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The Honorable Joe Paskvan
The State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

3 April, 2011


Dear Senator Paskvan,

Senate Bill 103 "An Act amending the medical examination requirements for firefighters entitled to a presumption of compensability for a disability resulting from certain diseases" will be heard by the Labor and Commerce Committee on Tuesday, 5 April. SB 103 seeks to address apparent technical problems in Alaska Statute 23.30.121, "Presumption of coverage for disability from diseases for certain fire fighters" that were identified after the statute took effect. I am writing to draw your attention to the determination that the full-time career fire fighters of the University Fire Department are apparently not covered by AS 23.30.121, the presumptive coverage law.

AS 23.30.121 (f) specifies that Alaska's presumptive law applies to certain Alaskan firefighters as defined by AS 09.65.295 "Liability involving a peace officer or fire fighter." Paragraph (f) defines a "fire fighter" as a person employed by a municipal fire department or who is a member of a registered volunteer fire department. The University Fire Department at UAF employs nine professional career fire fighters who are full-time employees of the University of Alaska. Accordingly, they are neither employed by a municipal fire department nor are they volunteer fire fighters, and thusly are not covered by the presumptive coverage law.

I can think of no reason why AS 09.65.295 or AS 23.30.121 would have intentionally excluded this small set of professional fire fighters. I understand that a Substitute version of SB103 is being considered to add language that would affirm coverage of State-employed fire fighters, including career members of the University Fire Department. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,


Douglas Schrage, Fire Chief



PARTNERS IN FIRE PROTECTION

