

# Public Testimony

1 STATE OF ALASKA  
2 REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA  
3  
4 Before Commissioners: Stephen McAlpine, Chairman  
5 Rebecca L. Pauli  
6 Robert M. Pickett  
7 Norman Rokeberg  
8 Janis W. Wilson  
9  
10 REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA  
11 701 West Eighth Avenue, Suite 300  
12 Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
13  
14 PUBLIC MEETING  
15  
16 November 8, 2017  
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1 Are there further members of the Anchorage  
2 audience who wish to address the Commission today?  
3 Seeing none, is there anyone online who chooses to  
4 address the Commission?

5 MR. NEWMAN: Yeah, my name is Gary  
6 Newman, I'd like to address the Commission.

7 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead,  
8 Mr. Newman. Just for the record, did we pick that  
9 up?

10 MR. NEWMAN: My name is Gary Newman  
11 in Fairbanks, Alaska.

12 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead.

13 MR. NEWMAN: Okay. And I'll speak  
14 on item four, as have others. I've been a  
15 telecommunications professional since coming to  
16 Alaska in 1972, and I've worked in both Fairbanks  
17 and interior rural Alaska.

18 In that time, I've watched the  
19 evolution of communications evolve to where  
20 broadband has become what electricity was kind of  
21 in the 1930s and voice communications later for  
22 rural areas of our country, which does include  
23 Alaska.

24 I'm speaking here as a consumer and  
25 to one -- one to whom my neighbors look to me for

1 advice because of my experience in the past.

2 I do commend the Legislature for  
3 their request to the RCA to establish a baseline  
4 and ask those companies who are in the business of  
5 providing broadband where they now serve and what  
6 their plans are in the near future.

7 I will say at the outset that I  
8 have read through the Alaska Plan, but I can't say  
9 I come close to understanding it. So I do  
10 appreciate Ms. O'Connor's synopsis of it.

11 I think we all agree that many  
12 Alaskans are being underserved or not being served  
13 with broadband access at all. This is not only  
14 true in the rural areas, but in anchor communities  
15 such as Fairbanks.

16 The challenges of a lower return  
17 for a for-profit company seems to leave them with  
18 the approach that we just need to provide them  
19 with funds to expand. This has happened, to some  
20 degree. But I might conclude, this is not,  
21 perhaps, the best model.

22 Speaking to those companies'  
23 responses to the RCA's request, I'll speak  
24 specifically on a few of them.

25 I commend Hughes for trying to

1 directly answer the questions posed by the RCA. I  
2 will note that their data caps are not industry  
3 standard. Their basic service of 10 gigabytes per  
4 month would be sucked up with two computers just  
5 trying to do monthly Microsoft patches and  
6 updates. CAF II says that 150 gigabytes should be  
7 a minimum.

8 satellite service, because of the  
9 physical issues of latency, is and should be  
10 intended for those areas that are not feasibly  
11 reached by local transport. Hughes does notice  
12 the -- note the potential of low orbit satellites,  
13 and I believe ACS is also considering this.

14 But I don't think it's been  
15 demonstrated in Alaska. And pricing isn't  
16 available, so we don't really know.

17 ACS's responses were, pretty much,  
18 wait for their CAF II projects in October of 2018,  
19 and they won't expand until its economically  
20 reasonable to do so.

21 Having watched ACS's continued  
22 abandonment of slow DSL service to those who don't  
23 happen to be within a mile of one of their  
24 communication huts, I'm not holding my breath.

25 AT&T's responses only address the

1 middle mile. They complain about regulatory and  
2 easement burdens and otherwise refer to the  
3 Commission to the Form 477 maps, which in this  
4 case, was a mere 364 megabytes of shape files that  
5 took me two hours to download on my Internet  
6 connection and have to go find Arc Explorer to  
7 actually view them.

8 As to providing mobile data  
9 services, AT&T does offer data cap services, but  
10 coverage in Fairbanks can be spotty. For example  
11 a couple years ago the FCC approved a new GCI  
12 tower with a mandate that it be tall enough to  
13 accommodate three cellular providers.

14 Since I have cellular service with  
15 AT&T, I got in touch with a local office, then the  
16 Alaska regional vice president, and then the  
17 office of the president and chairman of AT&T.

18 The answer was consistently the  
19 same, we have no plans to expand. I renewed the  
20 effort again this year, and the answer was the  
21 same. So that may be providing an answer that you  
22 didn't get from AT&T in their response.

23 I was looking forward to GCI's  
24 responses as to their future plans. They  
25 basically said, look at Form 477 and their ATC --

1 ETC report on your web site, which did offer some  
2 useful data and demonstrated spotty coverage  
3 within the Fairbanks core area and lots of areas  
4 not served at all within the Borough.

5 I will note that there's probably  
6 about 60 residents in our small valley who are  
7 desperate to be served by broadband, and many have  
8 petitioned GCI specifically because they have  
9 fiber that serves their main telemetry site at the  
10 end of our road.

11 We've pretty much demonstrated that  
12 GCI could provide service within their payback  
13 requirement of four years. But despite prodding  
14 for the last several years, there's been no  
15 visible commitment from GCI.

16 We want to be good neighbors. But  
17 from my understanding of their business process,  
18 Fairbanks has to compete with construction funds  
19 from Anchorage. And it's really hard to compete  
20 with a higher perceived payback in Anchorage.

21 Maybe their purchase by Liberty or  
22 controlling interest, which you just approved,  
23 will allow them to get better -- better financing.

24 And I -- I was kind of interested  
25 to note that there's competitor concerns that --

1 that that might somehow make them harder to  
2 compete with. But in many cases, there is no  
3 competition because nobody is providing service in  
4 a lot of the Fairbanks area.

5 The Rural Coalition, while holding  
6 back what it views as proprietary information,  
7 does somewhat address the middle mile for rural  
8 Alaska. And I appreciate the inclusion of their  
9 broadband access report. Implied in their  
10 responses that anchor cities, presumably including  
11 Fairbanks, are being served.

12 Verizon's one-page response just  
13 referred the RCA to their Form 477 and made it  
14 clear that they didn't object to telling the  
15 Commission this, even though they didn't have the  
16 authority to ask the question. I was not  
17 impressed with that response.

18 I would note though that Verizon,  
19 like AT&T, does provide data services at broadband  
20 speed through their -- their cellular network.

21 I would characterize Fairbanks as  
22 an area of haves, have very littles, and have  
23 nots. All the crap-shoot of where they happen to  
24 live, whether copper or cable have been built-out  
25 or line of sights, public spectrum wireless --

1 which I don't mean cellular providers such as  
2 AlasConnect or Ace Tekk, which together, probably  
3 serve no more than 1,400 subscribers.

4 AlasConnect senior management told  
5 me this year that they have no plans to expand, as  
6 they aren't making enough money on the wireless  
7 service and intend to abandon as the equipment  
8 ages out.

9 They do, however, serve commercial  
10 businesses with fiber on a spot basis, but that  
11 excludes potential residential customers.

12 AlasConnect, as the Commission may  
13 be aware, is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of MTA,  
14 Matanuska Telephone Association. And I didn't see  
15 a response from them to the Commission's request  
16 for information.

17 So in conclusion, I can state that  
18 there is thousands of potentially -- of potential  
19 residential customers and small businesses in the  
20 developed areas of the Fairbanks North Star  
21 Borough that are severely underserved by -- with  
22 less than 1 megabyte or not served at all by any  
23 broadband providers, even when a business case can  
24 be made to provide that service.

25 Most responders noted that the RCA

1 doesn't have jurisdiction over broadband, and I  
2 think we all agree that's the case.

3 But you were still asked -- tasked  
4 by the Legislature to ask the questions. And I'm  
5 glad the question was asked, because there's value  
6 in having this discussion. And I've heard some  
7 confirmation of that in your earlier discussion.

8 I'd like to be hopeful. But absent  
9 a large pile of money falling from the sky with a  
10 mandate to provide broadband build out, perhaps  
11 another business model, such as a  
12 broadband-focused cooperative can be formed to  
13 provide fiber connectivity to communities that are  
14 ill-served by current providers.

15 Again, maybe in the model of how  
16 electricity was provided to rural areas in the  
17 United States from the 1930s, '40s, and onward.  
18 And I guess I'll call that -- I think I'm within  
19 my five minutes. Thanks very much.

20 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Thank you,  
21 Mr. Newman. Any questions or -- on the part of  
22 the Commission? Seeing none, again, Mr. Newman,  
23 that was a very informed presentation that you  
24 just made.

25 And it's helpful for the Commission

1 to receive that because we do very frequently get  
2 the note, you have no jurisdiction. To which I  
3 generally think, we have no money.

4 In any event, is there any further  
5 public participation from members of the audience  
6 who are appearing telephonically?

7 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG:  
8 Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead,  
10 Mr. -- or, Commissioner Rokeberg.

11 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: I just want  
12 to echo your thanks to Mr. Newman and ask if he  
13 could forward us his comments for the record and  
14 for our use. Thank you.

15 MR. NEWMAN: Happy to do so.

16 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. In any  
17 event, Mr. Newman, you've been captured on the --  
18 by transcript. So any further questions or  
19 comments? Seeing none, is there any further  
20 public participation from individuals appearing  
21 telephonically before the Commission?

22 Hearing none, I'll turn back to the  
23 Anchorage audience and ask again the question, is  
24 there any other public participation from the  
25 floor? Seeing none, that concludes item number

1 one on the agenda.

2 Item number two, dealing with  
3 R-17-001, In the Matter of Consideration of  
4 Revisions to Regulations Governing Procedures in  
5 Case of a Shortage in the AS -- AUSF Fund.  
6 Commissioner Pickett?

7 COMMISSIONER PICKETT: Thank you,  
8 Mr. Chairman. I would ask all of the  
9 Commissioners -- Mr. Parrish handed out something  
10 titled on the -- at the top, "Appendix - Order  
11 R-17-001(3), option 3," amending the regulatory  
12 language in a format that can be submitted to the  
13 Department of Law.

14 At this point, we've had a number  
15 of discussions involving staff, the Attorney  
16 General, the Chair, and myself on this particular  
17 option. But I am going to turn it over to  
18 Mr. Parrish to comment on what it is we're looking  
19 at, and then I will turn to Mr. Goering after  
20 that.

21 MR. PARRISH: Thank you. This is  
22 David Parrish with the common carrier section.  
23 What is before the Commission is a -- and if --  
24 I'll refer to the matrix that is up here. It has  
25 three options in the -- hopefully that's the one

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Good morning.

3 It's wednesday, November 15, 2017. This is the  
4 time set for the special public meeting of the  
5 Regulatory Commission of Alaska to be held here at  
6 our office, 701 West 8th Avenue, Anchorage,  
7 Alaska.

8 On the dais with me is Commissioner Norman  
9 Rokeberg, Commissioner Bob Pickett, and  
10 Commissioner Janis Wilson. I'm Stephen McAlpine.  
11 Joining us by telephone is Commissioner Pauli.

12 Commissioner Pauli, are you with us?

13 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Yes, I am.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. The  
16 first item on the agenda is public participation.  
17 Are there any members of the Anchorage audience  
18 who wish to address the Commission today?

19 Seeing none, is there anyone appearing by  
20 telephone who wishes to appear before the  
21 Commission today? Hearing none, I'll move back to  
22 the Anchorage --

23 MR. NEWMAN: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Oh, I'm sorry.  
25 Go ahead, sir.

1 MR. NEWMAN: Yeah. This is Gary  
2 Newman again.

3 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Good morning,  
4 Gary.

5 MR. NEWMAN: Thank you all for  
6 having this. And I wish that word had gotten out  
7 a little better to give you a better sense of it.  
8 But I think that you have the idea that certainly  
9 Fairbanks and a lot of the rural communities are  
10 being underserved, and I suspect that that's what  
11 you'll pass on to the legislature.

12 Reading a recent Economist, I noted that  
13 Africa is having similar problems, but they're  
14 probably a little more severe. And I'm thankful,  
15 in a sense, that we're a little better off. When  
16 I first came up to Alaska in the early '70s, the  
17 Johnny Carson Tonight Show was about three weeks  
18 late because they had to mail the tape up. So  
19 we're making some progress in better  
20 communication, but I don't think we're there yet.

21 The one thing that I noted after the hearing  
22 last week is that I got a call back from ACS  
23 External Affairs, and they told me what their  
24 plans were a little more detailed than I had known  
25 before. And they're looking at a fixed wireless

1 solution. That might be a stopgap, but long term,  
2 really, getting everybody wired with fiber is  
3 what's going to be future-proof. And so perhaps  
4 that can be passed along as well.

5 Again, thanks. Happy to answer any  
6 questions.

7 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: And, Gary, we  
8 appreciate your follow-up after the meeting last  
9 week. And there is a member of ACS staff in the  
10 audience. And so I'm sure your comments will be  
11 relayed. Is there any further --

12 MR. PRATT: I would --

13 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead.

14 MR. PRATT: My name is Justin  
15 Pratt. I'm a consultant just outside of Eielson  
16 Air Force Base. I just wanted to explain my  
17 situation and the experiences that I've had with  
18 internet connection here. Just to give you a  
19 sense of some kind of -- I've been asking for some  
20 kind of DSL or broadband connection for close to  
21 15 years, and ACS has always told me it's  
22 currently trying.

23 Meanwhile, on my property they've trenched  
24 through my right-of-way and laid fiber optics to  
25 run lines up to others -- other communities. And

1 also, you know, we talk about serving those in  
2 kind of the middle gap area where a lot of  
3 Alaskans live, and that's just not happening.

4 I've attended meetings with Dave Talerico, my  
5 state representative, also Dave Guttenberg up at  
6 UAF.

7 There's been talks of different services and  
8 ideas. But I think the real way to solve this is  
9 just run, you know, lines to people that need it,  
10 especially those that are easy to access. But  
11 I've also experienced kind of a gut punch lately.  
12 Just south of me at Harding Lake, there's vacation  
13 homes. And recently ACS has been hooking up these  
14 homes that are only occupied part of the year  
15 while businesses, churches, residents in the area  
16 get nothing.

17 It's maddening. It's very frustrating. I've  
18 actually seen people and heard people talk about  
19 moving to the Lower 48 because they just don't  
20 have the access to services they need. And, you  
21 know, this is a huge one that they talk about.  
22 When I drive to the school and I see a teacher  
23 parked in the parking lot of the school because  
24 that's the only way they can get online, that's  
25 pretty sad.

1 And it's something that needs to be addressed  
2 and probably pretty soon for the benefit of the  
3 residents and the benefit of the economy in  
4 Alaska. Again, thank you for taking my comments.

5 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Thank you for  
6 your appearance, Justin. Are there any other  
7 participants on --

8 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG:  
9 Mr. Chairman, if I could ask a quick question.

10 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: I'm sorry. Go  
11 ahead, Commissioner Rokeberg.

12 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Yes. This  
13 is to the last witness. Could you describe what  
14 selection or how many providers you have a choice  
15 of in your area for broadband connection and then  
16 what speeds they may offer you.

17 MR. PRATT: Are you talking to me,  
18 Justin?

19 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Yes, sir.

20 MR. PRATT: I have none.

21 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: You have  
22 none?

23 MR. PRATT: The only option I have  
24 is to go through a wireless cell tower, which has  
25 limits and is extremely expensive. Wire

1 connection, I have none, even though they've  
2 trenched through my right-of-way to run fiber  
3 optics through my property. I called ACS, GCI.  
4 They all do not provide a hardline internet  
5 connection.

6 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Okay. Do  
7 you have a wireline telephone service near your  
8 property?

9 MR. PRATT: I always have, yes. I  
10 since have disconnected that. But, yeah, I've --  
11 in the past, I have had a phone line.

12 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: And who is  
13 the provider there?

14 MR. PRATT: It was ACS.

15 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Okay.  
16 well, thank you very much, sir. And, excuse me,  
17 where do you live exactly? In Salcha? I mean,  
18 where -- give us a perspective.

19 MR. PRATT: Yeah. I am right  
20 between Harding Lake and Salcha River right next  
21 to the post office, restaurant, by the boat shop.  
22 There's an LDS church about half a mile away.

23 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Okay.  
24 Great. Thank you very much for your testimony,  
25 sir.

1 MR. PRATT: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Chairman?

3 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Justin, I have  
4 one further question, excuse me, if I may.  
5 Justin, do you live on the Richardson?

6 MR. PRATT: I do.

7 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. Are  
8 there any other participants telephonic that wish  
9 to participate?

10 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Chairman  
11 McAlpine, I have a question for Justin.

12 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead.

13 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Justin, you  
14 said that you had wireline service from ACS but  
15 you've since cut the cord, so to speak. Do you  
16 use wireless primarily now?

17 MR. PRATT: I do, yes. The only  
18 thing that ACS offered us was a phone line. There  
19 was no DSL, nothing with that. And they said they  
20 could not offer that.

21 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Really. Okay.  
22 And do you have access to any sort of cable TV?

23 MR. PRATT: No.

24 COMMISSIONER PAULI: Okay. Thank  
25 you.

1                   CHAIRMAN McALPINE: For the record,  
2 that was Commissioner Pauli inquiring.

3                   Are there any other individuals who wish to  
4 participate telephonically?

5                   Hearing none, I'll turn back to the Anchorage  
6 audience. Is there anyone in the Anchorage  
7 audience that wishes to participate? Seeing none,  
8 that closes out public participation.

9                   Moving to item No. 2, Commissioner Rokeberg,  
10 do you want a brief stand-down while we --

11                   COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: No. That's  
12 okay. Why don't we move ahead.

13                   CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Okay.

14                   COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: I was  
15 waiting for someone to arrive with my briefcase.

16                   CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Okay. And  
17 she's free to interrupt when that happens.

18                   COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: I take my  
19 homework home for a change.

20                   CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Item No. 2,  
21 I-17-004, In the Matter of Report to State  
22 Legislature Regarding Alaska's Current Broadband  
23 Coverage and Planned Expansion and Gaps in  
24 Broadband Infrastructure and Financing.

25                   Commissioner Rokeberg?

1 MR. TILLY: I called in to see if I  
2 could give a comment.

3 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG:  
4 Mr. Chairman?

5 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Please identify  
6 yourself.

7 MR. TILLY: This is Chris Tilly in  
8 Fairbanks, Alaska.

9 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. Chris,  
10 the public participation section of the meeting  
11 has actually gone by. But since you've taken the  
12 time to do that, is this germane to the issue that  
13 we're dealing with, the broadband expansion in  
14 Alaska?

15 MR. TILLY: Yes, it is.

16 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. Go ahead  
17 and please limit your remarks to just a few  
18 minutes.

19 MR. TILLY: Okay. I just wanted to  
20 let everyone know about -- the RCA about broadband  
21 in Fairbanks, Alaska, the second largest community  
22 in Alaska. That I live seven miles from the city  
23 center and yet in 18 years I'm not able to get  
24 connectivity to my residence.

25 I have approached the providers. For 12

1 years I've had 384K over DSL. But if you  
2 disconnect from that, they will not hook you back  
3 up because the minimum speeds now are like 10  
4 megs. So they reduced themselves to the major  
5 urban area. They don't like my neighborhood  
6 because the property sizes are anywhere from 2, 5  
7 to 5 to 10 acres in spacing.

8 Even though we are 3,600 feet off the  
9 broadband infrastructure of GCI cable, we are  
10 unable to get any expansion to our area, even once  
11 we got all the neighbors together to be interested  
12 in that type of service. And we have careers that  
13 are, you know, doctors, attorneys, retired  
14 professors, real estate agents, and accountants.

15 But yet we were unable to get connectivity,  
16 but we can see the university hill that houses the  
17 supercomputers within our state. So while we talk  
18 about broadband in Alaska, both rural and urban,  
19 we have to realize that we have some of these  
20 spots that are unprovided.

21 Even our wireless providers cannot provide to  
22 some locations due to the tree heights, where you  
23 have to basically build yourself your own tower to  
24 get line of sight past your natural obstacles.

25 We own infrastructure that's already in place

1 through cable and can be used for DSL service, but  
2 sometimes we are held hostage to be able to get  
3 fiber connectivity to the substation in order --  
4 as the argument to provide more bandwidth.

5 But I just wanted to make sure to provide  
6 that type of feedback so you realize that we have  
7 blockages not only in rural areas but also in  
8 urban areas. As a matter of fact, sometimes some  
9 of the urban sites -- it would be easier if you  
10 were to move out to a rural site just to get  
11 better bandwidth.

12 There has been significant expense and  
13 infrastructure there. And that is good to be  
14 equal, but we also have to look at the population  
15 numbers as to who we provide to and don't provide  
16 to. Because everything is going to an internet  
17 self-serve world. But if you don't have that  
18 connectivity, it makes it very difficult.

19 I've been using cellular for a number of  
20 years. And while that was a stopgap measure, I  
21 ended up leasing accounts off the east coast to be  
22 able to provide unlimited services. But some of  
23 those vendors have now woken up and started  
24 discontinuing even their grandfathered unlimited  
25 accounts.

1 But we have to look at some of those  
2 provisions and that what's amazing is some of the  
3 DSL providers over the cable solution won't  
4 provide a home solution. But yet if the residence  
5 or if the person has a business account, they can  
6 then get a DSL service as a business up to a 1-meg  
7 connection. But they cannot always guarantee the  
8 1-meg service. And then that comes at a more  
9 substantial cost.

10 But it's hard because a lot of consumers do  
11 not know of that option. And so that shows that  
12 connectivity is possible but it is just not  
13 chosen. And so it's starting to become an issue  
14 with small entities almost going to start up their  
15 own cooperative just to provide themselves  
16 bandwidth in the marketplace.

17 And over 18 years, I've gotten just about  
18 every excuse from the providers instead of  
19 solutions. They usually tell me, Another two  
20 years, another four years. They try to tell me,  
21 well, they're waiting on this. They don't want to  
22 just do my place. They want to do the whole  
23 neighborhood. They draw up nice pictures, but  
24 then nothing ever gets built out.

25 And during that time I've been able to see

1 the state and the providers change out the cables  
2 on a neighbor road twice to the main feed  
3 structure, but yet not be able to provide  
4 expansion to those nearby properties.

5 There's a cell tower nearby and there's also  
6 fiber to the cell tower nearby. But, yet, that  
7 does not get the last mile to the customers. So I  
8 hope that helps give some insight to some of the  
9 plight for those that are even near that urban  
10 area. That's seven miles to the city center, two  
11 miles to the university, and yet the last 3,600  
12 feet to my property.

13 And I've also asked if they would offer any  
14 feedback if we could contribute capitally to the  
15 expansion. In other words, with our power  
16 utility, if you need to add poles or anything, you  
17 can get power if you pay so much per pole to get  
18 them to build out their infrastructure to your  
19 location.

20 I've asked the providers for that. And they  
21 have no structure for me to contribute towards  
22 that capital expansion. So instead I'm putting  
23 the money into a tower, but I cannot contribute to  
24 put the money in to expand their data plan. So I  
25 hope that's a good contribution to the subject

1 you're working at hand.

2 CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Chris, thanks  
3 for taking your time. Appreciate it.

4 MR. TILLY: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Commissioner  
6 Rokeberg?

7 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Thank you.  
8 I'd like to shift gears now and move on to some of  
9 the other issues we mentioned last meeting. One  
10 of which would be, we want to talk about at least  
11 some general comments and feedback on jurisdiction  
12 and, also, move on to financing and financial  
13 portions of that. We can talk about certain  
14 mechanisms there.

15 First, there is -- as a part of the  
16 jurisdictional debate, I've had some conversations  
17 with certain Commissioners. And it seems that  
18 there's -- we think there's a requirement to -- or  
19 some of us do -- to articulate a policy statement  
20 regarding the breadth of our jurisdiction,  
21 particularly in this case.

22 And if I might use the language that  
23 Mr. Gazaway suggested in the course of his  
24 drafting and read the following and get feedback  
25 from the Commissioners about whether we would

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Adrianell Poteet Sorrels, hereby  
certify that the foregoing pages numbered 1  
through 79 are a true, accurate, and complete  
transcript of the Special Public Meeting, held at  
the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on November  
15, 2017, transcribed by me from a copy of the  
electronic sound recording to the best of my  
knowledge and ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date                      Adrianell Poteet Sorrels, Transcriber

REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

Public Meeting

November 22, 2017

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STATE OF ALASKA  
REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

Before Commissioners: Stephen McAlpine, Chairman  
Rebecca L. Pauli  
Robert M. Pickett  
Norman Rokeberg  
Janis W. Wilson

REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA  
701 West Eighth Avenue, Suite 300  
Anchorage, Alaska

PUBLIC MEETING

November 22, 2017  
9:00 a.m.

## REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

Public Meeting

November 22, 2017

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1 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: I can hear  
2 you. Go ahead.

3 MS. CUHNA: And I wasn't able to  
4 listen to the whole meeting, but I don't think  
5 if anyone mentioned price control at all --

6 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Excuse me.  
7 If you would -- if you would please identify  
8 yourself for the record.

9 MS. CUHNA: Oh, I'm sorry. It is  
10 -- before I did. My name is Ella and the last  
11 name is Cuhna and I'm calling from Southeast  
12 Alaska. And I would like ask about the price  
13 control and if anybody is thinking how to  
14 modify -- how to help with the high cost of  
15 middle mile to the IP -- to the small  
16 providers. It really (indiscernible) barriers  
17 that allows the smaller and most effective ISPs  
18 to enter and help with delivery and help with,  
19 you know, getting the internet to the customer.  
20 So was that discussed at all to make it more  
21 affordable to everybody because that's -- I  
22 think that was really -- is getting to the  
23 point.

24 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Did you say,  
25 Ella, that you said you were calling from

## REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

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1 valdez?

2 MS. CUHNA: No, I'm calling from  
3 Gustavus, Alaska.

4 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Oh, okay.  
5 That's near Coffman Cove, Rokeberg.

6 Did you have anything further,  
7 Ella, that you wanted to add?

8 MS. CUHNA: Well, not -- not at  
9 this time, but did -- are you aware of this  
10 being discussed at all?

11 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: I personally  
12 am not. I don't know who serves Gustavus.

13 MS. CUHNA: I'm not only -- I'm  
14 not only talking Gustavus, but I'm talking  
15 about the price control of the middle mile  
16 prices that are, you know, setups that are  
17 little ISPs who are the last mile and that --  
18 that's really -- I think that's a big one in  
19 bringing the internet to the people in rural,  
20 you know, places like southeast villages and  
21 also up north, I guess, the same thing.

22 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. And I  
23 apologize. I had understood, when you said  
24 southeast, I thought you had said Valdez, and I  
25 was familiar with what is -- as Ms. Comcoff

1 (ph), who is on the phone, with what they  
2 provide. And by the way, while you're  
3 listening Ms. Comcoff, congratulations on your  
4 deployment of the fiber up the highway.

5 Go ahead, Lisa.

6 MS. PHILLIPS: Yes. This is Lisa  
7 Phillips again from Alaska Communications.  
8 Gustavus is a location that we serve, but it is  
9 in the study area or group of villages in the  
10 Sitka Bush study area that are considered more  
11 remote than high cost. And right now it is not  
12 funded under the CAF-II funding.

13 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: And how is it  
14 served?

15 MS. PHILLIPS: It is served -- as  
16 far as broadband?

17 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: As far as  
18 equipment, what -- how is it -- is it fixed  
19 wireless, is it --

20 MS. PHILLIPS: It's a traditional  
21 POTS, plain old telephone service, and long  
22 distance going in.

23 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay.

24 MS. PHILLIPS: And I don't know  
25 which long distance providers provide into

1 Gustavus, but we're the local exchange  
2 provider.

3 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: And I see  
4 Shawn Uschmann shaking his head, so evidently  
5 AT&T -- are you the long distance provider into  
6 that area?

7 MR. USCHMANN: We provide  
8 microwave middle mile (off microphone.)

9 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. And is  
10 there any internet access into Gustavus?

11 MS. CUHNA: Can I -- I don't know  
12 if you can still hear me --

13 MR. USCHMANN: (Off microphone  
14 comment.)

15 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Oh, okay.

16 MR. USCHMANN: Company provides  
17 wireless internet --

18 THE REPORTER: Microphone.

19 MS. CUHNA: Well, Fiber Alaska is  
20 the -- takes wire internet service provider --  
21 provider that's serving Gustavus, as well as  
22 some other Southeast communities. And as many  
23 other fixed wire (indiscernible) internet  
24 access providers who are facing many challenges  
25 and we are not funded. All of the funding is

1 coming from the private pockets and we are not  
2 the local exchange carrier, we don't have one.

3 It's all being funded from the  
4 life savings and hard work of individuals that  
5 dedicated its hard work to community. But it's  
6 really provided a really good service except  
7 it's really hard to expand. What I'm trying to  
8 say is there is -- the prices that this  
9 provider is paying to the middle mile it's  
10 really preventing from further -- or faster  
11 expanding. That's what I would like to tackle.

12 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: And I -- if I  
13 understand correctly it's a cost issue? And,  
14 Lisa, would you like to address it?

15 MS. CUHNA: That --

16 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Actually,  
17 while you were -- Shawn Uschmann from AT&T was  
18 in the back of the room, Ella, and he was  
19 speaking at the same time you were, but he  
20 wasn't at a microphone, so you probably didn't  
21 hear what he had to say.

22 Did you want to address this any  
23 further, Lisa?

24 Okay. Shawn.

25 MR. USCHMANN: Thank you,

1 Commissioner. I just will say that AT&T is in  
2 the process right now of upgrading our  
3 microwave backhaul through Southeast Alaska to  
4 various communities.

5 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. And I  
6 don't know, "reasonable" is a relative term and  
7 I think that what's being hit upon here is the  
8 cost of bringing high speed internet into the  
9 home.

10 Is that correct, Ella?

11 MS. CUHNA: Yes, exactly. This  
12 becomes a significant portion that -- for the  
13 last mile and those expenses are just --  
14 there's not very much left for capital  
15 expenditure for ISP. And it's very hard to  
16 expense for communities, especially like the  
17 one in Gustavus where everything -- everybody  
18 is spread out and there's not the three -- you  
19 know, we're trying the hardest, but it's --  
20 there's not much help.

21 You know, everything is -- my son  
22 started this company and he so much -- you  
23 know, he put all his life -- yes, he loves his  
24 life -- trying to, you know, serve this cause  
25 and I -- I just would like to see if that

1 raises some -- if anybody will be doing  
2 anything on the price control that will help a  
3 little ISP for doing everything out of the pure  
4 dedication.

5 CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Mr. Gazaway.

6 MR. GAZAWAY: This issue has  
7 arisen more than once and what she's talking  
8 about is carrier transactions, carrier to --  
9 provider to provider, who owns a network and  
10 they lease it to other providers. The Rural  
11 Coalition, ACS argue the GCI TERRA rates were  
12 involved in Docket U-12-127 when we were  
13 looking at IXC COLR reassignments. It's an  
14 ongoing issue, but at that time the Commission  
15 did not take on the issue as it felt broadband  
16 rate oversight is not within its purview and I  
17 think that's what she's talking to is how to  
18 get better rates for internet service provider  
19 as they lease middle mile facilities from the  
20 facilities-based provider. I thought I would  
21 put it in its context.

22 CHAIRMAN McALPINE: Would either  
23 of you like to comment on it? Okay.

24 Thank you, Ella, for your  
25 participation.

1 COMMISSIONER ROKEBERG: Thank  
2 you, sir.

3 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Any further  
4 comment or question? Seeing none, thank you  
5 very much, Tom.

6 MR. BRADY: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Are there any  
8 other members of the Anchorage audience who  
9 wish to address the Commission?

10 Seeing none, is there any further  
11 participation from people who are participating  
12 by telephone? Hearing none, that concludes --

13 MR. AUSTIN: Hello.

14 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead.

15 MR. AUSTIN: Yes, very briefly.  
16 This is Jeremy Austin from Whitestone Power &  
17 Communications. I would like to address a  
18 question to the Rural Coalition and it also  
19 touches on what Ella Cuhna was mentioning.  
20 Given that ACS, for example, has advocated with  
21 the FCC that some type of carrier neutral  
22 middle mile should be established in Alaska is  
23 this something that the Rural Coalition is  
24 interested in doing? Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Shannon, if

1 you'd come to a microphone. This is Shannon  
2 Heim, again, addressing the question that was  
3 asked by Jeremy.

4 MS. HEIM: I appreciate the  
5 question. We've talked about access to the  
6 middle mile a lot. I feel like we've -- we've  
7 fought it out already and it kind of is what it  
8 is at this point. I think most carriers in the  
9 state are offering access to their middle mile  
10 on a nondiscriminatory basis. Cost is an  
11 issue, I expect it will always be an issue, but  
12 the more middle mile that gets implemented and  
13 put into this state -- I do think that there  
14 will be more competition and the price will  
15 come down. I think whenever you have a  
16 monopoly facility, especially when it's new and  
17 the costs are still being recovered, you know,  
18 the costs are high. And -- but as there are  
19 more alternatives and carriers are building  
20 more alternatives for themselves and working  
21 together to connect their middle mile pieces, I  
22 think we will see generally the price come  
23 down. But I think we've seen, from the FCC, at  
24 least right now, they don't have a lot of  
25 appetite to regulate the middle mile cost.

1                   CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Does that  
2 answer your question, Jeremy?

3                   MR. AUSTIN: Yes, it does. Thank  
4 you, sir.

5                   CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Thank you for  
6 your participation.

7                   Are there any other individuals  
8 on line who wish to address the Commission  
9 today.

10                  MS. WARNER: This is Susan  
11 warner, also calling from Gustavus.

12                  CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead,  
13 susan.

14                  MS. WARNER: I just wanted to  
15 point out, after Tom Brady's remark, that  
16 Hughes satellite, yes, nominally is a  
17 competitive alternative. However, his comment  
18 does leave out that you have to be able to see  
19 the satellite in its arch, I think it's 136  
20 degrees, through the trees and the hills. And  
21 its transmission latency is still obviously  
22 present in people's -- for people who have  
23 signed up for that service in Gustavus.  
24 Thanks.

25                  CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Thank you.

1 Tom, did you have any comment about that?

2 Okay. Moving on, is there anyone else  
3 appearing telephonically who would like to  
4 address the Commission?

5 MS. CUHNA: This is Ella Cuhna.  
6 Just one more little comment.

7 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead,  
8 Ella.

9 MS. CUHNA: When I was trying to  
10 talk somebody said that we mentioned that we  
11 too rural -- I'm sorry, my English -- but, you  
12 know, we trying and this is the point. We are  
13 out there and we are trying to give it to the  
14 people. So is there any incentive for little  
15 ISP? Is anybody thinking about us? You know,  
16 we are really rural and we are very passionate  
17 and we putting all our work, but nobody is  
18 really saying that we are too far out there.  
19 It's -- that's what we're supposed to be doing  
20 is bringing it out there, right?

21 CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Well, I guess  
22 your comment goes to the choice of lifestyle.  
23 I suggested to my wife when I left Juneau that  
24 we moved to Valdez, and she reminded me that  
25 there was no Nordstroms there. So --

## REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

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1                   Is there anything further? Are  
2 there other members --

3                   MS. CUHNA: I --

4                   CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Go ahead.

5                   MS. CUHNA: I just want to finish  
6 that, you know, we have the people here in  
7 Europe that are being -- you know, Europe, but  
8 Eastern Europe, they have much better internet  
9 and in the country than -- and it's supported  
10 by the whole -- you know, I'm not refuting your  
11 opinion or anything, but it's being supported.  
12 And the little communities here, they really  
13 need some help and the really rural providers  
14 that are trying are being blocked by the big  
15 guys that they do get (indiscernible) for the  
16 middle mile. That's all.

17                  CHAIRMAN MCALPINE: Okay. Thank  
18 you. Is there anyone else appearing by  
19 telephone who wishes to address the Commission?

20                  Hearing none, we're closing out  
21 Item No. 1 and No. 2, we actually -- are  
22 combined.

23                  Is there any business to come  
24 before the Commission? Hearing none, the chair  
25 will entertain a motion to adjourn.

# **Emailed Comments**

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Jackie and Edward Debevec [mailto:akdebevec@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:22 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep\_David\_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us; Rep.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Broadband in Fairbanks, please do something!

RCA,

I thank Rep Guttenberg for speaking for us, his constituents at the Special Public Meeting this morning. We are very frustrated with the amount of broadband we get in Fairbanks. My husband and I work at UAF and live only 9 miles away from UAF, but only have the option of 4mg of Internet speed. When answering emails, watching movies, or googling information, we constantly are stopped because of the speed of our Internet connection. In this day and age, it is unacceptable. I can understand it if we lived in the Bush, but we don't! We live 9 miles away from Fairbanks.

We don't have children, but I advise several thousands of University and homeschool students who live in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. They need to have reliable Internet to complete their homework, a basic necessity.

Like Rep Guttenberg, we don't mind putting down a \$1000 investment to get higher speed. Please listen to our voices and help us fix this fixable problem.

-Jackie and Edward Debevec  
3662 Hardluck Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

**From:** sue.sherif@alaska.net [mailto:sue.sherif@alaska.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 12:21 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Guttenberg, David (LEG) <representative.david.guttenberg@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Docket I-17-004 Testimony and a Question

Please accept the attached as written citizen's testimony for today's hearing. I was prepared to give it via phone this morning, but after 3 hours of very interesting and extended testimony and with no idea when additional non-Anchorage testimony might be heard, how many Anchorage testifiers there might be, nor how long oral testimony might be taken, I have decided to submit my thoughts via email. (There were 23 others on the phone when I dialed back in after the break.)

I would like to see that transcript of the hearing when it is available. I assume that it will be posted on the RCA website. How long will it take to be available to the public?

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sue Sherif  
PO Box 82668  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708  
907-750-4762

## Docket I-17-004

Before my 2014 retirement, I worked with an Alaska State Library project funded by the US Department of Commerce, the Gates Foundation, and the Rasmuson Foundation to bring improved bandwidth to 67 remote and rural public libraries all over the State of Alaska. We had the opportunity to work with most of the major state and some of the local bandwidth providers. Working in Anchorage at that time I attended most of the deliberations of the then Governor's Advisory Broadband Task Force.

As a result of those experiences I learned much about the challenges and high costs of providing even minimal usable, interactive bandwidth to our entire state. At that time, I assumed that the gaps in broadband access were restricted to small villages in remote areas, but in retirement I have returned to Fairbanks to find that there are pockets of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, some closer to the center of Fairbanks than I live, where conventional broadband service is still not available. Yet Fairbanks would be assumed to be one of the spots in the state where access to broadband is available to all. So accurate mapping is very much an issue as one looks at gaps in Alaska broadband service and access.

Currently, I work as an occasional substitute at the Fairbanks public library, on whose behalf I am not testifying. The library serves some of these people who cannot access broadband from their homes. There I have seen even closer up another factor that creates a gap in broadband access for Alaskans. Every 4-hour shift I work, I have the occasion to help at least one and sometimes as many as a half-dozen people, primarily in their late 30 years or older who do not own computers and who went to school before they were ubiquitous, who need instruction in computer basics in order to carry out basic life tasks in an era where more and more services are carried out online. Increasingly people must go online in order to apply for jobs, participate in job interviews, receive training and take exams for certifications and licensures, do banking, receive Skype or Facetime calls from their loved ones serving in the military, and order products not available locally. I am proud that other public library staff and I are able to help these individuals make their first steps across the digital divide, but there are still many Alaskans who live out of reach of a public library or who do not know where to turn when they are faced with the instructions to link with a URL to accomplish a life task. The need to close the infrastructure gap is real as is the need for affordable consumer service and so is the need to fill the gap of computer skills for inexperienced citizens in a world gone digital.

Sue Sherif  
1966 Camomile  
PO Box 82668  
Fairbanks, AK 99708

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Connie Newman [mailto:cnewman@iditarodsd.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 10:03 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Docket #1-17-004

Good Morning,

I would like to comment on the expansion of broadband for the state of Alaska; Docket #1-17-004.

As the district superintendent for the Iditarod Area School District I have the responsibility for ensuring that all school sites in the district have reliable connectivity and phone service.

Currently we have a contract for internet connects with a 10mg for braod-band connection and voice phone lines for each school. For our connectivity alone the district pays over \$21,000 a month for the seven villages. Yet with this fee paid for services our sites do not have a reliable connection for conducting basic school business. Our phones are not always reliable either.

I would like to have an equitable connectivity for all students and communities in our state. This connectivity is necessary to meet the goals of safety and access to all citizens.

Please call if you need additional information to clarify the isolation of our villages with limited data or voice access.

*Connie A. Newman, Superintendent  
Iditarod Area School District  
Box 90  
McGrath, AK 99627*

[cnewman@iditarodsd.org](mailto:cnewman@iditarodsd.org)

*907-524-1221 Voice  
907-524-3217 Fax*

## Appendix F

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

-Winston Churchill

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Doug Braddock [mailto:djbraddock@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 12:50 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Broadband Internet Service

Dear Members of the RCA -

My name is Doug Braddock and I live at 2030 Teton Court in Fairbanks. In 2014/2015, we built a house in a newly-platted subdivision called Magoffin Highlands, about a mile north of the University of Alaska. Our subdivision has 73 lots, many of which have had houses constructed on them over the last several years.

We have no broadband internet service available. I have been told by GCI that we are out of their service area and that they have no plans to expand their area to include Magoffin Highlands. They say this even though GCI has physical infrastructure located within 500 feet of our new house.

ACS has told us that they cannot provide landline phone service to our house, much less any level of DSL service. Again, we were told that they have no plans to extend additional service to our area.

We are currently limited to using AT&T cellular service as our internet access. Download speeds average 2 MB/sec, and we have a 30 GB/month bandwidth cap. Given that the FCC classifies "broadband" as beginning at 25 MB/sec, we are a long way from having broadband access. And it is expensive.

This would be an understandable situation if we lived on the fringes of town, but we are only a mile north of UAF. As public utilities, I feel that GCI and ACS should be far more willing to expand their infrastructure to serve additional residential areas around Fairbanks. Lack of area wide broadband infrastructure is a limiter of economic development. I understand that the return on investment for residential services can be long term, but I also think that these utilities should be looking to the future and expand to areas like ours that are obviously growing and needing their services.

I wouldn't complain about this situation if I felt that these public utilities had expansion plans that were being actively pursued. They are not forthcoming with information and at times have been unresponsive to reasonable inquiries and requests for service.

Thanks for listening!

Doug

Douglas Braddock  
[djbraddock@gmail.com](mailto:djbraddock@gmail.com)  
907-978-5149

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Owen Guthrie [mailto:oguthrie@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 1:07 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep. David Guttenberg <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Broadband Needs in Fairbanks

Greetings,

I appreciate your time and attention spent focused on the connectivity issues and challenges throughout Alaska.

There is a dire need of access to the Internet in the Interior of Alaska. As Rep. Guttenberg testified, there are literally thousands of families who live within a few miles of the University of Alaska Fairbanks with little to no internet access. On a statewide scale, this lack of services is a detriment to employers and employees and the larger picture of Alaskan economic development. Also, our learners (K-12 through adult) need access to modern educational materials and communities. Our school curricula are limited by internet connectivity in the homes of our students. Thus, we are collectively limited by our slowest connected families.

Connectivity infrastructure is essential if Alaska is to make the transition to a knowledge based economy.

As our providers peck away at improving access, the sand drains from the hourglass. At current rates, we will effectively never achieve modern internet access for Alaskans - even to those living in relatively high density population areas such as Fairbanks. In many high density neighborhoods such as those close to UAF, providers have had 20 years or more to provide services and have not come close to meeting the need.

Listening to the plans of GCI and ACS leaves me concerned. These are good people and good companies, however, they have had decades to meet the need. Their ongoing planning does not address serving everyone with modern capacities, and their quoted target speeds are already becoming quaint. 10 Mbps tomorrow is the equivalent of the 56K connection of yesterday. We need to build for the future.

Lastly, the pacific northwest is experiencing a huge boom in high paying tech jobs and many of the jobs coming from firms like Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook are accessible by remotely based knowledge workers. Alaska is well positioned to house this workforce of the future and many qualified employees seek Alaska's outdoors and recreational lifestyle. However, all remotely based professional positions and educational/workforce development opportunities require solid connectivity infrastructure.

We need fast infrastructure, and we need it yesterday.

Best wishes and thanks again for your consideration.

Owen Guthrie  
1470 Ithaca Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Donald Fry [mailto:[dpfry@gci.net](mailto:dpfry@gci.net)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 3:18 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <[rca.mail@alaska.gov](mailto:rca.mail@alaska.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: internet

----- Original Message -----

**From:**  
"Donald Fry" <[dpfry@gci.net](mailto:dpfry@gci.net)>

**To:**  
<[rcamail@alaska.gov](mailto:rcamail@alaska.gov)>

**Cc:**

**Sent:**  
Wed, 22 Nov 2017 10:29:02 -0900  
**Subject:**  
internet

It is taking over two days to receive any information on my internet. It's very slow to respond, if it does. This is sad because I have two fiberoptic cables less than 200 feet from my house that ACS states cannot be used by Salcha residents because there aren't enough of us. Yet the villages have it. I respectfully suggest that there be NO MORE grants (using my tax dollars) to the internet companies until they resolve this issue. Paula A.  
Fry [dpfry@gci.net](mailto:dpfry@gci.net) 907-488-3098

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Cindy Jeffries [mailto:brutusgus@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 4:09 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** internet issues

I wish I could get faster speed where I live, here in Salcha. Some days my speed just stops when my computer is trying to update. Please help. Thanks. Cindy Jeffries

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Ken [mailto:ken\_carr56@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 4:15 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Fairbanks internet issues

Dear RCA,

We live close to the University of Alaska Fairbanks in a developing neighborhood, and we are unable to get internet service of any kind. We have looked into the issue diligently and repeatedly, however we currently are forced to use limited cell phone data as our only available source.

It greatly hinders our ability to work from home, engage in online commerce, or get basic news sources that are standard throughout the country and even a majority of the rural villages in Alaska. We are willing and able to pay for service, and any efforts to increase the availability would be greatly beneficial. Consistent, fast, accessible internet service is vitally important to be involved in and contribute to our community and society.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Carr

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Gary Pohl [mailto:garypohl@acsalaska.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 12:37 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** 'Rep. David Guttenberg' <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Broadband Internet

RCA: I missed the teleconference this morning (Nov 22), however, I want to give you my comments.

I am an architect, and I work out of my house. While I am one of the lucky ones to have a DSL here in Ester, the band width is very slow, and frustrating. I've checked with ACS, and there is nothing they can do to increase the speed, and GCI is not out here yet.

I saw on PBS News Hour last night that our country ranks way below other nations in broadband, and Alaska is undoubtedly one of the lowest ranked states in this regard. We recently went to Italy and the UK, and we were amazed how fast their internet connections are. So amazed that it was depressing to get home and get back on the slow system here at home. They also have a very secure set up everywhere for points of sale in the European Union. Getting back home, I had no issues with the various transactions I made by credit card, very secure.

I would love to see Alaska get "up to speed". I also feel for those in the rural communities.

Thanks,

**Gary H. Pohl**  
PO Box 346  
Ester, AK 99725  
(907)479-9453 Home  
(907)388-8085 Mobile

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** jerry@alaskajam.com [mailto:jerry@alaskajam.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 12:50 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Internet broadband

**Dear Sirs and Madams:**

I am writing to express my frustration with the abysmal internet services that are available at my location on the outskirts of Fairbanks. My location is less than 10 road miles from the downtown courthouse and the best internet available is ATT cellular, which provides up to 10 mbs for the first 22.5 gigabytes after which it throttles down to somewhere around 0.2 mbs. 50 gigs unthrottled is around \$300/mo.

For several years now GCI has had a cable less than 1/2 mile away but has informed me it is not being extended to my property, even though the residential density is similar to the area it now passes through.

Thank you for holding a hearing on this today and I'm sorry I was unable to attend.

Gerald Rafson  
1912 Gilmore Trail  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 22, 2017

**From:** Burns Cooper [mailto:gburnsc@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2017 11:05 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** broadband internet service

Hello—thanks for the chance to comment.

Broadband internet is increasingly a precondition for living in the modern world; it seems to be assumed by businesses and even government agencies everywhere except Alaska.

My wife and I moved into our current house in 2011; the listing documents claimed it had "high-speed internet access," but that actually meant a decrepit DSL connection that the phone company was not updating and ended shortly after that. Ever since, we have been struggling to get access. Some years, we've had no connection at all; at other times, slow and spotty access that would allow short emails but nothing else. We do not live way out in the Bush; we're less than 2 miles (5 minutes at most) from the UAF campus in the long-established College Hills subdivision. Our cell phone service is lousy, TV reception limited, and we only have internet because our neighbors across the road, with a slightly better location and a very high antenna, generously share their reception. It's wireless reception, though, so it's still very vulnerable to weather and other issues.

Ever since we moved in, we've been pestering all the providers in town for service. I've wasted countless hours being told they could help me, then finding out they couldn't (or wouldn't). GCI supposedly has a secret plan for expanding fiber optic cable, but all I know is that the years go by without it getting any closer. The private sector seems uninterested in home internet service. I have friends much farther out of town with cable service. But one lives on the way to a mine, another on the way to other industries. It's time for the public sector to do something. What about requiring utilities with monopolies or semi-monopolies to provide the services they're supposed to? There's no meaningful competition in Fairbanks.

I went to the meeting sponsored by Rep. Guttenberg and was heartened by it, but so far I haven't heard of any progress toward cooperatives or any other solutions.

Thanks,

Burns Cooper

745 Goldfinch Road, Fairbanks

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 27, 2017

**From:** Jill Holmgren [mailto:jill907jon@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 24, 2017 10:43 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Internet Service in Interior Alaska

To Whom it May Concern,

I support efforts to improve and expand faster, more reliable internet service to Interior Alaska. Poor internet service has hampered our family's ability to take advantage of online educational opportunities. For our friends and neighbors, it has inhibited and prevented operation and expansion of online businesses. We have contacted numerous companies to request faster service to our large subdivision in Goldstream Valley, with no results. Instead, we are left with receiving internet through the air from a tower that is miles away, experiencing slowdowns and dropped service, and a lack of service during heavy rain. Please do what is necessary to provide Interior Alaska with better educational and economic opportunity.

Thank you,  
Jill Holmgren

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 27, 2017

**From:** bband@steveest.es [mailto:bband@steveest.es]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 26, 2017 7:32 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** My abysmal internet

**RCA:**

I live in Fairbanks on a primary road leading to Goldstream Valley. A short 3.2 miles north the University of Alaska's Super Computer Center, and not much further to an enormous bandwidth serving the North Slope and soon to Europe and Japan. The GCI cable is less than two miles from me.

On December 18, 2006 I choose ACS High Speed Internet Service. I paid for 1Mbps service, but I have never received more than 0.7 Mbps.

Today, nearly 11 years later I still receive the same sub-megabit service at over \$90/mo. While ACS advertises a broadband unlimited plan for \$79. Unavailable to me.

When ACS offered cellular "broadband" service, I subscribed in April 2014. However, I was warned that if I give up my DSL service I would never be able to get it back because the minimum service offered is now 10Mbps. (Strange business model ?) So I subscribed to both.

The ACS service became GCI in April 2016 and I terminated September 2016 when GCI wanted to double my rate to \$120/mo for 20GB. My data rate peaked at 20Mbps, but most often undependable and much, much slower. Before the end of the month I always had to resort to the ultra-slow ASL DSL because my 20GB quota was exceeded. I even installed an outdoor antenna to improve the situation but the neighboring trees were a factor.

In addition I have an AT&T 40GB/mo plan (over \$350/mo). I had hoped it would be reliable enough to do away with my DSL. But alas, I average 1.42Mbps with a 260ms latency and "no service" often enough not to depend on it.

I have also had the ISP, AC wireless do a site survey with negative results.

I have looked into satellite: The Dish network provider would not install because of my location. So I did it myself after installing a tower at the end of my property, 400' from by house, and cutting down a forest of trees. Still, I can only see the 119 and 129 satellites. The new Hughsnet high speed service is not visible as it is further to the east. Nor is Dish 110, which carries the Fairbanks local channels. I am unserved over-the-air by ABC, CBS, FOX, CW because of that same ridge to the east

Given that Goldstream ranks at, or near the top in educational attainment in Alaska, and is comparable to high tech areas of like Seattle and San Francisco (<https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Alaska/Goldstream/Educational-Attainment>). It is a dire situation that theses people (including me), many who tech or research at the university are so poorly served.

When I have to "upgrade" my Windows, Mac OS, or iPhone apps. I usually drive to town to a restaurant or library to get enough bandwidth.

As I have demonstrated: I bare little expense, and have gone to considerable effort, to solve my internet problem.

I would be happy to pay even more for a satisfactory near term solution.

## Appendix F

**One last thing: With the promised expansion of the Gas Utility in the Goldstream area. Would it not make sense to install fibre optic cable at the same time ? It seem strange that this pipe is being built with out a secure source of gas. Yet there is an enormous source of bandwidth just a few miles away and no fiber.**

**Regards,  
Streve Estes  
972 Ballaine Road  
Fairbanks, AK 9909  
iPhone 907-460-1000**

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 27, 2017

**From:** Ann Stone [mailto:queenmother.stone@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 23, 2017 12:37 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Salcha internet service

To whom it may concern,

#1 -I am a widow and single mother trying to support my family preparing taxes. During the season I am havung more and more difficulty e-filing my clients' tax returns to the IRS. If I am unable to e-file any return I must include a letter explaining why it was mailed. Currently I live at 6550 Richardson Highway and my internet is very slow on good days and often goes down all together and this isn't even my busy time of year.

#2 - I also have a home at 7290 Richardson Highway that I am currently preparing to run as a Bed & Breakfast but am worried that I will not have anyone interested if I do not offer internet there. I have police reports on file from vandalism to the house over the past year but can not put up home security without internet or cell service to that location. Also, I will not be able to use my office to run my tax and pay roll business without these amenities.

#3 I have a rental home at 7629 Richardson Highway but have not been able to find any interested tenants when I explain the internet issues that we are having in our area. The home is not far from Eielson AFB and with the proposed increased maning there, it seems a shame to not have this home in the Borough rental inventory.

This lack of upgraded internet is causing a financial hardship on me and my family. Having a speedy internet is fun for those who use it for gaming but it has become a necessity for those of us who use it for work and support.

It is sad when remote areas of the State have faster internet and a considerably smaller population than do the folks in Salcha. Please consider upgrading our area so that we will be able to compete with the rest of the State and the world.

--

Ann Stone

I will grow where I am planted

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 27, 2017

**From:** C Smith [mailto:scandace18@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 23, 2017 7:54 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** slow internet

I've been told I should send an email to this address if I have problems with my internet through ATT. Well, I have problems.

For \$230/month, which includes 2 tablets, 2 phones, and the internet - the largest portion of the bill by far - I receive totally substandard service. I live 1/2 mile below the ATT/Alascom tower on Orchid Drive in Salcha. The tower is loaded with equipment installed by ATT and God knows who else, but none of it helps me. I'm supposed to receive LTE service, but that's laughable.

For example, late in September, I received a call from a friend who also has an iPhone. She asked if I'd updated the OS, which I hadn't. She told me it took her 12 hours to update it. It was a huge update, granted, but with our service and the amount we pay, 12 hours, really? I was leaving for Maine within a couple of days and told her I would use my sister's internet and let her know the results. My sister, in Yarmouth, Maine, has WiFi - the whole town has WiFi - and also has unlimited data. I set my phone to update and could hardly wait to call my friend when it finished. Instead of 12 hours, it took me 20 minutes - no lie. I was simply astounded! What the hell am I paying for?

Calls to ATT accomplish nothing but offered excuses - weather, satellite placement, trees in the way (really? I live on a hill, face directly south and am cleared all the way around. I can see the Alaskan Range!) I still get excuses. They are about the only game in town, though. For adequate cell phone coverage, we stick with them. And, from what I've heard, everyone's internet is basically as slow as ATT where I live. GCI is not available to me or I would gladly pay for a DSL line.

So there you have it. I've had ATT for almost 3 years, paying well over \$200/month, and receive substandard service. I'm hoping this email will accomplish something.

Thank you,  
Candace Smith  
Salcha Alaska

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 27, 2017

**From:** Amy Viltrakis [mailto:alviltrakis@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2017 9:22 AM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Internet service

Dear RCA,

I was unable to attend the meeting about our Internet in Salcha the other day. I currently am using Hughesnet as my provider, but the service is very limited and unreliable. I had to go this route due to my location- about 1/4 mile from the highway. Most days I do not have service or the best time for service is from 2-6 am. My service is also disrupted with weather, but it can be a sunny day and it still doesn't work.

I would appreciate the RCA helping our community establish a reliable service that is available to all homes. I feel that our community should have the same access as other small communities in Alaska.

Thank you,  
Amy Viltrakis

## Appendix F

**RECEIVED**

By the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on Nov 28, 2017

**From:** Tina Buxbaum [mailto:tinacarrbaum@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2017 1:54 PM  
**To:** Mail, RCA (RCA sponsored) <rca.mail@alaska.gov>; Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov  
**Cc:** ken carr <ken\_carr56@hotmail.com>  
**Subject:** Broadband Internet Service in Fairbanks

Dear Members of the RCA and Representative Guttenberg -

My name is Tina Buxbaum (my husband Ken Carr is cc'ed on this message as well) and we live at 2043 Teton Court in Fairbanks. In 2014 we built a house in a newly-platted subdivision called Magoffin Highlands, about a mile north of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Our subdivision has 73 lots, many of which have had houses constructed on them over the last several years.

We have no broadband internet service available. We have been told by GCI that we are out of their service area and that they have no plans to expand their area to include Magoffin Highlands. They say this even though GCI has physical infrastructure located near our house.

ACS has told us that they cannot provide landline phone service to our house, much less any level of DSL service. Again, we were told that they have no plans to extend additional service to our area.

We are currently limited to using AT&T cellular service as our internet access. Download speeds average 2 MB/sec with the use of a cell signal booster installed in a tree in our yard, and we have a 40 GB/month plan. Given that the FCC classifies "broadband" as beginning at 25 MB/sec, we are a long way from having broadband access. And it is expensive.

This would be an understandable situation if we lived "off the grid" or miles from town, but we are only, at most, a mile north of UAF. As public utilities, I feel that GCI and ACS should be far more willing to expand their infrastructure to serve additional residential areas around Fairbanks. Lack of area wide broadband infrastructure is a limiter of economic development. I understand that the return on investment for residential services can be long term, but I also think that these utilities should be looking to the future and expand to areas like ours that are obviously growing and needing their services.

I wouldn't complain about this situation if I felt that these public utilities had expansion plans that were being actively pursued. They are not forthcoming with information and at times have been unresponsive to reasonable inquiries and requests for service.

Thanks for listening!

Sincerely,

Tina M. Buxbaum  
[tinacarrbaum@gmail.com](mailto:tinacarrbaum@gmail.com)  
907-978-8383