



Representative Beth Kerttula

Sponsor Statement

**House Bill 273
Internet Privacy for Alaskan Consumers**

In the past few years, Alaskans have eagerly embraced Internet service into their homes and businesses. Access to the World Wide Web enables Alaskans to overcome geographic remoteness and time differences and to interact globally for ideas, information, and business. However, technological advances and business practices in the rapidly evolving electronic world have the potential for unprecedented access to Internet consumers' personal information and their on-line usage and preferences. Building upon the Alaska Constitution's strong foundation of Alaskans' right to privacy, HB 273 updates our consumer protection laws to address Internet activity.

HB 273 takes an important first step to protect Alaskan consumers' privacy at their entry point to the World Wide Web – their Internet service provider. HB 273 prevents an Internet service provider and its employees from disclosing a subscriber's personal identification information and any data that records a subscriber's Internet use or preferences *unless the subscriber agrees in writing to the use of their information*. Family, friends, or employees using the subscriber's Internet account are also protected. HB 273 makes an exception for disclosure of information in the case of a law enforcement investigation. As with other violations of Alaska consumer protection laws, HB 273 provides for civil penalties.

HB 273 protects a subscriber whose address is located in this state. It focuses solely on the subscriber's contractual relationship with an Internet service provider and does not address consumer privacy at the "other end" as Alaskans visit the virtually limitless web sites. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Congress, international organizations, and Internet business alliances are wrestling with these interstate and global privacy issues. HB 273 also does not legislate Internet content, minors' access to adult sites, or the collection of taxes on Internet sales.

HB 273 protects Alaskans' privacy by helping individuals maintain control over use of their personal information as they access the Internet.