



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

3B

Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** September 27, 2016

**Title of Item:** Letter of Support, Mille Lacs Energy Coop Broadband Grant

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
<b>Submitted by:</b> Ross Wagner		<b>Department:</b> Economic Development & Forest Ind
<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Ross Wagner, Economic Development & Forest Industry Coordinator		<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 10 minutes
<b>Summary of Issue:</b> Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is applying for a State of MN Border to Border Broadband Grant. They are asking Aitkin County to provide a letter of support. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative is planning a Fiber to the Home Network running from their headquarters in Aitkin in a southerly direction and then to there substation in near Spirit Lake in Farm Island Township. This will be a great benefit to those along this fiber line.		
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>		
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b> Approve <i>Letter</i> .		
<b>Financial Impact:</b> Is there a cost associated with this request? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

# AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

**Aitkin County Courthouse**  
217 Second Street N.W., Room 134  
Aitkin, MN 56431  
218-927-7276  
Fax: 218-927-7374

September 27, 2016

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

Attn: Office of Broadband Development

Dear Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben, Danna MacKenzie, and Members of the Review Team:

On behalf of the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, I am happy to submit a letter of support for Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative's Border to Border Broadband grant application. Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative will provide a much needed fiber to the home network in the Aitkin, MN area. As you are no doubt aware, Aitkin County is rated as one of the lowest counties for broadband accessibility.

Over the past two years Aitkin County has hosted broadband sessions with Sen. Matt Schmit (twice) and Rep. Paul Thissen. In addition we hosted a community meeting with area providers and citizens at the Long Lake Conservation Center last September. We have heard the demand for a better broadband network in Aitkin County loud and clear. The lack of broadband accessibility has hampered the ability of our citizens to work at home or remotely, our business to e-conference our resorts to offer dependable Wi-Fi and much more.

We are very pleased to see Mille Lacs Energy step up and be willing to make this investment in our county. Border to Border grant funding will greatly enhance the ability for this project to move forward and provide much needed broadband speeds to citizens and businesses of Aitkin County.

Sincerely,

J. Mark Wedel, Chair  
Aitkin County Board of Commissioners