

April 9, 2025

Chair Klein and members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee:

On behalf of the 14,000 members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing to express our support for Sections 4 and 5 of the Commerce omnibus budget bill (SF 2216), which would improve the process for deciding when a legacy telephone provider should be allowed to discontinue service.

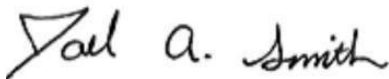
LIUNA members build and maintain underground water, energy and telecommunications infrastructure. We believe that all Minnesotans deserve access to affordable and reliable water and sewer systems, electricity and natural gas, and high-quality telephone and broadband services. In order to ensure that these utilities are both reliable and affordable, however, we need to make smart decisions about where to invest infrastructure dollars.

Telecommunications has undergone a profound transformation over recent decades, leaving legacy telephone service and infrastructure increasingly stranded as customers and businesses shift to higher-capacity broadband services. While we understand the need to protect legacy land-line customers, we are concerned that the obligation to serve will become harder and harder to sustain as the customer base shrinks.

SF 2216 would establish an orderly process for transitioning customers to alternatives that are as good or better than their current service and more sustainable, under the watchful eye of regulators who will hold legacy telephone companies accountable for ensuring fair outcomes. If we do this right, we can minimize the negative impacts of the transition and prioritize deployment of capital for the high-speed infrastructure of the future.

We urge Committee members to adopt this beneficial change and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager