

From: [Joyce McCombs](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Restore funding to the OWL program, please!
Date: Friday, March 04, 2016 2:12:10 PM

Dear Finance Committee Members:

I have just received notice that the Senate Finance Committee version of the 2017 state operating budget does not include funding for the OWL program.

I am shocked and outraged that this program, which provides broadband service to public libraries all over the state at for the cost of about \$1.00 per Alaskan resident, is in jeopardy.

Are you aware that for each dollar spent by Alaska on the program, the Federal match is \$4.00? Where else can such a return on investment be found?

Here in Delta Junction, the public library provides a vital link to the Internet for our entire community. Support through the OWL program for our broadband connection means residents can apply for their Permanent Fund Dividends, seek employment, keep up with Legislative news, start and maintain a personal business, and file Income Taxes, among other things.

In fact, as I type this, all 8 of our Internet stations are occupied with patrons doing their taxes, and we have a dozen laptop users on our WiFi doing everything from taking distance education classes to studying maps of the upcoming land sales in the Interior to downloading music for a church choir. Users in the parking lot stop in all through the day, as well and in the afternoon, students from the nearby schools arrive to stay until closing time to get homework and other projects completed. We average more than 150 users per day in the winter and more than 200 in the summer.

Every function of the library, for both patrons and staff, is tied to quality internet service, which we have been so grateful to receive through the OWL program.

You must restore funding for OWL. It's not only an investment in the future of libraries and learning, it's an investment in our great state of Alaska and the generations that follow.

Thank you,

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~ If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.
Marcus Tullius Cicero