

Mickey Kieffer

To: Amanda.Rudolph@house.mn.gov
Cc: advocacy@mactamn.org
Subject: Support document for the Equal Access to Broadband bill

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

NDC4 Cable Commission representing the cities of Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, West St. Paul and Town Square Television are writing in support of The Equal Access to Broadband Act HF 4182/SF 4262.

The Equal Access to Broadband Act will allow local governments to negotiate franchise agreements for use of the public rights-of-way by broadband providers. 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 non-profits. 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/SF4262 will modernize the funding structure of LOCAL Community Television. NDC4 Cable Commission representing the cities of Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, South St. Paul, Sunfish Lake, West St. Paul and Town Square Television and community television stations across the state rely on cable TV franchise fees and PEG fees to support coverage of local government meetings, candidate and election programming, sports, news, business and chamber of commerce, education and health, community events and festivals, music, arts, nonprofits that allow residents to engage in our community. This programming has become essential with the loss of local newspapers in many markets. While our programs are distributed on many digital platforms, franchise fees are paid ONLY on (decreasing) traditional cable TV service. Franchising broadband will level the playing field and provide ongoing funding to continue serving the needs of our community.

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

This is critical to our subscribers and viewers.

Sincerely,



Mickey Kieffer, Chairman
NDC4 Cable Commission & Town Square Television
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