

TLC Massage Therapy  
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AK License #102012



March 27, 2018

Senator Mia Costello  
State Capitol Room 504  
Juneau AK, 99801

Senator Costello,

My name is Traci Gilmour. As a Licensee I support extension of Sunset for the State Board of Massage Therapists.

I am a Licensed Massage Therapist in Juneau and sole proprietor of TLC Massage Therapy for 24 years. I also hold a seat on the Alaska State Board of Massage.

A review of meeting minutes shows this board has accomplished much of what has been required and continues its good work while keeping in mind efficiency and cost reduction over the three year period it has been holding public meetings. The board collaborates with other states licensing massage therapists and agencies for information that encourages public safety, effective communication and delivery of the best possible product for the consumer by licensees in Alaska.

The board started its journey receiving training from the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing. They moved immediately into creating regulations as required by statute. During the first year of meetings approval of applications was a primary focus as well as understanding its relationship with various entities of the state and federal governments. Public Comment was heard, Investigations officers and pertinent state agencies were represented and FBI explained their roles in law enforcement. Standards of Practice were adopted and apprenticeship requirements were brought to the drawing board. One of the board's focused discussions has been adoption of Matrices of Disciplinary Fines and Barrier Crimes to Licensing. Board members responded in favor of licensee feedback to decrease initial application and renewal fees. Support has been given to legislation introduced seeking changes in statute, i.e., HB110 and 145 (recently withdrawn and added to CSHB110).

The board is currently compiling curriculum from schools nationwide along with Continuing Education courses to make available a comprehensive list of approved course study for applicants.

Oversight by a board and licensure of massage therapists leads to increased access to prescribed medical care. Licensees provide medical massage at an often lower cost to consumers. Education opportunities are available and a greater understanding of the industry is growing that may not have been realized by unlicensed therapists.

Alaska's economy has been positively impacted in a time where jobs are declining due to decreased oil dollars and cuts in state employment. A new massage school in Juneau begins taking students in May, 2018 with guidance and support from local therapists. Graduates from massage schools in Alaska apply monthly for licensure and go on to open businesses or join massage establishments and doctors. Therapists from other states have applied for dual licensure in Alaska. Sole Proprietors are successfully billing insurance. Support staff have been hired, billing specialists are needed, continuing education classes are required which bring instructors to Alaska from outside. The benefit to the economy of Alaska reaches the hotel and airline industry, restaurants and stores. Increased knowledge about our industry leads to more clients on our tables, a greater understanding of how to treat them and healthier outcomes.

I believe the board has met its burden of proof and should be granted an Extension of Sunset. I urge you to support HB275 and allow this young board to grow, support protection of the consumer and encourage growth in our industry.

Thank you for your consideration,

Traci K Gilmour, LMT  
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