



April 1, 2025

Representative Paul Novotny, Co-Chair
House Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee
2nd Floor Centennial Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Kelly Moller, Co-Chair
House Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee
2nd Floor Centennial Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for HF 2875

Dear Co-Chairs Novotny and Moller,

On behalf of CTIA®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I am writing in support of HF 2875 related to improved protections for broadband infrastructure in Minnesota.

At a time of exploding consumer demand for wireless services, when wireless connectivity is important to public safety, health care and the economy, our industry is working hard to deploy infrastructure for Minnesota communities. In 2023, the wireless industry invested \$30 billion in private funding to improve connectivity for consumers. These investments support consumers and fuel economic growth in Minnesota, where the wireless industry employs approximately 57,000 residents and contributes \$5.7 billion to the state's GDP annually. However, ongoing criminal theft and vandalism of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure puts this progress at risk.

In recent years, a variety of factors have led to a significant uptick in theft of copper and engineering equipment and destruction of telecommunications and broadband assets in Minnesota and across the nation. In 2024 alone, nearly 4,000 incidents of theft and vandalism were reported between June and August. While attention has focused on the price and resulting theft of copper, these incidents are increasingly impacting all manner of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure. Perpetrators steal batteries and power cables from wireless towers and small cell sites, cut copper and other communication lines, and willfully and intentionally destroy wireless sites and fiber optic lines.

The impacts of these incidents are broad-ranging and significant. Disruption of 911 systems and public safety communications can delay emergency response times, especially in rural communities. Our health care networks heavily depend on broadband connectivity for patient care, access to medical records, medical devices and telemedicine services. Our transportation systems – airports, railways and highways – depend on connectivity. In recent years, all of these sectors and many others have been directly impacted by telecommunications and broadband vandalism, leading to both economic losses and increased risks to public health and safety.

As you know, HF 2875 would in part expand the state's definition of telecommunications equipment to include broadband infrastructure. Given the ongoing impacts of these incidents and our members' commitment to continue improving connectivity in Minnesota communities, we strongly support this legislation.

Jeremy Crandall
Assistant Vice President
State Legislative Affairs