



Representative Ginny Klevorn
House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee
581 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 2, 2024

Re: HF 4182 – Equal Access to Broadband Act

Chair Klevorn and Committee Members:

The City of Plymouth enthusiastically supports HF 4182, the Equal Access to Broadband Act. The legislation would permit cities to negotiate franchise agreements for use of the public rights-of-way by broadband providers. This would allow local governments to ensure all residents have equal access to high-speed internet and streaming services, as well as access to crucial community information, regardless of their income level.

The legislation would modernize the funding structure for local community PEG (public, educational and governmental access) programming, thereby increasing financial resources available for this essential public service. The current funding structure is limited to revenue generated from franchise fees for conventional cable television subscriptions. As more customers “cut the cord” on their cable subscriptions, funding for PEG and local community television dwindles.

As local print publications continue to shutter their doors, the ability for the public to stay informed and connected in their communities via local media coverage online is paramount. Coverage of hyperlocal news and information is vital to communities – it’s a need that cannot be met by area affiliates of major news networks, which generally cover regional, state and national news.

The City of Plymouth is fortunate to be a member of the Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission – under which member cities receive quality local coverage of community events, local news, high school sports, city council meetings, and other pertinent community programming.

However, not all cities in Minnesota have this same level of community coverage – which is why the Equal Access to Broadband Act is so vital. It’s imperative that all cities in Minnesota be afforded the authority to negotiate franchise agreements with broadband providers, so as to provide resources for and access to the hyperlocal programming that is essential to maintaining an informed and connected community. Thank you for your consideration of HF 4182.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffry Wosje', with a large flourish at the end.

Jeffry Wosje
Mayor of Plymouth

