



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF CONSUMER COUNSEL
NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW BROADBANDNOW REPORT FINDS 386,786 CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS LACK
BROADBAND ACCESS**

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (May 12, 2021) – The Office of State Broadband within the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel announces that a newly released report from BroadbandNow, which performs independent research and data on high-speed Internet access in the U.S., finds that 386,786 residents in the State of Connecticut do not have access to broadband. The analysis was performed by checking a sample of addresses against data that had been provided by wireline broadband Internet providers to the Federal Communications Commission. The study found that the providers over-reported to the FCC availability of broadband service “in cities, rural towns and everywhere in between.”

Out of a population of 3,565,000, the report found that 386,786 Connecticut residents were without broadband access. BroadbandNow observed an error rate of 22% in data submitted to the FCC by providers. Broadband is defined as Internet access at a download speed of no less than 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) and an upload speed of 3 Mbps, a benchmark that many experts agree remains insufficient for activities such as working or study from home. BroadbandNow advocates for a new standard of at least 100 Mbps download and 50 Mbps upload to better reflect the present needs of Americans. At 100 down and 50 up, the number of residents without adequate broadband would likely be significantly higher.

By contrast, Massachusetts, with a population of nearly 6.9 million residents – nearly twice that of Connecticut – has 179,089 residents without broadband access, according to BroadbandNow. That would mean that Connecticut, with far fewer rural areas, has 207,697 more residents without broadband access than does Massachusetts.

In order to address this lack of access, Governor Lamont introduced a bill that would require universal broadband availability in HB 6442, *An Act Concerning Equitable Access to Broadband*. “The BroadbandNow report unequivocally demonstrates the immediate need to address the connectivity issues in our state by passing the Governor’s broadband bill into law,” according to OCC Staff Attorney Burt Cohen, who also serves as the State’s Broadband Policy Coordinator. “Without universal access to robust broadband service, too many Connecticut residents will continue to be unable to participate in the

economy, education, health care and other essential components of 21st century life.” HB 6442 mandates universal broadband and establishes a state broadband mapping program to be managed by the Office of Policy and Management.

Support for HB 6442 comes from an overwhelming number of residents in northwestern Connecticut who remain without broadband access, state and municipal elected officials, the Connecticut Chapter of AARP, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the Coalition of Small Towns, the Connecticut Association for Community Action, the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology, the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut, and many state agencies.

The BroadbandNow report may be accessed at <https://broadbandnow.com/research/fcc-broadband-overreporting-by-state?>

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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.