

**From:** [JoAnn Ross Cunningham](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Request to fund SB139 (Online With Libraries--library internet access)  
**Date:** Sunday, March 06, 2016 7:25:16 PM

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**Pertaining to senate budget bill SB139, please, please reinstate all funding for internet support in our rural libraries.**

Below are several reasons for providing 21st-century connectivity to Alaskan citizens.

OWL provides broadband subsidies for Alaska's small and remote public libraries, a videoconferencing network for all Alaskans, and leveraged e-rate subsidies.

**OWL (Online With Libraries)** was included in Governor's budget. The governor's funding of **\$761,800** should be restored.

OWL internet funding leverages federal dollars in E-rate subsidy so is a good investment. **For every \$1 spent by the state on internet services, the federal match is \$4.**

Without OWL, Alaskan libraries will lose:

- Affordable and high speed Internet connections necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century tasks and competencies.
- Videoconferencing capabilities which has allowed for student participation in classes not available in their own communities, local Board trainings, personal legal advice, healthcare advocacy, and shared programs and trainings between libraries.
- Access to information and resources and online library catalogs available only through consistent and high speed internet connections.

**Cutting the OWL program will not only create hardship for libraries and communities across the state but will jeopardize federal E-rate funding that pays for 79% of Alaska's high broadband costs to rural and remote libraries.** OWL is a critical program that enables libraries to provide basic internet service to all Alaska residents.

**Please restore funding to Online with Libraries. Our Haines library is a vital community hub, and needs to maintain internet connectivity for access to basic information. *It's not just about books anymore.***

Thank you.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Ross Cunningham

Haines Resident, former high school teacher