



LE SUEUR COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
88 S. Park Avenue, Le Center, Minnesota 56057
TEL: 507-357-8220
Darrell Pettis, Le Sueur County Administrator

Minnesota Office of Broadband Development
Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development
First National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200
St. Paul, MN 55101

December 15, 2020

Dear Office of Broadband Development,

In 2020, we have made huge strides in broadband deployment in Le Sueur County for two reasons. First, because of the successful 2019 BEVCOMM (Eckles Telephone Company) Le Sueur County award and completed project and because we were able to spend about \$547,000 of our CARES Act budget on broadband infrastructure fiber built around prior and current border to border applications completed by December 1, 2020. However, there are still many miles to complete fiber installation in the county. That is one reason why we met with and helped plan for two applications in the 2020 Border to Border grant round for BEVCOMM and Metronet. Completion of these two projects would get additional reliable service to more of the county. It is critical for our work. We are looking ahead to 2021 planning to continue our partnerships.

That is why we are asking you today to please not penalize these two applications because of the preliminary results of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction awards announced Dec. 7, 2020.

Because of the auction, LTD Broadband was awarded significant territory in our county and those locations are partially covered by the 2020 applications to the Border to Border program. Eliminating those partial areas would invalidate our planning process and carefully configured budgets. The projects would no longer be viable.

We feel that for the future of our county and its citizens, fair evaluation of these grant

applications by the state must be preserved. It is our concern that LTD Broadband may not be able to fulfill the FCC's phase 2 verification and with a denial from the state, we would then be put even further behind in the process.

It cannot be overstated how important broadband service had become prior to the pandemic but since, our county's government, businesses, schools and students would not have been able to function. Please help us continue our work and the work of the volunteers serving the county to bring broadband door-to-door.

We appreciate your work and the Border to Border Grant program. Thank you for supporting rural Minnesota,

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at 507-357-8220 or dpettis@co.le-sueur.mn.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Pettis". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped "D" and a cursive "Pettis".

Darrell Pettis,
Le Sueur County Administrator