

April 3, 2024

Dear Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee,

As Station Manager of CTN Coon Rapids, the community media station serving Coon Rapids, Minnesota; I am writing in support of The Equal Access to Broadband Act HF 4182. Attached, too is a resolution of support from the City of Coon Rapids.

The mission of CTN Coon Rapids is to provide viewers with the best in local programming. We do this by being active in the community and by covering topics important to residents such as local news and information, sports and events. We produce 350-400 local programs and stories per year broadcast on cable TV and shared with our over 11,500 YouTube channel subscribers as well as other platforms.

I am writing in support of The Equal Access to Broadband Act HF 4182. The Equal Access to Broadband Act will allow local governments to negotiate franchise agreements for broadband providers' use of the public right-of-way. Minnesota communities have a 44-year history of franchising cable TV providers, and this bill will modernize legislation to continue the benefits of franchising for our residents, businesses, schools, and nonprofits. Local franchising is a proven way to ensure complete buildout provisions, no redlining or cherry picking, faster upload and download speeds, non-compliance provisions, local oversight of commercial users in streets and on public assets, and local customer service resolution.

In addition, HF 4182 will modernize the funding structure of local community television. Community television is a valuable service that provides a vital connection to our local communities and covers hyperlocal news and information not met by regional, state, or national media. It engages residents by providing neutral, unbiased coverage of public meetings, city services, and local elections. And it enriches lives by spotlighting high school sports, local concerts, and community events.

Unfortunately, many community television stations like CTN Coon Rapids are experiencing significant budget losses due to subscribers abandoning traditional cable services or "cord-cutting." Since the current funding structure is limited to receiving franchise fees and PEG fees from conventional cable TV revenues only, as cable subscribers drop, so does community television funding. Our station has experienced a decrease of more than 20% in cable franchise fees compared to 6 years ago. While we distribute our programming on multiple platforms, including cable TV, online streaming, and social media, only the cable operator is required to provide financial support, and only on their traditional cable TV service, not their streaming or internet services.

Please let us know if you need further information. Thank you for your work on behalf of our residents and our community!

Sincerely,



Eric Strouse
Station Manager
CTN – Coon Rapids
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Direct: 763-767-6526

RESOLUTION NO. 24-49

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATORS (MACTA)
EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE PUBLIC, EDUCATION, AND GOVERNMENT (PEG)
PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY TELEVISION FUNDING**

WHEREAS, community television programming allows community members to stay connected and entertained through public, education, and government (PEG) programming; and

WHEREAS, public television programming includes local community and nonprofit programs, City Council and commission meetings, and community events; and

WHEREAS, public television programming has primarily been funded through franchise fees which allow cable providers to utilize the public right-of-way for private use; and

WHEREAS, with the recent consumer trend of moving from traditional cable providers to digital/video streaming services, the funds available for public television programming has decreased;

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) is a statewide organization of municipal and nonprofit staff that advocates for cities and their residents;

WHEREAS, MACTA is in a campaign to create legislative changes at the state and federal level that will respond to consumer changes and allow current practices to modernize in response to these shifts;

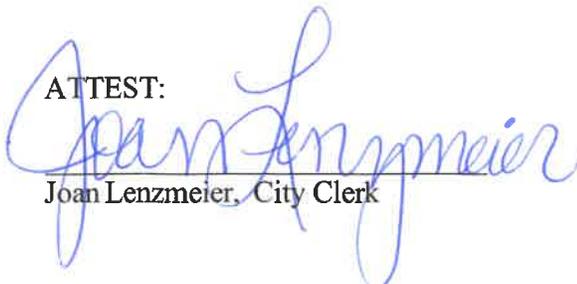
WHEREAS, MACTA is working with Minnesota cities to gain support for their legislative efforts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Coon Rapids, Minnesota to support the Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) effort to modernize local access funding through legislative change.

Adopted this 2nd day of April, 2024.



Jerry Koch, Mayor

ATTEST:


Joan Lenzmeier, City Clerk

