

Southeast Conference

Resolution 14-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE PROVIDING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL BROADBAND TASKFORCE FOR RURAL SOUTHEAST ALASKA, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INVESTMENT CRITERIA, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ESTABLISHED BY THE AUGUST 2013 STATE OF ALASKA BROADBAND TASKFORCE REPORT

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference (SEC) is a not-for-profit organization which serves as the southeast Alaska region's EDA-recognized economic development organization, and assumes a lead role in coordinated, multi-community economic development planning and action in southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Development states: "The provision of broadband service is vital to the economic development, education, health, and safety of rural Americans;"¹ and

WHEREAS, rural southeast Alaskan communities – many of which are accessible only by air or water -- struggle to develop sustainable, diversified economies due to issues of geographic isolation, and very limited access to resource development opportunities in the adjoining Tongass National Forest, and other federally-controlled lands which comprise 94% of the southeast Alaska region; and

WHEREAS, technological innovation continues to change the nature of global commerce, circumventing the limitations imposed by physical proximity and geographical isolation, and creating new, electronic connections between communities and economies; and

WHEREAS, broadband infrastructure produces cross-cutting benefits and value for all industries, improving access to markets, information, resources, and opportunities in an increasingly technologically-driven global business environment; and

WHEREAS, broadband is capable of enhancing all existing economic activity resident within rural Alaskan communities, creating new opportunities and tech-driven industries for rural southeast Alaskan communities, and assisting in diversifying rural economies beyond traditional natural resource-based economic activity; and

WHEREAS, broadband access generates social benefits which may include public safety improvements; new e-learning and distance learning opportunities for rural Alaskans; electronically-delivered healthcare services; and new job opportunities allowing rural youth to remain within their communities as successful adults; and

WHEREAS, many of Southeast Conference's member communities believe they lack adequate access to high speed broadband services, and desire equitable opportunities to derive socioeconomic benefit from broadband infrastructure; and

¹ US Federal Register / Vol. 78, No. 112 / p. 34980

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WHEREAS, the relatively small size, geographic isolation, and limited capacity of these communities makes it necessary for them to work collaboratively to establish equitable opportunities for broadband access; and

WHEREAS, the Statewide Broadband Task Force was appointed by Commissioner Susan Bell in February 2011 to develop a plan that would accelerate the deployment, availability and adoption of affordable broadband technology throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force defined two key goals for Alaska, the first goal was to make it possible for Alaskans to participate and be competitive in the global community by extending the full benefits of broadband technology to every Alaskan; and

WHEREAS, the second goal of the Task Force was to provide access to 100 megabits per second of connectivity to every Alaskan household; and

WHEREAS, sufficient access to internet technology and broadband connectivity has evolved into a basic human right; and

THEREFORE BE IT SO RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS;

Section 1

Southeast Conference supports development of a Broadband Task Force, which shall:

- Identify broadband development needs and opportunities in southeast Alaska.
- Leverage public, private, and tribal resources as needed to address broadband needs and opportunities.
- Utilize a coordinated, regional approach to seek grant funding, respond to public comment opportunities, provide policy recommendations, attract private investment, and complete other activities as necessary to address broadband development in rural Southeast Alaska.

Section 2

Southeast Conference supports the development objectives, investment criteria, and policy recommendations established in the Alaska Broadband Taskforce Report published August 2013, and strongly encourage the State of Alaska to strategically allocate resources to realize the goal of 100 megabits per second broadband connectivity for everyone Alaskan by 2020.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS ON September 19, 2013 AND DUE TO SUNSET ON OCTOBER 19, 2014

Witness by:



Lori Blood
President

Attest:



Shelly Wright
Executive Director