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

RE: SB 83 Telecommunications Regulations/Exemptions

Dear Senator Reinbold:

I am the Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs for Alaska Power & Telephone Company (AP&T), and am writing in support of SB 83. AP&T provides energy and telecommunications services to many rural and remote areas of Alaska. AP&T's telecommunications operations stretches over 1,100 miles, from Bettles in the Interior to Metlakatla in the Southeast. AP&T is engaged in improving broadband service and capacity to its customers through submarine fiber, microwave, and fiber-to-the-home (FTTH).

SB 83 updates Alaska's telecommunications statutes that have become obsolete due to increased competition, advances in technology, and recent and constant changes to federal regulations. The bill places all similarly-situated telecommunications providers under the same set of rules. For example, currently telecommunications providers structured as cooperatives do not have to file tariffs with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA). SB 83 levels the playing field by removing the tariffing requirements for the remainder of the telecommunications companies. Obviously, not having to submit tariff filings will relieve regulatory and financial burdens on AP&T, but this will also reduce the burden on the RCA, whom often articulates publicly that it is understaffed. With the elimination of tariffing, it is important to find an alternate way to protect consumers residing in the most sparsely populated, high cost areas -- consumers who may only have one choice for telecommunications service. The "postage stamp" rate provision in SB 83 provides this protection. AP&T feels that mandating a telecommunications provider to maintain the same local service rates in its entire service area will deter the telecommunications provider from raising rates *only* in select high-cost areas. While the bill is good for AP&T and the RCA, most importantly AP&T believes that SB 83 benefits its customers best of all.

My Sincere Gratitude,

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