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March 19, 2025

The Honorable Matt D. Klein
Chair Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
2105 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Gary H. Dahms
Ranking Minority Member, Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
2219 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Senate File 2224

Dear Chair Klein, Senator Dahms, and committee members:

Part of my job as Attorney General is to comment on proposed statutory changes to protect consumers. I also have a duty under Minnesota Statutes section 8.33 to represent the interests of residential and small business telephone customers. Because of these duties, I write to oppose Senate File 2224. By removing the obligation of telephone local exchange carriers to provide service, Senate File 2224 has the potential to impair the safety and well-being of Minnesotans who rely on landline telephone service.

Landline telephone service remains a lifeline for many Minnesotans who use it to access emergency services, conduct telehealth appointments, and communicate with friends and family. For these and other reasons, telephone companies are required to furnish reasonably adequate service to customers within their service area. Senate File 2224 would remove this obligation to serve without effectively ensuring that Minnesotans have an adequate substitute. The Federal Communications Commission data that would dictate whether telephone companies could refuse service is not sufficiently reliable and would allow a company to refuse service where direct wireless and satellite internet are the only other options. These options are often less reliable and more expensive than the landline telephone service many Minnesotans have relied on for decades. Further the methods for telephone customers to challenge a company's claim that there is substitute service are burdensome in both the original bill and in the A-1 amendment. There is simply too high a risk that Minnesotans will have this essential service disconnected with no viable substitute.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, my team and I are available and open to further discussions on this issue.

Sincerely,

Keith Ellison

KEITH ELLISON
Attorney General

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