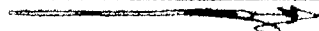




KAWERAK, INC. • P.O. Box 948 • Nome, AK 99762



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January 25, 2010

The Honorable Representative Neal Foster
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Building, Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 278

Dear Representative Foster:

Kawerak, Incorporated is the regional Native non-profit organization providing services to 16 communities in the Bering Strait Region. One of the services Kawerak provides is to help each community identify their top priorities. The vast majority of these communities have identified "Housing" as one of their top three priorities. While the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) provides many services to rural Alaska, there are some programs that could be made more accessible.

House Bill Number 278, if passed, would be of benefit to the residents of this region. As you know, many people who would otherwise qualify for AHFC's rebate program are not in a financial position to afford the up to \$10,000 in construction costs participate in the program. These are people who typically make too much money to qualify for the low-income programs afforded by AHFC, yet are also not well off enough to afford the initial costs of retrofitting their homes – currently a requirement under the rebate program. We believe that a voucher system would increase the number of retrofitted homes in our region. Kawerak is thus in support of HB 278 and any other initiatives to make the AHFC programs more accessible. We also request that the Alaska State Legislature consider the lack of certified energy raters in our villages and seek a solution to rectify the situation since certified energy ratings are needed to participate in at least two of the AHFC programs.

Thank you for your work to increase the accessibility of the AHFC rebate program. Please keep us informed about the progress of this bill, and let us know if there are any other steps that Kawerak can take to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

KAWERAK, INCORPORATED

Melanie Edwards,
Executive Vice President