

August 31, 2021

Frontline Worker Pay Working Group

Representative Ryan Winkler, Representative Anne Neu Brindley, Representative Cedrick Frazier, Senator Karin Housley, Senator Mary Kiffmeyer, Senator Erin Murphy, Commissioner Robert Doty, Commissioner Steve Grove, Commissioner Roslyn Robertson

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of our employees who provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. When your committee meets to decide which frontline workers are entitled to compensation, please consider the telecommunications industry.

The employees of the company I work for provide telecommunication services to a large portion of central and east central Minnesota. We provide high speed internet, television, and digital telephone services to residential and business customers in those areas.

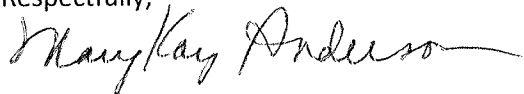
When the pandemic shelter-in-place order was issued, we were deemed an essential business in order to maintain our existing infrastructure, as well as design and create additional infrastructure. Our employees came to work every day in order to ensure families, workers, and businesses could be connected to their jobs, customers, educational institutions, and the rest of the world through our internet services.

Our employees did not receive a break from working during this time. Instead, our employees were committed, and worked every day during the entire pandemic. Our technicians had face-to-face contact with many of our customers; even having to enter several customer's homes in order to complete an installation for services. Our office representatives and maintenance workers also had contact with customers who came to the office needing assistance, handling correspondence, assisting drivers with deliveries, etc. Our workers did not have the convenience of not having to report to work; or working remotely every day.

Not only did our employees have to work with customers, but with each other. The concern that you may contract COVID-19 from your fellow co-worker weighed heavily on all of our employees. We had at least six of our employees contract COVID-19, and one employee lost her husband to COVID-19 last fall. Our employees exposed themselves to risk on a daily basis.

Many people would not have even had the opportunity to work remotely if it hadn't been for the efforts of our employees working every day to maintain and install our internet services throughout the local communities. We ask that you please consider the telecommunications industry as one of the groups that qualify for the Frontline Worker Pay.

Respectfully,



Mary Kay Anderson
Hinckley, MN