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January 31, 2018

Senator Mia Costello
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Senate Bill 112, Workers Compensation Reform Bill

Dear Senator Costello:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to support Senate Bill 112, an Act relating to workers compensation.

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

Every Alaskan employer, including the State of Alaska, is impacted by workers compensation claims. Despite a strict culture of safety instilled at Alaska's mines, AMA members too face challenges with the current workers compensation structure in our state. Efforts to reform the current system to ensure it protects and cares for employees while providing tools for employers to manage claims are welcomed. Reform should incorporate objective, evidence-based care guidelines, resolution tools, and efficient reemployment benefits. Comprehensive reform will control the significant workers compensation costs employers face currently and bring cost savings to the private sector and the State of Alaska.

AMA supports SB112 and encourages this Committee to pass the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Deantha Crockett
Executive Director