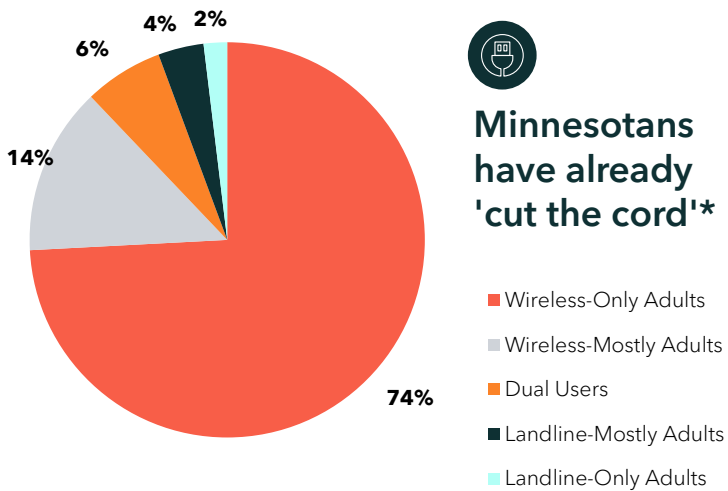


Modernizing Minnesota's Landline Telephone Regulations for 21st Century Communication



Minnesotans Are Choosing to Abandon Landlines for Next-Generation Broadband

- 1 With the ongoing transition to next-generation broadband, consumers are choosing faster, more reliable technologies. Minnesota's regulations, while well-meaning, are antiquated.
- 2 Minnesota's communications policy applies to a old world where connection was through a rotary phone, and copper landline providers were the monopoly. Obligations created by this policy siphon resources better used to accelerate the state's universal broadband goals.
- 3 Faster, more reliable alternatives are flourishing in the marketplace. Many states have responded to this shift by adopting modern rules that focus investment on high-speed broadband infrastructure.
- 4 VoIP, wireless, and other modern voice technologies ensure continuity of service, including access to 911.
- 5 Retiring copper infrastructure reduces operational costs, fosters investment in advanced technologies, and increases market competition.



2023-2025 Lumen is Investing ~\$200M to deliver Quantum Fiber to 212,184 homes

Minnesotans continue to abandon their landlines at a rate of 15% annually.

The most recent CDC data (from 2022) shows landline-only usage dropped to just 1.9% in the state.

But long-standing obligations to provide copper wireline service have not changed. Modernizing state law to eliminate the obligation to serve in areas where federal and state broadband grants are awarded will reflect this transition. This is a modest change in law and benefits Minnesotans by ensuring access to more desired technology.

Technological advances like Fiber, 5G, Fixed Wireless, and satellite allow us to communicate with each other in ways we could not imagine a century ago.

Minnesota Has Fallen Behind States Across the US in Modernizing Landline Regulations: It's Time for a Regulatory Refresh

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Colorado, Florida, Idaho, and Iowa legislatures have granted complete COLR relief for telecommunications services.
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Illinois provides a structured process for service discontinuance upon 60-day notice.
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Michigan and Wisconsin allow carriers relief once they receive FCC approval. Legislatures have linked COLR obligations to Federal Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) obligations, meaning that any changes the FCC makes to ETC obligations apply to state COLR obligations, providing relief of state requirements upon FCC approval.
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The FCC's recent approval of a competitor's VoIP product as an adequate replacement for copper landlines highlights the utility of modern alternatives. However, strict COLR regulations continue to stifle competition and options for many hard-to-serve customers.

How Minnesotans Benefit:

 **Improved Access & Affordability to Modern Technology.**
Transitioning from these regulations allows carriers to focus on expanding and improving broadband services, which aligns with Minnesota's goal of ensuring their citizens have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.

 **Enhanced Service Quality.**
Fiber networks, and other technologies of today, provide a better overall connectivity experience compared to aging copper networks. This includes digital medical devices providing better data analysis capabilities, storage and accessibility of data, and integration with modern healthcare systems.. Fiber is less susceptible to outages and offers higher reliability and resilience, which is crucial for all citizens who depend on consistent service for emergency situations.

 **Environmental Benefits.**
Transitioning from copper to fiber networks significantly reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions. This not only benefits the environment but also contributes to overall public health and safety, which is important to all citizens.

 **Safety and Security.**
Fiber networks reduce the risk of copper theft, which is a significant issue due to the high value of copper. This enhances the security of the network infrastructure, providing a safer environment for all users.

Ongoing Copper Theft across Twin Cities Affecting Service Restoration:

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Since the end of September 2024, there have been 32 cable theft incidents across the Twin Cities. These crimes have caused severe damage to the copper network, potentially jeopardizing public access to emergency services like 911
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An excess of 10,000 employee hours have been worked to restore these sites, and repairs will continue through February 2025. Total cost is project to be \$8M – assuming no future theft.

