



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Shelley Hughes
Chair, Senate Community & Regional Affairs
Alaska State Capitol, Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support Senate Joint Resolution 13 – Improve Broadband Internet Access

Committee Chair Hughes

On behalf of Alaska Communications, please accept this letter of support regarding Senate Joint Resolution 13 – Improve Broadband Internet Access.

Alaska Communications has a 120-year history serving the state of Alaska. We've evolved from a local telephone company to one of the largest broadband and managed IT service providers in the state. We own and operate a state-of-the-art fiber optic network serving Alaska from the North Slope to Ketchikan and two of the four subsea fiber optic cables connecting Alaska to the Lower 48. We are deploying new technology, such as fixed wireless, Mesh FiWi and fiber-to-the-home, to connect more Alaskans with broadband.

In July 2020, we achieved a milestone in our broadband network expansion program, reaching over 16,000 rural Alaska residents with high-speed internet, with a goal of serving more than 32,000 rural Alaskans by 2025. Communities now served with new or upgraded internet speeds include Delta Junction, Hope, Klawock, Larsen Bay, Ninilchik, Kake, Kasilof, Sterling and Thorne Bay. We are making great progress connecting Alaskans and appreciate the support we have from our legislators, State of Alaska administration and local government leaders. We could not make this kind of progress without access to rights of way and coordination with government entities.

Senate Joint Resolution 13 encourages continued cooperation among broadband providers and the State of Alaska administration, so we can continue our great progress deploying broadband.

The State can support broadband deployment by ensuring that no unnecessary or burdensome fees, such as increased permit or right-of-way fees, consistent with state law, become barriers or roadblocks to broadband deployment. Additionally, the State can support broadband deployment by engaging with and seeking input from broadband providers before making policy changes that impact our industry.

We appreciate your leadership and support and know that by working together we can connect more Alaskans with high-speed internet than ever before.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonard Steinberg', written in a cursive style.

Leonard Steinberg
Senior Vice President, Legal, Regulatory and Government Affairs