



TESTIMONY: SHAWN WILLIAMS ON MAY 10, 2022, 1:30 PM AK
ALASKA SENATE LABOR & COMMERCE COMMITTEE HEARING ON HB 363

Good afternoon, Chair Costello, and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Shawn Williams and I'm the Vice President of Government Affairs and Strategy at Pacific Dataport.

We are the locally-owned satellite middle mile provider – located in Anchorage – launching two satellites over 100% of Alaska and connecting more than 110,000 rural Alaskans with broadband. Our first of two satellites will launch in August and the second will launch in 2024.

I'm going to keep my testimony short and simple. The committee substitute (CS) version that Chair Costello is bringing forward today is supported by the stakeholders who previously had concerns about HB 363. It takes into consideration what other states have actually done to simply establish an office of broadband. This CS has several changes that are important to us:

- Removes the non-sensical parity fund
- Adjusts for better provider representation and community engagement
- Includes all the IJA requirements known to date
- Promotes competition
- Does not deprioritize the tribes in the award consideration process
- Includes all technologies possible and
- Establishes a broadband office with the goal of serving every household in Alaska

Finally, Chair Costello's CS has the changes we needed and wanted. We appreciate that this CS version prioritizes the unserved and works to organize Alaska's broadband funding. We encourage the spirit of competition and anything that promotes broadband expansion, efficiency, lower prices, better service, competition, and a free market – we believe the new CS version does this.

I would like to thank this committee and our bill sponsor for addressing such a major challenge for Alaska.

Thank you for your time.

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