

HB 336 Written Testimony
Andria Agli, Shareholder & Corporate Relations Manager
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
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Mr. Chairman, for the record, my name is Andria Agli. I am a shareholder of Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) and the manager for shareholder and corporate relations for BBNC. Thank you for inviting BBNC to testify in support of HB 336 today. We support this bi-partisan legislation.

I grew up in the village of South Naknek on the Alaska Peninsula and return every summer to commercial and subsistence fish. I have family that still live and work there year round. The high cost of heating fuel and electricity is a challenge that all Alaskans have to deal with. However, the problem is greater for residents of rural Alaska. Currently, the cost of heating fuel in South Naknek is \$ 5.25 per gallon. The cost of electricity is more than \$.50 per kWh. These prices hit everyone hard. Legislative efforts to provide financial relief for these high prices are necessary and certainly have BBNC's support.

BBNC is an economic cornerstone of the Bristol Bay region and it takes the responsibilities that come with that position very seriously. BBNC has more

than 9,000 shareholders and since 1978, BBNC has paid more than \$100 million in dividends to its shareholders. In 2012 alone, BBNC will distribute another \$13 million. BBNC has established an education foundation that provides scholarships for higher education and vocational training, created internships and employment opportunities; established an Elder benefit program, and advocated on behalf of the economic, cultural and subsistence rights of our shareholders. BBNC continues this work today to ensure our corporate mission of “Enriching our Native way of life.”

BBNC is pursuing new responsible economic and investment opportunities in the Bristol Bay region that will help better the lives of our shareholders and regional residents. BBNC supports renewable energy programs and both renewable and non-renewable resource development that responsibly allows for shareholders to sustain their way of life.

Our Board recently directed the corporation to invest \$30 million over the next 5 years within the region. Our shareholders have told us they need help with the high cost of heating fuel and electricity. BBNC’s investment efforts will identify and evaluate projects that could help provide some

energy cost relief. BBNC supports the legislature's efforts to do the same with this legislation.

High energy costs represent the greatest challenge to the economic success of villages in the Bristol Bay region, where average families pay more for their home energy bills than they do for rent or mortgage payments. It is for this reason that BBNC advocates for energy programs that provide current and long-term solutions to this growing crisis.

HB 336 is a very good complement to BBNC's strategy to invest in the Bristol Bay region, and has BBNC's full support. This will not change the price of heating oil or electricity in the short-term; however, it will provide some relief to rural residents.

Section 1 of the bill will provide an energy voucher to every adult PFD recipient. For many households this will provide immediate energy relief. For households that include extended families with multiple adults living under the same roof, the total voucher amount received by this legislation will be significantly greater. While this is not a permanent fix, it will help the current economic hardships felt in our rural communities.

Section 2 of the legislation is also helpful because it will prompt ideas for longer-term assistance strategies for dealing with the recurring problem of high energy costs. BBNC applauds the legislature's efforts to get such strategies on the table as long-term energy solutions are needed statewide.

In closing, BBNC supports HB 336 because it will provide short-term energy assistance to those who are impacted the most and provide a mechanism to consider more permanent energy solutions to this ongoing crisis. Both are needed to bring energy costs to an affordable level to the benefit of all Alaskans.

Thank you for the Committee's time this afternoon. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.