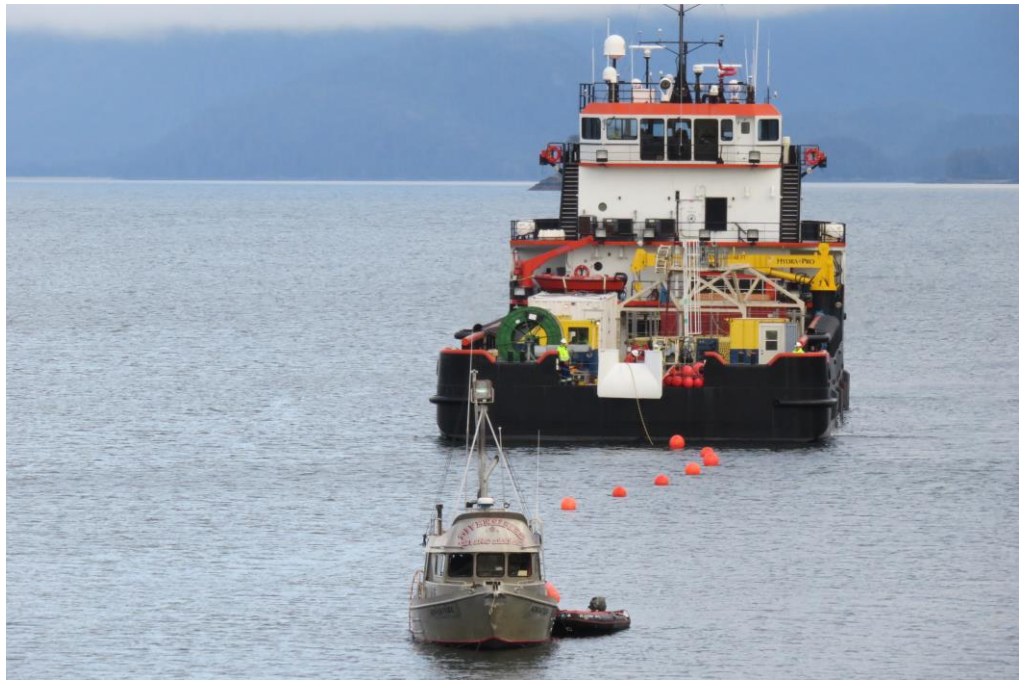
Broadband Infrastructure

February 17, 2022
Alaska Municipal League

Alaska Telecom Association

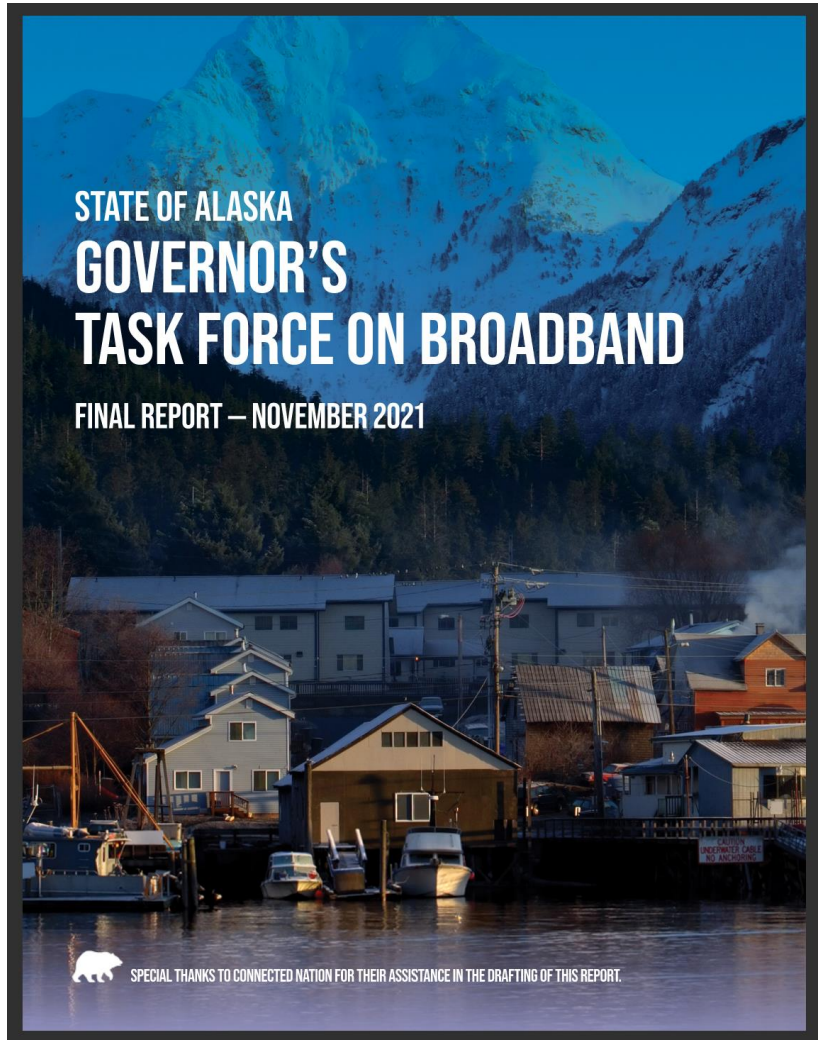
State of Telecom: MOMENTUM

- Now
  - 54,000+ locations upgraded or newly deployed
  - $1.2B capex 2017-2020
  - $100M USDA ReConnect Grants
  - ~3,500 employees



- Next
  - Governor's Task Force on Broadband
  - Infrastructure, Investment, & Jobs Act (IIJA)

Governor's Task Force on Broadband



- Administrative Order 322
- 11 Voting Members
- 2 Ex Officio Members
- 8 Tasks
- 2 Subgroups
- 32 Public Meetings
- gov.alaska.gov/broadband

Target the Unserved & Underserved

Robust broadband services should be available to **all Alaskans**. Policymakers should expand buildout objectives to deploy infrastructure to **meet the needs of unserved and underserved locations** across Alaska.

Define Gaps

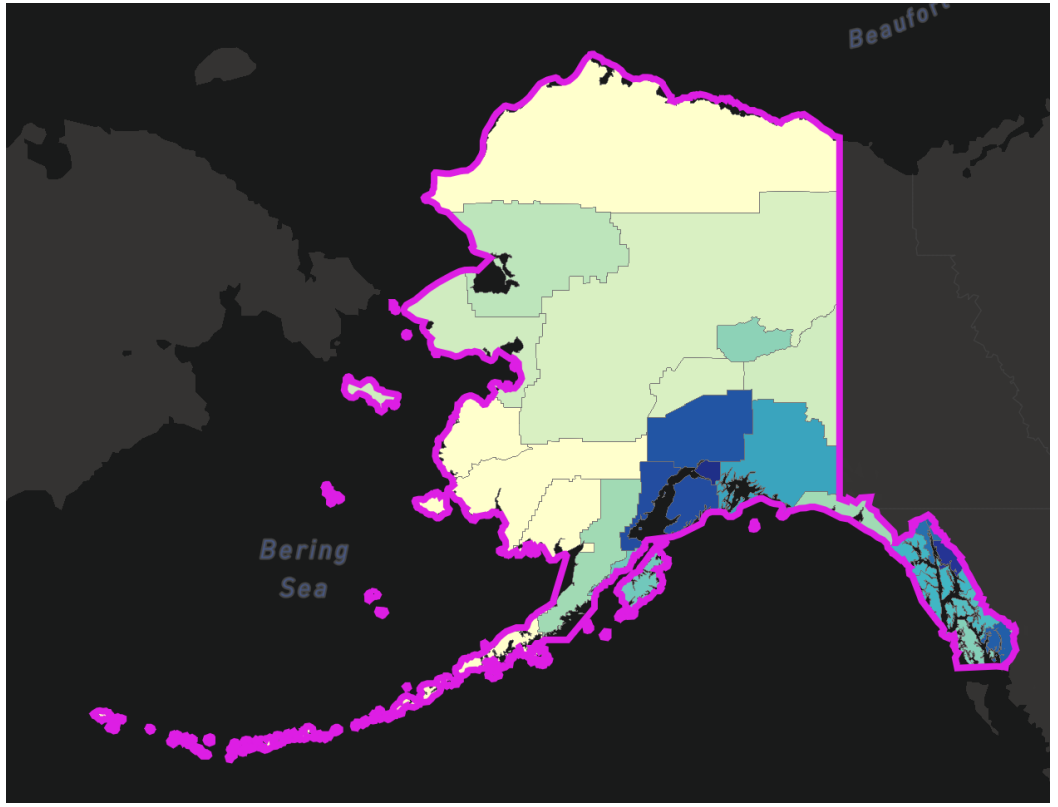
- Speeds: **100/20Mbps**
- Latency: less than **100 milliseconds**, sufficient for real-time applications like 2-way video
- Data usage: comparable to **urban** markets
- Reliability: **24/7 service** with minimal downtime and resistant to single points of failure

Identify Middle Mile Needs

Broadband policy and program analyses should include data gathering and research to **identify where additional middle-mile capacity is needed** to meet established or potential last-mile service availability speed targets, recognizing that any established **standards will need to evolve** with the growing demands of technology and consumer usage over time.

Ensure Accurate Maps

Accurate, granular broadband availability and infrastructure **maps should define where unserved and underserved areas exist**



Lack of Affordability Creates Gaps

Policymakers should recognize that **affordability is an important element** in defining where gaps in broadband infrastructure exist. Policymakers should also recognize that **affordability is driven by underlying costs** associated with Alaska's unique operational environment and that **partnerships** between service providers and state and federal programs are important in achieving affordable service delivery to end-users.

Prioritize Local Workforce Development

Additional priority should be given to broadband infrastructure projects that include **support for local workforce development.**

Don’t Widen the Digital Divide

Policymakers should also recognize the importance of **minimizing the disparity in access to broadband service** that may develop because of fast-paced technological evolution and strive to ensure that equitable development continues to occur.

Give Preference to Fiber Middle Mile

Due to its unparalleled bandwidth, latency, upgradeability, and reliability, **fiber-optic cables** should be deployed wherever feasible and practical to facilitate middle-mile connections.

Establish an Office of Broadband Deployment

An Alaska Office of Broadband Deployment should be established to provide **leadership and direction** to the state's efforts to ensure the expansion of broadband access and digital equity for all Alaskans.

Infrastructure, Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA)

- $42.45B - Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment (BEAD)
- $14.2B - Affordable Connectivity Program
- $2.75B - Digital Equity Planning, Capacity & Competitive Grants
- $2B - Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program
- $1B – Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program
- $2B – Broadband ReConnect Program
- $250k – Denali Commission

BEAD

- Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment (BEAD)
  - Administered by NTIA, “primarily for the purposes of state broadband planning and deployment”
  - State of Alaska Office of Broadband
  - Priorities
    - Unserved <25/3Mbps
    - Underserved <100/20Mbps
    - Anchor institutions
  - Requires 5-year plan
    - Minimum 100/20Mbps, low latency, scalable
    - Collaboration with local and statewide entities

BEAD Timeline

- BEAD
  - $5M planning funds summer 2022
  - FCC maps FIRST
    - Will define unserved & underserved locations
    - Will be used to calculate allocations to states
    - “In general.--On or after the date on which the broadband DATA maps are made public, the Assistant Secretary shall allocate to eligible entities,”

Affordable Connectivity Program

- $14.2B
- Subsidy of $75/month for low-income families
- $100 towards device
- Available now!

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

- $2B more for existing program
- Federally recognized Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, Tribal Colleges, Alaska Native Corporations
- Deployment, telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion

WASHINGTON – The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced today it has awarded three additional grants as part of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. These grants, totaling $1.5 millior are being awarded to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Lincoln, Ore., and two Alaskan villages: the Village of Clarks Point and the Native Village of Selawik.

Middle Mile Grants Program

- $1B nationwide
- Expand and extend middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas to the internet backbone
- Caution: small $ & big competition

Broadband ReConnect Program

- Very well-suited to Alaska
- $100M grants awarded to Alaska for broadband infrastructure
- $2B added to existing program
- Round 3 application window
- Round 4, summer 2023?

Questions

Christine O'Connor

Executive Director

Alaska Telecom Association

oconnor@alaskatel.org

(907) 563-4000