

I fully support the State of Alaska's waiver request for off-hours use of E-rate connection in our rural villages. To date, there is virtually NO service available in home in rural Alaska.

As a State Department of Labor Employment Services employee, our office serves Western Alaska residents including 26,000 in 55 villages in an area the size of Pennsylvania. The State now uses the Internet to list job openings via "The Alaska Job Bank" and an online application process for State positions. These online services are not available to virtually all our region's residents who have no affordable, home based Internet service to access these job seeker services.

Additionally, with no Internet service available to private homes in the region, our region's residents continue to experience "third world" conditions regarding access to online, home based educational services for both youth and adults.

And lastly, this limitation creates a major--and I would say critical--barrier to economic development in our villages where double-digit unemployment is constant. Lacking any affordable, Internet service for private use, any new employment and/or business opportunities face major communications barriers to success given the lack of Internet connectivity so critical to doing business in this day and age.

Therefore, I strongly urge the FCC to grant the State of Alaska's waiver request to expand the use of E-rate connectivity to rural residents in our region and in other rural, remote areas in our State. Thank you for including these comments in your deliberations.