**46 CITIES JOIN EFFORT TO DEVELOP**

**GIGABIT BROADBAND NETWORKS IN CONNECTICUT**

 (December 18) ---Hartford, CT. A consortium of state municipalities seeking to bring world-leading Gigabit Broadband Networks to Connecticut announced today that 46 Connecticut municipalities, representing 50% of the state’s population, have joined the effort for Connecticut to lead the nation as the first gigabit state through public-private partnerships.

The Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) issued last September seeks information and dialogue with interested parties to increase access to ultra-high-speed gigabit networks in a consortium of municipalities throughout Connecticut while simultaneously reducing the cost of such networks for businesses, high-tech industry, universities, homeowners and other users. The RFQ invited Connecticut cities to join the CTgig Project, resulting in the final group of 46 municipalities for this phase of the project.

“We’re thrilled that so many cities have joined the effort,” said New Haven Mayor Toni Harp. “This clearly demonstrates a high demand by cities for next-generation infrastructure to drive economic growth and social progress thru the entire state.”

State Consumer Counsel Elin Katz, who helped launch the CTgig Project, said, “The initial release of the RFQ stimulated a significant number of inquiries by potential providers. With the increase in the number of communities participating, the economics for the providers will improve, making this project more attractive and Connecticut an even more attractive state for economic development.”

William Vallee, State Broadband Policy Coordinator, pointed out that “The RFQ expressly seeks financing to be invested by the potential fiber network builders and Internet service providers expected to respond to the RFQ on January 13, 2015. Neither the state nor the municipalities will be investing funds in the networks or Internet service provisioning, but the municipalities will contribute in-kind assets and support.” Vallee stated that “the RFQ seeks to increase competition in the Internet access market to boost the currently low levels of access speeds available in Connecticut and reduce the exceedingly high rates compared to peer states and other nations charged by the incumbents. That said, incumbent telephone and cable operators are logical respondents since they are already providing Internet service across the state, and they are, of course, encouraged to respond to the RFP.”

The state of Connecticut has enacted very favorable laws and regulations opening the public rights of way (PROW) to broadband providers, including:

* Statewide regulatory authority over attachments and equipment in the PROW, with minimal municipal regulation or fees;
* A reserved attachment position on all utility poles, with no rental fees for use the “municipal gain” for any purpose;
* A Single Pole Administrator process to streamline management and costs for all attachers, including a statewide PROW scheduling management database;
* Strictly enforced and rapid Make Ready deadlines;
* Equitable pole attachment rates base on the FCC Formula.

Blair Levin, Executive Director of Gig.U (a consortium of over 30 leading research university communities seeking to accelerate the deployment of next generation networks across the U. S.), who also led the writing of National Broadband Plan and advised the Office of Consumer Counsel on this project, noted “with this effort, Connecticut cities are again where they have been in other turning points in our country’s history: ahead of the curve and well-positioned to reap the benefits of the information age economy.”

Respondent proposals are due by 11 am EST January 13, 2015 and must be filed with The City of New Haven purchasing department which is administering and coordinating the RFQ for the municipalities:

<http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/PurchasingBureauOnline/index.asp>.

Information related to the RFQ can also be accessed at: <http://www.ct.gov/broadband/cwp/view.asp?a=4524&q=525910>

Questions and comments should be directed to William Vallee, State Broadband Policy Coordinator, at William.Vallee@ct.gov or 860-827-2905.

The following 46 municipalities form the consortium of state municipalities supporting the RFQ, as of December 12, 2014:

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| AvonBarkhamstedBerlin BloomfieldBranfordBridgeportCantonColchesterDanburyDurhamEast HaddamEast HartfordEnfieldFairfieldFarmington Glastonbury | GuilfordHaddamHartfordHebronLisbonMadisonManchesterMansfieldMeridenMiddletownMilfordNew HavenNew LondonNorwalk | PlainvilleRidgefieldRocky HillSimsburySomersSouth WindsorSouthingtonStamfordThomastonWaterford West HartfordWest HavenWestportWindhamWindsorWoodbridge |