

Alaska Telecommunications Users Consortium

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October 27, 2004

Commissioner Kate Giard
Regulatory Commission of Alaska
701 West Eighth Avenue, Suite 300
Anchorage,
Alaska 99501-3469

Dear Commissioner Giard:

This letter is to support the work of United Utilities Inc. in the development and deployment of DeltaNet services in southwest Alaska. Specifically, the Alaska Telecommunications Users Consortium (ATUC) supports the use of public funds for the deployment of DeltaNet.

The ATUC membership uses high-speed IP networks for the primary delivery of public services statewide, including K-12 education, higher education, telehealth, public broadcasting, libraries, municipal and government services. The primary issues facing ATUC membership are parity, sustainability, and economic development.

Parity means IP services at least equivalent to those offered in the lower 48 states. An important component of parity is terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure. Based on the deployment of Internet2 in the lower 48 states, Alaska is about 5 to 7 years behind. All of the rural regions of Alaska are taking steps, right now, to get off of satellites and onto terrestrial infrastructure. UUI and DeltaNet are leading the way, with the deployment of high speed microwave IP-over-SONET capacity. With the deployment of DeltaNet, schools, clinics, libraries, colleges, and government services in southwest Alaska will be able to catch up with services offered in the rest of the United States.

Sustainability means affordable, high-speed IP services. Satellite-based services are too expensive: the bandwidth is costly, the ground facilities are costly, and operations are costly. UUI and DeltaNet are leading the way, through deployment of affordable high speed terrestrial services.

Economic development in rural Alaska should accompany parity and sustainability. Investment in telecommunications infrastructure should also result in local employment. The United Utilities family of companies are a southwest Alaska-owned company, with employees in every community. UUI does business with every public service provider in southwest Alaska. We especially note the developing business relationship between UUI

and YK Technologies, in Bethel. YK Technologies is one of the most encouraging young companies in Alaska, providing local hire in information technology support, and providing essential services which will be used in the future by ATUC member institutions. All told, ATUC thinks DeltaNet is the smart way to invest public money.

In the final analysis, the beneficiaries of DeltaNet services will be the residents of southwest Alaska. DeltaNet builds on the increasing regional demand for broadband and high-speed IP service, and aggregates it into a sensible network which will grow with the region and new, emerging content services. The statewide membership of ATUC supports UUI and DeltaNet as a much-needed, visionary network, leading the way for the rest of rural Alaska.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Moore", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Moore
Executive Director (interim)

cc.

Steve Smith, Chairman
Board of Directors
Alaska Telecommunications Users Consortium

Alaska Telecommunications Users Consortium



Who is ATUC ?

ATUC is a non-profit organization with a statewide non-profit membership composed of K-12 schools, universities, health care organizations, libraries, research institutes, public broadcasting, municipal governments, and state government.

What is ATUC's purpose ?

ATUC is a non-profit organization with the mission of advancing education, science, and government services, including health care, libraries, and public broadcasting, through sharing of advanced telecommunications resources. ATUC is highly focused on content and collaboration over advanced networks.

What does ATUC do ?

Parity. Like similar consortia in 42 other states, ATUC will be the organization for buildout of Internet2 connectivity across Alaska. Using capacity purchased from regulated and deregulated carriers, ATUC will be building a shared network – **AlaskaExpress** – in order to link Alaska non-profits to each other and to the national Internet2 community. Alaska is about 7 years behind the lower 48 in accomplishing Internet2 connectivity.

Sustainability. Like similar consortia in 42 other states, ATUC will be focused on accomplishing connectivity for its membership at affordable rates. Alaska schools and health care organizations are very dependent on the USF subsidies, and with the opening of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 in the coming session, Alaska non-profits need a collective voice.

Content and Collaboration. In the long term, ATUC is highly focused on content and collaboration, within Alaska and with the national Internet2 community. As of October, 2004, more than 25,000 K-12 schools, libraries, and museums in 34 states have access to the Internet2 network, along with over 200 universities in all 50 states. These non-profits are actively sharing and developing content in education, health care, science, broadcasting, and many other areas.

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