



Intergovernmental Relations Department  
350 S. Fifth St. – Room #301M  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[www.minneapolismn.gov](http://www.minneapolismn.gov)

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March 10, 2024

Chair Zach Stephenson  
Commerce Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

**Re: HF 4182 – Equal Access to Broadband Act**

Dear Chair Stephenson and Committee Members,

The City of Minneapolis is pleased to support HF 4182, the Equal Access to Broadband Act. This legislation will allow cities throughout the state of Minnesota to ensure their residents will have equal access to the same quality of broadband service no matter what neighborhood they live in.

We know local franchising works. When cable television was an emerging technology, the state of Minnesota enacted the 1973 Minnesota Cable Act authorizing local franchising of cable systems. When the City of Minneapolis authorized its first cable franchise, it required that every ward be served over a reasonable period of time. Through local franchising, the franchised cable operator has been required to provide the same quality of cable service to all residents in the City. However, local franchising applies only to cable companies and not to phone or broadband-only companies.

Broadband is provided by cable, phone, and broadband-only companies. HF 4182 would modernize local franchising to allow local franchising of broadband provided by all of these companies. This will lead to more equitable deployment of broadband quality of service to all residents, greater consumer protections, and public benefits such as access television funding and digital training and opportunities for residents.

Again, thank you for your consideration of the Equal Access to Broadband Act. We urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katle Topinka", written over a white background.

Katle Topinka  
Director, Intergovernmental Relations



# Chaska

**March 21, 2024**

The Honorable Rep. Zack Stephenson, Chairman  
House Committee on Commerce Finance & Policy  
449 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Stephenson and Members of the House Commerce Committee,

The City of Chaska is writing in support of the Equal Access to Broadband Act HF 4182.

The Equal Access to Broadband Act will allow local governments like the City of Chaska to negotiate franchise agreements for use of the public rights-of-way by broadband providers. For years, the City of Chaska, along with other Minnesota communities, have negotiated franchising agreements with cable television providers, and this bill will modernize legislation to continue the benefits of franchising for our residents, businesses, schools, and nonprofits.

HF 4182 will modernize the funding structure of local community television. The City of Chaska currently has two Comcast channels, 14 and 15, and we rely on cable TV franchise fees and PEG fees. This funding supports diverse local coverage that helps residents engage with our community. This programming includes government meeting broadcasts, candidate forums, community event coverage, local news, sports, art, music, and nonprofit programming.

This programming has become essential. We have a strategic goal to be a welcoming, respectful, engaging, and inclusive community. Providing our community with more access to information will help us better reach more of our community.

While we distributed our information across many digital platforms, franchise fees are only paid on traditional cable television service, which is shrinking. Franchising broadband will help us continue to provide content that serves our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the Equal Access to Broadband Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Podhradsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Podhradsky  
City Administrator  
City of Chaska



March 11, 2024

Chair Stephenson and Members of the Commerce Finance and Policy Committee,

Metro Cities, representing the shared interests of cities across the metropolitan area at the Legislature and Executive Branch, appreciates the opportunity to comment on and support HF 4182 – Freiberg. This bill includes language allowing local governments to require franchise fees from a provider furnishing broadband, and other provisions.

Cities play a vital role in achieving significantly higher broadband speeds. Local units of government contribute to increasing broadband capacity and ensuring internet connectivity, reliability, and availability.

Metro Cities policies support the ability of local officials to manage and protect public rights-of-way and to collect compensation for the use of public assets. Metro Cities policies also support state policies and programs that substantially increase speed and capacity of broadband services statewide, including facilitating solutions at the local level. Incentives which support private sector service providers to respond to local or regional needs, and to collaborate with cities to deploy broadband infrastructure will support the ability to meet immediate and future local needs.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ania McDonnell'.

Ania McDonnell  
Government Relations Specialist