



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Public Safety

DIVISION OF ALASKA STATE TROOPERS
Office of the Director

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March 3, 2017

The Honorable Mike Chenault
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 434
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: House Bill 148 Service Areas in Second Class Boroughs

Dear Representative Chenault:

As the Director of the Alaska State Troopers, I am writing to express my support for House Bill 148, allowing second-class boroughs to establish emergency service corridors via ordinance. The Kenai Peninsula Borough needs to ensure consistent coordinated coverage for the almost 90 miles of heavily traveled Seward and Sterling highways bordered predominately by unoccupied land. I fully support the efforts of the Kenai Peninsula Borough to identify and implement a local solution to this problem.

The proposal by the Kenai Peninsula Borough to create a highway corridor service area funded by federal PILT payments presents a unique solution with many benefits for communities and the state. This will allow the Kenai Peninsula Borough to provide resources, support, and coordination to supplement struggling volunteer agencies in sparsely populated areas, and will greatly improve the efficiency of the services that do exist.

Currently, local communities, nearby EMS service areas, and other response organizations respond to accidents in the region in an inefficient patchwork manner. Local communities have few volunteers, and those they do have are overtaxed with accidents on the highway that can require long transport times. When a local agency is unable to respond due to lack of resources, agencies as far as 60 miles away may be called on to respond. This can result in multi-hour waits for care, and the current system does not ensure a response. This legislation would allow for the borough to establish consistent and coordinated response to roadway accidents.

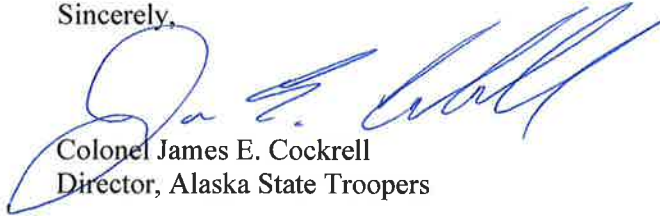
This also presents a solution that allows second-class boroughs to service a community gap without requiring a complete overhaul of long existing emergency response systems. Many service areas within the KPB - and throughout the state - have long histories of providing quality service to their region. Restructuring these organizations in order to address a specific gap creates unnecessary obstacles for municipalities attempting to ensure emergency care for the travelers on their roads. For the Kenai Peninsula Borough, this corridor solution would allow them to provide resources to a specific roadway without requiring a much larger change, such as the adoption of borough-wide powers. While the adoption of borough-wide powers may be technically possible, the complexities of such an overhaul would be extremely extensive with the potential for numerous roadblocks along the way.

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The solution in HB 148 requires no obligation from the State of Alaska and allows local governments to determine the best solution for their communities. Improved emergency response along crucial highways in the state will benefit all Alaska residents.

I support the passage of HB 148, allowing second-class boroughs to establish emergency service corridors via ordinance. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James E. Cockrell", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

Colonel James E. Cockrell
Director, Alaska State Troopers

Cc: Walt Monegan, Commissioner
Bill Comer, Deputy Commissioner
Allison Hanzawa, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Mayor Mike Navarre, Kenai Peninsula Borough