



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We are writing regarding the ReConnect Program, established as a result of President Trump's effort in 2017 to identify legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities and Congress's inclusion of this broadband program in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018. Administered by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), the first round of the ReConnect Program has already accomplished much in Alaska. Support from this program will enable the Cordova Telephone Cooperative, Inc. to bring high speed broadband to nearly 270 rural households in Yakutat, a rural community in southeast Alaska. Much more remains to be done, however.

Alaska faces unique challenges to deploying rural broadband infrastructure. Alaska is America's last and greatest frontier. Our state has vast expanses—areas larger than most other states—devoid of interconnected roads, an electric grid, or water and sewage systems. Despite the lack of basic infrastructure other states take for granted, the people who live and work in rural Alaska need broadband to succeed. Our rural health clinics need broadband to power telemedicine services, our rural village schools need broadband to connect their students to critical education resources, and the businesses in our rural villages need broadband to compete in a global economy.

It is critical that the second round of the ReConnect program do as much as possible to help Alaska close the digital divide. Several Alaska-based providers submitted applications for ReConnect support in the current funding round. Despite a significant amount of progress in recent years, entire regions of our state still lack access to any terrestrial broadband service. We need to close those gaps so Alaska can keep pace with the information needs of the 21st Century economy. We encourage you to review those applications carefully while considering Alaska's unique situation and needs. Consistent with applicable law, policy, and guidance, we respectfully ask that you give due consideration all Alaskan grant applications and that you keep our offices apprised of the outcome of the applications.

We applaud your leadership and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's mission of investing in the critical infrastructure necessary for economic development in rural America. USDA's financial investments made on behalf of the American people have the power to unlock private investment, boost

economic opportunity, and reinvigorate rural communities. Expanding rural broadband infrastructure is among the nation's most important priorities.

We remain eager to work with you to improve connectivity in rural Alaska and appreciate your considerable efforts so far. Please contact our respective offices with any questions.

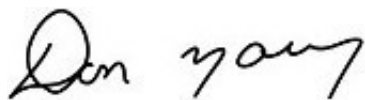
Sincerely,



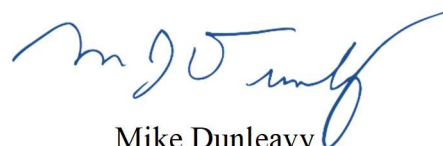
Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska



Mike Dunleavy
Governor of Alaska

cc: Honorable Chad Rupe, Rural Utility Service