



Senator Lyman F. Hoffman

Member, Senate Finance Committee

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Sponsor Statement

SB 74
(version S)

“An Act relating to funding for Internet services for school districts.”

SB 74 increases the broadband requirement for schools from 10 megabits per second (Mbps) to 25 Mbps of download speed and provides funding to help schools reach the 25 Mbps through the School Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG).

Districts that qualify for discounted rate for internet services under the Federal Universal Services Program are eligible.

The Universal Service Administrative Company, Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as “E-rate,” provides discounts of up to 90 percent to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

The School BAG was established in 2014 and created to assist schools to reach internet download speeds of 10 Mbps. Currently the grant funds may be used to cover eligible costs incurred by the school districts for schools that have less than 10 Mbps each fiscal year. Since 2014 new and improved technologies and increases to internet services have allowed for more and faster delivery of internet services. Because the cost of internet in some rural districts has decreased, the annual internet costs have fallen below the 2014 benchmark established by state law. To allow school districts to utilize these advances, SB 74 will increase the minimum requirement of Mbps from 10 to 25 which will increase the amount of Broadband Assistance Grants (BAG) that the state can pay to school districts.

In 2019, 80 schools in 20 school districts will benefit from the school BAG awards.

The funding leverages federal E-rate funds at approximately 8:1. The program allows for leverage for up to 9:1 based on a formula for free and reduced lunch calculation by district.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 74 to help bring improved broadband services to rural Alaska and improve service for schools across the state.

I urge your support of this legislation to provide Alaskan students, classrooms and teachers and all educators better access to the digital world.

District S

Adak
Akiachak
Akiak
Akutan
Aleknagik
Aniak
Anvik
Atka
Atmauthluak
Attu Station
Bethel
Chefornak
Chignik
Chignik Lagoon
Chignik Lake
Chuathbaluk
Clark's Point
Cold Bay
Crooked Creek
Dillingham
Dutch Harbor
Eek
Egegik
Ekwok
False Pass
Flat
Goodnews Bay
Grayling
Holy Cross
Igigig
Iliamna
Ivanof Bay
Kasigluk
King Cove
King Salmon
Kipnuk
Kokhanok
Koliganek
Kongiganek
Kwethlik
Kwigillingok
Lake Minchumina
Levelock
Lime Village
Lower Kalskag
Manokotak
Marshall
McGrath
Mekoryuk
Mertarvik
Naknek
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Nelson Lagoon
Newhalen
New Stuyahok
Newtok
Nightmute
Nikolai
Nikolski
Nondalton
Nunapitchuk
Oscarville
Pedro Bay
Perryville
Pilot Point
Platinum
Pope-Vannoy Landing
Port Alsworth
Port Heiden
Portage Creek
Quinhagak
Red Devil
Russian Mission
Sand Point
Shageluk
Sleetmute
South Naknek
St. George
St. Paul
Stony River
Takotna
Togiak
Toksook Bay
Tuntutuliak
Tununak
Twin Hills
Ugashik
Unalaska
Upper Kalskag