

From: [Valarie Kingsland](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Operating Budget HB 72 and 73 testimony
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Finance Committee

Operating Budget HB 72 and 73

Public Testimony

March 31, 2015

Dear Finance Committee and All Concerned,

I'm a lifelong Alaskan, an Inupiaq person, an UAF alumni, and ardent supporter of equal access. It is because of broadband access that I was able to successfully complete a Master's degree program that enabled me to become a library museum director while living at home in Seward. It is my deepest hope that my fellow Alaskans and Alaska Native people would have the same life changing opportunity.

I am alarmed that the modest budget for the Online With Libraries, or OWL, funding is threatened with elimination. This initiative provides broadband support, equipment, training and internet technology assistance to over 96 libraries in Alaska.

This includes public access to 351 workstations, 183 early literacy stations, 385 laptops and 125 tablets, as well as internet and Wi-Fi access for our fellow Alaskan community members. Over 1,800 video conferences have been scheduled, which includes training sessions, classes, meetings, virtual tours, author visits and unique cultural events and programs.

The OWL program enables access to technologies and expertise that small communities and libraries do not have access to. Loss of this program will also result in a loss of federal monies that support broadband access in our rural and remote communities.

A reduction to dialup internet access will drastically limit the ability for our citizens to

access E-Gov, employment, health, safety, financial, educational, language, and historical information, programs, documents and applications at state and national levels frequently available only online.

In just 2014 alone, there were 15,027 public access desktop computer sessions at the Seward Community Library & Museum.

I implore careful consideration about the impact the loss of this modest program will have across the state. Thank you for listening!

Respectfully,

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