



February 20, 2024

Re: Support for municipal broadband provisions in HF 3679 (Kraft)

Dear Chair Stephenson, Vice Chair Kotyza-Witthuhn and members of the House Commerce Committee:

On behalf of our 838 member cities, the League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to provide our comments in support of the municipal broadband provisions in HF 3679 (Kraft) that remove unreasonable and preemptive barriers for communities seeking to establish municipal broadband networks.

While some communities in Minnesota have developed successful municipal broadband networks, the existing requirements in Minn. Stat. § 237.19 and Minn Stat. 429.021 have created significant barriers, which serve to protect incumbent internet service providers and limit competition as well as resident choice. Section 3 and section 4 of the bill remove requirements that a city require supermajority voter approval for the provision of municipal broadband as well as the limitation that prohibits municipal networks from competing with service provided by private providers. In cities that have overcome these unreasonable barriers, publicly owned and locally controlled broadband networks have increased competition resulting in lower consumer prices and better-quality service across all providers.

While not all cities may be interested in establishing their own broadband service, the removal of these anti-competitive barriers will set the stage for consumers to benefit from market competition as local communities seek to attract broadband deployment or establish their own network to deliver affordable, high-quality internet that is ubiquitous across an entire community.

Please join us in supporting the municipal broadband provisions in HF 3679.

Sincerely,

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

Daniel Lightfoot
Intergovernmental Relations Representative
League of Minnesota Cities