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Broadband Task Force Releases Blueprint for Alaska's Broadband Future

(Juneau, AK) – The Statewide Broadband Task Force today released its plan and recommendations for deploying high speed broadband across the state, saying that to be competitive in today's global environment every Alaska household should have access to 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) of broadband speed by 2020. The plan can be viewed at www.akbroadbandtaskforce.com, and will be available for public comment on August 7.

"I appreciate the work of the task force, as broadband plays an important role for many Alaskans in education, commerce, public safety, and healthcare," said Commissioner Susan Bell. "Importantly, the plan clearly states that neither public nor private funding alone will fully achieve the plan's goals. We will need creative solutions to deliver the broadband capabilities and speed of 100 Mbps by 2020."

The 22-member task force first convened in March 2011 and was comprised of user groups, educators, anchor institutions, regulators, and communication providers. Members heard from more than 30 presenters as to the positive impacts of and need for high-speed broadband including communities, companies and future providers. Additionally, the task force developed a statewide broadband map of middle- and last-mile infrastructure; conducted economic modeling to understand the costs to develop a more robust network; assessed current and future satellite deployment; and, evaluated current technology and programs including those in other countries.

After Congress passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act in October 2008, a grant program was established and funded in 2009 by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to facilitate broadband planning in every state. Alaska received \$6.3 million for its broadband planning efforts including funds to establish a task

force to oversee the planning effort, map Alaska's current broadband middle- and last-mile infrastructure, and to establish speeds and adoption rates.

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