

March 23, 2015

Senator Gary Stevens

Re: SB 61

Dear Senator Stevens,

Thank you so much for sponsoring, and bringing this bill forward. As a member of the Pratt Museum Board of Directors, I see the importance of this bill. We have been fund raising for five years, in order to build a new structure for our precious collections. To date we have been fortunate with funding from the state, but recognize it would be better for all of us, if there were established a grant process so these needed statewide projects can be prioritized. And this bill will respond to that.

For Homer, the Kenai Peninsula, and the Pratt, this new building is badly needed. Our current structure was built in 1964, It started out as a museum on one floor and senior center on the ground floor. In the ensuing years the museum took it all on, and added some to the rear for offices that are inadequate and too small. Several staff have offices in closets. Although the building meets the ADA requirements, in order to effect those it means going outside of the building, regardless the weather, and walking around, for the 3 levels of our museum. The new building will be all on one level.

The Pratt is a must see for most tourists, and provides the history and culture of the area. I have known it since 1980, and always take my visitors there. They delight in the forest walk, and seeing the various "critters" in the tanks, or taking a turn at the live cam on Gull Island to see the various bird parents on nests or young. Art work is always to be found, as well as the rich history of the area. It is a special place.

SB 61 establishes a grant program long overdue. It sets in place a mechanism for receiving funding, when funding is available, and it prioritizes capital funding requests. When funds are available again, each museum will know where they stand.

As one who loves Alaska's museums, I again thank you for this bill, and urge your colleagues to support it.

Sincerely,

Milli Martin  
PO Box 2652  
Homer, AK 99603  
907-235-6652

