



March 11, 2019

Minnesota House of Representatives
Greater Minnesota Jobs and Economic Development Finance Division

Re: Border to Border Broadband Grant Program Funding

Dear Chairman Pelowski and Committee Members:

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, comprised of more than 2,300 businesses that employ more than 500,000 employees across the state, supports strong and continued funding for the Border to Border Broadband Grant Program in the upcoming biennium.

Incorporating the next generation of entrepreneurs, technological innovation and automation, and workplace evolution bring enormous possibility and challenges to the business community, particularly with respect to decisions about where to locate a business, how to attract and retain workers, and ways to compete in a global economy. In our rapidly changing 21st century, Internet access has become essential for commerce.

But, there are places in Greater Minnesota still lacking a reliable, fast Internet connection. These places tend to be in areas where geography, population density, or other issues make the business case for deployment economically challenging.

A vibrant local and globally competitive economy requires robust, modern, secure, and accessible communications, data, and information infrastructure, systems, and networks. That is why we support strategic investments to bring technologically-neutral and cost-effective broadband to locations in Minnesota that lack a broadband connection.

As the Legislature deliberates the allocation of limited state resources, the Minnesota Chamber recommends strong and continued funding for the state's Border to Border Broadband Development Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauryn Schothorst". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauryn" being more prominent than the last name "Schothorst".

Lauryn Schothorst
Director of Energy and Telecommunications Policy
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce