



April 21, 2016

To: The Honorable Governor Mark Dayton  
 The Honorable Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith  
 Members of the Minnesota State Legislature

From: League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties, Minnesota Association of Townships, Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators, Minnesota Rural Education Association, Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus, Metro Cities, Greater Minnesota Partnership, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Minnesota School Boards Association, and Schools for Equity in Education

Subject: Unified Support for Senate Broadband Position

Affordable broadband access at world-class speeds is critical to the future of Minnesota. It has become a necessary tool for education, health care, economic development, agriculture, and government. That need will only continue to grow. All Minnesotans, no matter where they live – in a city or in the rural countryside – need and deserve access to online information and services.

Our organizations have recognized that we need to provide a strong and unified voice in support of significant broadband funding. We have joined together to advocate for adequate funding and appropriate policies for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program. This program, when adequately funded and designed, provides an essential tool to ensure that robust broadband is available throughout the state.

Our groups believe that Senate Bills 2447 and 2448 provide the proper policies and funding that will enable quality projects with a high rate of return for improving broadband access for the following reasons:

- A fund of \$85 million dollars will motivate providers and government partners to do the hard work to develop the plans and partnerships necessary to create a quality application and successful deployment.
- The grant definitions of unserved (25 Mb/3 Mb) and underserved (100 Mb/20 Mb), tied to the proposed 2022 and 2026 Governor’s Broadband Task Force broadband goals, ensure that communities with substandard broadband will not be left behind with investments in last generation technologies.
- Border-to-Border Broadband grants should create long-term broadband infrastructure that will provide both immediate benefits and a platform for future enhancements. Quick, but short-term solutions are not smart investments of limited state funds.



Thank you for your consideration and support of statewide, world-class broadband that is increasingly required to ensure Minnesota’s economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Respectfully Submitted,

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