



News from:
COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO

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**COMPTROLLER LEMBO, MAYOR HARP JOINTLY TESTIFY IN
SUPPORT OF STATEWIDE GIGABIT INITIATIVE**

Comptroller Kevin Lembo and Mayor Toni N. Harp today jointly testified on a legislative proposal – An Act Concerning Gigabit Internet Access – that would support the development of ultra-high-speed gigabit Internet service statewide.

New Haven is co-leading a statewide coalition of both state and municipal leaders to deploy gigabit broadband service for everyone in Connecticut, including underserved areas. More than 100 Connecticut cities and towns have expressed interest in bringing technology to their communities and joining the growing economic development movement. Collaborators include State Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford, Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz, West Hartford Deputy Mayor Shari Cantor and Stamford Mayor David Martin.

Lembo and Harp testified together today on the gigabit legislation, which could have very significant economic development and consumer benefits.

“This legislation has the potential to energize and expand Connecticut’s economy in a way that will have lasting effects for decades,” Lembo said. “Gigabit broadband service would rapidly deliver information – serving as a superhighway for researchers, schools, businesses large and small and every household. It would be the ultimate economic assistance incentive program because it would reward all business and industries, new ones and those already established here, with a superior infrastructure and an open door.”

"Today the transmission of data is what's needed to form the bedrock of an information age economy," New Haven Mayor Toni N. Harp said. "New Haven needs one gigabit capacity to transport the medical data, financial transactions, and research information that are the currency

of New Haven in 2015. Today, our entire state needs this dramatic infrastructure upgrade to accommodate a deluge of digital information."

A gigabit broadband network is capable of 1,000 megabit-per-second (Mbps) upload and download speeds. The current average home speed in Connecticut is only 9 Mbps download and even slower upload.

"This initiative is about much more than movie and music downloads," Lembo said. "In fact, it's hardly about entertainment at all. It's about economic development and innovation."

Lembo and Harp have heard from both large and small companies that have faced significant challenges transacting daily business with global clients due to the costs and limitations of the state's existing Internet technology capability.

"Some of Connecticut's businesses are experiencing impediments to their day-to-day work because of the lack of this technology in the state," Lembo said. "Gigabit broadband service will provide a strong economic development incentive to business and bring more competition to the broadband market, reducing costs and improving service for all businesses and households that are suffering from high broadband, cable and phone bills."

Lembo and Harp said gigabit development in towns and cities across the country are spurring new start-up communities and attracting new corporate residents. They pointed to the success of gigabit networks in areas like Kansas City, MO; Austin, TX; and Chattanooga, TN.

"Not only are new and existing entrepreneurs able to plug into a reliable and worthwhile network, but consumers and businesses alike are able to reap more competitive pricing for broadband service," Lembo said. "In gigabit municipalities, customers are seeing improved customer service and reduced costs for higher-speed broadband service – in some cases going from several thousand dollars a month to roughly \$70/a month. For residential consumers of cable, phone and Internet services the costs for bundled services have been reduced significantly.

"The state needs to start thinking about high-speed internet the way it thinks about rails and roads. But fortunately, unlike roads that have to be maintained every three or four years, this infrastructure will long outlive any financing. As a small state with high population density we have a real opportunity to leapfrog other states by having access to gigabit broadband service statewide. Gigabit broadband networks are coming. Connecticut can get on board or

be left behind.”

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