February 24, 2015

Please put this letter on the record against HB 81.

My Name is James Squyres. I am an Article I, Section 2 Alaskan.

I am not a Contractor and am actually a CPA by profession. I Oppose this Bill. I live remote, off the grid, in the Unorganized Borough, and I feel that you folks who live in the more urban parts of this state may not realize the unintended consequences that may be an outcome of this legislation.

“No man’s life, liberty or property are safe while the Legislature is in session” - Quote by Mark Twain

I take exception with the language that states “two years after the period of construction ends”

Let’s take a 30,000 foot view looking down on the State of Alaska. We see that over ½ of this state geographically is in the unorganized borough. Many people out here pay cash for their land and build on a pay-as-you-can afford basis. Many folks live SAFELY and comfortably in unfinished structures where the “construction has not ended”. They are building in one of the harshest environments on earth WITHOUT COMPLAINT until the legislature gets into their affairs. MOREOVER many folks out here have multiple properties and acquire multiple structures, oftentimes all of them are uncompleted, as they better their position and move closer to a job or closer/further from town. If this individual had to, or wanted to, sell everything at once and leave due to a change of job, loss of health or any other reason they could run afoul of this bill with an extra onerous burden that they would otherwise not have to bear.

On a different note - another consideration not being discussed. I have heard “CLOSE A LOOPHOLE” and “LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD” but I have not heard the contrast regarding an owner builder who puts up his own capital and does not receive 1 dime unless his structure sells for more than what he has in it. This entrepreneur bears the full risk of the market vs. the Contractor who works for others for contracted amounts and who receives progress payments, yet puts up no capital. FURTHERMORE, looking at Webster’s dictionary the definition of a contractor is “one of the parties to a contract” of which the owner builder is NOT contracting per se. There is a HUGE inherent difference. The subsequent contract to SELL his property is a different matter than a contract to build, of which you need to be duly licensed etc. That is an IMPORTANT point I wanted to make.

“The best way to take control over a people and control them utterly is to take a little of their freedom at a time, to erode rights by a thousand tiny and almost imperceptible reductions. In this way the people will not see these rights and freedoms being removed until past the point at which these changes cannot be reversed” - Quote by Adolf Hitler

This is not the first time this legislation has come up. I was opposed to it last year and it failed to make it through. You legislators are paid to be a part of this issue and the contractor’s lobby clearly THINKS they have a financial interest in this as it keeps coming back up. I would hazard a guess that most of us testifying against this bill are not being paid in any form or fashion, as I myself am not, and that we are being unnecessarily burdened by the state by having to continually be vigilant as per the Mark Twain quote at the beginning of this letter. Even with a fiscal note of zero it costs the state significant money and time for this bill to be repeatedly dragged through the legislative process which is not a good thing in this time of fiscal crisis. If this is a problem in some urban area of the state it should be handled locally perhaps as a borough or municipal ordinance. Throwing a lasso around the state and including the most remote cabin is an unnecessary unintended consequence. I implore you to not allow this bill to go any further.

Sincerely,

James Squyres

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