

CHAPTER 16C

MINNESOTA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL

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Subdivision 1. **Policy.** The legislature finds that telecommunications and information communication technologies involving Minnesota citizens, businesses, units of government, and educational institutions constitute an increasingly important aspect of life in the state. Minnesota should take full advantage of the emerging high technology advances in communications to spur both rural and urban economic development. Therefore, it is in the public interest for Minnesota to promote coordination and to establish leadership in the use of advanced telecommunications resources in the public and private sectors.

Subd. 2. **Creation; membership.** The Minnesota telecommunications council is created in the executive branch. The council consists of 23 members, as follows:

(1) four members, appointed by the governor, representing elementary and secondary education, vocational technical education, public and private higher education, and librarians;

(2) four members, appointed by the governor, representing state agencies;

(3) the chair of the public utilities commission, or a designee of the chair;

(4) the chair of the cable communications board, or a designee of the chair;

(5) one member appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the chief justice of the supreme court;

(6) two members, appointed by the governor, representing the telecommunications industry and two members, appointed by the governor, of labor organizations which represent telecommunications workers;

(7) two public members, appointed by the governor, who are not employed in the telecommunications industry; and

(8) six members appointed by the governor from the general public. In making these appointments the governor shall seek to include, but is not limited to, persons who represent private sector businesses, public broadcasting, commercial broadcasting, nonbroadcast communication systems, and local and regional government. The governor shall attempt to appoint persons who represent various geographical regions of the state.

Subd. 3. **Terms of membership appointed by governor; compensation.** Terms and compensation of members are governed by section 15.059, but the provisions of that section governing expiration of advisory groups do not apply to this council.

Subd. 4. **Staff.** The council shall hire an executive director who shall serve in the unclassified service. The council may hire or contract for other staff.

Subd. 5. **Duties.** The council has the following duties:

(1) advise the governor, the legislature, state agencies, institutions of higher education, and political subdivisions on matters of telecommunications policy that may affect the state and its citizens;

(2) foster and stimulate the use of telecommunications services and systems by public agencies for the improvement of the performance of governmental functions;

(3) serve as a clearinghouse of information for the public and private sector about innovative projects, programs, or demonstrations in telecommunications;

(4) assist in the development of state plans for development of telecommunication systems, both public and private;

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(5) serve as a means of acquiring governmental and private funds for use in the development of services through telecommunications;

(6) review, assess, and report to the governor and the legislature annually on the telecommunications needs and services of state and local government, and on effectiveness of state laws relating to telecommunications;

(7) study and evaluate all existing or proposed laws pertinent to the council's duties at all levels of federal, state and local government affecting telecommunications policies, services, and systems, including the relationship of current regulatory structures to new telecommunications technology, and advise the appropriate officials on any needed improvements;

(8) make recommendations regarding the development of coordinated telecommunications networks in the state; and

(9) survey existing telecommunication providers and users to determine if existing services must be improved to meet state economic development goals. In performing this duty the council shall make use of existing surveys and resources.

The council may accept gifts and grants in furtherance of the purposes of this section.

History: 1984 c 654 art 2 s 65