

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Representative Samantha Vang  
Chair, House Agriculture Finance and Policy  
545 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

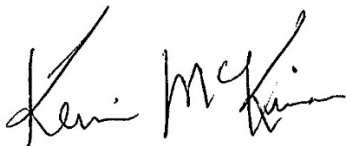
Dear Chair Vang,

Thank you to your committee for hearing and considering HF 2679, the Governor's Agriculture omnibus bill---which includes \$276 million for the Border-to-Border Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program. This money will help get us closer to our state statutory speed goals of 100mbps/20mbps by the year 2026. Also included is \$750 thousand over the biennium to fund the Office of Broadband Development so the office can continue operating programs and performing other vital functions in the broadband space.

Access to broadband is now recognized as a critical factor in the economic and social sustainability of all Minnesota communities. We need state funding to continue progress in getting to border-to-border broadband access. While we anticipate receiving federal funds for broadband infrastructure, we do not expect that money to arrive until 2024 at the earliest. Without state funding, we will miss construction seasons and stall progress toward our state speed goals. Additionally, we will need a mix of state and federal to get to full broadband access in the state. Minnesota is recognized as a national leader in broadband development, and we would like to continue to be so.

I know the committee has challenging work ahead. I am committed to working with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this funding in your omnibus bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Deven Bowdry ([deven.bowdry@state.mn.us](mailto:deven.bowdry@state.mn.us)) with any question.

Regards,



Kevin McKinnon  
Temporary Commissioner

CC: Representative Paul Anderson, Minority Lead