

March 3, 2016

Senate Finance Committee  
House Finance Committee  
Senator Donny Olson  
Representative Neal Foster  
Representative Benjamin Nageak

Please reconsider the potential closure of the Nome Youth Facility (NYF). The facility services the Bering Strait Region and the Northwest Arctic Borough.

The Bering Strait Region includes 17 villages; and the NANA Region services 11 communities. Clients at the NYF may fluctuate at times but not having the facility available for the two regions is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of our greatest assets, the youth in need.

The only mode of transportation for both hubs is air transportation; transporting clients to an urban setting for youth services is not only expensive but it is a disservice to their culture and family ties. Transporting them to urban settings will only serve to reinforce their differences and not be productive.

Clients at the NYF are afforded an education while incarcerated; continuing education is an important component to the wellbeing of our future assets, our children. Non client youth are able to attend classes at NYF also. Many have gone on to graduate, earning a high school diploma; without NYF and its school, they never would have been able to achieve this important goal.

The youth of NYF are a visible and a viable part of the Nome community. They are extremely active in community work service – they set up / take down chairs, they clean different facilities around town, they partake in whatever is asked of them without complaint if it is within their scope and plan. They make a good impression to all those they work with and for. They are given a chance to build up their own self-esteem and worthwhileness...in a setting that closely resembles their own communities. All of this would be lost if the NYF were to close.

Please do not eliminate the funding for the Nome Youth Facility. Please show the youth in our regions that they matter and make a difference.

Sincerely,

ASEA Local 52 – Nome Chapter (representing Nome, Kotzebue, and Barrow)