



Northwest Arctic Leadership Team

[DATE]

Senator Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dan Sullivan
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate office Building
Washington, DC 20510

*Delivered electronically to Garrett_Boyle@murkowski.senate.gov and
Larry_Burton@sullivan.senate.gov*

Re: Urging action to preserve the Universal Service Fund

Dear Honorable Senators Murkowski and Sullivan,

The Northwest Arctic Leadership Team (NWALT) is writing to express our deep concern regarding the significant risks to the Universal Service Fund (USF) program and to urge immediate action by Congress to implement solutions to preserve the USF program. A loss or disruption to USF would be devastating for Alaska, and particularly for our region and other rural regions of Alaska.

NWALT is comprised of the top executive and chairperson of the following organizations which serve communities in Northwest Alaska: Maniilaq Association, a consortium of 12 federally recognized Tribes which provides health, social, and tribal government services through compacts with the Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs; NANA Regional Corporation, an Alaska Native corporation formed pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; Northwest Arctic Borough, a home rule regional government formed under the laws of the State of Alaska; and the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, a public school system educating about 2,000 students in 11 villages. Together, our organizations are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the people of our region have every opportunity to live a quality life and achieve the American Dream right here in our home communities along the Arctic Circle.

Our regional leadership has significant concern over the recent SCOTUS decision to hear a case that has the potential to jeopardize the USF program, for which our communities rely. As you know, USF helps ensure rural areas stay connected to the outside world, receive critical healthcare, access education, and maintain economic opportunities. Our region relies on the program to access health services through the Rural Health Care Program and for education through the E-Rate Program. Between these two programs alone, our region could lose nearly \$50 million per year if the USF went away.

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Additionally, an adverse decision by the U.S. Supreme Court jeopardizes ongoing projects aimed at bridging the digital divide, such as the NANA regional broadband project, further isolating vulnerable populations and widening inequalities. It is vital that the USF remains intact so that rural Alaskans can continue to thrive and have equal access to the services they deserve.

To safeguard Alaskans' social and economic wellbeing, we urge you and your colleagues in Congress to take swift action to protect the Universal Service Fund. Preserving the vital infrastructure and telecommunications that keeps our communities connected and supported is of the utmost importance. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Elizabeth Niiqsik Ferguson at Elizabeth.Ferguson@nana.com or 907-442-8148.

Thank you,

Margaret Hansen
Ticket
Co-Chair

John Lincoln
Co-Chair

Nathan Hadley
Member

Floyd Herman
Member

Tim Gilbert
Member

Linda Lee
Member

Dickie Moto
Member

Terri Walker
Member

CC: Honorable Congressman Nick Begich
Honorable Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy
Honorable Alaska State Senator Donny Olson
Honorable Alaska State Representative Robyn Burke

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