



Alaska APRN Alliance P.O. Box 240443 Anchorage, AK 99524 aprnalliance@gmail.com

February 24, 2021

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Representatives Foster and Merrick,

We are writing today regarding HB 76 "An Act extending the January 15, 2021 governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;".

The Alaska Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Alliance supports HB 76. As front-line health care providers caring for Alaskans of all ages in hospitals, birthing centers, primary care clinics and surgical centers, we believe the bill includes two provisions that are necessary to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first is Section 2 of the bill, which extends the emergency declaration. The declaration is necessary to convey to the governor the powers granted in AS 26.23.020.

Specifically, the emergency declaration allows the governor to exercise the powers found in AS 26.23.020 subsection (g)(10), which is to "allocate or redistribute food, water, fuel, clothing, medicine or supplies;". It is the last two items, "medicine or supplies", that most directly affects us as frontline health care providers. This provision allows personal protective equipment and vaccine to be allocated and distributed to health care providers.

We believe it is also important to extend the powers granted in Section 5 of the bill, which deals with occupational licensing. Responding to the pandemic has stressed our health care system in ways we have not previously seen. In Alaska, the need for more providers is acute. Regulators must have the power to license new providers on an expedited basis.



APRN
ALLIANCE

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We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony on HB 76. Please feel free to contact us any time if you have questions about our position on the bill, or other health care issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Logan CRNA".

Chris Logan, CRNA, APRN
Acting President, APRN Alliance

From: Cate Ross [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2021 3:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for HB76

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of HB76 and the extension of the disaster declaration.

Our state is obviously still in a state of disaster. Case numbers are much higher than they were when the declaration first went into effect. We need to do everything in our power to contain and mitigate this disease. Extending the disaster declaration will allow for the necessary risk management mandates to continue, such as mandatory quarantining/testing after travel, and mask mandates. In addition, we need to take advantage of any way possible to increase the efficacy of distributing and administering vaccines. We have already seen the federal and state government falter at this task, so need full access to any possible resources in order to get as many people as possible vaccinated.

I urge you to not listen to those of your colleagues who are spreading conspiracy theories. We all want to support local businesses, and for things to "go back to normal". But the only way for that to happen is through continuing to listen to the science, as opposed to baseless conspiracy theories and fear mongering.

This past week, we saw multiple legislators travel out of town and not quarantine before testing after arriving back in Juneau. As a result, multiple people in direct contact with those who traveled have now tested positive, and we are already seeing covid infections ripple out into our community at large. I fully expect there to be many more cases linked back to the capital in the coming weeks, as we are just now starting to see the consequences of such reckless behavior. This is but one example of why we need to extend the disaster declaration and do everything humanly possible to slow the spread of this horrible disease.

Please look at the hard science and facts, and recognize that the only way out of this disaster is to recognize we're still in it, so it doesn't end up stretching out longer and causing more illness and death. Please pass HB76, and implement it retroactively to the date of the expiration, in order to take care of our communities and state.

Thank you,
Cate Ross
Juneau, Alaska

From: Lacy Wilcox [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 10:59 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for HB76

Dear House Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of HB76 and the extension of the disaster declaration.

The emergency isn't over, clearly, and we need to stay vigilant in our efforts to triage the infected and vaccinate the population.

Please do not listen or be swayed by the conspiracy theories perpetuated by some in your ranks, they are not based in science or reality. I expect the legislature to be wise and not swallow up this misinformation. I am an essential worker, a mother, and a spouse of someone who is vulnerable, and I speak for my household consisting of 4 registered voters.

Eliminating the declaration would inhibit the availability and distribution of vaccines, obscure access to funding and critical supplies for our hospitals and clinics, inhibit testing and contact tracing, and other logistical support.

Again, please pass this legislation quickly, it has taken too long already, and should not have been allowed to lapse. It should also be implemented retroactively to Feb 14th.

Thank you,

Lacy Wilcox
Juneau, Alaska



City of Homer

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Homer City Council

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February 22, 2021

Senate President Peter Micciche
Speaker of the House Louise Stutes

Greetings,

The Homer City Council is writing to express our support for the Alaska State Legislature to pass SB 56, or a similar bill, which will reinstate/extend Alaska's disaster declaration due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. We appreciate the recent progress in the Senate in moving the bill to the Senate Finance Committee and the outreach from the Alaska House Coalition to Governor Dunleavy. However, the current disaster declaration expired February 15, 2021.

Unlike some states, the State of Alaska does not have broad public health powers. In Alaska, public health measures are directly linked with the disaster powers. The tools associated with the disaster declaration provides a safety net for the governor, his administration, and local governments to respond flexibly and strategically. For instance, the previous disaster declarations have helped Alaska become the most vaccinated state in the country. However, most of Alaska's population (and the US population) remains vulnerable to the novel coronavirus.

Reinstating the disaster declaration assures the State's authority to distribute vaccines through mass vaccine clinics, procure and direct scarce supplies, and suspend certain statutes and regulations to allow health care providers and businesses to perform efficiently under the current circumstances. We are particularly concerned about what nonrenewal means for the State's vaccination effort going forward, and our health care system's ability to quickly respond should the virus, or variants of the virus, cause a rebound of cases in the State.

The recovery of our local economy has been dependent on mitigating COVID-19 transmission and supplying vaccine to all those who want it. The disaster declaration was an essential component of our ability to effectively respond to support both these efforts. Under the declaration, Homer's Unified Command team worked closely with the State to

- Coordinate local public information and education efforts with the Statewide response.
- Procure important and scarce PPE, testing, and voluntary vaccination supplies through the declaration's procurement regulations waiver.
- Mitigate intra and interstate COVID-19 transmission through the State's testing program in hub airports. As a spoke airport supporting business, medical and tourism travel, testing opportunities at hub airports greatly mitigates the potential travel-related disease transmission.
- Work with local industries to establish critical infrastructure guidelines as needed.

Our citizens benefitted directly from the disaster declaration as well; we would not want to lose current or upcoming economic relief resources by letting the Disaster Declaration lapse, particularly including the following:

- The ability to quickly establish non-congregate sheltering contracts waiving the more formal and lengthy process.
- The ability to use telehealth for medical needs.
- The potential loss of \$8 million in federal SNAP benefits and possibly other federal benefits.

We urge the Alaska State Legislature to quickly pass SB 56 or a suitably amended bill to reinstate Alaska's COVID-19 Disaster Declaration.

Thank you for public service.

CITY OF HOMER



Ken Castner, Mayor

Cc: Governor Dunleavy
Senate Finance Members
House Finance Members
Senator Gary Stevens
Representative Sarah Vance
Alaska Municipal League