

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

LeRoy Koppendraye	Chair
Marshall Johnson	Commissioner
Ken Nickolai	Commissioner
Thomas Pugh	Commissioner
Phyllis A. Reha	Commissioner

In the Matter of Implementing the Requirement
of S.F. 1064 to Establish an Accessible
Electronic Information Service

ISSUE DATE: July 5, 2005

DOCKET NO. P-999/CI-05-886

ORDER AUTHORIZING BUDGET
TRANSFER

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On June 7, 2005, the Commissioner of the Department of Employment and Economic Development filed a request for \$54,000 from the Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) fund to implement legislation requiring him to establish and operate an accessible electronic information service for blind and physically handicapped persons. The Commission has oversight authority over the TAM budget under Minn. Stat. § 237.52.

On June 8, 2005, the Commission issued a notice soliciting comments on the request and stating that the Commission would take up the request at its June 30, 2005, meeting.

No comments were filed, and on June 30, 2005, the request came before the Commission.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Under legislation signed into law on May 24, 2005,¹ the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is required to enter into contracts to establish and operate an accessible electronic information service for blind and physically handicapped persons, providing braille and audio editions of newspapers via computer. The service is to be funded from the budget of the Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) program, unless that budget is inadequate to fully fund both the TAM program and two additional programs that were created by the May 24 legislation.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development requested \$54,000 to fund the

¹ S.F. 1064, 84th Legislative Session (2005-2006).

service from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. It has entered into contracts with two organizations: a \$40,000 contract with the National Federation of the Blind to provide audio/braille editions of over 150 newspapers and a \$14,000 contract with Dial-In News to provide audio/braille editions of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and *City Pages*. The Department intends to absorb all administrative costs, which it estimates at some \$11,000.

The Commissioner of Commerce, who administers the TAM account, has reported that he considers the fund balance adequate to fund both the TAM service, and the two new services created by the new legislation, for the foreseeable future.²

The Commission finds that the budget proposal filed by the Commissioner of Employment and Economic Development complies with the new statute and that there are adequate funds in the TAM account to fund both the TAM program and the two new programs that statute creates. The funding request will therefore be approved.

The Commission will so order.

ORDER

1. The Commission hereby approves the proposal to transfer \$54,000 from the Telecommunications Access Minnesota budget to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for implementation of the accessible electronic information service required under S.F. 1064, 84th Legislative Session (2005-2006).
2. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)

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² See *In the Matter of DOC/TAM's FY 2006 Proposed Budget and Surcharge Recommendation*, P-999/CI-05-624, Order Approving the Proposed Budget and Decreasing the Surcharge (June 15, 2005).