

All,

I am not a betting man. Had I been one, I would have placed a pretty big bet on the Task Force succeeding as the odds would have been against me. I mean, seriously, who would have thought that 23 people, with diverse backgrounds and conflicting interests, would have worked so well together? That we would put an agreement on paper and influence others enough to likely pass legislation to codify our recommendations?

Well, we did it. And today, almost two years after its inception, the Ultra High-Speed Broadband Task Force ceases to exist. In what seems like the perfect farewell gift, the Minnesota Legislature will very likely approve a bill capturing our recommendations, and the Governor will sign it into law in the next two weeks.

Is the new law what I would have written had I had a magic wand and lived in the Land of Unlimited Resources? Maybe not.

It is, however, wise, forward-looking legislation that positions Minnesota as a leader in the nation. Now, with the National Broadband Report released, I think our wisdom as a state shines even brighter.

While the Task Force's report was almost 150 pages long, our key recommendations were narrowly defined: we wanted universal access to Ultra High-Speed Broadband in Minnesota, we defined Broadband as a minimum of 10 to 20 megabits per second download and 5 Mbps upload, and we wanted the state to set a comparative goal within the U.S. and the world. Furthermore, we felt that there had to be some sort of ongoing institution to ensure that the objectives were pursued. It's all in the bill.

With this, my last letter as Chair, I would like to recognize the talent and the hard work of each and every Task Force member, the supporting staff and friends across the state who freely gave us their work, ideas, advice and enthusiasm to create the report and pass the law (well, getting closer anyway – should be next week!). It has been my privilege to meet and work with each of you.

Together, we have contributed to making Minnesota a better place to live and work. And, a leader among the States in our great country.

I should have placed that bet.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Your ex-chair