

The Honorable Ginny Klevorn
Chair, State and Local Government Committee
581 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 4182 – Equal Access to Broadband Act

Dear Chair Klevorn and Committee Members,

The North Suburban Communications Commission (dba NineNorth) is pleased to support HF 4182, the Equal Access to Broadband Act. This legislation will allow cities throughout the state of Minnesota to ensure their residents will have equal access to the same quality of broadband service no matter what neighborhood they live in.

We know local franchising works. When cable television was an emerging technology, the state of Minnesota enacted the 1973 Minnesota Cable Act authorizing local franchising of cable systems. When the NSCC authorized its first cable franchise, it required that area be served over a reasonable period of time. Through local franchising, the franchised cable operator has been required to provide the same quality of cable service to all residents in the city. However, local franchising applies only to cable companies and not to phone or broadband-only companies.

Broadband is provided by cable, phone, and broadband-only companies. HF 4182 would modernize local franchising to allow local franchising of broadband provided by all of these companies. This will lead to more equitable deployment of broadband quality of service to all residents, greater consumer protections, and public benefits such as access television funding and digital training and opportunities for residents.

Again, thank you for your consideration of the Equal Access to Broadband Act. We urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ongstad

Jeff Ongstad
Executive Director
North Suburban Communications Commission