

Subject Broadband Internet

Authors Berg and Others

Analyst Colbey Sullivan

Date March 15, 2024

Overview

This bill would require the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to reserve a certain percentage of its broadband development grants each year for applicants that satisfy the workforce standards established in the bill. It also would create a state Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program at DEED to accomplish similar goals.

In addition, H.F. 4659 would require underground telecommunications infrastructure to be installed by safety-qualified installers when located near underground utility lines, and give the Public Utilities Commission authority to investigate and take action against telecommunications companies and cable providers that damage or unreasonably interfere with public utility or cooperative electric association infrastructure.

Summary

Section	Description
---------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Awarding grants.</p> <p>Requires DEED to reserve an increasing percentage of Border-to-Border Broadband Development grant dollars each year for those applicants that agree to implement the workforce best practices specified in this section.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD).</p> <p>Requires DEED to implement a program that prioritizes applicants for state broadband funding that embraces the workforce hiring and training standards specified in this section. Requires DEED to make information submitted by applicants publicly available on the agency's website. Specifies that all workforce commitments made by grant applicants must become enforceable conditions of the grant. Requires grantees to provide biannual workforce reports that include specified information. Requires DEED to investigate a successful applicant's failure to fulfill</p> |

Section	Description
---------	-------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| | their workforce requirements and take appropriate action, which may include banning the applicant from any future DEED broadband funding opportunity. |
| 3 | Underground telecommunications infrastructure.
Defines key terminology. Requires use of safety-qualified underground telecommunications installers when underground telecommunications infrastructure is installed within ten feet of underground utilities. Requires the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to develop certification standards for safety-qualified underground telecommunications installers that include certain specified components. Requires DOLI to develop an approval process for installer training providers. |
| 4 | Telecommunications and cable communication systems.
Grants the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) authority to investigate telecommunications carriers, telephone companies, and cable communications system providers that impact public utility or cooperative electric association infrastructure. Authorizes the PUC to take action if the PUC determines that the entity's conduct damaged or unreasonably interfered with the infrastructure. |



**MN HOUSE
RESEARCH**

Minnesota House Research Department provides nonpartisan legislative, legal, and information services to the Minnesota House of Representatives. This document can be made available in alternative formats.

www.house.mn.gov/hrd | 651-296-6753 | 155 State Office Building | St. Paul, MN 55155