



SECTION 7: THE TELECOM AND UTILITY POLE SECTOR

4.7M COMMUNICATIONS LINES

Since the mid-1990s, both wireless and wireline telecommunications in Connecticut have been largely deregulated under state and federal law. Most telecommunications services, including cellular service, local and long-distance calling, “800” services, and voice over internet protocol (VOIP), are not subject to rate or quality regulations.

Connecticut customers can obtain telecommunication services from The Southern New England Telephone Company (Frontier Communications of Connecticut), which is the primary incumbent local exchange carrier, or from any number of Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs), or even from cable companies.

PURA continues to provide regulatory oversight of what is referred to as Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS), which is the traditional, analog voice transmission over copper wires. This service, however, has been largely replaced as customers have migrated towards other competitive services. PURA also plays an important role in promoting a competitive telecommunications market through its regulation of public rights-of-way and utility poles, which support a substantial portion of the state’s telecommunications infrastructure. With rapid advances in communications technology, PURA endeavors to maintain a regulatory scheme that facilitates equitable and timely access to these critical assets. Further, the CBYD program, discussed in Section 5: The Natural Gas Sector and overseen by the Authority, ensures that excavations related to underground telecommunications facilities are done safely and in coordination with other relevant utilities.

Finally, PURA is also responsible for determining and approving funding for public and community technology and telecommunications resources such as Connecticut’s Enhanced Emergency 911 (E-911) program and community access television. These services are critical elements of Connecticut’s infrastructure, providing education, and emergency support, and enhancing First Amendment rights for Connecticut’s citizens.

KEY TELECOM & UTILITY POLE TOPICS

Ensuring Continuity of Public Telecommunication Resources

Ensuring Continuity of Public Telecommunication Resources In addition to supporting the deployment of broadband and ensuring the structural safety of the poles throughout the state, the Authority determines and approves funding for important public services each year including certain state-directed grants, Connecticut's Enhanced Emergency 911 (E-911) program, and community access television funding.

PEGPETIA

In 2007, the General Assembly established the Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) program to promote and improve public, educational, and governmental programming and to support education technology initiatives through the enactment of Public Act 07-253, An Act Concerning Competitive Video Services. This account is funded by a quarterly tax on the gross earnings of video service providers, while the Authority is responsible for determining the allocation of accumulated funds into the account and administering grants to eligible entities.

Each year, PURA opens a proceeding where it accepts applications for funding. The Authority opened Docket No. 24-10-02, Allocation of Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 16-331cc, to distribute \$1,988,010.51 in available funding.

Fifty percent (50%) of available funding is allocated to local community television councils, the state-wide video advisory council, public, educational, and governmental programmers and public, educational, and governmental studio operators; the other fifty percent (50%) is allocated to boards of education or other entities offering education technology initiatives. In the event that the total amount requested by eligible applications for one category is less than 50%, and the other is greater, PURA may reallocate excess funds to the other category.

The Authority received a total of 136 applications. The Authority awarded grants for "public, educational and governmental" programming (PEG Grants) to 33 applicants for a total of \$995,132.19 in grant funds. Additionally the Authority awarded grants for "education technology initiatives" (ETI Grants) to 81 applicants for a total of \$992,878.32. A complete list of awardees and the amount of funding received is available in the decision.

[Read the 2025 PEGPETIA Final Decision.](#)

Table 8: PEG and ETI Grants

Grant Type	Total Requests	Grants Awarded
PEG	\$2,954,471.75	\$995,132.19
ETI	\$8,791,205.72	\$992,878.32
Total	\$11,745,677.47	\$1,988,010.51

E911 Program

The Authority is statutorily responsible for determining the amount of the monthly fee to be assessed on each telephone service, commercial mobile radio service (CMRS or wireless), customer-owned coin operated telephone (COCOT) service, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) subscriber to fund the administration of the E-911 program. PURA bases this fee on:

1. The operating budget established by Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), taking into consideration any existing moneys available in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Telecommunications Fund;
2. A progressive wire line inclusion schedule (excluding CMRS) that considers “the final report of the task force to study enhanced 9-1-1 telecommunications services established by Public Act 95-318;” and
3. A maximum fee of \$0.75 per month per access line.

The Authority calculates the E-911 monthly assessment fees for non-CMRS customer accounts with multiple lines using a progressive schedule. In other words, the more lines on an account, the less the account pays per line. Telecommunications companies report the total number of accounts based on number of lines to PURA, while DESPP reports the annual operating budget for the E-911 program. Examples of expenses comprising this budget include database services, network management and maintenance, translation services, regional telecommunications centers, and training. Using these values, PURA can calculate a per-line monthly fee necessary to fund the program.

In Docket No. 25-01-05, Annual Assessment Proceeding to Fund the Development and Administration of the Enhanced Emergency 911 Program, using the telecommunications companies’ provided line numbers and the 2025 E-911 budget of \$38,434,300.44 provided by DESPP, PURA calculated a single-line fee of \$0.69 per month. Accounts with more than one line pay a lower rate per line on a progressive scale, as low as \$0.14 per line. The \$0.69 per line fee is a four cent decrease over 2024.

[Read the 2025 Enhanced E-911 Decision.](#)

Annual Community Access Support Review

Public access television programming provides benefits that are not necessarily easily quantified but are nonetheless important public services, such as enhancing a sense of community and First Amendment rights. Connecticut law requires multichannel television companies (e.g., cable or satellite television), referred to as “multichannel video programming distributors” (MVPDs) to fund public community access programming (CAP) by assessing a baseline \$5 per year charge on each of their customers. The Authority is responsible for determining whether this charge should be adjusted each year to reflect any increase or decrease in the consumer price index (CPI) in the previous year.

Further, the Authority can adjust the community access subscriber fee amount for each MVPD within a range of 40% above or below the statutory benchmark, as adjusted for inflation, based on the following criteria:

- The level of public interest in community access operations in the franchise area;
- The level of community need for educational access programming;
- The level and breadth of participation in community access operations;
- The adequacy of existing facilities, equipment and training programs to meet the current and future needs of the franchise area; and
- Any other factors determined to be relevant by the Authority.

Through Docket No. 25-01-06, Annual Community Access Support Review, PURA assessed the subscriber fee amount for each MVPD that took effect on July 1, 2025. Using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, PURA found that the 2024 rate of inflation as measured by the CPI for the Northeast Urban Region is 3.51%. To determine the +/-40% range within which the per subscriber amount can be set, the Authority adjusts the original statutory \$5/subscriber amount for inflation. In the 2024 Decision, the Authority found that the statutory amount as adjusted for inflation was \$11.10. Increasing this amount by 3.51% for 2023 CPI inflation equates to a value of \$11.49. Forty percent of \$11.49 is \$4.60. Consequently, the community access support per subscriber for each MVPD must be between \$6.89 (\$11.49 - \$4.60) and \$16.09 (\$11.49 + \$4.60). The Final Decision in Docket No. 25-01-06 thus calculated the 2025 subscriber fee for each MVPD, which all fall within the statutory range identified above.

[Read the 2024 Community Access Support Final Decision.](#)

Docket No. 24-11-06: Joint Application of Verizon Communications Inc. and Frontier Communications Parent, Inc. for Approval of a Change of Control

On November 15, 2024, Verizon and Frontier submitted a joint application to the Authority requesting a change of control in which a wholly owned subsidiary of Verizon would merge into Frontier and Frontier would become a direct wholly owned subsidiary of Verizon. The merger was proposed to occur at the holding company level meaning there would be no merger or dissolution of any regulated company, and no transfer of customers or assets. Upon completion of the merger, Verizon would acquire 100 percent of Frontier and its subsidiaries, including The Southern New England Telephone Company d/b/a Frontier Communications of Connecticut (SNET). On June 11, 2025, the Authority issued a decision approving the change of control between Verizon and Frontier.

A change of control such as the one proposed between Verizon and Frontier is governed by General Statutes § 16-47. Specifically, “[n]o . . . holding company . . . shall interfere or attempt to interfere with or, directly or indirectly, exercise or attempt to exercise authority or control over any [telephone company], without first making written application to and obtaining the approval of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, . . .” SNET is a telephone company supplying services within the state. In approving a proposed change of control, the Authority may approve or disapprove any such application in whole or in part and upon such terms and conditions as it deems necessary or appropriate. Importantly, by statute, the Authority must take into consideration: (1) the financial, technological, and managerial suitability and responsibility of the applicant; the ability of the holding company to provide safe, adequate, and reliable service to the public through the company's plant, equipment, and manner of operation if the application were to be approved; and (3) the effect of the approval on the location and accessibility of management and operations and on the proportion and number of state resident employees.

Additionally, General Statutes § 16-247a(a) identifies certain goals of the state, including, among others, “to (1) ensure the universal availability and accessibility of high quality, affordable telecommunications services to all residents and businesses in the state, [and] (2) promote the development of effective competition as a means of providing customers with the widest possible choice of services . . .”

In its decision, the Authority found that Verizon possesses the requisite technological, managerial, and financial suitability to operate a public service company and to provide safe, adequate, and reliable service to the public. In its review, the Authority considered the effect of approval on Frontier's provision of safe, adequate, and reliable service as well as the location and accessibility of management and operations and on the impact on state resident employees. Moreover, Verizon, Frontier, and OCC reached a settlement agreement for certain terms and provisions of the change of control. The settlement

agreement terms were incorporated into the Authority decision approving the transaction.

[Read the Verizon - Frontier Change of Control Decision.](#)