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Referred: Finance

BY THE RULES COMMITTEE BY
REQUEST OF THE SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

1 IN THE SENATE

2 SENATE BILL NO. 504 *am*

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act creating the Public Communications Commission."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 * Section 1. AS 44.19 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9 ARTICLE 8. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION [RURAL
10 DEVELOPMENT AGENCY].

11 Sec. 44.19.581. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION. There is
12 created in the Office of the Governor the Public Communications Com-
13 mission.

14 Sec. 44.19.586. MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF OFFICE. (a) The commis-
15 sions consists of three members appointed by the governor, without
16 regard to political affiliation, subject to confirmation by a majority
17 of the members of the legislature in joint session. Members serve at
18 the pleasure of the governor.

19 (b) The members of the commission shall serve staggered terms of
20 three years, with the initial terms determined by lot.

21 Sec. 44.19.591. COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES. Members of the com-
22 mission receive no salary, but are entitled to \$100 per diem, and travel
23 expenses.

24 Sec. 44.19.596. CHAIRMAN. The governor shall appoint a chairman
25 to serve at his pleasure.

26 Sec. 44.19.601. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSION. (a)
27 The commission may

28 (1) establish a telecommunications system for the state or
29 any portion of a system, upon the approval of the Alaska Public Utilities

1 Commission;

2 (2) apply for and receive from the federal government or its
3 agencies the status of "authorized user" and whatever other approval
4 is needed to construct and operate a telecommunications system in the
5 state;

6 (3) apply for and receive from the federal government, its
7 agencies, or from other public or private sources, gifts, grants, or
8 other aids available in order to carry out the provisions of secs. 581
9 626 of this chapter. The commission may use a gift, grant and other
10 aid subject to reasonable limitations imposed by the grantor.

11 (b) The commission shall

12 (1) formulate a continuing program for the development of
13 an integrated statewide telecommunications system, including long-line,
14 satellite, microwave, television, radio, telegraph and facsimile
15 communications;

16 (2) keep currently informed of all local, national and
17 international developments affecting telecommunications in Alaska, and
18 be responsible for briefing the governor on their potential impact;

19 (3) conceive, review and recommend state policies to the
20 governor for the regulation and development of all phases of communica-
21 tions in the state;

22 (4) institute a program of standardization of state communi-
23 cation equipment to provide for an efficient integration of communica-
24 tions throughout the state;

25 (5) coordinate among state agencies telecommunication program
26 creation and broadcasting;

27 (6) provide and institute immediately a statewide emergency
28 communications network system, including medical support, civil defense
29 and other emergency communications;

1 (7) assist the attorney general in preparing for proceedings
2 on telecommunications before the Alaska Public Utilities Commission
3 and the Federal Communications Commission;

4 (8) to the extent allowed by the Federal Communications
5 Commission, provide for the assignment of telecommunications frequencies
6 to intrastate users of telecommunications equipment.

7 Sec. 44.19.606. DUTIES AND POWERS OF COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO
8 EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING. (a) The Public Communications Commission
9 shall

10 (1) develop educational broadcast service to the public
11 schools of the state, institutions of higher education, children of
12 preschool age, and supply programs of educational value to the general
13 public;

14 (2) initiate all applications for educational broadcasting
15 licenses submitted to the Federal Communications Commission on behalf
16 of the state;

17 (3) control and supervise the use of broadcasting channels
18 reserved for the state by the Federal Communications Commission for
19 educational broadcasting purposes;

20 (4) provide consultative services in all aspects of educa-
21 tional broadcasting to all public or private agencies in the state
22 which request them;

23 (5) serve as a library and clearinghouse for information
24 on broadcasting for educational and public purposes;

25 (6) receive all federal, state or private funds, property
26 or assistance that may be appropriated, granted or otherwise made
27 available to the state for educational broadcasting purposes at all
28 levels of education, and use and disburse funds and property for
29 purposes consistent with the terms of secs. 581 - 626 of this chapter,

1 subject to reasonable limitations imposed by the grantor;

2 (7) initiate all state applications for federal or private
3 funds, and receive for review and approval all applications for state
4 participation if the applications involve any form of educational
5 broadcasting.

6 (b) The commission may

7 (1) lease, purchase, construct, own, operate, manage and be
8 the licensee of educational broadcasting stations, production centers,
9 and all other related equipment and facilities necessary to provide
10 fully effective educational broadcasting in the state;

11 (2) perform all other functions necessary to insure the
12 orderly and coordinated development of educational broadcasting in the
13 state;

14 (3) provide a system of subsidies and grants-in-aid to
15 commercial broadcast stations or companies operating or licensed in the
16 state for the broadcast of not more than 200 hours by each station in
17 a fiscal year of network news, reports or public affairs programming.

18 Sec. 44.19.611. ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS OF THE COMMISSION. The
19 commission may

20 (1) employ all consultative, technical and clerical person-
21 nel necessary for the implementation of secs. 581 - 626 of this chapter,
22 within the limits of available funds;

23 (2) employ a director, who shall be directly responsible to
24 the commission in financial and administrative matters;

25 (3) appoint unpaid advisory committees to assist in develop-
26 ment of programs for educational and public television broadcasts;

27 (4) adopt regulations necessary to carry out the powers and
28 duties of the commission.

29 Sec. 44.19.616. COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING. Nothing in secs. 581 -

1 626 of this chapter may be construed to restrict or control commercial
2 broadcast stations or companies operating or licensed in the state.

3 Sec. 44.19.621. UTILITIES REGULATION. Nothing in secs. 581 -
4 626 of this chapter may be construed to exempt or supersede regulatory
5 jurisdiction as established in AS 42.05.

6 Sec. 44.19.626. DEFINITIONS. In secs. 581 - 626 of this chapter

7 (1) "commission" means the Public Communications Commission;

8 (2) "educational broadcasting" means noncommercial trans-
9 mission, programming or distribution intended to serve an educational,
10 public or instructional purpose and includes, but is not limited to,
11 television and radio transmission by 2,500 to 2,690 megahertz, closed
12 circuit or microwave video and audio programming, slow-scan television
13 programming, and satellite, teletype or facsimile transmission and
14 distribution methods;

15 (3) "telecommunications" means the transmission and recep-
16 tion of messages, impressions, pictures and signals by means of
17 electricity, electromagnetic waves and any other kind of energy, force
18 variations or impulses whether conveyed by cable, wire, radiated through
19 space, or transmitted through other media within a specified area or
20 between designated points.

21 * Sec. 2. AS 14.58 is repealed.
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