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February 29, 2012

Senator Joe Paskvan
Alaska State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Paskvan,

Thank you for introducing SB 208; An Act establishing an Alaska intrastate mutual aid system and relating to the duties of the Alaska division of homeland security and emergency management and the duties of the Alaska State Emergency Response Commission.

The model legislation that has been put forth by the collaboration of NEMA and FEMA, to promote an Intrastate Mutual Aid System (IMAS), is legislation that the Alaska Municipal League believes should be implemented within the State of Alaska. The ability for one political subdivision to receive and/or render aid to another is both wise and important to all involved.

Emergencies have no respect for jurisdictional boundaries that we impose upon our state. Therefore, emergency responders must be able to depend on other political subdivisions for coordination in order to protect lives and property. SB 208, as we interpret it, would allow for a statewide agreement, rather than the Alaska Disaster Act which provides for mutual aid between neighboring political subdivisions.

The Alaska Fire Chief's Association is a member of AML and we support their hard work and commitment to enhancing all safety needs with regards to fire fighting. Because of this relationship and the importance to municipalities to be able to help protect their residents, we stand in strong support of SB 208.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Kathie Wasserman
Executive Director