THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Controlled Substances Advisory Committee

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January 10, 2017

Honorable Bill Walker
Office of the Governor
PO Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

As you know, the Controlled Substances Advisory Committee (CSAC) is an advisory board made up of subject matter experts in the field of controlled substances. The CSAC is tasked, among other things, to advise your honor "of the need to add, delete, or reschedule controlled substances in the schedules in AS 11.71.140 – 11.71.190." The Committee consists of medical professionals, law enforcement personnel, and members of the public, all of whom have professional experience in the area of controlled substances. Over the past two years, the CSAC has met numerous times to discuss the various and widespread issues surrounding drugs in Alaska.

To that end, the CSAC has discussed and agreed that two particular substances need to be added to the Alaska controlled substance schedules. The first, commonly referred to as tramadol, is a narcotic-like pain medication that acts at the opioid receptors in the human brain in a manner similar to traditional opioids (such as morphine). Tramadol is habit-forming, has addictive properties, and is highly susceptible to abuse. The CSAC recommends that tramadol and its related substances be classified as a schedule IVA controlled substance. Under medical supervision tramadol serves a legitimate medical purpose – that is, it can be used to manage moderate to severe pain. In relation to Alaska's overall controlled substance scheme, tramadol would be appropriately scheduled as an IVA controlled substance.

The second controlled substance that needs to be classified under Alaska law is U-47700, commonly referred to as "Pink". U-47700 is a synthetic opioid, chemically identified as 3,4-dichloro-N-[2-(dimethylamino)cyclohexyl]-N-methylbenzamide, and is nearly eight times more potent than morphine and has been linked to numerous deaths nationwide. It has also been linked to the deaths of at least three Alaskans. There is currently no approved medical use for this substance and it has not been approved by the FDA for human consumption. U-47700 has been found in combination with other powerful drugs such as heroin and fentanyl. The substance is unregulated and poses a serious risk to overdose. In short, it is highly dangerous and an imminent hazard to public health and safety. In considering the factors of AS 11.71.120(c), the CSAC concluded that U-47700 should be classified as an IA controlled

substance. Law enforcement through-out the nation has seen an increase in the unauthorized distribution of U-47700. By codifying this substance within Alaska law, the state can begin tackling this growing problem.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Henderson
Chief Assistant Attorney General
Chair, Controlled Substance Advisory Committee

cc: CSAC members (*via* email)