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March 31, 2015

Senate Finance Committee Members

Re: Without State Funding, Alaska Rural Communications Services (ARCS) Goes Away!

The Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) is a State of Alaska (SOA) owned and operated 1) rural television service, 2) satellite delivery platform for video, audio and data, and 3) key component in Alaska's Emergency Alert System plan and Emergency Relay Network.

ARCS is a low power bush television service, owned and operated by the SOA. It serves the rural populations with a single channel of television and provides many viewers with their only source of over-the-air television programming. A free-to-watch, over-the-air service, ARCS programming includes news and information, children's and educational programs, popular commercial broadcasts and important Alaska events. Each ARCS community gives their own time, labor, equipment space and pays for the electrical power to keep ARCS on the air for their residents.

Emergency alerts and information from state and federal authorities are fed directly into the ARCS satellite signal, making it an important conduit for statewide Emergency Alert System (EAS) alerts. As a leg in the SOA EAS Satellite Relay Network the ARCS signal is used by many commercial and non-commercial broadcasters who use it as part of their mandated compliance with the EAS. The ARCS television signal delivers these emergency communications directly into the homes of viewers in some of the most remote Alaskan communities.

The ARCS Digital Conversion Project, funded by a FY2014 State capital appropriation, is in the process of upgrading the transmitters at 185 sites from analog to digital. In addition to refreshing the aged electronics at the remote sites, this upgrade will deliver improved video and audio, increase the program offerings with multichannel public service streams, decrease the cost of operation to the communities through better power efficiency, and provide several years of warranty service from the vendor. Digital ARCS will greatly expand public service, enhancing the life, health and safety of rural and bush Alaska residents.

ARCS is distributed by a satellite signal that covers the entire state. Embedded in that signal are additional video, audio and data services including Alaska Public Television, University of Alaska TV, and several audio channels servicing Alaska's public radio community.

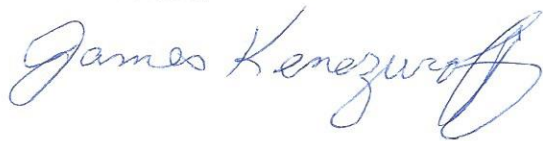
Through the ARCS system, the SOA provides critical information services to many bush and rural Alaskans whose only source of over the air television is the ARCS channel in their

community, to multiple broadcast entities around the State, and leverages the infrastructure to provide an important link in Alaska's emergency communications.

Continued funding of the ARCS is essential to the State of Alaska's residents. Please reconsider funding this vital service so that Alaska can continue to stay connected to each other, the nation, and the world.

Sincerely,

James Kenezuroff
Vice-President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Kenezuroff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".