

3/28/14

Dear Senator Kelly,

I am writing you to voice my support for continued capital budget funding of BAKLAP (Boreal Alaska: Learning, Adaptation, Production) project which uses One-Tree Alaska as the model for its K-20 STEAM education component. As manager of the University of Alaska, Institute of Arctic Biology greenhouse, where many of the project trees are cultivated, I have the opportunity to see first-hand the dedication and commitment of the One-Tree staff, as well as the engagement and scientific curiosity exhibited by the student participants in the program. The opportunity for young students to express their innate curiosity while learning the principles of disciplined scientific inquiry will be extremely valuable in their immediate education, and ultimately valuable in their personal and economic opportunities as well educated adults.

I am well aware that state revenues are declining and budgets must be trimmed. However, in analogy to personal financial situations when belt tightening needs to be done to deal with economic realities, one occasionally will find opportunities of such obvious value that it still makes sense to invest now to gain (save) much more in the future. The funding of BAKLAP is one such opportunity which will pay huge dividends for the students, and contribute to the future economic viability of the state. There is no doubt that education is a gateway to economic success. I hope you will agree with me on this. Thank you for taking my opinions into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Wright" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Wright

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