



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
CONNECTICUT, INC.**

Study Report

Emerging Media and Internet Issues: E-Democracy for Connecticut

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Executive Summary

In June 2007, the LWVCT Convention authorized a state-level study of emerging media issues, their relevance to democracy, and their importance to Connecticut residents. Members from local Leagues throughout the state were invited to join the LWVCT's study group. The group attracted volunteer study group members from Bethany, Greenwich, Litchfield, Madison, West Hartford, Weston, Wilton, and Woodbridge. Although the group has identified several additional topics for further study—chief among them the critical role that media ownership and consolidation plays in the dissemination of news and information in our democracy—the focus of the present study was threefold:

- the implications of the LWVUS's new "pro" net neutrality position for Connecticut,
- universal high speed Internet access for Connecticut residents, and
- the future of community access TV (PEG TV) in CT.

The group has researched online materials from government, academic, business, and the nonprofit sectors, as well as conducted interviews with Connecticut experts knowledgeable in these three topics. The LWVCT Fall Conference—*E-Democracy: A 21st Century Citizen's Right to Know and Participate*—made emerging electronic media issues its theme this year. The entire 2½ hour tape of the conference can be viewed at <http://www.lvwweston.org> The study group has also published an online blog for group postings of resources, questions, and discussion—www.ctmediastudy.wordpress.com—and has included background information for members in our semi-annual VOTER newsletter distributed to all Connecticut League members as well as in our statewide members-only e-mail messaging system.

This report includes the findings of our group, our references, excerpts from personal interviews, and statements for member concurrence. Concurrence statements appear at the end of each section and in a list at the end of the report. For quick reference, a summary of group findings and concurrence statements are included in this Executive Summary. The entire report will be posted online at www.lwvct.org or call the LWVCT at (203) 288-7996 if you require a hard copy.

An Open, Uncensored, Nondiscriminatory Internet

The League of Women Voters believes that a vibrant democracy depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. Access to information is the lifeblood of democracy and open government. Over the past two decades, the Internet has emerged as an essential vehicle for free speech, journalistic expression, democratic participation, political association, and business innovation—in both the private and public sectors. (League of Women Voters of the U.S. Net Neutrality Task Force Papers 2007) The LWVCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, by the Connecticut Constitution, and by the League's Principles. The 2006 LWVUS Convention adopted a resolution to call upon Congress to support net neutrality legislation. To further member understanding of this issue, the LWVUS Board convened a task force to develop educational materials for members and background for the net neutrality position. The LWVUS Net Neutrality Task Force has completed its report which is available online at www.lwv.org in the Members section.

According to a December 2006 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 70% of American adults (approximately 141 million people) use the Internet. Sixty seven percent of Internet users go online to get news, 66% have visited a local, state or federal government Website and 54% look online for news or information about politics or upcoming campaigns. (Pew Internet & American Life Project 2007)

Regardless of your type of Internet service, we all expect that, when we get online, we'll be able to reach any Website, use any search engine, and watch any online video that we choose. When you pay your monthly Internet service bill, you want FULL access to the ENTIRE Internet. No one company owns the Internet—we all do! Taxpayer monies funded its origins through Department of Defense projects in the 1960s. Network neutrality has always been one of its original characteristics and, many argue, the reason for its unique success as a communications and information service.

Net neutrality means no discrimination—all data, Websites, and content on the Internet must be transmitted without discrimination, favoritism, blocking, or quality degradation by your Internet service provider (ISP). Your e-mail is just as important as anyone else's, the Christian Coalition's Website appears as quickly as Planned Parenthood's, and one candidate's Website is just as accessible as her opponent's. Think how important this is for voters during election season and for democracy itself!

Federal regulations protecting a neutral, nondiscriminatory Internet had been in effect for years until a Supreme Court decision on telecommunication policy eliminated them for ISPs in 2005, although regulatory protections remain in place for dial-up Internet service providers. Individual citizens, good government groups, consumers, legislators, journalists, academicians, and businesses have joined together in a national grassroots coalition of more than 750 groups to support a return to the pre-2005 regulatory protections and Internet neutrality legislation. They argue that our country must return to the protections historically offered by the neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet, so that diverse voices can report and interpret the news, citizens can participate fully in the democratic process, political candidates can reach their growing online audiences, innovators can compete with established businesses, and small businesses can reach big markets.

On the other hand, many telephone and cable companies—which provide Internet service to customers throughout the nation over the wires, pipes, and cables through which traffic on the Internet travels—welcome the elimination of regulatory protections. They argue that network neutrality protections are unnecessary impediments to innovation and, because they own the wiring, that they should control what travels over the Internet and be able to charge certain customers extra fees for faster loading and priority status. They further argue that regulations are unnecessary and unwarranted. However, recent reports of interference suggest otherwise.

The arguments of telephone and cable companies ignore the fact that innovation on the Internet—designed to be an open *network of networks*—has flourished for the past 40 years under the regulations that protected the Internet's neutral, uncensored nature. It's also important to remember that these privately held, for-profit corporations received substantial public funding and other incentives to build their telecommunications systems in the first place.

Like the supporters of net neutrality, the cable and telephone companies have established advocacy groups of their own to influence public and legislative opinion. In two reports on the lobbying strategies of telecommunications companies, *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: Parts I and II*, Common Cause labels several of the telecommunications lobbying groups "Astroturf" because, although they masquerade as grassroots coalitions, many are funded by the telecommunications industry with minimal actual citizen support. (Common Cause. 2007)

Several states—New York, Michigan, and Maine—have already considered net neutrality legislation on a state level. Maine became the first state to pass a net neutrality resolution—a bipartisan effort—to monitor and report on relevant telecommunications policies for Maine. Maine's coalition of legislators and "good government" groups believe that net neutrality protections are essential for political discourse, dissemination of news, and democratic participation.

After considering the implications of the LWVUS position for Connecticut and the importance of protecting open access to the Internet for Connecticut Internet users, the study group proposes the following statement for member concurrence:

*The LWVCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association—guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the Connecticut Constitution. The League also believes that net neutrality protections are essential for political discourse, dissemination of news, and democratic participation. Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut strongly supports the LWVUS position to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. To further this position, the LWVCT supports efforts by the State of Connecticut to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. AGREE ()
DISAGREE ()*

Universal High Speed Internet Access for Connecticut Residents

High speed Internet—or broadband—means a fast Internet connection through cable lines, telephone lines, power lines, or by wireless technologies. Connecticut residents need fast, high capacity connections to engage in political discourse, to communicate with their legislators, to use Internet telephone services, to get speedy access to e-mail communications, to conduct business efficiently, to telecommute, and to view live video or radio broadcasts. Some basic types of Internet service—like dial-up service over a telephone line—just don't offer enough speed and capacity to view video or to use Internet telephony. Moreover, they require the full use of a telephone line.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) uses a standard definition of high speed broadband Internet service—200 kilobits of data per second—for either downloading material from the Internet to your computer or posting it from your computer to the Internet. (FCC 2006) This definition troubles many consumer advocates, good government groups, computer scientists, and some FCC commissioners, because it sets the standard much lower than that used by other developed nations in the world, presenting a more positive picture of access to modern Internet service than really exists in the U.S. They say that other countries have speedier Internet service for lower costs to customers and criticize as inaccurate the FCC's method of data collection on high speed Internet service availability and penetration rates in rural areas, such as eastern and northwestern Connecticut.

The *New York Times, Connecticut Section*, has reported on the obstacles for residents and Internet service providers alike regarding modern Internet connections in some parts of Connecticut, the state with the nation's highest per capita income. (Hochswender, 2007) Cable and telephone company spokespersons said that laying the infrastructure for high speed Internet access throughout less populous and remote communities is expensive and, with more competition for customers in TV and Internet service, may be a costlier investment than expected. Residents said that their access to news and information is compromised and their ability to compete in the modern marketplace is jeopardized by outdated communications technology.

Additionally, Connecticut cities recognize the importance of updated Internet service to schools, community centers, and libraries which often serve as communications centers for non-affluent residents who find Internet subscriptions too costly. Several cities, like Stamford, have begun implementing downtown wireless Internet projects to make their cities family-, business- and visitor-friendly.

Finally, a Connecticut legislator introduced legislation encouraging cities and municipalities to implement their own Internet access projects. This is noteworthy because in other states, such as Nebraska and Arkansas, this right has been curtailed by state legislatures.

The LWWCT study group proposes the following statements for member concurrence:

Efficient, affordable, high speed access to the Internet for all Connecticut residents—regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics—is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, for competing in the global marketplace, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to participate in our democracy. Therefore,

- *The League of Women Voters supports making high speed Internet access available to all Connecticut residents, without cost, through schools, libraries, and other secure public buildings. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*
- *The League of Women Voters believes that affordable high speed Internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all Connecticut residents and businesses. State and local government policies should support broadband, wireless, and other means of high speed Internet deployment throughout the state. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*

Community Access and Public Affairs TV
Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) TV & the Connecticut Network (CT-N)

The League of Women Voters believes that an informed citizenry is the bedrock of democracy and that governmental bodies must protect a “citizen’s right to know” by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible. In 2000, The League of Women Voters urged the Federal Communications Commission to issue requirements for broadcasters to cover local public affairs. (LWVUS. *Representative Government*.)

PEG is an abbreviation for *Public, Educational, and Governmental* access TV channels. These form the three branches of *Community Access TV*—the TV channels that broadcast your local Board of Selectmen and Board of Education meetings, your grandchildren’s spelling bees, and your local *Meet the Candidates* events. PEG access has its roots in the 1984 federal Cable Act and in various amendments to the Act. PEG channels—throughout the nation—allow residents to see their local government in action, without commercial “spin” or commentary, from the comfort of home. One PEG center operator states, “...no issue or constituency is too small to receive equal time on PEG channels. This level of localism, even micro-localism, is not found anywhere else on the cable dial and it’s what makes PEG unique and essential to many communities.” (Eisenmenger, 2007) Often PEG channels are broadcast from TV stations in town halls, community centers, or regional PEG centers with lots of volunteers and minimal funding.

The Connecticut Network (CT-N) is a close cousin of community access TV. Established and funded by the Connecticut General Assembly, CT-N has its own channel which offers a critically important way for Connecticut residents to view statewide public affairs programs and live, uncut sessions of the state legislature.

In exchange for using public rights-of-way (the roads, sidewalks, and public land where phone lines and cables run), cable companies promise, through franchise agreements, to pay fees to municipalities so that schools, governments, libraries, and individuals can gain access to the public airwaves—thus, the term *community access*. Subscriber fees collected by the cable companies pay for equipment, training, and staffing of local and regional PEG stations. Providing community access TV channels and providing for citizen input through regional cable television advisory boards are required parts of Connecticut’s franchise agreements with cable TV companies. These agreements are regulated by the CT Department of Public Utilities Control (DPUC).

Telephone companies are beginning to offer television service throughout the country, as competition for cable TV companies. In a new state law which certifies new TV/video providers in Connecticut, the legislature required companies to carry community access TV and CT-N on their basic, or lowest-price—service plans. New TV services—like those offered by telephone companies—competing with cable companies must provide the same number of community access channels that the town’s current cable company carries and must carry CT-N. However, there is no requirement in the new law that requires companies to offer the same *quality* of PEG broadcasting or ease of access to PEG channels as to that of other TV channels. Finally, none of these requirements pertain to satellite television providers. Customers using a “dish” for TV reception will not receive CT-N or any community access channels at all, unless the provider chooses to offer them.

The LWVCT study group proposes the following statements for member concurrence:

Access to information through modern TV/video communication is essential to the public interest and to League of Women Voters’ mission and purpose— to protect civil liberties, to ensure open, transparent government, and to promote the public’s right to know. To protect the public interest, high quality PEG transmission and PEG availability on basic service tiers are essential. Therefore,

- *The League of Women Voters believes that community access television channels—for public, educational, and governmental programming—must be adequately protected,*

promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()

- *The League of Women Voters believes that statewide public affairs programming, such as provided by The Connecticut Network (CT-N), must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded by the state legislature and available to all Connecticut residents, regardless of the provider of TV/video services. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*
- *The League of Women Voters believes that government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access, or PEG, TV. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*

I. Introduction

At the League of Women Voters Convention in Minneapolis in 2006, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut led a successful effort to enact a resolution urging the League to call upon Congress to support an open and neutral Internet. Following the adoption of this resolution by the 800+ delegates present at the convention, the LWVUS convened a task force to help develop member understanding and guidance materials on the topic of “net neutrality”. As the LWVCT monitored various media reform efforts in Congress, at the FCC, and in other states, the Connecticut League became convinced that an in-depth look at emerging media issues and their implications for our democracy—with a focus on our state—was necessary. Without transparency in local and state government operations, without diverse voices in the media, without impartial news that Connecticut residents can depend upon, and without open access to the Internet, the Connecticut League’s educational and advocacy mission is compromised.

In June 2007, the LWVCT Convention authorized a state-level study of emerging media issues, their relevance to democracy, and their importance to Connecticut residents. Members from local Leagues throughout the state were invited to join the LWVCT’s study group. The group attracted volunteer study group members from Bethany, Greenwich, Litchfield, Madison, West Hartford, Weston, Wilton, and Woodbridge. Although the group has identified several additional topics for further study—chief among them the critical role that media ownership and consolidation plays in the dissemination of news and information in our democracy—the focus of the present study was threefold:

- the implications of the LWVUS’s new “pro” net neutrality position for Connecticut,
- universal high speed Internet access for Connecticut residents, and
- the future of community access TV (PEG TV) in Connecticut.

The LWVCT 2007 Fall Conference added an additional dimension to our study through its panel of experts who described how timely the League’s study was. Not only has Connecticut’s legislature been exploring the very issues that the LWVCT is studying, but Congress and other states have, as well. Members and the public can view a videotape of the conference at www.lwvweston.org.

This report conveys the background of each topic, its relevance for our state, and the salient controversies surrounding each. To assist in members’ understanding, the study group has included a glossary of terms common to the telecommunications industry, a list of references (with annotations) and expert consultants, and general statements of concurrence for local Leagues to consider for each topic. If the concurrence statements are approved by Connecticut’s local Leagues, Members-at-Large Unit, and ultimately by the LWVCT Board, they will become the positions on which the Public Issues Team and local Leagues may take action.

II. Internet (“Net”) Neutrality

How Is an Open, Uncensored, Nondiscriminatory Internet Related to League Principles?

The League of Women Voters believes that a vibrant democracy depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. Access to information is the lifeblood of democracy and open government. Over the past two decades, the Internet has emerged as an essential vehicle for free speech, journalistic expression, democratic participation, political association, and business innovation—in both the public and private sectors. (League of Women Voters of the U.S. Net Neutrality Taskforce Papers. 2007) The LWVCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association—guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Connecticut Constitution and embodied in the League’s Principles. The 2006 LWVUS convention adopted a resolution to call upon Congress to support net neutrality legislation as an interpretation of the *Citizen’s Right to Know* position and the League’s

Principles. To further member understanding of this issue, the LWVUS Board convened a task force—a group of League members from throughout the nation—to develop educational materials for members and background for the net neutrality position. The LWVUS Net Neutrality Task Force is available online at www.lvv.org in the *Members* section on Representative Government.

According to a December 2006 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 70% of American adults (approximately 141 million people) use the Internet. Sixty seven percent of Internet users go online to get news, 66% have visited a local, state or federal government Website and 54% look online for news or information about politics or upcoming campaigns. A 2004 report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that citizens who use the Internet, particularly broadband, hear more points of view than other citizens. The report also found that while television remains the primary source of political news, broadband users—that is, those who use high speed Internet connections to the Internet—increasingly get their information online and from sources unassociated with major news organizations.

What is Net Neutrality?

Regardless of your type of Internet service, you expect that, when you go online, you'll be able to reach any Website, use any search engine, and watch any online video that you choose. When you pay your monthly Internet service bill, you want FULL access to the ENTIRE Internet. You also expect to be able to contact your legislators, engage in political advocacy, use Internet telephony, and research the issues that are important to you as an informed voter.

Net neutrality means no discrimination—that all data, Websites, and content on the Internet must be transmitted without favoritism, blocking, censorship, or quality degradation by your Internet service provider (ISP). Your e-mail is just as important as anyone else's, the Christian Coalition's Website appears as quickly as Planned Parenthood's, and one candidate's Website is just as accessible as her opponent's. Think how important this is for voters during election season and for democracy itself! Net neutrality protections prevent Internet service providers from becoming gatekeepers to the Internet and prohibit ISPs from censoring, blocking, speeding up or slowing down your access to online material based on its source, its ownership, or its political orientation.

The essential characteristics of a neutral Internet were summarized by the 2007 report of the LWVUS Net Neutrality Task Force as:

- A. Non-discriminatory routing of packets of data
- B. User control and choice over service levels
- C. Ability to create and use new services and protocols without prior approval of network operators
- D. Non-discriminatory "peering" or exchange of data traffic among large, national or worldwide Internet trunk lines

Network neutrality has been one of the Internet's original characteristics and, many argue, the reason for its unique success as a communications and information service. The Internet Society (ISOC), an international nonprofit educational organization, provides leadership in addressing the global future of the Internet, focusing on education and policy. Their members have published a history of the Internet that chronicles its historical open nature and its influence on technological innovation. Development of the Internet—designed to be an open *network of networks*—can be traced to a U.S. Department of Defense DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) program—ARPANET—in 1969. The first message on the Internet was sent that year from a computer at UCLA to one at the Stanford Research Institute, with computers at UC Santa Barbara and the University of Utah added to the system soon after. (Kleiner, et al. 2003) Today it serves an estimated 100 million Websites. (CNN 2006) By its very design, the Internet has, for 40 years, been neutral, uncensored, and non-discriminatory, allowing a free-flow of information, ideas, and commerce across its infrastructure—the telephone lines, wires, and cables that crisscross our nation and carry the data that travels over the Internet. Moreover, technological, journalistic, business, and artistic innovation has flourished under the regulations that protected the Internet's neutral, uncensored nature. No person, nation, or company owns the Internet—we all do!

In September 2007, Dr. Mark Cooper, Research Director, Consumer Federation of America, testified about a major change in the law regulating the Internet, noting that, until 2005, a neutral, open Internet was protected by federal law.

When Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, virtually all Internet traffic originated or delivered to the public traveled on telecommunications networks that were obligated to provide nondiscriminatory interconnection and carriage under Title II of the Communications Act. The U.S. was the global Internet leader by far. But the FCC abandoned the principles of nondiscrimination, first for broadband provided by cable companies, then for telephone companies.(Cooper 2007)

How did that change occur?

In 1992, Congress voted to allow commercial traffic onto the Internet, as long as its neutral nature was preserved and that no providers of Internet service were favored over any others. Telephone companies, the first carriers of the Internet, were still subject to *common carrier* regulations, obligating them to allow other Internet providers equal access to our country's communications infrastructure—telephone lines, at the time. In 2005, the FCC changed the definition of cable broadband Internet service from a *communications* service to an *information* service, a change which eliminated some of these common carrier requirements. Although common carrier rules continue to apply to dial-up Internet service providers, this decision, in a landmark case—*NCTA v. Brand X*—opened the door for telephone and cable companies to engage in discriminatory traffic routing and favoritism in the use of their wires and cables that carry the data of the Internet.

Journalist Bill Moyers, in a PBS program entitled "[The Net At Risk](#)," described the new "toll road" discriminatory scheme: "For those companies that pay the fee," said Moyers, "their content would breeze through the fast-pass lane at the toll bridge, reaching users more quickly; those who don't pay will be stuck in the crowded, slow-moving line, and users will have to wait longer for their content to load."

The League of Women Voters Internet Neutrality papers report:

The Internet has thrived since the 1992 legislation because of an overarching regulatory framework mandating non-discrimination and ensuring openness. Until recently, the underlying telecommunications networks used to access the Internet have rested on pro-competition safeguards that ensured openness. FCC safeguards allowed end users to choose any Internet service provider and utilize any legal device they desired. Internet service providers were allowed to purchase retail telecommunications services from the incumbent local exchange companies, or ILECs, on nondiscriminatory rates, terms, and conditions. These safeguards could be said to constitute a "Law of Nondiscrimination" governing the Internet's on-ramps.(LWVUS 2007)

The 2005 decision endangered the free and nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. The companies that lay cable, build telephone lines, or provide satellite connections provide the infrastructure hardware but do not own the Internet or the right to control its data. They receive compensation for their services by charging monthly subscriptions to users—large and small. Moreover, these network operators also receive a variety of public subsidies. These subsidies include the use of public rights-of-way, use of public airwaves, tax breaks, and Universal Service Fund fees—fees that are charged to consumers in order to bring telecommunication services at reasonable rates to rural and low income households, as well as to libraries, schools, and health care providers.

Daniel Weitzner of MIT notes that users "already pay for the network services that we use in rough proportion to the cost of those services. Today network costs are allocated between users (who pay for their own access to the Net) and large services (like Amazon, who pay a much higher price for their service because they load more data onto the Net). (Weitzner 2006)

What is the role of federal and state government in regulation of the Internet?

According to its Website, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is “an independent United States government agency, directly responsible to Congress. The FCC was established by the Communications Act of 1934 and is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable. The FCC’s jurisdiction covers the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. possessions. The FCC is directed by five Commissioners appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms, except when filling an unexpired term.” (FCC Website)

In 2005, the FCC released a policy statement on Net Neutrality with four principles:

1. Consumers are entitled to access the lawful Internet content of their choice;
2. Consumers are entitled to run applications and services of their choice, subject to the needs of law enforcement;
3. Consumers are entitled to connect their choice of legal devices that do not harm the network;
4. Consumers are entitled to competition among network providers, application and service providers, and content providers.

According to Free Press legal counsel, Marvin Ammori, the FCC principles do not constitute a legislative rule, having never followed the usual notice-and-comment procedure; therefore, the policy statement’s status and force are unclear. Moreover, he notes, telecom companies began making public statements about their intention to begin discriminating among providers of content on the Internet immediately after the FCC issued these principles, raising more questions about the impact—or lack thereof—of the FCC policy. (Ammori 2007)

A June 2007 statement by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) took a neutral stance in the net neutrality debate. In a report on its examination of the net neutrality issue, the FTC recommended that policymakers proceed with caution. They cited more competition within the broadband industry and appeared to agree with the large cable and telephone companies that there was no evidence of consumer harm by the lack of net neutrality protections. Many good government and consumer advocacy groups disagreed with the FTC’s finding of more competition, stating that most Internet users have only one Internet Service Provider for high-speed Internet access. (Gohring 2007)

On January 9, 2007, Senators Byron Dorgan and Olympia Snowe re-introduced legislation that would impose net neutrality obligations on broadband Internet service providers. The bill (S. 215), known as the Internet Freedom Preservation Act, amends the Communications Act of 1934 and would prohibit broadband Internet service providers from blocking, degrading, discriminating against or otherwise interfering with any lawful content, applications or services on the Internet. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Several states—New York, Michigan, and Maine—have already considered net neutrality legislation on a state level. Maine became the first state to pass a net neutrality resolution—a bipartisan effort—prohibiting Internet service providers in their state from interfering in a neutral, open Internet. Maine’s coalition of legislators and good government groups believe that net neutrality protections are essential for protecting the rights of Maine Internet users. Maine’s League of Young Voters supported this effort as a way to bring youthful entrepreneurs to Maine by guaranteeing them a business environment that is friendly to start-up companies.

Who supports net neutrality?

Many consumer groups, journalists, and federal lawmakers from both major parties support a return to state and federal protections for a free, open, neutral Internet. More than 750 diverse and unlikely partners, such as the American Library Association, Common Cause, the Christian Coalition, the ACLU,

almost every major consumer group, and many major newspapers, have joined forces to urge Congress and the FCC to restore the protections for Internet users that existed before 2005. This group, the *SavetheInternet.com Coalition*, argues that, if the companies who provide the wires, cables, and hardware are allowed to interfere with, or censor, traffic on the Internet, free speech, freedom of the press, democratic discourse, and even entrepreneurial innovation will be at risk. They argue that our country must return to the legislative and regulatory protections that preserved the neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet, so that diverse voices can report and interpret the news, political candidates can reach their growing online audiences, citizens can participate in our country's democratic process, small businesses can reach big markets, and innovators can compete with established businesses.

Another broad-based group, the Open Internet Coalition, has asked the FCC to develop a national broadband policy that would include net neutrality laws. They include such companies as Amazon, PayPal, eBay, Google, Match.com, Skype, and YouTube. According to their mission statement, the Open Internet Coalition seeks "to ensure that the transmission of internet traffic remains open, accessible and fast, and does not favor one particular brand or type of content over another." (Open Internet Coalition 2007)

In 2006, when the House of Representatives last voted on a net neutrality bill, three of Connecticut's five federal legislators supported net neutrality. The two who opposed it were not re-elected the 2006 election.

Finally, the League of Women Voters of the United States supports a neutral, open, nondiscriminatory Internet—net neutrality—and has a position urging Congress to do the same.

Who opposes net neutrality?

Telephone and cable companies, which provide 98% of the access to the Internet across the country through wires, pipes, and cables, welcome the elimination of regulatory protections. They argue that they should be able to control the content on the Internet and offer preferential treatment to some Web sites because they own the wires and cables. They call net neutrality a disincentive to investing in upgrades to the infrastructure, a discouragement to innovation, and "a solution in search of a problem." (Wall Street Journal Editorial 2006) Their arguments do not address the fact that entrepreneurial innovation on the Internet—designed to be an open *network of networks*—has flourished under the regulations that protected the Internet's neutral, uncensored nature for the past 40 years. Furthermore, while they argue that regulations are unnecessary and unwarranted, recent reports of interference suggest otherwise.

Like the supporters of net neutrality, the cable and telephone companies have established advocacy groups of their own to influence public and legislative opinion. In response, Common Cause calls these groups "Astroturf" groups because, although they masquerade as grassroots coalitions, many are fronts for the telecommunications industry with minimal actual citizen support. (Common Cause 2006)

Have there been violations of net neutrality?

There have been several reports of blocking, degrading, or censorship by Internet service providers, although it is difficult to determine the degree to which Connecticut residents have been affected.

In 2005 a small North Carolina Internet service provider, Madison River Communications, was fined by the FCC for blocking customer's access to a competing Internet telephony service. (FCC 2005)

In August 2007, Ars Technica, a technology news organization, reported that AT&T censored anti-Administration lyrics from a Pearl Jam concert when it Webstreamed the concert online. Fans attending the concert heard them uncut. (Anderson 2007)

In October 2007, the Associated Press reported that the 2nd-largest Internet service provider in the nation, Comcast, had been degrading lawful video traffic on the Internet and reported a lawsuit brought by a user. (Robertson 2007) The Electronic Frontier Foundation confirmed the AP reports through tests of their own. (Schoen 2007) In November 2007, a coalition of consumer advocates petitioned the FCC to force Comcast to stop interference and to pay fines for doing so.(FCC 2007) Comcast denied blocking access to any Websites or content, but admits to “reasonable network management”.(Comcast 2007)

In another incident related to open communications networks, the New York Times reported (September 2007) that Verizon had refused to carry cell phone action alert text messages from NARAL Pro-Choice America.(Liptak 2007) Users subscribe to receive these messages, but Verizon, calling these messages “unsavory,” refused to transmit them to the customers who had signed up for them. Following Verizon’s actions, the Christian Coalition and NARAL Pro-Choice America protested the blocking of these messages in a Washington Post letter—called *Can You Hear Us Now?*—demonstrating the concerns of unusual allies from across the political spectrum. (Washington Post 2007) Text messaging has become an effective tool for reaching young Americans. In fact, a recent study shows that young voters who received text messages reminding them to vote were more likely to have voted than others. (University of Michigan 2007)

OpenNet Initiative, an organization tracking Internet censorship has said that several governments have closed or blocked information on the Internet, under the guise of technical difficulties. Most recently, in October 2007, Myanmar just closed down its Internet, following worldwide postings of images showing citizens’ protests of the country’s repressive regime. (Meydans 2007)

How is an open, nondiscriminatory Internet related to civic life?

The Internet has had a profound impact on political discourse in this country. The trend toward using the Internet for news and information about politics is accelerating. The number of online users who got some news or information about politics in August 2006 was nearly 2½ times larger than the number of Americans using the Internet for that purpose in July, 2002. (Horrigan 2006).

The Supreme Court Justice Stevens, in the case *ACLU v. Reno*, acknowledged the importance of the Internet to free speech and civic life.

It [the Internet] provides relatively unlimited, low cost capacity for communication of all kinds.... Through the use of chat rooms, any person with a phone line can become a town crier with a voice that resonates farther that it could from any soapbox. Through the use of Web pages, mail exploders, and newsgroups, the same individual can become a pamphleteer. As the District court said, ‘the content on the Internet is as diverse as human thought. (Stevens 1997)

Voices and ideas that are not frequently presented by traditional media can find an audience on today’s Internet. For example, Steve Grove, Head of News and Politics for YouTube, the video sharing Website, says that millions of people have become empowered to participate in the democratic process through YouTube channels and the CNN/YouTube debates this year. The YouTube Debates have allowed voters to create their own video debate questions which are transmitted directly to candidates through the Internet. (CNN 2007)

Where can I find more information about this? Where is the LWVUS Task Force on Net Neutrality report?

Find the League of Women Voters Net Neutrality Task Force Report at this Web address:
<http://www.lwv.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ForMembers/Projects/NetNeutrality/InternetNeutralityTaskforcePapers.pdf>

Statement for Member Concurrence

After considering the implications of the LWVUS position for Connecticut and the importance of protecting open access to the Internet for Connecticut Internet users, the study group proposes the following statement for member concurrence:

The LWVCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association — guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the Connecticut Constitution. The League also believes that net neutrality protections are essential for political discourse, dissemination of news, and democratic participation. Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut strongly supports the LWVUS position to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. To further this position, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports efforts by the State of Connecticut to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet.

AGREE () DISAGREE ()

| Pros: | Cons: |
|--|--|
| Explosive growth in Internet occurred during period of protections. Innovation and free speech flourished with a neutral, open Internet protected by law until 2005. | Telecoms maintain that net neutrality regulations are unwarranted. Telecoms maintain that net neutrality would discourage innovation. They say that free market competition and existing regulations will take care of any customer dissatisfaction with Internet service. |
| Several instances of blocking and discrimination have been recently reported, demonstrating the need for protections. Telecommunications companies—cable companies and telephone companies—have publicly stated that they should be free to discriminate among Websites or data, to determine which receive favored treatment, and to “prioritize” selected content and Websites over others. | Telecoms believe that they own “pipes”—cables, telephone lines, and wires—and should be able to discriminate or set priorities among the data that travels over the Internet |
| Taxes and public subsidies supported the development of the Internet, use of public rights-of-ways for laying cables, lines, and wires, as well as the funding to expand telephone service to rural areas. Users—both readers and online contributors—already pay subscription fees for use of pipes. Owning the cables and telephone lines does not entitle telecoms to own the Internet or the right to control the data that travels over it. | Telecoms say they need to generate more revenue to expand into remote areas and make improvements. They say that that net neutrality will interfere with making new investments into the infrastructure of the Internet. |
| Citizens increasingly look to the Internet for information, news and political participation. | |

III. Universal High Speed Internet in Connecticut

What is universal high speed Internet access? Why is it important?

High speed Internet—or broadband—means a fast Internet connection through cable lines, telephone lines, power lines, or by wireless technologies. Universal access is important because all consumers need fast, high capacity connections to conduct business efficiently, to telecommute, to engage in political discourse, to communicate with their legislators, to use Internet telephone services, to get speedy access to e-mail communications, and to view live video or radio broadcasts.

Computers store and communicate information in the form of “bits,” short for “binary digits” of data. Speeds are expressed as bps (bits per second), kbps (thousands of bits per second or kilobits per second), or mbps (millions of bits per second or megabits per second). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the international organization that collects worldwide economic and social data considers high speed Internet access to be data transmission of 284 kbps in either direction—either downloading material from the Internet to your computer or posting it from your computer to the Internet. (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2007) The FCC uses a standard definition of high speed broadband Internet service—200 kilobits (kbps) of data per second—for either downloading or uploading. (FCC 2006) This definition troubles many consumer advocates, good government groups, computer scientists, and some FCC commissioners, because it sets the standard much lower than that used by other developed nations in the world, presenting a more positive picture of access to modern Internet service than really exists in the U.S. They say that other countries have speedier Internet service for lower costs to customers.

Basic dial-up Internet service—over a telephone line—provides speeds between about 25 kbps and 56 kbps and just doesn't offer enough speed and capacity to view video or to use Internet telephony. It also requires the full use of a telephone line. Dial-up service is not considered high speed service because it can require several minutes to download just a single high quality picture, or a complex Web page. DSL service (also delivered over telephone lines) can offer speeds 10 to 100 times faster than dial-up; coaxial cable service can offer even faster connections, hundreds of times faster than dial-up. Fiber-optic cables (strands of glass wires woven together) can out-pace coaxial cable, if properly implemented. (Wirtenberg 2007.)

The Communications Workers of America, on their Website www.speedmatters.org, notes that some countries have already established goals of 100 megabits per second (mbps) for both download and upload speeds. Their tests find “... in the US, speeds most often range from 1 to 3 mbps download and 50-384 kbps upload. Yet, even these speeds are too slow; for example, 6 mbps are needed for such important interactive features as videoconferencing.” (Communications Workers of America 2007) Participating in unique candidates' debate formats, such as the 2007 CNN/YouTube Presidential Debates, is not feasible without high speed Internet access.

A 2005 report from Consumers Union, Consumers Federation of America, and Free Press presents reasons why the U.S. is falling behind other developed nations in its Internet service: limited competition, a digital divide between poor and affluent households, lack of a coherent national Internet policy, and poor data collection practices. The report states that the U.S. ranks 14th in the world in average Internet speeds and that Americans pay over 10 times more for far less service than other developed nations. (Turner 2005)

How is universal high speed Internet (broadband) service related to League purposes and principles?

An informed electorate and a thriving democracy depend upon the freedoms contained in the League's principles and mission—the support of individual liberties, open government, and public information.

Today, the media encompasses much more than TV, radio, and newspapers—it's the World Wide Web, e-mail, Web-streamed video, citizen commentary, and online blogging. Internet access is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, for competing in the global marketplace, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to participate in our democracy.

According to a writer for the Center for Digital Democracy, more campaigning is taking place on the Internet and voters are questioning their candidates and public officials online. The Internet provides a particularly effective vehicle for reaching younger voters. (Center for Digital Democracy. 2007)

League delegates to the 2006 LWVUS Convention, in speaking about the importance of net neutrality on the Internet, also cited the importance of modern communications, entrepreneurial innovation, and market access for small businesses as critical underpinnings of a healthy democracy and a thriving economy.

What does the federal government say about the need for universal Internet access? What about other national organizations?

Back in 2004, President Bush called for universal affordable broadband access by 2007 to support public education, healthcare, and economic competitiveness. (The White House 2004) Both Congress and the FCC acknowledge that expansion of high speed Internet service and an assessment of where it's lacking are critical needs. However, consumer advocates criticize the FCC's method of data collection on high speed Internet service availability and penetration rates as greatly inaccurate in both rural areas, such as eastern and northwestern Connecticut, and inner city neighborhoods. They argue that the need for high speed Internet access is far greater than FCC statistics suggest. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ranks the U.S. 15th in the world's nations for high speed Internet access availability, a drastic drop from 4th place in 2001. (OECD) It's clear that the U.S. is falling behind in telecommunications. The nonprofit Center for Creative Voices in Media released a report with the Brookings Institution that chronicled the successes and failures of U.S. broadband policy—or “non-policies,” according to the report: “The failure to achieve President Bush's 2004 goal of universal broadband access to the Internet ‘in every corner of America by the year 2007’ has cost our nation hundreds of billions of dollars in added economic development and over a million newly-created high-paying jobs...” (Center for Creative Voices in Media 2007)

In the fall of 2007, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed a “mapping” bill that would help lawmakers and private entities determine where more broadband Internet access is needed. Rep. Edward Markey, (D-MA), chair of the telecommunications subcommittee, sponsored the bill which he said was needed because FCC deployment data are “inadequate and highly flawed.” (Markey 2007) The bill, H.R. 3919, also creates a national broadband availability map that consumers could use to find service providers and provides funds to local planners for increasing local broadband deployment and use.

Another bill, The Community Broadband Act of 2007—a Senate bill with bipartisan support—would pave the way for cities to install free Wi-Fi networks without being forced to contract through existing commercial providers. Fourteen states have passed bills that prevent local governments from providing free or low-cost high speed Internet access for citizens, if the local governments were deemed to be competing with commercial broadband services. The Community Broadband Act of 2007 would reverse those laws. A similar measure is moving forward in the House, also with broad bipartisan support.

Cities and states are exploring the use of another wireless technology, WiMax, that uses a signal that can blanket a much wider area than a WiFi signal, which is generally limited to only a few hundred yards unless it uses overlapping service zones. WiMax uses a section of spectrum, 700 MHz, which is the last block of available radio frequencies. U.S. cities such as Chicago, Seattle, Charlotte, Providence, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York are all either using WiMax or scheduled to deploy WiMax service in 2007, using partnerships with various companies.

Doesn't everyone in Connecticut already have access to high speed Internet service?

No. In Connecticut, most residents in affluent or densely populated areas can take advantage of the infrastructure that makes high speed, affordable Internet access possible. However, those living in rural, remote, or geographically challenging areas of the state may be forced to forego high speed Internet access, because telecommunications companies will not invest in the costly installation of cable or DSL lines to remote areas.

The New York Times Connecticut Section has reported on the obstacles for residents and Internet service providers alike regarding modern Internet connections in some parts of Connecticut, the state with the nation's highest per capita income. (Hochswender 2007) Cable and telephone company spokespersons say that laying the infrastructure—the cables, lines, and wires—for high speed Internet access throughout remote communities is expensive and, with more competition for TV and Internet customers, is a costlier investment than expected. Laying cables for Internet access is analyzed on a case-by-case basis in remote areas. However, telephone company officials say that 93% of the state's residents have access to DSL high speed Internet service, more have access to dial-up service. Unfortunately, those residents in out-lying areas say that their ability to compete in the modern marketplace is jeopardized by outdated communications technology. With the Internet becoming more important to acquiring news and information, this “digital divide” limits the civic participation of those on its slow edge. Watching a candidates' debate on the Internet, for example, or viewing Webstreamed video of the Connecticut legislature is not feasible using dial-up Internet service.

The Connecticut legislature, recognizing the need for a statewide communications infrastructure, passed a bill (Public Act 07-254) that 1) allowed municipalities to use Local Capital Improvement Project funds to plan broadband Internet access projects and 2) established the Broadband Internet Coordinating Council, scheduled to meet by September 2008. Its duties will be to monitor developments in the deployment of high speed Internet access throughout the state and to report to the legislative committee with cognizance over technology. (Connecticut General Assembly 2007)

Have municipalities been successful in providing universal broadband coverage to their residents?

It's a mixed report. Some states and municipalities have embarked upon the worthy goal of bridging the “digital divide” and leveling the access to communications playing field for urban, suburban, and rural residents alike. Some states have undertaken their own projects. Massachusetts' Governor Deval filed legislation in November 2007 to extend high speed Internet access to all communities by 2010. Other states—like New Jersey—have enacted legislation that enable municipalities to offer Internet access either as a public service or through public/private partnerships. Kentucky's “Connect Kentucky,” is a statewide public/private partnership which helps communities to find Internet service providers for their residents and feasible ways to install the necessary infrastructure.

Providence R.I. has a public safety-based wireless (WiFi) system. WiFi projects use outdoor receivers and transmitters that send signals to users' laptop computers which are equipped with a card that connects a user to the Internet. Some cities such as Anaheim, Minneapolis and New Orleans have been concentrating on municipal WiFi systems for Internet access with mixed success and some outright failures. Philadelphia has experienced both potential benefits and the pitfalls of its municipal wireless network. Philadelphia has completed about 15 miles of municipal network coverage with complete city-wide coverage planned for late 2007. (Banker et al. 2007) However, it has received complaints of undependable connections, higher installation costs than expected and less subscribership than anticipated. Chicago planned to cover a 228 square mile area with a WiFi network, hoping to become one of the largest U.S. cities to offer blanket access to the Internet. However, rising costs and technical problems led to the cancellation of its planned development in cooperation with Earthlink. Earthlink also canceled its partnership with San Francisco.

Asheville, NC, has maintained a citywide Internet access network for 12 years, operated by a nonprofit group called Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN), as a way to deliver open Internet access to residents and preserve net neutrality practices at the same time. They provide wireless access, regional and national dial-up Internet access, Web hosting, low power FM radio, and a computer recycling project. Looking ahead, MAIN suggests that America’s broadband needs could be met by “spectrum reform”—allowing cities and towns to use sections of the public airwaves that are currently not being used (“white spaces”) and the so-called 700 Mhz spectrum space. (MAIN Website 2007)

Connecticut cities recognize the importance of updated Internet service to schools, community centers, and libraries which often serve as communications centers for non-affluent residents who find Internet subscriptions too costly. Connecticut legislators also recognized the necessity of providing a technologically up-to-date business environment, friendly to start-ups and established businesses alike. As previously noted, a new law allows municipalities to use Local Capital Improvement Projects (LOCIP) grants for planning municipal Internet networks and establishes a statewide broadband coordinating council to monitor developments in deployment of high speed Internet access throughout the state.

The city of Stamford had planned to offer free Internet access as a public service and as a business-friendly amenity. They hoped to make mass transit by rail more attractive, bring Internet access to an especially needy area of the city, and, eventually, offer free Internet access to the entire city. The cost estimates of \$20-30 million dollars, along with technical problems in reaching northern outlying areas of the city, made the plan unworkable. However, a smaller WiFi network in central downtown Stamford, funded by federal and local agencies, has been a success. Although consumer usage is low, the planners are upbeat about the future of the project. Stamford’s project was initiated originally by the Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission, in conjunction with the Downtown Business District, Ferguson Library, and the Chamber of Commerce. Its funding came from a federal grant made possible through the *One Coast, One Future* project of the Fairfield County Business Association.

Statements for Member Consideration

Efficient, affordable high speed access to the Internet for all Connecticut residents—regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics—is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to make informed choices at the polls. Therefore,

- *The League of Women Voters supports making high speed Internet access available to all Connecticut residents, without cost, through schools, libraries, and other secure public buildings. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*
- *The League of Women Voters believes that high speed, affordable Internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all Connecticut residents and businesses. State and local government policies should support broadband, wireless, and other means of high speed Internet deployment throughout the state. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| High speed access is required to view much Internet content, including streaming of Connecticut’s legislature and candidates debates. | High speed Internet access is a luxury not a necessity |
| Even while US overall falls behind other nations, states can take measures to improve economic development and guarantee citizen participation. | States should not be involved. Universal broadband expansion should be a federal policy initiative. |
| Affordable, high speed Internet access is essential to the state’s economic well-being and should be supported by government. | Local governments should not compete with private business. |

IV. Community Access (PEG) and Public Affairs TV

What is the history and purpose of community access TV (PEG) and public affairs TV in Connecticut?

PEG is an abbreviation for *Public, Educational, and Governmental* access TV channels. They form the three branches of *Community Access TV*. These are the TV channels that broadcast your local Board of Selectmen and Board of Education meetings, school events, and local Meet the Candidates programs. PEG access has its roots in the 1984 federal Cable Act and in various amendments to the Act. PEG channels—throughout the nation—allow residents to see their government in action without commercial “spin” or commentary.

- ❑ *Public access* allows private individuals and groups to communicate their message to the general public.
- ❑ *Educational access* allows local schools to supplement classroom learning or broadcast special school events.
- ❑ *Governmental access* allows communities to operate their own versions of local C-SPAN channels by broadcasting governmental meetings and programs.

Connecticut law describes the fundamental purposes of community access—or public, educational, and governmental access—as “...enhancing First Amendment rights; providing for the dissemination of diverse views and for a marketplace of ideas and information; capitalizing on the possibilities inherent in “narrowcasting,” as opposed to broadcasting; providing for viable alternatives to commercial programming, and enhancing a sense of community among residents of the town and franchise area.” (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 16-331a-12(9))

In Connecticut, the CT Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) negotiates cable TV franchises that currently mandate PEG—24 separate agreements throughout the state. PEG service to Connecticut residents varies, depending upon the franchise agreements. It can include:

- ❑ Town-specific PEG channels and studios operated by local staff and volunteers and narrowcast to local residents through the cable or video provider serving a community.
- ❑ Regional PEG channels and studios operated by third-party companies that produce PEG programming for a geographic region.

PEG channels air local government meetings, board of education programs, LWV-sponsored candidates’ debates, informational forums, interviews with community leaders, religious programs, theatrical performances, and documentaries. Programming can be either locally or nationally produced—or a mixture of both.

The Connecticut Network (CT-N) is our state’s own award-winning state-supported, 24-hour, 7-days-a-week, nonpartisan TV network of public affairs—featuring informative programs from our Capitol, our universities, and state agencies. The Connecticut Network is managed and operated for the Connecticut General Assembly by Connecticut Public Affairs Network, Inc., a not-for-profit company founded to educate citizens about their state government and related issues. Its funding comes from the gross sales taxes paid by cable companies offering television services to Connecticut residents. Besides live broadcasts of legislative sessions and public hearings, CT-N broadcasts discussions of hot topics, public forums, and candidates’ debates—with no cuts, no edits, and no biased commentary.

Launched in March of 1999, CT-N has produced thousands of hours of video. This video is accessible through cable television as well as streaming on the Internet, archived for viewing on demand, and for purchase on VHS & DVD. Closed captioning makes programming accessible to the hearing-impaired population.

CT-N has been recognized for excellence within the professional media community. Their recent awards include the national 2007 Sunshine Award from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and the Connecticut Chapter of the SPJ's Helen M. Loy Freedom of Information Award.

In 2006, the state legislature and the state's cable companies agreed to dedicate a fulltime channel for CT-N on either the Basic or "Extended Basic" cable service by January 1, 2007.

Legislation passed in 2007 mandates that certified competitive video providers—like telephone companies competing with cable companies to provide TV services to Connecticut customers—must provide the Connecticut Network (CT-N) and PEG access channels on their basic or lowest-priced service plans—benefiting those on tight budgets. Currently in Connecticut, satellite customers do not receive CT-N or any PEG programming.

How are community access TV and CT-N relevant to the League's mission and program?

The League of Women Voters believes that an informed citizenry is the bedrock of democracy and further believes that governmental bodies must protect a "citizen's right to know" by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible. As early as 1994, the League of Women Voters of the United States had already urged the Federal Communications Commission to issue requirements for broadcasters to cover local public affairs.

Because television is such an effective and powerful medium for information-sharing and news coverage, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut considers CT-N a valuable resource and a partner in its efforts to inform CT residents about the statewide issues that affect us all. Through the years, high-profile candidates' debates have become accessible to thousands of Connecticut voters because of the partnerships that CT-N has formed with the League of Women Voters and local League chapters. Countless voters have watched the speeches of their state legislators on the floors of the Connecticut General Assembly. CT-N is an important resource for keeping government transparent and citizens informed.

PEG TV channels in Connecticut also provide a unique service to our state's voters on the local level. They present a window to the operations of town government—candid and unrehearsed. They air community calendars, interviews with legislators, voting information, and emergency alerts. One PEG center operator states, "...no issue or constituency is too small to receive equal time on PEG channels. This level of localism, even micro-localism, is not found anywhere else on the cable dial and it's what makes PEG unique and essential to many communities." (Eisenmenger 2007) Public access stations provide opportunities for citizens to develop and broadcast their own talk shows and interviews. Several League members in Connecticut currently host their own informative programs on public access television.

Many Leagues rely upon local PEG channels to televise their debates, public forums, and presentations. For example, the New Canaan League aired its recent school start time program on its local governmental access channel. Last season's statewide and Congressional debates were broadcast on several local community access channels as well as on the Connecticut Network (CT-N) throughout the state.

How does community access television work in Connecticut?

Connecticut Law—Chapter 289 of the Connecticut's General Statutes—details the requirements for operating cable television in Connecticut. Among those requirements are the establishment of a cable television advisory council in each franchise area and the requirement of at least one community access

channel for use by the public through the company's basic service plan. Companies must make facilities, equipment, and training available for community access programming.

Advisory councils represent local communities' interests to the area's cable television providers and the DPUC. Their mission is to advocate the best possible service for cable television customers and to promote the utilization of program services through Public, Education and Government Access (PEG). Advisory council members serve as volunteers—public servants appointed by their local government—and may not work for a cable TV company. They also review all programming of a company or organization within the franchise area when the programming has been the subject of a complaint.

See the Appendix for a map of Connecticut's 24 cable TV franchise areas and a listing of the cable television advisory councils for each area.

Why are there different ways of administering community access channels across the state?

The DPUC historically has selected, through the franchise process, the designated community access provider in each franchise area. In some Connecticut towns, community access TV channels are operated by nonprofit companies like West Hartford Community Television, Nutmeg TV (covering 8 towns including New Britain and Canton) or Citizens TV (New Haven, Hamden, and West Haven). In other communities, like all the towns in lower Fairfield County, community access channels are operated by individual towns from their town offices and staffed by part-time town employees and volunteers. In some towns, community access channels are merged into one station; other towns may broadcast three separate channels for public, educational, and government programming.

In some communities in Connecticut, local town governments produce, manage, and broadcast their own town-specific programming. In other communities, nonprofit companies operate local or regional PEG channels, broadcasting both their locally produced programming and nationally distributed programs.

If a nonprofit organization wishes to become the designated community access provider in a region, Connecticut statutes describe the process by which the DPUC will determine the community access provider for an area. The DPUC considers the advice of the citizens' advisory group, the cable provider, and the municipalities in the area, along with a review of the petitioning organization's experience, financial status, and operating plans.

Every community in Connecticut has at least one community access channel—some may have 2 or 3, depending on the franchise agreement between the CT Department of Public Utility Control and the cable TV provider that serves each franchise region. Satellite TV providers are not required to carry CT-N or community access TV channels.

Why are we studying PEG or community access TV now?

The LWVCT is studying the future of PEG programming in Connecticut because a new law has been passed describing the conditions under which companies may become certified to provide competing TV and video services to Connecticut residents. One condition is the requirement that these companies continue to offer the community access channels which bring local and state government programming directly to the homes of Connecticut voters and residents. The LWVCT applauds these requirements in the new law.

In June 2007, the Connecticut General Assembly—in the spirit of encouraging more competition and more choices for consumers—passed An Act Concerning Certified Competitive Video Service (now PA 07-253) that authorized a new certification procedure for competing businesses who wish to begin offering television and video services to Connecticut customers. This was one of a wave of state laws,

passed and pending, across the nation in recent years (Miller & Van Eaton Website, as seen Dec. 2007). The Connecticut law offers a good-faith effort to avoid some of the pitfalls seen in earlier versions, especially regarding community access channels. The competing companies acquire regional and national programming, which is sent digitally through wires to customers' homes through a customer's Internet service to their television sets. The service is called Internet Protocol TV (IPTV), although some cable TV companies call it "telephone company TV."

The law allows companies to offer television services without following all of the franchise regulations currently required of cable TV companies. After several legal and regulatory issues were resolved by the DPUC and the courts, two telephone companies moved forward to enlist customers in selected areas of the state; one received certification in November 2007.

Under the new law, telephone companies need not cover the entire state with their competing Internet video services. The law does not allow "red-lining" of neighborhoods which is refusing service to low income neighborhoods. However, the new law does not prohibit "cherry picking", a practice of offering competitive video services to affluent neighborhoods and communities of the state, while neglecting other less accessible, less profitable neighborhoods. While "cherry-picking" worries some, others note that the new services are already being offered in less affluent sections of our largest cities, such as New Haven.

The law designates the DPUC as the agency responsible for resolving customer disputes and establishes a statewide video council to facilitate regional communication, in lieu of local advisory councils like those for cable TV. It does not require that competing video providers offer public access studio space or equipment, nor does it require that rates be regulated under the new law.

Must competitive video providers offer community access programming to Connecticut customers in the same way that cable companies do?

Yes and no: there will be some important differences. Connecticut's 2007 video certification law requires that a newly certified competitive video provider offer customers CT-N along with the same number of community access channels that the customer previously received from the cable company. They also must offer these channels on the basic or lowest-cost service plan. One company that has been recently certified to offer Internet Protocol television service in Connecticut—competing with cable TV—offers customers the opportunity to view other towns' public, educational, and governmental channels through a separate drop-down menu on the channel guide. However, whether the appearance of PEG channels on a customer's screen will be of the same quality as other channels remains unclear. There is no provision in the new law stating that a newly certified video provider must provide the same *quality* of transmission of PEG programming as other programming, or the same ease of access to PEG channels as to other channels. Also, because of the treatment of PEG programming on one company's video/television system, PEG channels cannot be recorded and played back by a customer's built-in DVR video recorder. (AT&T U-Verse Update to Community Access Providers, December 2007)

Some cable advisory councils have raised concerns about the financial cost and the method by which PEG programming will be transmitted from schools, town hall studios, and public access producers to new competing video/television systems. Because many PEG operations—especially town-specific PEG channels—are run on tight local budgets and staffed by part-time workers and volunteers, connectivity costs pose a potential hardship to municipalities and a potential barrier to all residents being able to view their community access TV channels.

How is PEG supported in Connecticut? Will that change?

It's important to remember that privately-held, for-profit corporations such as telephone and cable companies received substantial public funding to build their television and telecommunications systems. They also received preferential treatment in the awarding of channel space and radio station space on the public spectrum and unfettered access to public land, highways, roadsides, and utility poles to run their businesses. Particularly in an era of hundreds of broadcast channels, it's appropriate that these same corporations make a small part of the channel space available to the public—who own these rights-of ways—so they can gain access to the public airwaves. Community access TV receives support from several different sources:

- ❑ Subscribers to cable TV. The DPUC establishes a dollar amount that the company or organization responsible for community access operations receives from subscribers to operate community access television. In Connecticut, the amount is currently five dollars per subscriber per year, adjusted annually by a percentage reflecting the increase or decrease of the consumer price index for the preceding calendar year. In some franchise areas, towns receive grants earmarked to support local PEG operations. In others, the funding goes directly to a third-party regional PEG provider to operate PEG channels.
- ❑ Cable companies. Cable companies, through their franchise agreements, are required to provide public access studios, equipment, and training for local PEG producers.
- ❑ Local town governments. The towns provide personnel and equipment, as well as in-kind donations of office space and utilities.

Under new Connecticut legislation, support for PEG will come from a new statewide fund administered by the DPUC and established by the legislature. Proceeds from these funds, which are generated by cable and telephone company video providers, will be distributed to local communities from the DPUC. The formula and method of distributing these funds is currently being developed.

As new video providers become certified to provide services to Connecticut residents, the provision of PEG programming may require costly new equipment in order for towns to interconnect with customers of the newly certified companies. If towns cannot afford to interconnect with the customers of new video providers, the transmission of PEG programming to those customers may be in jeopardy.

Statements for Member Consideration

Access to information through modern TV/video communication is essential to the public interest and to League of Women Voters' mission and purpose—to protect civil liberties, to ensure open, transparent government, and to promote the public's right to know. To protect the public interest, high quality PEG transmission and PEG availability on basic service tiers are essential. Therefore,

- ❑ *The League of Women Voters believes that community access television channels—for public, educational, and governmental programming—must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*
- ❑ *The League of Women Voters believes that statewide public affairs programming, such as provided by The Connecticut Network (CT-N), must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded by the state legislature and available to all Connecticut residents, regardless of the provider of TV/video services. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*
- ❑ *The League of Women Voters believes that government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access TV, or PEG TV. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Public, Educational, and Governmental Access TV provides viable alternatives to commercial programming, provides transparency in government operations, and enhances sense of community. | Public prefers commercial programming. Community access programs are not entertaining enough and not polished enough to appeal to viewers. TV companies know best what the public wants to view. |
| Public should have opportunity for input in decisions about television service. | TV companies already provide for customer service needs. |
| With 100s of channels, up to 4 channels in the public interest is reasonable. | Providing up to 4 channels (for PEG and CTN) cuts into revenue. |

V. List of Concurrence Statements for Members

Internet “Net” Neutrality

The LWWCT believes that a free and open Internet is increasingly important to the protection of individual liberties—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association —guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the Connecticut Constitution. The League also believes that net neutrality protections are essential for political discourse, dissemination of news, and democratic participation. Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut strongly supports the LWWUS position to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. To further this position, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports efforts by the State of Connecticut to protect the open, neutral, nondiscriminatory nature of the Internet. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()

Universal Internet Access for Connecticut

Efficient, affordable high speed access to the Internet for all Connecticut residents—regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics—is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to make informed choices at the polls. Therefore,

- The League of Women Voters supports making high speed Internet access available to all Connecticut residents, without cost, through schools, libraries, and other secure public buildings. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*
- The League of Women Voters believes that high speed affordable Internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all Connecticut residents and businesses. State and local government policies should support broadband, wireless, and other means of high speed Internet deployment throughout the state. AGREE () DISAGREE ()*

Community Access TV and Public Affairs Programming

Access to information through modern TV/video communication is essential to the public interest and to League of Women Voters’ mission and purpose— to protect civil liberties, to ensure open, transparent government, and to promote the public’s right to know. To protect the public interest, high quality PEG transmission and PEG availability on basic service tiers are essential. Therefore,

- The League of Women Voters believes that community access television channels—for public, educational, and governmental programming—must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of TV/video services to Connecticut residents. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*
- The League of Women Voters believes that statewide public affairs programming, such as provided by The Connecticut Network (CT-N), must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded by the state legislature and available to all Connecticut residents, regardless of the provider of TV/video services. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*
- The League of Women Voters believes that government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access TV, or PEG TV. AGREE () or DISAGREE ()*

VI. APPENDICES

Glossary of Common Telecommunications Terms

| <u>Term</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|--|--|
| Astroturf | Advocacy and lobbying groups that mimic real grassroots organizations, but are really fronts for industries, with little real consumer funding or support. |
| Broadband Internet Service | High speed Internet access using cable modem, telephone lines (DSL service), broadband over power lines (BPL), or wireless technology allowing video. Connecting to the Internet by dial-up service is too slow to be called high speed broadband service. The FCC defines broadband high speed Internet access as 200 kilobits (kbps) of data per second—for either downloading or uploading. |
| Common Carrier | Once the basic principles of the telephone networks, originally prohibiting discrimination and requiring fair access for other telephone companies to interconnect to the Internet. The 2005 Supreme Court upheld an FCC decision that cable broadband Internet access is an information service, not a communications service, therefore not subject to common carrier regulations. However common carrier rules still apply to dial-up Internet service. |
| Community Access TV or PEG | Public, Educational, and Governmental Access television which disseminates noncommercial programming from individuals, schools, and local governments. |
| Internet Service Provider (ISP) | Company or organization that provides users with connection to the Internet and related services. |
| Megabits & Kilobits per second (Mbps & kbps) | Measurements of data transmission speed measured in seconds—a megabyte is one million bits. A megabyte is about the amount of information contained in a typical novel. A kilobit is a thousand bits. |
| Narrowcasting | Transmitting programs to a specific list of recipients, such as cable customers living in a certain geographic area. |
| Net Neutrality | Net neutrality means no discrimination on the Internet—all data, Websites, and content on the Internet must be transmitted without favoritism, blocking, censorship, or quality degradation by your Internet service provider |
| PEG--Public, Educational, Governmental Access | The three branches of community access TV |
| Public Rights- of-Way | The public roads, highways, roadsides, and sidewalks over which (and under which) utility and telecommunications companies run their cables, poles, and wires in order to operate their businesses. |
| Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) | Internet telephony—the routing of voice conversations over the Internet or through any other Internet protocol-based network. |
| Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) | Technology of wireless local area networks that can be used for mobile computing devices such as laptops, Internet and VOIP phone access, gaming, and connectivity of consumer electronics such as televisions. When municipalities offer wireless Internet service, it's called municipal WiFi or muni-WiFi. |
| Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMax) | A technology similar to WiFi but potentially capable of operating at higher speeds, over greater distances, and for a greater number of users. |
| World Wide Web (www) | A system of specially formatted, interlinked documents and “Web” sites accessed by using the Internet. The World Wide Web was invented by MIT’s Sir Tim Berners-Lee working in Geneva, Switzerland in 1989. The specific language of the Web (HTTP) and Web browsers allow fast links among Web documents and sites. |

LWVCT, November 2007 Adapted from: State of Connecticut Office of Legislative Research: February 8, 2007

State/Federal Agencies Involved in Telecommunications Policy and Regulation

| | |
|--|--|
| Federal Communications Commission (FCC) | Federal agency that oversees all interstate telecommunications, including communications, including wireless telecommunications, that originate or terminate in the U.S. |
| Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) | Connecticut's state agency that regulates cable, telephone, and other utilities. |
| Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) | Independent state agency that represents Connecticut ratepayers in DPUC and FCC proceedings in five regulated areas: electric, gas, water, telephone, and to some extent, cable television, primarily in matters that go before the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC). |
| Connecticut State Office of Attorney General (AG) | Office that enforces Connecticut's anti-trust laws, promotes competition, and protects residents from unfair trade practices. It provides legal services to state agencies that regulate public utilities. |

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Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC). It subjects the companies that provide these competitive video services ("providers") to some of the requirements that apply to cable TV companies, notably those regarding community access and customer information. This bill creates state franchising for both cable and phone companies to facilitate competition among TV/video providers. New providers will match incumbent channel capacity for community access TV, and if there is no current PEG agreement, the local community may request up to three channels, based on population size. Although there are provisions against re-lining, there are no build-out requirements, no needs-assessments required, no local citizens' advisory councils, and no rate regulation. See Office of Legislative Research Report at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/SUM/2007SUM00253-R02HB-07182-SUM.htm>

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Additional Resources

Personal Interviews, Statements, and Services*

We wish to thank the following people for their insight, information, and expertise:

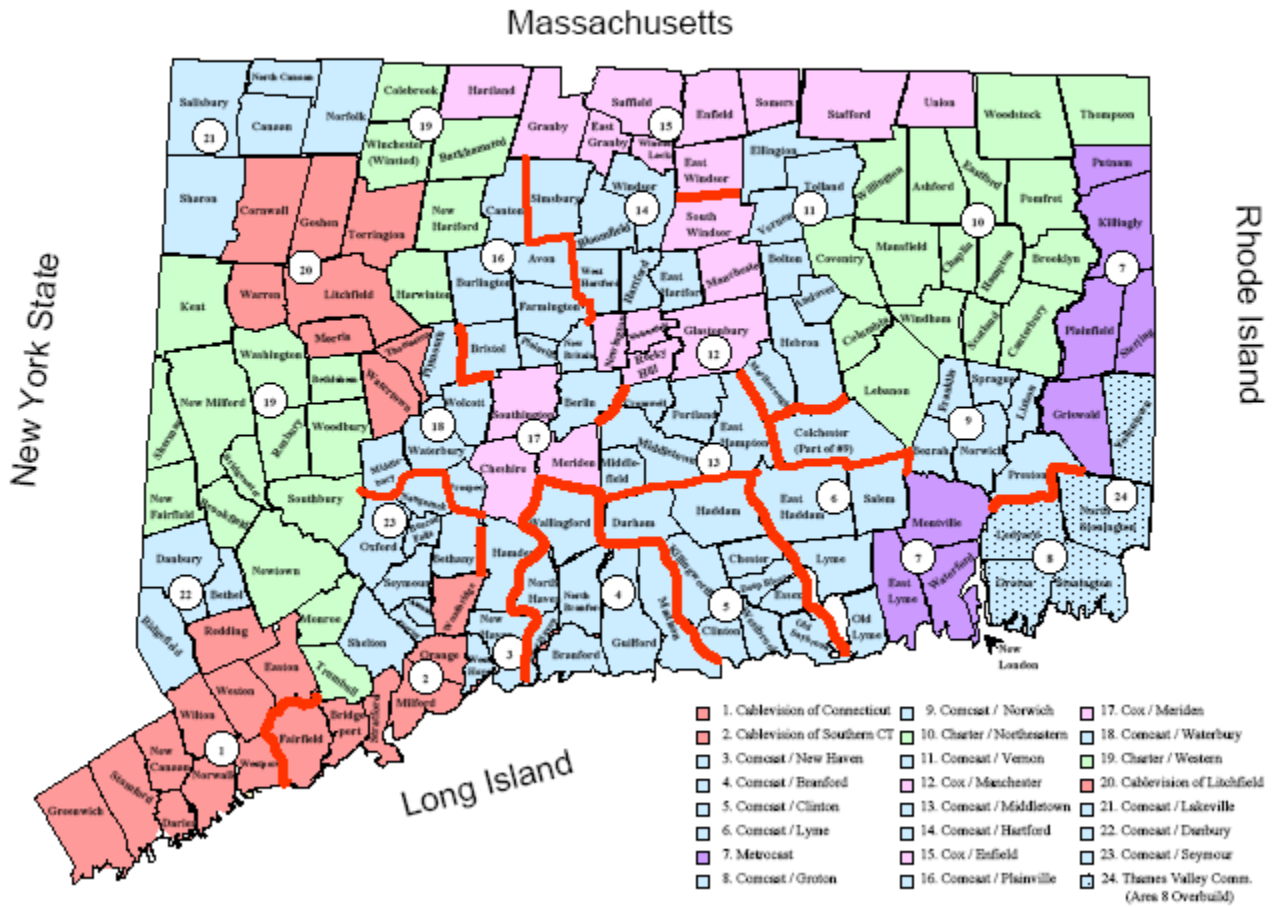
- ❑ Jon Bartholmew, Common Cause Maine
- ❑ The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut Attorney General
- ❑ The Honorable Thomas Drew, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly
- ❑ The Honorable Steve Fontana, Co-Chair, Energy and Technology Committee, Connecticut General Assembly
- ❑ Paul Giguerre, Executive Director, The Connecticut Network
- ❑ Mike Pensiero, IT Director, City of Stamford, CT
- ❑ The Honorable Chris Perone, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly
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- ❑ Alexandra Russell, Policy Director, Free Press, Washington, DC
- ❑ Al Wirtenberg, Independent Media Consultant

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**Please contact the LWVCT Office at 203-288-7996 or lvvct@lvvct.org for additional information.*

Cable TV Franchise Regions in Connecticut (Map and Listing)

Connecticut CATV Franchise Map



5. *d/b/a name* **CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT**
Certificate Holder: **Charter Communications Entertainment I, LLC**
Company Address: 9 Commerce Road, Newtown, CT 06470
Key Contact: Georgia Griffith, Vice President/General Manager
Towns Franchised: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Monroe, Washington, Kent, New Milford, Southbury, New Fairfield, Roxbury, Sherman, Trumbull, Woodbury, Newtown/Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Harwinton, New Hartford, Warren, Winsted, Winchester, West Hartland (partial)
Telephone Nos.: (800) 827-8288
Fax No.: (203) 304-8713

6. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/BRANFORD**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Connecticut, LLC**
Company Address: 44 North Branford Road, Branford, CT 06405
Key Contact: John Bairos, Manager. Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Branford, E. Haven, Guilford, Madison, No. Branford, No. Haven, Wallingford
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597

7. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/CLINTON**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Clinton CT, Inc.**
Company Address: 21 East Main Street, Clinton, CT 06413
Key Contact: John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Durham, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Old Saybrook, Westbrook
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597

8. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/DANBURY**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Danbury, Inc.**
Company Address: 5 Shelter Rock Road, Danbury, CT 06810
Key Contact: Sharon Codeanne, Manager Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Bethel, Danbury, Ridgefield
Telephone No.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597

9. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/GROTON**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Groton, Inc.**
Company Address: 401 Gold Star Highway, Groton, CT 06340
Key Contact: Sharon Codeanne, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Groton, Ledyard, North Stonington, Stonington, Voluntown, Sub Base
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597

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| 10. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/HARTFORD |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of Connecticut, Inc. |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | 222 New Park Drive, Berlin CT 06037 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | Stephen Fitzgibbons, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Simsbury, West Hartford, Windsor |
| | <i>Telephone No.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |
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| 11. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/LAKEVILLE |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of California/Connecticut/Michigan |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | 10 Gandolfo Drive, Canaan, CT 06018 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | John Bairos, Manager Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | Canaan, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon |
| | <i>Telephone No.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |
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| 12. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/OLD LYME |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of CT/GA/MA/NH/NY/NC/VA/VT, LLC |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | One Hilltop Road, Norwich, CT 06360 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | East Haddam, Haddam (east of CT River), Lyme, Old Lyme, Salem |
| | <i>Telephone Nos.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |
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| 13. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/MIDDLETOWN |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of Middletown, Inc. |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | 19 Tuttle Place, Middletown, CT 06457 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | Cromwell, East Hampton, Middlefield, Middletown, Portland |
| | <i>Telephone No.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |
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| 14. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/NEW HAVEN |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of New Haven, Inc. |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | 630 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06511 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | Sharon Codeanne, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | Hamden, New Haven, West Haven |
| | <i>Telephone No.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |
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| 15. | <i>d/b/a name</i> | COMCAST/NORWICH |
| | <i>Certificate Holder:</i> | Comcast of CT/GA/MA/NH/NY/NC/VA/VT, LLC |
| | <i>Company Address:</i> | One Hilltop Road, Norwich, CT 06360 |
| | <i>Key Contact:</i> | John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations |
| | <i>Towns Franchised:</i> | Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, Lisbon, Norwich, Preston, Sprague |
| | <i>Telephone No.:</i> | (800) 266-2278 |
| | <i>Fax No.:</i> | (860) 505-3597 |

16. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST PLAINVILLE**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Connecticut, Inc.**
Company Address: 222 New Park Drive, Berlin CT 06037
Key Contact: John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Avon, Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, Canton, Farmington, New Britain, Plainville
Telephone No.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597
17. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/SEYMOUR**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of CT/GA/MA/NH/NY/NC/VA/VT, LLC**
Company Address: 80 Great Hill Road, Seymour, CT 06483-2299
Key Contact: Sharon Codeanne, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Oxford, Naugatuck, Seymour, Shelton
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597
18. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST VERNON**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of Eastern Connecticut, Inc.**
Company Address: 222 New Park Drive, Berlin CT 06037
Key Contact: John Bairos, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Andover, Bolton, Ellington, Hebron, Marlborough, Tolland, Vernon
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597
19. *d/b/a name* **COMCAST/WATERBURY**
Certificate Holder: **Comcast of CT/GA/MA/NH/NY/NC/VA/VT, LLC**
Company Address: 80 Great Hill Road, Seymour, CT 06483-2299
Key Contact: Sharon Codeanne, Manager, Govt. & Community Relations
Towns Franchised: Middlebury, Plymouth, Prospect, Waterbury, Wolcott
Telephone Nos.: (800) 266-2278
Fax No.: (860) 505-3597
20. *d/b/a name* **COX COMMUNICATIONS NEW ENGLAND/ENFIELD**
Certificate Holder: **CoxCom, Inc.**
Company Address: 5 Niblick Road, Enfield, CT 06082
Key Contact: John L. Wolfe, V.P. Govt. and Public Affairs
Towns Franchised: East Granby, East Windsor, Enfield, Granby, Hartland, Somers, Stafford, Suffield, Union, Windsor Locks
Telephone Nos.: (800) 955-9515
Fax No.: (860) 741-6249
21. *d/b/a name* **COX COMMUNICATIONS NEW ENGLAND/MANCHESTER**
Certificate Holder: **CoxCom, Inc.**
Company Address: 170 Utopia Road, Manchester, CT 06040
Key Contact: John L. Wolfe, V.P. Govt. and Public Affairs
Towns Franchised: Glastonbury, Manchester, Newington, Rocky Hill, So. Windsor, Wethersfield
Telephone No.: (800) 955-9515 (860) 436-4269
Fax No.: (860) 512-5115

22. *d/b/a name* **COX COMMUNICATIONS NEW ENGLAND/MERIDEN**
Certificate Holder: **CoxCom, Inc.**
Company Address: 683 East Main St., Meriden, CT 06450
Key Contact: John L. Wolfe, V. P. Govt. and Public Affairs
Towns Franchised: Cheshire*, Meriden*, Southington**
Telephone No.: (800) 955-9515 (203) 439-4269* (860) 436-4269**
Fax No.: (203) 514-6037

23. *d/b/a name* **METROCAST COMMUNICATIONS OF CT, LLC**
Certificate Holder: **same**
Company Address: 61 Myrock Avenue, P.O. Box 6008, Waterford, CT 06385
Key Contact: John Dee, General Manager
Towns Franchised: Montville, New London, Waterford, East Lyme, Griswold*, Killingly*, Plainfield*,
Sterling*, Putnam**
Telephone Nos.: (860) 442-8525, *(860) 564-1967, **(860) 928-3866
Fax No.: (860) 443-6031

24. *d/b/a name* **THAMES VALLEY COMMUNICATIONS, INC.**
Certificate Holder: **Groton Utilities, Inc.**
Company Address: 295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340
Key Contact: David Lee, Chief Operating Officer
Towns Franchised: Groton, Stonington, North Stonington, Ledyard, Voluntown
Telephone Nos.: (860) 446-4010
Fax No.: (860) 446-4098

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