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Monday, February 24, 2020

Sen. Torrey Westrom, Chair  
Senate Agriculture, Rural Development & Housing Finance Committee

**Re: Support of SF 3049**

Dear Chair Westrom and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and Minnesota Rural Counties (MRC), we write in support of SF 3049 (Draheim), that provides an additional \$30 million in funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program for FY 2021 and beyond.

We greatly appreciate your investment in broadband funding last session, providing the first ever multi-year appropriation to the grant program. This funding will help ensure the state is on track to meet its 2022 speed goals of 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload for every home and business in the state, and lays the groundwork to reach the 2026 speed goals of 100 mbps up and 20 mbps down by 2026.

Last year, the Office of Broadband Development received \$70 million in applications for the \$20 million that was available to disburse. Well-crafted grant applications were turned away because the Office did not have enough funding to fully meet the need. That is why AMC and MRC, working in partnership with the MN Rural Broadband Coalition, are advocating for the inclusion of SF 3049 in this year's supplemental budget bill. We know that there is significant unmet need and thousands of Minnesotans without access to broadband service across the state

**The Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program is making great strides in pulling the curtain back on the digital darkness that still exists in many parts of the state. While there is much left to do, we appreciate your past efforts to fund the program and urge your support for SF 3049.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Sve".

Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner  
President, Association of Minnesota Counties

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul B. Gerde".

Paul Gerde, Pope County Commissioner  
Chair, Minnesota Rural Counties