



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Corrections**

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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February 28, 2018

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
103 E. Front St.  
Nome, AK 99762

Representative Paul Seaton, Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
270 W. Pioneer Ave  
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Chairs Foster & Seaton,

The Department has been requested to provide information on the impacts associated with an amendment that would reallocate FY2019 funds from Electronic Monitoring (EM) to the 24/7 Program housed within the Department of Health & Social Services (H&SS).

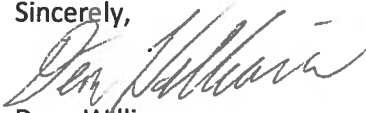
The issue of EM versus the 24/7 program is a matter of priorities for the Department in the face of a dramatic rise of EM as a result of the Pre-Trial Enforcement Division that started January 1, 2018. While the 24/7 program may have benefits, the absolute priority for the Department must be EM as our supervision ranks are dramatically increasing. I respectfully request that the committee consider the following facts.

- Since January 1, 2018 the Pre-Trial Enforcement Division has placed approximately 170 people on some form of electronic monitoring. This is 170 people who are now on EM as result of the Pre-Trial Enforcement Division with only 2 months into the effort.
- The function of the 24/7 program requires individuals to show up to a centralized location, usually in an urban setting, to blow into a breathalyzer twice a day to determine if the person has been drinking. The Department has virtually the same equipment that is portable. In other words we can do the same testing remotely and require the individual to do it more than twice a day. As of today's date we have approximately 57 individuals (of the 170) that are required to use the portable breathalyzer device.
- The 24/7 program is an urban centric approach. It can really only function in a more urban environment where people are required to show up to the centralized location. These individuals often must take a bus, catch a ride with someone, or walk since they often do not have a vehicle or a valid driver's license. I believe this is contrary to all of our efforts to be more sensitive and responsive to needs of rural Alaska Natives and the over representation of them in our criminal justice system. Also, the portable breathalyzer (EM) system advances the intent language to stand up EM in the Bethel region.

- Under 47.38.020 (3) there is a presumption that individuals pay for the 24/7 program themselves based upon their ability to pay. Clearly, the amendment in question shifts the burden for payment to the Department of Corrections since it would transfer \$750,000 out of our budget. It is not self-pay if our Department is paying for it.
- The 24/7 program is not a Department of Corrections program and is one that is rightly housed in the Department of Health and Social Services. The advancement of the 24/7 program, rightly or wrongly, seems more appropriately discussed in that area of the budget versus our Department.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond in writing. Again, while recognizing there may be some benefits to the 24/7 program in some urban settings, I believe the clear priority for our Department must be the advancement of electronic monitoring that can have a far greater reach throughout the State. The expanse of electronic monitoring is rapidly expanding under the Pre-Trial Enforcement Division and any decision on EM must be made looking forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dean Williams", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dean Williams  
Commissioner