



Enriching Our Native Way of Life

March 20, 2015

Senator Peter Micciche  
Alaska State Capitol Building Room 514  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Micciche:

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) supports SB 1 (currently in Committee as CS SSSB1), legislation that would limit the indoor, enclosed or public spaces where smokers could continue to smoke. BBNC currently restricts smoking inside its corporate offices and these rules serve our employees well – protecting non-smoking employees from having to endure second-hand smoke while still providing smoking employees with reasonable access to places they can use tobacco products. BBNC believes SB 1 is similarly in the best interests of all Alaskans.

BBNC appreciates your concerns about limiting state government's intrusions against individual personal liberties. We also agree with the assessment contained in your sponsor statement for SB 1, that this proposed legislation does not overstep that line. The legislation would only apply to indoor or enclosed areas of public buildings and to limited, specified types of private spaces or public outdoor spaces. It does not discriminate against smokers in hiring or employment decisions and allows local governments to adopt more restrictive ordinances should they so choose.

Most importantly, SB 1 is good legislation because it addresses a significant public health problem. According to information contained in "Alaska Tobacco Facts" (April 2012), a publication produced by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, exposure to second-hand smoke poses significant health concerns in that it can increase an individual's risk of developing heart disease by 25%-30% and lung cancer by 20%-30%. These are unacceptable health risks that also impose significant and avoidable economic burdens on Alaskans and Alaska businesses. By some estimates, exposure to second-hand smoke costs Alaskans millions of dollars in direct health care costs and lost income and costs Alaskan businesses significant amounts of lost employee time.

Now is the time for the Alaska state government to act on this issue because data contained in the same "Alaska Tobacco Facts" publication shows that Alaskans, smokers and non-smokers alike, overwhelmingly favor smoking bans in or at their workplaces, restaurants, and schools and school events (65%-90% favor).

Simply stated, second-hand smoke is a health and economic issue that Alaskans want addressed. BBNC supports SB1 because it addresses that need in a responsible manner.

Regards,

Jason Metrokin  
President & CEO

cc: Commissioner Valarie Davidson, HSS