



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
NEWS RELEASE

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**CONNECTICUT BROADBAND LEADERS WITNESS HISTORIC FCC
VOTE ON INTERNET, DISCUSS CT 'GIG' PROJECT WITH FCC
CHAIR**

(Washington, D.C) – At the invitation of top officials from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a delegation of Connecticut state broadband leaders – Comptroller Kevin Lembo, state Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford), Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz and state Broadband Policy Coordinator Bill Vallee – attended today's historic FCC vote at an open meeting of the FCC in Washington, D.C.

The FCC voted to adopt strong, open Internet rules to ensure that Americans reap the economic, social and civic benefits of an open Internet today and into the future, including the preservation of so-called “net neutrality.”

The Connecticut delegation is also meeting to discuss its “CT Gig” project with FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler; the project is a consortium of 46 municipalities seeking to create ultra-high-speed gigabit (“Gig”) Internet networks throughout Connecticut.

The invitation to the hearing was extended by Wheeler in recognition of Connecticut's leadership in developing community gigabit networks; the Connecticut delegation plans to discuss its CT Gig project with Wheeler and other FCC officials and explore possible funding sources for the project.

Wheeler has repeatedly voiced his support for the CT Gig project, stating last September, “Too many Americans lack real choices for fast, affordable Internet service, which is why I’m heartened to see these leaders commit to bringing gigabit connectivity to the businesses and consumers of Connecticut.”

“This honor belongs to all those in state and local government who have helped lead the effort to bring the benefits of this rapidly-evolving age of innovation and technology to all residents,

businesses and community anchor institutions of Connecticut,” Katz said today. “It’s clear that the future economic prosperity we’re striving for in our high-tech state largely depends on reasonably priced and universal access to a truly robust digital fiber network open to all who live and work here.”

“We are grateful for this historic vote, and we will continue to push for statewide gigabit access, because every business, large and small, deserves the opportunity to grow, prosper and compete in the global economy,” Lembo said. “Connecticut is a strong player in the world markets today, but without access to reasonably priced broadband network infrastructure throughout the entire state, we will be left behind as other states and countries make the investments necessary to compete in the future.”

“Today is a wonderful culmination to what, for me, has always been a constituent-driven public policy process,” Sen. Bye said. “Consumers and businesses in my Senate district and across Connecticut expect and deserve affordable, faster Internet speeds. Connecticut needs to create an Internet atmosphere that fosters and retains businesses and young people to stay and grow here. Today’s action by the FCC dovetails perfectly with those goals and with our state Gig project.”

Today’s FCC’s Internet docket was the most commented-upon rulemaking in the agency’s history, with more than 3.9 million submissions to date. By lightly regulating provision of “broadband Internet access service” (retail broadband service commonly bought from cable, phone, and wireless providers), the FCC would shift the expensive and restrictive monopoly of today’s Internet market to one focused on allowing consumers more freedom to access the legal content and applications they choose online, without interference from any broadband network provider.

Connecticut municipalities have just embarked on the CT Gig Project with the goal of helping them all get access to faster, cheaper broadband so they can succeed in the competitive digital economy that is already in full bloom across the world.

“Broadband is not a luxury, it’s a necessity,” Vallee said. “We believe that there must be a fiber connection to every address in Connecticut, just as there is an electric line and a water pipe. We won’t let anyone in Connecticut be excluded from the ability to connect online for healthcare, education, business, public safety, or to keep in touch with their government.”

Preserving net neutrality fosters innovation and competition by ensuring that new products and services developed by entrepreneurs aren’t blocked or “throttled” by Internet service providers putting their own profits above the public interest. This approach would not include utility-style rate regulation (such as rate regulation or tariffs), and is designed to encourage investment in broadband networks by a wide array of new private investors and municipal communities without restrictions or market barriers.

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