

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Sponsor

Statement

SESSION:

Alaska State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-4457 Office  
(907) 465-3519 Fax  
(800) 928-4457 Toll Free

INTERIM:

1292 Sadler Way, Suite 304  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Office (907) 456-8172  
Fax (907) 456-2490

## Representative David Guttenberg

### House Bill 388 – Alaska Broadband Task Force

A recent report, [The Economic Impact of Stimulating Broadband Nationally](#), states:

“It is widely understood that increased adoption of broadband technology speeds the flow of information and sparks innovation. According to the Brookings Institution, ‘High-speed internet access has developed rapidly in the last decade and is increasingly viewed as essential infrastructure for our global information economy.’ However, at the beginning of 2008, many United States residents still cannot access broadband internet service, especially in America’s most rural areas. (Connected Nation, Inc.)”

The Internet is the public infrastructure of our time. It is no longer just a standard medium for everyday communication, but is a key component of economic development. HB 388 will demonstrate the State of Alaska’s commitment to facilitating an effective statewide broadband strategy that will enable the State to achieve and maintain global competitiveness, long term statewide cost savings, and better quality of life for residents. To be able to capitalize on all the economic opportunities and savings made possible by broadband connectivity, we must invest in building a strong framework capable of achieving maximum rather than minimal capabilities.

To achieve this goal, the Alaska Broadband Task Force will help the State adopt a broad, comprehensive and multifaceted strategic approach to providing affordable, high-speed, universal broadband access to all homes, businesses, and schools. The formation of the Task Force will engage partners across a wide spectrum of public sector, private sector, and not-for-profit organizations to provide innovative broadband solutions to close the well-documented digital divide in Alaska.

It is universally accepted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century access to affordable high-speed internet service is a necessity for economic competitiveness, health care access, educational and social opportunity, homeland security, and equity. To be a full participant in both the Information Age and the Information Economy, access to affordable, high-speed broadband internet service is critical for Alaskan individuals, businesses, and schools. In rural and remote areas, as well as more populated areas, the State of Alaska can – and must – improve access and affordability of high-speed internet service.

The failure to build-out broadband infrastructure no longer simply stifles Alaska’s potential growth, but actually does a disservice to the public interest. The National Conference of State Legislatures has recognized the importance of this issue and has adopted an initiative called *Connecting America* that states, “Broadband internet is an important key to the nation’s leadership in technological and economic initiatives. The President, the Congress, and the FCC have identified rapid deployment of high-speed broadband as a national priority ... State legislative policies can stimulate or impede broadband development and demand.”

I urge you to support this legislation in order to stimulate broadband deployment for all Alaskans.

Representative.David.Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us  
<http://guttenberg.akdemocrats.org>