From:	Lon Garrison
To:	Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Mike Dunleavy
Cc:	Steve Bradshaw; Jennifer Robinson; Tonia Rioux; Tim Fulton; cass district
Subject:	Support for SB90
Date:	Wednesday, April 10, 2013 6:28:04 AM

Senators,

While the Sitka School Board has not had the chance to formally review Senate Bill 90 and vote on a resolution supporting its passage, I am writing to you to express my support for such a measure in my capacity as a local school board member here in Sitka. Our district, like many others across the state faced exceptionally high increases in the cost of our insurance even in light of the fact that our district is in a pool with our city employees and our local community hospital. Our initial insurance rate proposal for 2014 from Premera Blue Cross was a 25.5% increase, nearly a $700,000 blow to our budget. Since then, we have been able to buy down that rate and renegotiated the benefits (increasing the deductible and modifying other measures) to a 15% increase which is still a very significant impact to our budget. It certainly makes sense to me, that a statewide pool would provide school district with significant cost savings by spreading that risk and usage among a significantly larger group of enrollment and that the size of that enrollment would in itself provide for a more cost effective and stable market. Of course the uncertainty of the full implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act makes a larger pool even more attractive as well.

In February, I testified to a meeting of the Senate Education Committee there at the Capital and it was asked at the time if there were other cost saving measures the state might try to enable and I would say this is one of those. Therefore, as a member and President of the Sitka School Board I would advocate for support of SB90. I know that time is of the essence with regard to the end of the session. Unfortunately our board will not have an opportunity to take up this issue, so this email is not to be construed as an endorsement from the entire Sitka School Board.

Best regards,

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Lon Garrison
President, Sitka School Board

Sitka, Alaska
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