

Steve Drazkowski
State Representative

District 28B
Goodhue, Wabasha and Winona
Counties

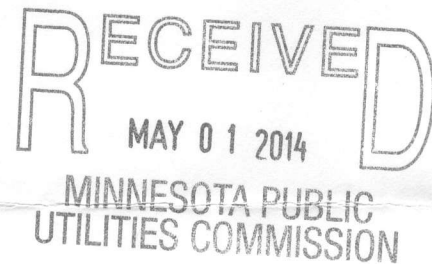


Minnesota House of Representatives

Via Electronic Delivery and US Mail

April 28, 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 about these problems from a constituent who works for a local carrier in Winona, 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. People in my district report many of the same frustrations as do those in Northwestern Minnesota – notifications of "dead air" on attempted incoming calls, failure to ring by clients making outside calls, and lack of voice mail connectivity.

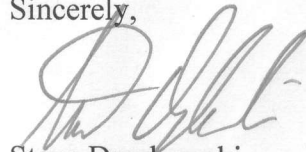
Although a number of factors contribute to the long-distance call completion issue, many local carriers believe the problem lies with the "least cost routing" mechanism employed by contractors engaged by such carriers. Carriers who hire firms that use this method should be obligated to ensure that the 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.



Southeastern Minnesota families and businesses 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, 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 consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Steve Drazkowski
State Representative – District 21B

CC:

Gene Pelowski Jr., Representative, Minnesota House of Representatives
Mr. Michael Rothman, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Peter Brickwedde, Director of Government affairs, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Sandra Balonis, Senior Project Manager/Partner, Winona Search Group
Jim Crigler, President/Senior Partner, Winona Search Group