



March 2, 2022

The Honorable Bryce Edgmon
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th St State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: House Bill 363 – Broadband, Office, Grants, Parity

Dear Representative Edgmon,

Thank you for introducing House Bill 363 “An Act establishing the office of broadband; creating the broadband adjustment parity fund; establishing the Statewide Advisory Board; and providing for an effective date.”

As one of Alaska’s largest broadband and managed IT service providers with a 120+ year history serving Alaskans, we are ready to support the State in delivering affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband to all.

We support House Bill 363 creating the Office of Broadband in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to accept and distribute federal broadband infrastructure dollars in the following order of priority: unserved areas, underserved areas, and anchor institutions.

House Bill 363 follows guidelines set forth in both the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Governor Dunlevy’s Task Force on Broadband recommendations. It is a critical step the State must take before it is eligible for federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment funding.

We support making broadband affordable by establishing the Broadband Parity Adjustment Fund and ensuring the State can take full advantage of federal programs that can benefit Alaskans. We are glad that the newly established federal Affordable Broadband Connectivity program will support eligible Alaska households with a bill credit of up to \$75/month for broadband service. The Broadband Parity Adjustment Fund may be able to build on this existing federal program, rather than replace it, since the goals are so similar. For example, The Broadband Parity Adjustment Fund could provide an additional benefit for Alaskans who need a greater subsidy than the federal program provides. It could also provide support to enroll Alaskans in the federal program or administer grants to non-profits to assist in enrollments. A primary goal of the state broadband office could be to maximize federal spending on broadband affordability in Alaska by ensuring that all eligible Alaskans are able to participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program. We are working on refining these ideas and will follow up shortly with some specific suggestions.

We appreciate your leadership and know that by working together we can connect more Alaskans with high-speed internet than ever before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Heather Cavanaugh' in a cursive script.

Heather Cavanaugh
Senior Director, External Affairs and Corporate Communication