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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

H. F. No. 4797

04/07/2026 Authored by Harder The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Elections Finance and Government Operations

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to local government; authorizing online publication when no qualified
1.3 newspaper is available; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 331A.01,
1.4 subdivisions 1, 7, 12, by adding a subdivision; 331A.03; 331A.04, subdivision 4;
1.5 331A.06, subdivision 1; 331A.08, subdivision 3; 331A.09; Minnesota Statutes
1.6 2025 Supplement, section 331A.10, subdivision 2; repealing Minnesota Statutes
1.7 2024, section 331A.12, subdivision 1.

1.8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.9 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.01, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.10 Subdivision 1. Scope. As used in sections 331A.01 to ~~331A.11~~ 331A.12, the terms
1.11 defined have the meanings given them except as otherwise expressly provided or indicated
1.12 by the context.

1.13 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.01, subdivision 7, is amended to read:

1.14 Subd. 7. Public notice. "Public notice" means every notice required or authorized by
1.15 law or by order of a court to be published by a qualified newspaper in the manner described
1.16 in this chapter, and includes:

1.17 (1) every publication of laws, ordinances, resolutions, financial information, and
1.18 proceedings intended to give notice in a particular area;

1.19 (2) every notice and certificate of election, facsimile ballot, notice of referendum, notice
1.20 of public hearing before a governmental body, and notice of meetings of private and public
1.21 bodies required by law;

2.1 (3) every summons, order, citation, notice of sale or other notice which is intended to  
 2.2 inform a person that the person may or shall do an act or exercise a right within a designated  
 2.3 period or upon or by a designated date; and

2.4 (4) this subdivision contains no independent requirement for the publication of any  
 2.5 public notice.

2.6 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

2.7 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.01, subdivision 12, is amended to read:

2.8 Subd. 12. **Publish.** "Publish" means dissemination in the print edition of a qualified  
 2.9 newspaper, and in the e-edition of the qualified newspaper if applicable, or publication on  
 2.10 a political subdivision's website pursuant to section 331A.04, subdivision 4.

2.11 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

2.12 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.01, is amended by adding a subdivision to  
 2.13 read:

2.14 Subd. 15. **Website.** "Website" means a specific, addressable location provided on a  
 2.15 server connected to the Internet and hosting World Wide Web pages and other files that are  
 2.16 generally accessible on the Internet all or most of the day.

2.17 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

2.18 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.03, is amended to read:

2.19 **331A.03 WHERE NOTICE PUBLISHED.**

2.20 Subdivision 1. **Generally.** Except as provided in subdivision 2, a public notice shall be  
 2.21 published in a qualified newspaper, ~~and~~ or on the political subdivision's website pursuant  
 2.22 to section 331A.04, subdivision 4. Except as otherwise provided by law, publication in a  
 2.23 qualified newspaper must be made in one that is likely to give notice in the affected area  
 2.24 or to whom it is directed. When a statute or other law requires publication in a newspaper  
 2.25 located in a designated political subdivision or area and no qualified newspaper is located  
 2.26 there, publication shall be made ~~in a qualified newspaper likely to give notice~~ pursuant to  
 2.27 section 331A.04, subdivision 4, unless the particular statute or law expressly provides  
 2.28 otherwise. ~~If no qualified newspaper exists, then publication is not required.~~

2.29 Subd. 2. **Exception; certain cities of the fourth class.** A public notice required to be  
 2.30 published by a statutory or home rule charter city of the fourth class located in the  
 2.31 metropolitan area defined in section 473.121, subdivision 2, is not required to be published

3.1 in a qualified newspaper if there is no qualified nondaily newspaper of general circulation  
 3.2 in the city, provided:

3.3 (1) the notice is printed in a newsletter or similar printed means of giving notice that is  
 3.4 prepared by the city and either mailed or delivered to each household in the city; or

3.5 (2) publication occurs pursuant to section 331A.04, subdivision 4.

3.6 **Subd. 3. Alternative dissemination of bids and requests.** (a) For a political subdivision  
 3.7 that designates publication in a qualified newspaper as its means of dissemination, in addition  
 3.8 to or as an alternative to the statutory requirements for newspaper publication, a political  
 3.9 subdivision may disseminate solicitations of bids, requests for information, and requests  
 3.10 for proposals by a means authorized in paragraph (b), if the political subdivision  
 3.11 simultaneously publishes, either as part of the minutes of a regular meeting of the governing  
 3.12 body or in a separate notice published in the official newspaper, a description of all  
 3.13 solicitations or requests so disseminated, along with the means by which the dissemination  
 3.14 occurred.

3.15 (b) A political subdivision may use its website or recognized industry trade journals as  
 3.16 an alternative means of dissemination. A dissemination by alternative means must be in  
 3.17 substantially the same format and for the same period of time as a publication required by  
 3.18 this chapter.

3.19 (c) For the first six months after a political subdivision designates an alternative means  
 3.20 of dissemination under this subdivision, it must continue to publish solicitation of bids,  
 3.21 requests for information, and requests for proposals in the official newspaper in addition to  
 3.22 the alternative method. The publication in the official newspaper must indicate where to  
 3.23 find the designated alternative method. After the expiration of the six-month period, an  
 3.24 alternative means of dissemination satisfies the publication requirements of law for  
 3.25 solicitation of bids, requests for information, and requests for proposals.

3.26 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.27 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.04, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

3.28 **Subd. 4. ~~General circulation~~ When no newspaper office in locality.** (a) When no  
 3.29 qualified newspaper has its known office of issue or a secondary office located within the  
 3.30 political subdivision, then a qualified newspaper ~~of general circulation there~~ shall be  
 3.31 designated, provided that the newspaper can certify upon request:

3.32 (1) that its print and online circulation reaches residential households in the political  
 3.33 subdivision; and

4.1 (2) that it provides news coverage of the activities in the political subdivision, including  
4.2 those of its governing body.

4.3 (b) When no qualified newspaper is available that meets the criteria in paragraph (a),  
4.4 the political subdivision must post the information required to be published on the political  
4.5 subdivision's website and on the Minnesota Newspaper Association's statewide public notice  
4.6 website. The political subdivision may continue to publish notices in this manner until a  
4.7 qualified newspaper that meets the criteria in paragraph (a) is available to be designated.

4.8 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

4.9 Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.06, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

4.10 Subdivision 1. **Maximum rate.** The maximum rate charged for publication of a public  
4.11 notice in a qualified newspaper shall not exceed the lowest classified rate paid by commercial  
4.12 users for comparable space in the newspapers in which the public notice appears, and shall  
4.13 include all cash discounts, multiple insertion discounts, and similar benefits extended to the  
4.14 newspaper's regular customers.

4.15 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

4.16 Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.08, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

4.17 Subd. 3. **Publication of proceedings.** Notwithstanding other statutory publication  
4.18 requirements, if the governing body of a political subdivision conducts regular meetings  
4.19 not more than once every 30 days, the governing body need not publish the meeting minutes  
4.20 in the official newspaper or on the political subdivision's website until ten days after the  
4.21 proceedings have been approved by the governing body.

4.22 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

4.23 Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.09, is amended to read:

4.24 **331A.09 PUBLICATION ON SUNDAY OR HOLIDAY.**

4.25 Any public notice may lawfully be ~~printed in a newspaper~~ published on a Sunday or  
4.26 holiday. Any notice that, by law or the order of any court, is required to be published for  
4.27 any given number of weeks may be published on any day in each week of the term, and if  
4.28 published as many weeks and as many times in each week as required by the law or order,  
4.29 it is a lawful publication.

4.30 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

5.1 Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 2025 Supplement, section 331A.10, subdivision 2, is amended  
5.2 to read:

5.3 Subd. 2. **Discontinuance.** (a) When a newspaper ceases to be published before the  
5.4 publication of a public notice is commenced, or when commenced ceases before the  
5.5 publication is completed, the following procedures apply: (1) when the publication is required  
5.6 by court order, the order for publication may be amended by order of the court or judge, to  
5.7 designate another newspaper, as may be necessary; or (2) when the publication is required  
5.8 by law, rule, or ordinance, the publication may be made or completed in any other qualified  
5.9 newspaper.

5.10 (b) If no qualified newspaper is available for publication of a public notice after the  
5.11 discontinuance of a newspaper, the political subdivision must ~~post the information required~~  
5.12 ~~to be published on the political subdivision's website until another qualified newspaper is~~  
5.13 ~~identified, which shall then be designated. During the time when no qualified newspaper is~~  
5.14 ~~available, the political subdivision must also post the public notice on the Minnesota~~  
5.15 ~~Newspaper Association's statewide public notice website, at no additional cost to the political~~  
5.16 ~~subdivision~~ publish pursuant to section 331A.04, subdivision 4.

5.17 (c) Any time during which the notice is published in a newspaper prior to the newspaper's  
5.18 discontinuance shall be calculated as a part of the time required for the publication, proof  
5.19 of which may be made by affidavit of any person acquainted with the facts.

5.20 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

5.21 Sec. 11. **REPEALER.**

5.22 Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 331A.12, subdivision 1, is repealed.

APPENDIX  
Repealed Minnesota Statutes: 26-08273

**331A.12 WEBSITE ADVERTISEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECT BIDS.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The terms defined in this subdivision and section 331A.01 apply to this section.

(b) "Website" means a specific, addressable location provided on a server connected to the Internet and hosting World Wide Web pages and other files that are generally accessible on the Internet all or most of the day.