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Contact: Bob Nelson, President, NASUCA, (406) 444-9699, [robnelson@mt.gov](mailto:robnelson@mt.gov)  
or David Springe, (785) 550-7606), [david.springe@nasuca.org](mailto:david.springe@nasuca.org)

## **CONNECTICUT CONSUMER COUNSEL ELIN SWANSON KATZ NAMED 2016 LOCAL INTERNET CHOICE STATE CHAMPION**

Silver Spring, MD – Last week, the Coalition for Local Internet Choice (CLIC) announced the recipients of its 2016 Local Internet Choice Awards, a national award which was established to honor individuals and organizations for their extraordinary contributions to the preservation and protection of local decision-making in critical broadband infrastructure matters. CLIC represents a wide range of public and private interests who support the authority of local communities to make the broadband Internet choices that are essential for economic competitiveness, democratic discourse, and quality of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The awardees will be honored during a CLIC event hosted on October 18, 2016 in Minneapolis, Minnesota as parts of its day-long focus on An Action Plan for Local Internet Choice in 2017 and Beyond.

According to CLIC, Elin Swanson Katz, Consumer Counsel for Connecticut’s Office of Consumer Counsel, was designated as the distinguished recipient of its annual award for “her singular exemplary leadership at the state level on behalf of the state of Connecticut’s consumers, businesses, and localities, to accelerate the emergence of advanced communications networks for community and economic development throughout Connecticut.” Other 2016 Local Internet Choice Award recipients include: Dr. Robert Wack, Council President, Westminster, Maryland; Elliott Noss, CEO, TING Internet; Derek Slater, Senior Policy Manager, GOOGLE Fiber; the Colorado Communications and Utility Alliance; U.S. Senator Cory Booker, State of New Jersey; U.S. Representative Anna Eshoo, State of California; and U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey, State of Massachusetts.

In addition to serving as Connecticut’s Consumer Counsel, Ms. Katz serves as Vice President of the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates. Bob Nelson, President of the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), lauded her saying, “Elin has spent the past five years advocating effectively for the interests of her state’s utility consumers and tirelessly working to ensure all have access to affordable, high quality broadband.”

“I’m honored by this award,” said Katz. “It recognizes the work done by so many different stakeholders in Connecticut – mayors and first selectmen, state officials, elected officials, internet providers, business and industry representatives, educators, and most significantly, individual consumers – to advance telecommunications within the state. I share this award with all of those who have helped move Connecticut to the forefront of the digital economy.”

Elin Swanson Katz was first appointed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy to serve as the State of Connecticut's Consumer Counsel in 2011, and she heads the Office of Consumer Counsel, an independent state agency that advocates on behalf of the state's utility consumers before the state and federal agencies and courts. Her agency also includes the Connecticut State Broadband Office. Ms. Katz is one of the state leaders of the CTgig Project, in which a number of Connecticut municipalities are seeking to develop ultra-high speed gigabit networks through public-private partnerships. As Consumer Counsel, she serves on the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board. She serves as NASUCA's Vice President and serves as NASUCA's representative on the Federal Communication Commission's Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service. Prior to becoming Consumer Counsel, she practiced at law firms in Washington, D.C.; Boston; and Hartford. She also served as Assistant Counsel at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, taught at Trinity College in Hartford, and served as legal a legal consultant. Ms. Katz holds degrees from Cornell University (B.S. in Industrial and Labor Relations), Boston University School of Law (J.D. cum laude), and Trinity College (M.A. in English Writing, Rhetoric, and Media Arts, with honors).

Connecticut's Office of Consumer Counsel was established in 1975. It advocates for consumer interests in all matters which may affect Connecticut consumers with respect to public service companies, electric suppliers, and telecommunications providers. The office works to ensure reasonable rates, reliable service, a strong economy, and a clean environment for the state's electric, gas, telephone, and water utilities' customers along with protection for cable television customers. For more information, please see <http://www.ct.gov/occ/site/default.asp>.

NASUCA is a voluntary association of 44 consumer advocate offices in 41 states and the District of Columbia. NASUCA's members are designated by the laws of their respective jurisdictions to represent the interests of utility consumers before state and federal regulators and in the courts. See [NASUCA.org](http://nasuca.org/) for more information. For more information, please see <http://nasuca.org/>.

For more information about CLIC and its award recipients, please see <http://www.localnetchoice.org/>.