

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Senator Shelley Hughes

Senate District F—Palmer, Chugiak, Mirror Lake, Peters Creek, Eklutna, Fairview Loop, Gateway, Butte, Lazy Mountain

### **SB 81 Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Act Update**

***“An Act relating to electric and telephone cooperatives; relating to telephone service and related telecommunications services.”***

#### **Sponsor Statement**

Senate Bill 81 updates the Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Act to allow cooperatives the ability to assimilate twenty-first-century technology into their governance process and to update their name to better communicate the services they provide.

SB 81 will allow cooperatives to adopt into their bylaws the options of providing members with electronic notice of membership meetings, conducting annual meetings through teleconference, and counting voting members who attend via teleconference for the purposes of a quorum. These provisions will allow cooperatives to more thoroughly engage their members and allow members to more readily take an active role regardless of their location, the weather, the cost or any other obstacle that may be a challenge for in-person attendance.

Over half a dozen electric and telephone cooperatives have the word “association” in their name due to their creation prior to the statutory requirement to have “cooperative” in their name. SB 81 allows the word “association” in place of the word “cooperatives” in the name of the cooperative. Additionally, SB 81 allows telephone cooperatives to use the words “telecommunications” or “telecom” in place of ‘telephone’ in the cooperative’s name. These simple changes will allow these cooperatives the flexibility to make changes to their name to one that is a more suitable descriptor of the services they provide.

By supporting these simple and yet effective changes to the Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Act that are proposed in SB 81, we will be affording Alaska’s electric and telephone cooperatives throughout the state the ability to represent the services they offer more appropriately via the names of their entities and to conduct business as a cooperative in a more practical manner using the very technologies they currently provide to the public.