



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

4B

Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: April 8, 2025

Title of Item: Approve Support Letter Mille Lacs Energy

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
Submitted by: Mark Jeffers		Department: Economic Development
Presenter (Name and Title): Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 5 min
Summary of Issue: <p>The Aitkin County Economic Development Committee has received a request to support Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative Grant application by providing funding support toward the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program. The Committee recommends funding \$25,000 toward the project if awarded and upon completion of the project.</p> <p>Funding comes from the ARPA funds designated for broadband projects in Aitkin County.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Economic Development requests approval of a motion to forward a letter of support and commit to funding if grant is awarded and upon completion of the project.		
Financial Impact: <p>Is there a cost associated with this request? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</p> <p>Is this budgeted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i></p> <p>Designated ARPA funds for broadband projects in Aitkin County</p>		



AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Aitkin County Government Center
307 2nd Street NW, Room 316
Aitkin, MN 56431

April 8, 2025

Minnesota Office of Broadband Development
180 E 5th St Suite 1200
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) Letter of Support

Aitkin County would like to express our support for Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative's Broadband Project for the BEAD Grant Program Funding.

MLEC's efforts will provide access to high-speed internet for many of our community members that currently do not have adequate internet access, or no internet access at all. These residents currently struggle with slow internet speed and poor connectivity—some residents have NO access to broadband—which adversely impacts school, work, and healthcare for these families.

This grant opportunity would greatly improve the quality of life for Aitkin County residents. Improving broadband to our residents in one of our highest priorities in Aitkin County. Currently, Aitkin County is 40th out of 87 counties for broadband access to under-served or un-served residents. MLEC has been very aggressive in their commitment to improving broadband to County residents.

Aitkin County strongly supports this project and if awarded, would commit \$25,000 toward the project and would appreciate your consideration of MLEC's BEAD grant application.

Thank you for your consideration,

J Mark Wedel
County Commissioner, Board Chair
Aitkin County