



March 30, 2022

**Re: HF 14 – Resources for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant program.**

Dear Chair Pelowski and members of the House Industrial Education and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities supports HF 14 and respectfully requests that members support efforts to provide additional resources for increasing access to reliable broadband. HF 14 provides an additional \$60 million each year over the next biennium for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program.

Reliable broadband internet access is essential infrastructure needed by cities to compete in a global digital economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of broadband as Minnesotans work and study from home due to the pandemic. Cities across Minnesota are working diligently to preserve their local economies and protect residents amid the pandemic. Residents continuing business operations and students learning at a distance must have reliable broadband access to succeed.

However, many communities in Minnesota lack the infrastructure needed to provide reliable broadband at affordable prices. Because of high fixed costs for broadband infrastructure, low population density, and lack of return-on-investment for private sector providers, many cities especially in greater Minnesota have found it impossible to facilitate broadband access. State resources outlined in HF 14 will help address the digital divide and put Minnesota one step closer to providing reliable broadband access to all Minnesota homes and businesses.

Increasing state investment in broadband deployment is now more critical than ever considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the attention the Legislature has shown on this issue. Additional state funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant program outlined in HF 14 will provide much needed assistance to communities and bolster local and regional economic development. We strongly believe that the state should continue to provide state funding for this program over the next biennium and build on the momentum resulting from increased federal resources coming into the state for broadband rather than only relying on federal funds to meet state broadband goals. Please join us in our support for HF 14.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Daniel Lightfoot'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daniel Lightfoot  
Intergovernmental Relations  
Representative  
League of Minnesota Cities