

To: Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair, Senator Torrey Westrom  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 1150  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

From: The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition  
2401 Broadway Ave #1  
Slayton, MN 56172



March 30, 2022

Dear Chair Westrom and Committee Members,

On behalf of our member organizations, the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition writes in **support of SF 4019**. This bill would appropriate an additional **\$110 million to the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program** by allocating the state's remaining portion of the American Rescue Plan Act's Capital Projects Fund. This funding would bring more long-term stability to a grant program that has only been funded on a one or two-year basis yet continues to do great work bringing broadband service to rural Minnesota.

SF 4019 also includes provisions in Article 2 that would support higher state matching funds for low density areas (Sec. 2), allow DEED the flexibility to apply for federal funds (Sec. 3), assuring funding received through the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act is directed to the Border-to-Border Grant Program (Sec. 4), the ability for DEED to direct funds toward better broadband mapping (Sec. 6), as well as allowing broadband infrastructure to be installed on existing easements (Article 4, Sec. 3). The Coalition supports these items.

The pandemic has taught us that Minnesotans need broadband connections in their homes. 170,000 Minnesota households are not connected to 25mbps/3mbps connections (2022 state goal), and 240,000 households are not connected at 100mbps/20mbps (2026 state goal), mostly in rural areas.

SF 4019 would ensure that the Border-to-Border Grant Program continues to partner with trusted internet service providers to bring needed investment in our rural Minnesota communities.

Thank you for dedicating your time and resources to hearing this bill and emphasizing the importance of broadband in Minnesota.

Respectfully yours,

Jay Trusty  
Chair  
Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition

# Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition Members

