

## Alaska Telephone Association

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Christine O'Connor  
Executive Director

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Senator Anna MacKinnon  
Co-Chair Senate Finance Committee  
State Capitol Room 516  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Senator MacKinnon,

We would like to express our support for SB 102 "An Act relating to funding for Internet services for school districts; and relating to the Alaska higher education investment fund." Access to broadband service is essential to students and educators throughout Alaska. Through broadband, Alaska's schools are able to greatly improve and expand the opportunities students have to broaden their learning experience and excel throughout Alaska.

The current Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program has been extremely valuable in helping schools acquire more broadband capacity through the E-rate program. The E-rate program is a critical program supporting connectivity for Alaska's schools, allowing them to receive up to 90% federal support for broadband services. Pairing BAG with E-rate will continue to offer opportunities to improve broadband access for Alaska's children and teachers.

SB 102 increases the current minimum broadband requirement for schools from 10 megabits per second (Mbps) to 25 Mbps for each school and provides funding to help schools reach 25 Mbps. Current technology and infrastructure is able to deliver 25Mbps to all schools in Alaska. With the support provided under SB 102, broadband speeds can be increased for 197 schools. This will give thousands of students and teachers more access to the benefits of broadband, including a multitude of educational activities and boundless Internet-based content. Additional capacity will also help reduce technical issues related to network congestion such as buffering.

Our members continue to invest in Alaska's broadband infrastructure and are committed to working closely with schools to meet their broadband needs. SB 102 will provide an important tool in helping Alaska's schools increase access to broadband and all its benefits. Students and teachers will benefit from the vast array of content and capabilities available through more robust broadband connections.

Sincerely,



Christine O'Connor  
Executive Director