



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**NEWS RELEASE**

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

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**WILL CONNECTICUT BE THE FIRST GIGABIT  
STATE? PRIVATE SECTOR OFFERS PLANS FOR  
MUNICIPALITIES SEEKING PARTNERS TO  
DEVELOP ULTRA-HIGH-SPEED “GIG”  
INTERNET NETWORKS**

(January 22, 2015 – New Britain, CT) – Eleven private sector businesses and industry representatives, including two international investment banks, the state’s largest telecommunications company, and the leading telecommunications industry group, have filed responses to a request from many of the state’s municipalities looking for partners to develop ultra-high-speed gigabit “Gig” internet networks in their communities. Gig networks deliver internet speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second or 1,000 megabits per second (Mbps), more than 100 times faster than the average home speed of about 9 Mbps.

The respondents are Fibertech Networks; Frontier Communications of Connecticut; Lightower Fiber Networks I LLC; Macquarie Capital USA, Inc.; Netaccess Futures; The New England Cable and Telecommunications Association; Nova NextGen Solutions, LLC; SiFi Networks; Spot On Networks, LLC; Tilson; and Veloz Broadband LLC.

The content of the responses is confidential. However, Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz, whose office is helping coordinate the effort with municipalities, says that the scope and breadth of the responses is very encouraging: “We received some very serious, thoughtful responses from some well-respected players in the telecommunication industry. We also have municipalities from all over the state who are looking to be part of the dialogue – I’d estimate we have at least 100 municipalities who are interested in exploring Gig opportunities.”

Consumer Counsel Katz said that one of the main challenges is organizing and coordinating responses and dialogue with such a large number of towns, and that a statewide framework and point of contact should be considered. “Given the number of interested municipalities, combined

with the number of industry heavy hitters who responded, I believe it's time to consider whether statewide options can be developed through a state point of contact that offers options to every municipality is the best framework. My goal is to create an option that is available to any municipality that wants to opt in."

The RFQ sought input on the creations of gigabit fiber networks to foster innovation, drive job creation, stimulate economic growth, and serve new areas of development in the communities that participated in the RFQ process. It sought an "open-access" model that allows any internet service provider to use the network to provide service to customers. This would help assure a robust competitive market throughout each market as multiple providers would have equal network and market access to every potential customer in the state.

Ben Barnes, Secretary of Policy and Management, echoed the statewide vision: "Our goal should be to become the first state that has ultra-high-speed-gigabit networks available from border to border. This public-private partnership is part of the infrastructure necessary for Connecticut to compete for the high tech jobs of the future -- and grow our economy. Connecticut can and should be on the cutting edge of the new economy and this project helps us get there."

The municipal effort, dubbed the "CTgig Project," was led by Stamford Mayor David R. Martin, West Hartford Deputy Mayor Shari Cantor, and New Haven Mayor Toni N. Harp, as well as state Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford), state Comptroller Kevin Lembo, and Consumer Counsel Katz. The project leaders are excited by the responses to their effort.

Stamford's Mayor Martin noted, "I am thrilled with the number of responses received to the RFQ. This process shows how important it is for municipalities and the state of Connecticut to partner together in order to take the necessary steps to facilitate the infrastructure that will help enable the Connecticut economy to continue to grow and be competitive on a global scale."

"The value of ultrahigh speed internet to Connecticut's economic development cannot be overstated," Deputy Mayor Cantor stated, noting the links to the President's infrastructure agenda. "Affordable high-speed broadband is essential to Connecticut's growth industries such as genomics, bioinformatics, aerospace, software and insurance. There is enormous interest and excitement in developing an ultrahigh speed internet service for Connecticut. The timeliness of this initiative has been underscored by President Obama's recent speeches over the last few days emphasizing the importance of fiber networks to the future of our nation."

"As the economic hub of south-central Connecticut the urgent need for New Haven businesses, healthcare providers, and research facilities to transmit large volumes of data at a reasonable cost is self-evident," Mayor Harp said. "The one gigabit network we envision will accommodate massive data transmission and provide a desirable digital infrastructure for future economic expansion – I'm delighted by the initial response to the RFQ."

Senator Bye reiterated that fiber networks are part of the State's infrastructure, stating, "This is a critical infrastructure project for Connecticut's economic development and to improve internet connectivity for all residents."

"Municipal leaders, businesses and consumers in every corner of the state have made their position

clear -- that we want and need low-cost, reliable and high-speed broadband that reaches every business, large and small, and every household, wealthy or not," Comptroller Lembo said. "There are developers and investors ready to move -- ready to make Connecticut the first gigabit state. As a collaborative statewide effort, we have a responsibility to make that happen -- to make Connecticut a destination for economic development, and a model of infrastructure development."

The CTgig Project has drawn praise from both Senate and House leaders. "Connecticut has a long, proud history of innovation, and today we are leading again by taking an important step toward becoming the first gigabit state in the nation. This state-of-the-art information infrastructure will be an enormous asset to Connecticut's high-tech businesses and world-class research institutions, and a great convenience for state residents," said state Senator Martin M. Looney (D-New Haven), another Senate champion of the project.

"This project has so much potential for families, businesses, and our overall economy. As online applications continue to expand to more and more aspects of our daily lives, access to a high-speed, reliable internet becomes more necessary. Connecticut has a strong reputation for its advanced technologies, and the success of CTgig will help keep us ahead of the curve," said Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden).

Next steps for the CTgig Project will be to evaluate the responses, coordinate information among the municipalities and project leaders, and develop options for a framework to interact with the respondents and potential partners.

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*The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut's advocate for consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/occ](http://www.ct.gov/occ).*