

1 2015 RES-
2 URGING ACTION TO IMPROVE RURAL BROADBAND COVERAGE

3 With data usage rising and networks strained, access to broadband in rural areas has emerged
4 as a pressing problem.

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6 Across the country, federal funds are being used in a public-private partnership to enhance rural
7 broadband coverage. In the State of Wisconsin, \$23 million in federal stimulus money targeted
8 for expanding high-speed internet was returned in 2011. This leaves Wisconsin behind other
9 states in rural broadband funding. State revenue in the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant
10 Program is insufficient to address rural broadband needs. While the Governor recently
11 proposed an increase to \$1.5 million annually for rural broadband, Minnesota spent \$20 million
12 in 2014, another \$10 million in 2015, and a proposed \$100 million for 2016.

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14 Dane County towns in the TDS service areas are struggling to get internet access at speeds
15 needed for students, business, and entertainment. The lack of access to high speed internet
16 puts urban students who need to access the internet for homework at a disadvantage to those
17 who live in rural areas. It also affects residents who work from home, as well as local business
18 owners. Additionally, the lack of access to high speed internet discourages new businesses
19 from locating in rural areas.

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21 TDS has not invested in the necessary infrastructure improvements to provide this service.
22 Customers in the TDS service areas do not have other options for high speed internet.
23 Recently, TDS stopped offering high-speed internet service in some Dane County rural areas.

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25 Smaller providers in Dane County have shown a willingness to make an investment into high
26 speed internet. These providers are not able to financially afford to offer to install infrastructure
27 without owning the telephone services to the customer base. As a result, unless TDS
28 relinquishes its service in areas in which it does not plan to invest in high speed internet, TDS
29 holds the only available internet services (albeit at slow speeds).

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31 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges TDS
32 to relinquish their service area in underserved towns to a provider that will make a commitment
33 to towns to work toward providing broadband services to residents.

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges the State of
36 Wisconsin to seek federal funding to expand broad band services to underserved rural areas.

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors urges the State of
39 Wisconsin to increase financial support to expand broadband coverage, using the example of
40 the neighboring state of Minnesota as a guide.

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42 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Dane County legislative
43 delegation, Governor Scott Walker, the President of TDS Telecom, members of the Wisconsin

44 Public Service Commission, Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Congressman
45 Mark Pocan.
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