



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**NEWS RELEASE**

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS  
APPLAUD 46 TOWNS THAT STEP OUT TO LEAD  
DEVELOPMENT OF ULTRA-HIGH-SPEED “GIG”  
INTERNET NETWORKS IN CONNECTICUT**

(December 19, 2014 – New Britain, CT) – Forty-six municipalities have joined together to facilitate the development of ultra-high-speed “Gig” internet networks in their communities. Representing over 25% of the state’s 169 towns and encompassing over half of the state’s residents, these cities and towns have joined the effort for Connecticut to lead the nation as the first gigabit state through public-private partnerships. The effort, 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 Elin Swanson Katz, has received national attention and drawn praise from Federal Communications Commission Chair Tom Wheeler, who tweeted yesterday, “Excited that 46 cities have committed to CTgig Project. Faster, better broadband = jobs, innovation, econ development.”

The mayors issued a joint Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) seeking information and dialogue with interested companies or developers, hoping to increase access to ultra-high-speed gigabit networks in their cities and throughout Connecticut while simultaneously reducing the cost of such networks for businesses, high-tech industry, universities, homeowners and other users. 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. Other municipalities were invited to join the effort simply by submitting an addendum detailing their town’s profile and administrative resources.

“The response from our state’s towns has been overwhelming,” Consumer Counsel Katz said. “I’ve heard over and over that municipal officials are frustrated with available internet speeds and the cost to their towns of upgrading internet networks. These 46 municipalities have made the decision to take control of the situation. From the high school to the town hall to the library, the demand for faster internet speeds and greater bandwidth is ever-increasing. Businesses face the

same challenges, and we know more residents than ever are asking the same question: How do we get faster, cheaper, more reliable internet? Partnering with the private sector to examine the best way to build and finance these Gig networks is the first step in making them a reality in Connecticut.”

Stamford's Mayor David Martin noted, “Stamford is proud to be one of the leaders of the consortium of municipalities looking towards the future of high speed broadband service for the residents and businesses of Connecticut. It is important that municipalities and the State continue to take proactive steps to be on the leading edge of technology that allows for the continued strengthening of the State's economy.”

Shari Cantor, West Hartford Deputy Mayor, stated, “As one of the three communities to initiate the RFQ, I am excited to see the increase in interest in pursuing truly affordable high-speed broadband throughout the state. The coordinated effort demonstrates the realization by municipalities, the business communities, and educational institutions that this is a critical piece to continuing economic growth in our state.”

“That so many Connecticut cities have joined this effort is heartening and confirms for me the pent-up demand for high-capacity digital connectivity in support of commerce, research, and 21<sup>st</sup> century life in our state,” said New Haven Mayor Toni N. Harp. “I think this demonstrates the potential return on investment for a qualified supplier of next-generation infrastructure to drive economic growth and social progress in Connecticut.”

Senator Beth Bye, one of the early supporters of the RFQ effort and an architect of key legislation that empowered municipalities to develop their own internet networks, stated, “This is a big day for Connecticut. Our municipalities are joining together to bring affordable, ultra-high speed internet to Connecticut. Our innovation economy requires this tool to grow and be competitive on a global scale.” She added that the response from the state’s municipalities has been “simply extraordinary.”

“This overwhelming response proves that Connecticut is ready to become the first gigabit state – sending a message to the market that we want a competitive utility landscape that fuels economic development, saves money for consumers and encourages businesses to put down roots here,” Comptroller Lembo said. “I commend municipal leaders for recognizing the importance of this consumer and economic development initiative. Gigabit broadband service will be a superhighway for Connecticut researchers, schools, businesses large and small, and every household. It will be the ultimate economic assistance incentive program because it would reward all business and industries, new ones and those already established here, with a superior infrastructure and an open door. In other areas of the country and in nations across the globe, development of gigabit networks is spurring innovation, attracting economic development, and improving service while reducing costs for broadband consumers.”

"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.

Ben Barnes, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, also noted the economic development potential of the project, stating, “This exciting new program can help create jobs in

Connecticut. The participating municipalities deserve praise for seeing its promise and joining the effort.”

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

Avon	Guilford	Plainville
Barkhamsted	Haddam	Ridgefield
Berlin	Hartford	Rocky Hill
Bloomfield	Hebron	Simsbury
Branford	Lisbon	Somers
Bridgeport	Madison	South Windsor
Canton	Manchester	Southington
Colchester	Mansfield	Stamford
Danbury	Meriden	Thomaston
Durham	Middletown	Waterford
East Haddam	Milford	West Hartford
East Hartford	New Haven	West Haven
Enfield	New London	Westport
Fairfield	Norwalk	Windham
Farmington		Windsor
Glastonbury		Woodbridge

Proposals from entities interested in partnering with the municipalities 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>.

Questions and comments should be directed to William Vallee, State Broadband Policy Coordinator, at [William.Vallee@ct.gov](mailto:William.Vallee@ct.gov) or 860-827-2905. Mr. Vallee, who works with the Office of Consumer Counsel, is coordinating the effort for the towns. He indicated that there may well be opportunities for other communities in the future: “We needed to have a cutoff date to allow the potential respondents a month to prepare appropriately targeted proposals or suggestions. Based on the responses that hopefully result from the RFQ and the large number of Connecticut towns that filed addendums, we may have the opportunity to reopen admissions from remaining municipalities.”

Information related to the RFQ can also be accessed at:

<http://www.ct.gov/broadband/cwp/view.asp?a=4524&q=525910>

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