

Dan Fabian
State Representative

District 1A
Kittson, Marshall, Pennington and Roseau
Counties



Minnesota House of Representatives

Via Electronic Delivery

February 5, 2014

Dr. Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: Rural Call Completion Issues

Dr. Haar,

Recently, the Minnesota Department of Commerce filed comments in Docket No. P999/CI-12-1329 recommending that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission open an investigation into call completion and other impediments to safe and consistent long-distance telephone service in rural Minnesota. Having heard numerous stories from constituents and local carriers in Northwest Minnesota, I support the department's request and urge the PUC to conduct a thorough investigation and identify solutions for Minnesotans.

While the Federal Communications Commission adopted rules in October 2013 intended to address some of the issues, the problem persists to the detriment of families trying to remain connected and small businesses seeking to maintain and grow. Folks in my district report many of the same frustrations as do those in other parts of Greater Minnesota – phantom ringing heard by those calling from another area, “not in service” notices despite having spoken with the recipient by phone the same day, and dead air after correctly dialing a number.

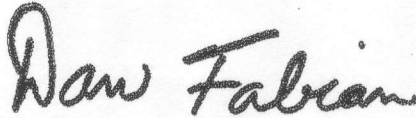
Although a number of factors contribute to the long-distance call completion issue, many local carriers believe the main problem lies with the “least cost routing” mechanism employed by contractors engaged by some carriers. Carriers who hire firms that use this method should be obligated to ensure that the intermediate router(s) comply with all applicable federal and state regulations. The commission and the Minnesota Department of Commerce should use their authority to regulate such practices to ensure that carriers are following all applicable rules and regulations.

The families and businesses committed to Northwest Minnesota should not be left in the cold as a result of poor or inconsistent long-distance call quality. Such poor service not only harms the economic livelihood of people here, but is also a looming public safety issue. If people are unable to rely on their long-distance telephone service, they may lose access to law enforcement or other emergency services at critical moments.



Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Fabian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Dan Fabian
State Representative – District 1A

Cc: Mr. Michael Rothman, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Commerce