



Association of Minnesota Counties

March 21, 2023

RE: Support for H.F. 1075

Dear Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is writing in support of H.F. 1075. It is a priority for our membership, which includes all 87 counties in Minnesota, to ensure that emergency radios are up to date and support a larger network of emergency communications that keep people safe.

The Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) is the backbone of public safety communication infrastructure in the State of Minnesota. ARMER radios are used statewide by first responders, firefighters, and law enforcement personnel to communicate and to serve those in need. Having effective communication tools, such as radios, is essential to successfully provide public safety and saves lives in communities throughout the State.

Radios that serve the ARMER system are outdated in many jurisdictions. Counties and other local jurisdictions struggle to fund the maintenance and replacement costs for this vital piece of public safety infrastructure. Local governments often operate on tight budgets, especially in greater Minnesota where the need for radio communications is greatest. Planning for the costly process of replacing this critical infrastructure has proven difficult for local governments. State assistance is necessary to keep our emergency communications up to date and we urge the state to fund a grant program for local jurisdictions to upgrade ARMER radios. We also encourage the Legislature to identify a sustainable funding model to support ongoing replacement and long-term planning for ARMER equipment and infrastructure maintenance.

We strongly support H.F. 1075 because it meets the urgent need to replace deteriorating radios, while also giving state and local governments an opportunity to thoughtfully plan for the future.

AMC is available to assist in any way you find helpful. Please contact Nathan Zacharias, AMC Technology Policy Analyst, at nzacharias@mncounties.org if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Steve Schmitt, Meeker County Commissioner
Chair, AMC Public Safety Policy Committee