CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
ALASKA'S CAPITAL CITY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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February 15, 2011

Honorable Beth Kerttula
Alaska State Representative
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Support of Alaska HB 18

Dear Representative Kerttula:

I am writing to encourage your full support of Alaska HB 18, "An Act establishing Alaska Public Gardens Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year". At last year's Alaska Public Gardens Day celebration approximately 600 Juneau citizens and visitors attended, affirming increasing popular support for Juneau's public garden. We would like to make Alaska Public Gardens Day an annual event.

Nationally, the United States celebrates Public Gardens Day in early May and several states and cities in the lower 48 have, through formal legislative action, recognized the day in their own context. This is a day set aside by the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) to promote awareness of public gardens and their value to local communities.

Alaska enjoys the benefits of three APGA-member gardens as well as several unaffiliated gardens. The Alaska Botanical Garden in Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks, and the Jensen-Olson Arboretum in Juneau are special places that provide opportunities for education, plant conservation, recreation, and research. The Alaskan gardening season doesn't correspond with the lower 48, so the late May date is an appropriate choice for our climate.

Public gardens have a measurable impact on the quality of life in a community and in Alaska, this is magnified. While Alaska boasts unparalleled scenic vistas, there are few opportunities for wandering in a cultivated garden setting. Throughout history, public garden settings have provided teaching space as well as space for contemplation and respite. And, public gardens help define a community's sense of longevity as well as its culture.

Thank you for your support of HB 18 and your continued support of Parks & Recreation and the Jensen-Olson Arboretum.

Sincerely,

Bruce Botelho
Mayor

Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom

Rep. Beth Kerttula
State Capitol Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

Jan. 10, 2011

Re HB 18

Dear Representative Kerttula;

Alaska's gardens bring visitors from around the world to see their bounty — whether native Alpine species, exotics coaxed and pampered to survive in this climate, or hearty vegetables. But sometimes, we fail to appreciate what is in our own backyards.

The proposed HB 18 Alaska Public Gardens Day, the Saturday before Memorial Day each year, will draw attention to efforts in local communities to beautify and to nourish through gardening. Gardens, like those here in Palmer at the Palmer Visitor Center and the Alaska State Fairgrounds, give visitors a chance to see many of the plant species that will grow here in Alaska. And at the Alaska Plant Materials Center, the new Alaska garden there tells stories of history, culture, sustainability and variety.

These gardens, and others around the state, deserve the spotlight shone upon them on their own special day, and I urge you to help designate the last Saturday in May as that day.

While, as my experience with Alaska Agriculture Day has shone, it can take some time to raise awareness using a special day, it can be the catalyst for a range of activities and media coverage. For those of us who operate programs with a very limited budget, it is one more tool in the educational arsenal. I urge you to support the efforts of Alaska Botanical Garden, the Georgeson Botanical Gardens and others to make this a reality.

Thank you for supporting any efforts that help students understand the sources of their food, fabric and flowers, and my thanks for your ongoing interest and support of Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom.

Sincerely,

Victoria Naegele
Executive Director
Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom

9788 N Waldo Reed Rd., Palmer, Alaska 99645 • akaitc@alaskafb.org
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Alaska AITC is a 501c3 project of the Alaska Farm Bureau

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Julianne McGuinness

Dear Representative Kerttula: January 11, 2011

I am to support, and thank you for sponsoring, House Bill No. 18, "An Act establishing Alaska Public Gardens Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year".

As the Executive Director of the Alaska Botanical Garden, each day I witness the tremendous educational, recreational, and inspirational value the public gardens of our State have for our communities and visitors alike. They are important cultural / scientific institutions as well as true community treasures.

Our Gardens serve the public on many levels: as tourism destinations, as important educational facilities for children and adults to learn about gardening, ecology, and science, as workforce-training sites for youth and adults in transition, and as places where families and school groups "get outdoors" for wellness-enhancing exercise. (In fact, gardening is one of the top national and Alaskan pass-times, and garden tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry.)

Alaska has three APGA-member gardens, and many unaffiliated gardens also open to the public. The Alaska Botanical Garden in Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks, and the Jensen-Olson Arboretum in Juneau are special places that provide opportunities for education, plant conservation, recreation, and research. They have an increasingly vital role to play in northern-latitude plant preservation. These public gardens have a measurable impact on the quality of life in our communities and in Alaska.

The United States celebrates National Public Gardens Day in early May, and the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) actively uses this special day to promote awareness of public gardens and their value to local communities. However, since the Alaskan gardening season doesn't correspond with rest of the nation, a later date in May is a more appropriate choice for our climate.

I respectfully request that the legislature pass this bill as a means to proclaim the vital role public gardens play in a sustainable and healthy Alaska.

Sincerely,

Julianne McGuinness

Julianne McGuinness
Executive Director, Alaska Botanical Garden
907-562-7010 / julianne@alaskabg.org

Dear Representative Kerttula:

I am writing to give my full support to House Bill No. 18, "An Act establishing Alaska Public Gardens Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year".

The Alaska Botanical Garden in Anchorage is my place of employment so I have a year round appreciation for its importance to the community. The Garden is utilized by children, families, and individuals as a place to relax in nature, do research, preserve plant material and educate. As a small non-profit with a fixed budget, we are unable to reach out to as many people and organizations as we would like. By allowing Alaska to have its own specific Public Gardens Day, we could greatly increase our reach, especially since we would offer it as a FREE day so all could partake. We are experiencing an ever growing demand for outdoor education and this would be a great opportunity to provide! We have hundreds of volunteers that keep the garden growing. Why not share this amazing resource with the entire community?

Nationally, the United States celebrates Public Gardens Day in early May and several states and cities in the lower 48 have, through formal legislative action, recognized the day in their own context. This is a day set aside by the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) to promote awareness of public gardens and their value to local communities.

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Public gardens have a measurable impact on the quality of life in a community and in Alaska, this is magnified. While Alaska boasts unparalleled scenic vistas, there are few opportunities for wandering in a cultivated garden setting. Throughout history, public garden settings have provided teaching space as well as space for contemplation and respite. And, public gardens help define a community's sense of longevity as well as its culture.

Please vote for this bill and in so doing, proclaim the vital role public gardens play in a sustainable and healthy Alaska.

Sincerely,

Lacey Ott

Lacey Ott
2215 Pearl Road
Wasilla, AK 99654
907-376-9065

From: Donna Dinsmore [mailto:ddinsmore@alaska.net]
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2011 5:03 PM
To: Merrill Jensen
Subject: letter of support

Dear Representative Kerttula:

I am writing to give my full support to House Bill No. 18, An Act establishing Alaska Public Gardens Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year.

I am the president of the Georgeson Botanical Garden Society, an organization formed to promote and support the Georgeson Botanical Garden at UAF. This garden, besides being a beautiful place to visit, provides valuable research essential to the growth of home gardens and the gardening industry.

Alaska is unique and has special needs. Gardening is a challenge in the north but the industry is growing and your support is necessary. "Sustainability" and "locavore" are buzz words used in today's media. Alaska's public gardens make these words a reality. Alaska's public gardens provide opportunities for education, plant conservation, recreation, and most important research.

Public gardens have an impact of the quality of life in the far north. After months of snow and a white landscape, a colorful flower gardens helps give us respite and peace of mind. Tourists are always amazed at the color, the beautiful flowers and the variety of vegetables grown in our gardens. Here in Fairbanks we can actually sit peacefully and watch the plants grow. The community values this special place.

Please vote for this bill and in so doing, proclaim the vital role public gardens play in a sustainable and healthy Alaska.

Sincerely,

Donna Dinsmore
Georgeson Botanical Garden Society
699 Gradelle
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
907-479-5265