

Alaska State Senate
Senator Forrest Dunbar

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SPONSOR STATEMENT VERSION N
SB 111: DIGITAL PRODUCT REPAIR

"An Act relating to the diagnosis, maintenance, and repair of products that use digital electronics to operate; adding an unlawful act to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 111 will give Alaskans access to the information and tools needed to repair their digital equipment including consumer electronics, kitchen appliances, ATVs, and farm equipment. Over the last several decades, manufacturers have added digital components to all kinds of equipment. Sometimes this adds convenient functionality, but it also lets manufacturers exert control over the device in perpetuity.

Manufacturers have made it difficult for owners or independent service providers to repair their devices by refusing to publish repair documentation, gluing parts together, and using specific tools that aren't available to the public. They use this artificial monopoly to charge exorbitant prices for official repairs. The problem is exacerbated in Alaska, where official repair avenues are even less accessible and more expensive than in the Lower 48, and sometimes aren't available at all.

Alaskans have a strong tradition of self-sufficiency and improvisation. We like to make things work, and in remote areas we need to make things work. By preventing consumers and independent technicians from conducting repairs, manufacturers push people to replace rather than repair. This is a financial burden on consumers, and it is especially harmful in Alaska. Many rural residents live on a very small cash income, and shipping is extremely expensive. In remote areas where equipment like ATVs and snowmachines are critical to survival, obstacles to repair are outright dangerous. SB 111 will give owners and independent service providers the tools and information they need to fix equipment, rather than being forced to purchase new equipment.

SB 111 will save Alaskan families money by allowing them to extend the life of their digital products, also reducing the burden of waste on small communities. It will make documentation, tools, and parts available at fair prices, fostering a competitive marketplace of small independent repair businesses.

SB 111 will save Alaskans money and let them keep using the equipment they rely on. It will keep business in-state and reduce waste. I strongly urge you to support SB 111.