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Lancaster's government wants a seat at the table in [the lawsuit filed by PPL against MAW Communications](#), the city's community broadband partner. The city filed a "petition to intervene" Tuesday that, if approved, would allow it to be a party in the case. That "guarantees that our counsel can be made fully aware of all developments and can work to actively protect our interests," Mayor Danene Sorace said.



The move represents a change of course for the city. Former mayor Rick Gray's administration had stressed that it was not involved in the suit, though it separately

planned [to petition the Federal Communications Commission](#) for changes to PPL's rules on MAW's behalf. MAW, a small telecom utility based in Reading, has been installing a municipal fiber-optic network for the city. Half the bandwidth is reserved for city functions. The other half is for a consumer broadband offering called LanCity Connect.

Underwritten by city loans, LanCity Connect debuted last year, but deployment ran into difficulties and [had to be slowed down](#). Then, in December, PPL sued MAW, saying the small company had installed equipment on PPL's poles without authorization. PPL alleged MAW made unsafe attachments and sought a preliminary injunction to compel their removal.

The suit is ongoing. In the meantime, according to court records, MAW agreed to stop making new attachments and to provide PPL an inventory of attachments already made. PPL will decide what work needs to be done to ensure safety. If MAW disagrees with any of PPL's safety assessments, the state Public Utility Commission would decide the issue.

The city knew all along that community broadband would be a challenge but continues to believe it's in residents' best interest, Sorace said. PPL sought several times to meet with Lancaster's

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administration regarding the pole connections, but no meeting has taken place, PPL spokesman Paul Wirth said. “We remain willing to work with the city,” he said. – ***Lancaster Intelligencer***

Washington (state) representatives in the state Legislature and Congress are showing great leadership in their work to restore net-neutrality protections. This crusade should continue until sense is restored at the Federal Communications Commission, which voted in December to rescind its 2015 net neutrality rules, including the classification of broadband as an essential utility.

That capped a disgraceful year by an agency that also gutted rules to preserve the diversity of news-media voices, made it easier for broadcasters to consolidate and prevented companies from offering a federal discount on broadband service to the poor. Washington representatives are responding in three ways that deserve support from their constituents.

In Congress, U.S. Sens. Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray are part of an effort to force a Senate vote on whether to override the FCC’s net-neutrality reversal, which took effect on Feb. 22. They’re part of a coalition of 49 Senators and 149 House members keeping the spotlight on this important issue. Cantwell said repeal is a longshot, but the effort is important to educate colleagues in Congress and the public “about how devastating this can be to the economy.”

Of particular concern in Washington is the effect on startups with online business models. They need an open, level playing field to compete with incumbents. The FCC’s decision is also being challenged in court by Washington and 21 other states. Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson in January joined the process by petitioning the FCC to change its position.

In the meantime, Washingtonians should benefit from special net-neutrality protections in a bill introduced by state Rep. Drew Hansen, D-Bainbridge Island. **Substitute House Bill 2282** was approved by a wide margin in the Legislature. Gov. Jay Inslee is supportive and is expected to sign it into law shortly. The bill prohibits internet providers in Washington from blocking content, services and devices, with a few exceptions. It also prohibits them from throttling traffic on the basis of content and from prioritizing traffic. Providers are also required to disclose information about their performance and network management practices.

States’ ability to regulate broadband companies is generally pre-empted by federal rules. But Hansen believes that the FCC relinquished its authority over net neutrality rules by rescinding them nationally. Washington also has authority to protect residents under its Consumer Protection Act. “That is a very concrete way that people can show the FCC that we truly believe in a free and open internet,” Hansen said. Indeed we do. Keep up this important fight. – ***Seattle Times editorial; also, York Daily Record editorial board has message for Sen. Pat Toomey***

Connecticut is considering whether it makes sense to counter the repeal of federal net neutrality rules, which had banned telecommunications companies from interfering with web traffic or speeds to favor certain sites or apps.

Democratic Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff last week unveiled proposed legislation that would ultimately prohibit internet service providers in Connecticut from throttling consumer internet speeds, blocking certain websites or charging extra fees in exchange for favored internet traffic. Meanwhile, Democratic State Comptroller Kevin Lembo has urged Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, also a Democrat, to join at least five other governors in requiring all state contracts with internet providers include net neutrality provisions. A public hearing is scheduled for Monday on legislation that would do the same thing.

Opinions are mixed at the state Capitol as to whether Connecticut should get involved in what some argue is a federal debate. Some highlights of where things stand:

– Why does Connecticut care about net neutrality? Appearing last week at a news conference, Gigi Sohn, a former counselor to a one-time Federal Communications Commission chairman, praised Connecticut lawmakers for “helping to fill the gaping hole” left by the FCC when it repealed net neutrality rules first imposed in 2015. “When the federal government fails to protect consumers, it is up to the states to do so, and Senator Duff’s bill does just that,” said Sohn, who is now a distinguished fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Technology Law and Policy. She contends the Connecticut legislation, which Duff said is modeled after proposals from other states, would ensure consumers, not internet service providers, “determine who wins and loses on the internet.” Duff argues that net neutrality is good for Connecticut. He said he’s been flooded with positive feedback from the public. “It is a Democratic and Republican issue,” said Duff. “It’s clearly bipartisan. This is an issue that affects people who are younger or older. This affects folks who are in the workplace and out of the workplace.”

– Is everyone on board? No, not everyone agrees Connecticut should even get involved in this fight. Senate Republican Leader Len Fasano said the General Assembly should not pass Duff's legislation, which would charge the state's Public Utility Regulatory Authority with regulating net neutrality provisions. "It was only regulated for a very, very short period of time," said Fasano, adding how there was an "internet explosion" with new companies entering the market before the Obama-era regulation took effect. Connecticut "should just stay out of it," Fasano said. Former FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz told Connecticut lawmakers recently that internet access is an inherently interstate service and federal law pre-empts state and local regulation of broadband services. "As a result, such legislation must be enacted at the federal level, which is also the right policy," he said in written testimony.

– Is there anything else the state can do? Malloy said he is considering Lembo's suggestion that he issue an executive order, requiring net neutrality provisions in state contracts. Lembo also wants Malloy to deny state economic assistance to internet service providers that fail to uphold the provisions. "The federal government's efforts to repeal net neutrality rules are damaging to everyone who values access to a free and open internet," Malloy said. Meanwhile, Connecticut is one of at least 20 states and the District of Columbia that have sued to try and block the FCC's action. The new rules are not expected to go into effect until later this spring. – **Associated Press**

