

From: Jan Flora
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2017 1:47 PM
To: Thatcher Brouwer <Thatcher.Brouwer@akleg.gov>
Cc
Subject: HB197

To the House Resources Committee:

I support HB197, Community Seed Libraries.

Alaska is very food insecure despite 43 farmers markets around the state and Alaska Grown produce in our grocery stores. I think this bill will help us improve food security and build community resilience by making locally adapted and heirloom seed more available to home gardeners.

Small agriculture is booming all over the state. We have over 200 high tunnel greenhouses in Homer, Alaska - the most in any zip code in the United States. Most of them are being used by families to grow their own vegetables, bush fruits and tree fruits. Seed saving and seed swapping is very common among our growers. There's a family in Ninilchik that has been saving the seed that their ancestor brought over from Russia 160 years ago. They've continued to grow the crops every year and save the earliest and the best seed to keep their ancestral varieties going. A new farmer here started growing Winter Luxury pumpkins four years ago. That's a 105 day crop. By saving seed from her earliest and best pumpkins, she now gets her first ripe pumpkins in 84 days, which is a stunning adaptation to her soil and climate.

A community seed library in Homer would increase availability and enable us to encourage and educate new seed savers. The Homer Public Library kept one of their oak card catalogs to be used by a seed library. They have offered to house a seed library, as has the Homer Soil & Water Conservation District. We are excited about the possibilities.

The prime sponsor of the bill and your committee have been very receptive to feedback from agrarians in shaping the bill. Your hard work is commendable and appreciated. If I'm allowed, I'd love to invite members of your committee to sign on as co-sponsors of this bill.

Thank you,

Jan Flora
Homer, Alaska

"Civilization exists because of six inches of topsoil and the fact that it rains."

- author unknown