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## **S.F. No. 3476 – Broadband line extension and easements (1st engrossment)**

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### **Background**

In rolling out broadband to rural Minnesota, there are individual properties that may be difficult to reach and expensive to service, even if broadband is available in the area. The establishment of a broadband line extension program seeks to remedy this difficulty. During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee heard a bill, S.F. 1304, that allowed rural electric cooperatives to use existing utility easements to provide broadband services. This bill was incorporated into the commerce omnibus bill, H.F. 6, and passed during the 2021 First Special Session.

**Sections 1 and 2 [Broadband line extension program]** establish the broadband line extension program, instructing the Office of Broadband to create a web portal to collect information about unserved addresses. The information collected would be shared with broadband service providers, who could then participate in a reverse auction to bid on servicing those addresses with support from the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program.

**Section 3 [Broadband easements]** provides parity to broadband service providers, giving them the same rights to use existing utility easements that were previously given to rural electric cooperatives.