

Help at Home
ALASKANS TO ALASKA



January 8, 2009

Representative Charisse Millett
State Capitol, Room 412
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Millett

This letter of support is on behalf of American Red Cross of Alaska volunteers and staff who firmly believe that House Bill 77 will be of great benefit to all Alaskans. This bill will allow State employees to volunteer their time, without penalty to their personal leave or seniority, during times of large scale disaster. Any state employee interested in volunteering within the Red Cross Disaster Preparedness and Response network will receive free training and instruction in disaster relief services.

This partnership will help to increase the number of volunteers engaged, from throughout Alaska, who will be trained in sheltering, case management, mass care and mental health to name just a few areas. The more people who are trained and prepared to respond the better our state will be able to sustain ourselves when a situation like the 1964 earthquake arrives or the floods within the Interior this past summer. All the training that is provided through American Red Cross is free, to any volunteer, which will allow minimal to no fiscal impact on our state operating budget. House Bill 77 will also set an example for other employers throughout our state, leading the way and demonstrating the importance and value of allowing individuals to give back to their community and the importance in investing in our State's level of preparedness and ability to respond to our own immediate needs during a disaster.

I thank you for identifying and realizing the importance of HB 77. American Red Cross looks forward to working with the State and its employees as we continue to raise our level of readiness throughout Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Houlihan".

Michelle Houlihan
Chief Executive Officer