

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Lora Reinbold
Chair, Senate Labor and Commerce Committee
State Capitol, Beltz 105
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB 83 Telecommunications Regulation/Exemptions

Dear Senator Reinbold:

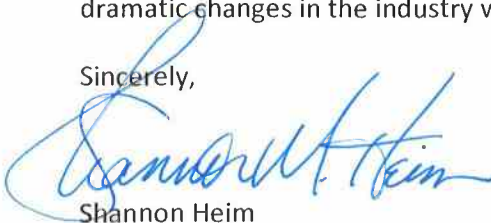
I represent the Rural Coalition; our membership consists of most of the rate of return incumbent rural local exchange carriers in Alaska, all of whom serve some of the highest cost areas of the state.¹ Rural Coalition members are generally small, rural telephone companies and cooperatives that endeavor to bring the highest quality of service possible to Alaskans. Rural Coalition members have regularly informed the Regulatory Commission of Alaska ("Commission" or "RCA") that existing regulatory burdens are unsustainable.

The Rural Coalition supports Senate Bill 83, which updates Alaska's telecommunications statutes to remove obsolete statutes and allow Alaska's telecom providers to operate more efficiently and focus resources on modern services.

Many of the Alaska statutes are out of date and pose real impediments to investment and innovations. SB83 proposes to update these statutes to allow providers to prioritize the deployment of modern technology across Alaska. SB83 allows Rural Coalition members, all of which provide traditional landline service, greater flexibility to compete with new technologies while protecting landline service. The bill also promotes regulatory efficiency for both the Commission and regulated carriers by eliminating old and meaningless filings and reports.

The Rural Coalition supports the strong consumer protections contained in SB83. The bill balances the dramatic changes in the industry with necessary regulatory oversight.

Sincerely,



Shannon Heim

¹ The Rural Coalition is composed of Adak Telephone Utility, Alaska Telephone Company, Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, Inc., Bettles Telephone, Inc., Bristol Bay Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Bush-Tell, Inc., Circle Telephone & Electric, LLC, City of Ketchikan dba Ketchikan Public Utilities, Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative, Cordova Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Interior Telephone Company, Inc., Matanuska Telephone Association, Inc., Mukluk Telephone Company, Inc., North Country Telephone Inc., Nushagak Electric and Telephone Company, Inc., OTZ Telephone Cooperative, Inc., and The Summit Telephone and Telegraph Company, Inc.