Remote Testimony for Committee Hearings in Alaska
Remote Testimony in Alaska

- Alaska’s Unique Environment
  - Vast size, small population
  - Location of Capitol
  - Lack of road systems
  - Rural Communications

- Alaska’s Remote Testimony Solutions
  - Legislative Information Offices (LIOs)
  - Cisco MeetingPlace System
Juneau Alaska
### Travel stats for Alaska (visiting the Capitol in Juneau)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (Miles)</th>
<th>Driving Time</th>
<th>Best Flight Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>22 hours</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairbanks</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>19 hours</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Harbor</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nome</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>9.5 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel for the 1st Territorial Legislature

On January 7th, 1913, four legislators from Nome (Senator Freeding, and Reps. Aldrich, Kennedy, and Gaffney hitched up their dog teams and departed for Juneau. They mushed to Fairbanks, and then on to Valdez where they boarded the steamship Northwestern bound for Juneau. They arrived in Juneau in time for the opening session on March 3rd, 1913.
Twenty One Legislative Information Offices (LIOs)

- Alaska has 21 Legislative Information Offices.
- LIOS provide access to public computers, statutes, and teleconferencing to allow remote testimony.
- The LIO staff is non-partisan, and sometimes the only Alaska State office in the community.
- Many LIOs are staffed year round (one or two staff); some are only staffed during Legislative Session.
Bethel LIO
Local population approximately 6,400.
Staff is full time
Homer LIO
Local population approximately 5,300.
Staff is session-only
Nome LIO

Local population approximately 3,800.

Staff is full time

‘Bering Sea Gold’ filmed out there!
Kotzebue LIO

Local population approximately 3,400.
Staff is full time.
Glennallen LIO

Local population approximately 500.
Staff is session-only
Remote Testimony in Alaska

- 1972 - 1st regional LIO office opened in Anchorage.
- 1975 - Fairbanks LIO opened.
- 1977 - Additional LIOs opened (Nome, Ketchikan, and Bethel).

- 1978 - Legislative Teleconference Network established (large ‘party line’) between LIO sites.
- 1981 - ‘Off-net’ feature created; more LIOs established.
Cisco MeetingPlace

• Cisco MeetingPlace installed in 1999, allows citizens to remotely provide audio testimony at legislative meetings.

• We prefer citizens use a nearby LIO if possible (amendments, changes in schedule, explanations in procedure, etc.).
Cisco MeetingPlace

• All Committee meetings have a ‘moderator’ from our LIO staff who let’s the Chairperson know who is waiting to testify and on which bill.
• Individual public comments time limits are set at discretion of Chair (usually 2 minutes).
• We are currently working on an automated solution using iPads to keep track of who is waiting to testify.
Cisco MeetingPlace

- Our configuration allows up to 72 active telephone lines.
- At peak times, we have 7 simultaneous teleconferences.
- In 2014 we logged 5,000 hours of teleconferencing.
- In 2014 we had 4,215 people participate in teleconference meetings (90 day Session).
The Future, Video Testimony?

- Yes, someday.... probably.
- We have video teleconferencing between our 3 largest sites, but it is rarely used.
- We have tried Skype, and will continue to.
- We do use Microsoft Lync internally.
- Slower circuit speeds (Satellite) to remote communities are still problematic.
Questions?
Testimony