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February 12, 2021

32nd Alaska Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Submitted electronically

Subject: Senate Bill 56 – At Act Extending COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Declaration

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Alaska Legislature:

The Alaska Miners Association writes to urge passage of Senate Bill 56, extending COVID-19 Disaster Emergency Declaration.

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining safe operations that protect the health and safety of our workers and our communities has been the priority of the mining industry. The emergency declarations that have been in place over the past year have been critical to making this happen.

These emergency declarations protected our critical infrastructure industry, mobilized health care resources for our communities, and more recently have allowed Alaskans to be vaccinated throughout the state. If the declaration expires, and the legislature does not take action, we risk a patchwork of confusing local mandates that will threaten both our health and our economy.

While we are all tired of the pandemic, maintaining the emergency declaration is critical to getting us through this last mile and ensuring a safe and healthy Alaska.

Please take swift action to pass SB56 and extend the emergency declaration so that we may move quickly and efficiently to end this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Deantha Skibinski
Executive Director