



Dear Chair & members of the Senate Labor Committee,

The Minnesota BlueGreen Alliance coalition supports the inclusion of SF 4742 in the Senate Labor Omnibus bill. Expanding our broadband connection across the state is essential to ensuring equitable access to internet, as well as key to our clean energy transition. Expanding broadband and information communication technologies have the potential to create and sustain jobs, revolutionize energy management, improve energy efficiency, and support economic development. Smarter grids at the transmission level will enable controls to adapt to unpredictable weather conditions. Communications technologies will integrate solar panels and electric vehicles into the grid seamlessly, adapting to real time renewable energy delivery.

The unfortunate fact is that often broadband and telecommunications investment has been subcontracted to low-road employers. The tools often used in other construction sectors—like Project Labor Agreements that set the stage for good-paying, safe jobs on projects—haven't been used often enough. We need to do more to lift up the prospects for workers to get good, safe jobs in the broadband sector. That's why we support SF 4742.

Getting it right matters to us all. The lack of labor standards leads to shoddy work, which impacts consumers and the public. In a nationwide survey of Communications Workers of America technician members on AT&T's use of subcontractors, "respondents consistently reported problems with the quality of contractor work. Members most frequently reported that contractors cause quality problems leading to higher costs (96%), followed by service quality problems for customers (81%), and safety risks for workers or the public (57%)."¹

The potential for broadband and communications technology to make our energy system efficient and effective, but we cannot compromise on worker compensation and benefits for the sake of speedy deployment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Abby Hornberger, MN Policy Organizer

¹ Communications Workers of America, AT&T's Web of Subcontractors: Building Next Generation Networks with Low-Wage Labor," October 2020, <https://cwa-union.org/sites/default/files/20201005attsubcontractorreport.pdf>