

From: [Delta Community Library](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Restore OWL funding
Date: Monday, March 30, 2015 4:19:12 PM

Dear Finance Committee Members:

Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Senator Pete Micciche
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Donnie Olson

I am stepping out of my usual comfort zone as a rural Library Director who simply wants to meet the needs of her patrons and writing you today to strongly urge you to restore full funding for the OWL network (Online with Libraries).

The OWL network provides a lifeline for the Delta Community library. The subsidy we received through the program last year totaled more than \$11,000 and included an upgrade to our previously inadequate Internet connection, as well as installation, monitoring and training on our OWL equipment. The Delta Library is finally up to speed (literally) and able to provide the digital content and broadband Internet access local residents and our library staff have needed for several years. That's a lot of bang for a few bucks, and with more than 100 users per day in our library, the results of our increased bandwidth have been universally positive.

Without the financial, technical and training support provided by OWL and the Alaska State Library team, the Delta Library will reverse direction and return to the days of dial up Internet. This will be a significant loss will be for our distance education students who take classes and do testing online in the library. Of course, patrons use the library Internet for many other things, too: filing for PFD's and income taxes, researching medical and legal issues, finding employment, starting a business, and as I'm sure you know, researching local, state and federal government issues.

The millions of dollar spent over the past few years creating the OWL network infrastructure is one of the best investments ever made for the State of Alaska. Not only can we communicate effectively and in a timely manner over vast distances and provide unique programing from anywhere in the world, in this era of reduced revenue, the economic impact of less travel for staff training is obvious.

The dedication of the Alaska State Library staff in bringing more than 90 libraries further into the digital age cannot be underestimated. While each library in the OWL network contributes a share of their budget to the cost of OWL, cutting the program entirely will devastate those of us in rural communities who have few ways to raise revenue on such short notice.

I urge you again to please consider your constituents here "in the trenches" who rely on their local library for an adequate broadband connection and give your support to restoring full funding to the much needed and highly valued OWL Network.

Thank you,

Joyce McCombs, Director
Delta Community Library
Box 229 2291 Deborah Street
Delta Junction, Alaska 99737
Phone: 907.895.4102 Fax: 907.895.4457

"Winter is not a season, it's an occupation." ~Sinclair Lewis