



October 27, 2020

Tewodros Bekele  
Senior Vice President / Chief Technology Officer  
Land O'Lakes Inc.  
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Arden Hills, Minnesota 55126-2998

Dear Chairman Bekele and Members of the Governor's Broadband Task Force:

Access to universal, high quality broadband services is essential for our residents and businesses to thrive. While we generally understood this prior to the pandemic, COVID-19 has driven this fact home. Robust broadband is essential to learning and working from home and to support whole new methods of service delivery – from health care to retail sales.

We are writing to urge the task force, as it finalizes its report to the Legislature, to make two clear recommendations:

- The first of these is speed. The 2026 goal of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, while it may have seemed aggressive when it was adopted, now looks somewhat modest. Why not recommend what the Border-to-Border grant has enabled in some areas of the state: 100 and 100?
- Second, we would urge the task force to tell legislators that this is an ongoing challenge, that having good access and speed is vital to all Minnesotans. As such, this investment should be a regular and recurring feature of the state's operating budget. So, we would ask you to say that the Legislature consider the \$35-50 million as an annual expenditure – for many years.

With so many users now using broadband as an essential infrastructure, with multiple home users simultaneously using videoconferencing, cloud file storage and other collaboration tools, we now realize that many existing broadband services are not up to the task, especially upload speeds. Many broadband networks, especially those of traditional phone and cable companies,

are designed to deliver content to end-users. Today's world requires high-speed networks that support two-way symmetrical capacity.

Federal and state public policy goals and programs need to recognize this new reality. For example, the 3 Mbps standard expressed in both FCC standards and Minnesota goals fails to meet this reality impinging on Minnesota families and households – urban, suburban, and rural – to effectively use the Internet. Even Minnesota's 2026 goal ignores the trends in Internet use.

We the undersigned, Minnesota Mayors from rural, urban, and suburban cities, encourage the Task Force to reconsider this outdated paradigm. We urge our state broadband leaders to adopt a more future-oriented perspective that recognizes the importance of symmetrical network design and deployment that will support current and future two-way broadband-dependent applications. Our state goals and practices should ensure that our broadband networks enable rather than hinder community vitality.

Thank you.

Cc: Governor Walz  
Lt. Governor Flanagan  
Commissioner Steve Grove  
Angie Dickison  
Diane Wells

*Minnesota Mayors Together was launched in 2017 to build trusted relationships across the state and catalyze hopeful conversations based on common ground, not divided politics.*

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