



June 2, 2016

The Honorable Senator Murkowski
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Sullivan
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Congressman Young
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young:

I am writing to ask for your support in assuring that affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband is available for all Alaskans, including those who reside in rural communities. Access to the internet is a foundation for economic growth, quality health care, education, and overall a better way of life.

Chugachmiut is a non-profit health & social services organization that utilizes broadband heavily to deliver quality health and other vital services in rural Alaska. But for the Universal Service Administration Company's Rural Health Care Program subsidy, we could not afford internet connectivity in the rural Community Health Aide clinics we operate; costs vary from clinic to clinic between \$21,000 - \$47,700 per month. Because of the subsidy, Chugachmiut's portion is approximately \$1,200 per month in total.

In the recent past, every clinic was connected via satellite with its inherent latency and data limitations. Today, three of the four clinics are connected via microwave towers while one remains on the satellite system. This improved connectivity has resulted in enhanced patient outcomes and cost efficiencies for organizations such as Chugachmiut. We continue to struggle with latency and accompanying issues in the one clinic; those patients and Chugachmiut staff do not have the same level of access to vital services at the Alaska Native Medical Center, Chugachmiut's mid-level clinic in Seward, and advanced level behavioral health services.

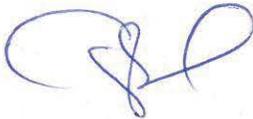
While Chugachmiut is pleased with increased data limits and the decreased latency we now enjoy in three sites, the people we serve continue to experience challenges in affordable access to adequate speed and quality. Today, residents of the three villages connected via microwave pay three to four times more for ten times less speed than what is offered in urban Alaska. There are no such options, however limited, to the residents receiving services via satellite.

For these reasons, I ask you to consider urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to direct a substantial portion of the public monies intended for Alaska be spent to link the off-road communities to urban Alaska with adequate, affordable, competitive high-speed broadband capability. Rural Alaskans are entitled to internet access similar in type and price to urban Alaskans and Americans. This does not require wasteful spending on duplicative facilities.

The FCC must be urged to attach conditions for the receipt of public monies, as a safeguard, to assure that money is spent for the purposes rural Alaska needs most. We need assurance that broadband service is provided at adequate speed and quality, and there is sufficient capacity, so that we may receive services similar to those available in urban markets both today and tomorrow. We want to make sure there are competitive offerings, because competition brings lower prices and better service.

We ask that you support the FCC's adoption of unambiguous conditions to guarantee these objectives. Competition and accountability is the only way to ensure that rural Alaska will have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet. Connecting our communities to the rest of Alaska, and the world, is critical for Alaska's success.

Thank you for your support.



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CC: FCC Secretary and staff