

United States Senate

President Pro Tempore
Washington, DC 20510

Ted Stevens
Alaska

February 2, 2005

Kate Giard
Chairman, Regulatory Commission of Alaska
701 West Eighth Ave., Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Kate:

I write in support of a supplemental grant application filed by United Utilities, Inc. for existing grant agreement sites in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta region. The supplemental grant request was made under the Rural Alaska Broadband Internet Access Grant Program in September 2004.

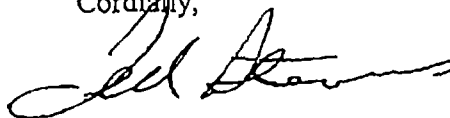
The UUI supplemental grant request is necessary to complete its project to bring telecommunications infrastructure to the YK Delta and its villages. The success of this project is especially important to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the Association of Village Council Presidents and the People's Learning Center in Bethel. All parties agree this project is vital to their missions of bringing quality health care options and broadband telecommunications opportunities to rural Alaskans in the YK Delta. I am particularly concerned that, owing to a lack of broadband telecommunications infrastructure in this region, telemedicine stations I funded in 57 villages in this region as part of the Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network are currently standing idle. To my knowledge this is the largest number of unserved villages in any part of the State.

I understand the cost of the project has increased substantially since UUI's first proposal was submitted for your review. Given the sharp increases in fuel and steel prices we have seen recently, this is not surprising. I am pleased that UUI has taken the steps necessary to insure the system they are building can last in Alaskan Bush conditions, including UUI's plans to address the issue of warm permafrost.

I hope as you give this grant request your final consideration, you will keep in mind the broad support of the region as well as our broader goal of bringing the full spectrum of telemedicine and telecommunications options to this needy region.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS