

HB61 – EFFECT ON ALASKAN PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

Does HB61 Improve Public Health, Safety & Welfare? - **NO**

Architects have successfully protected Alaskan public health, safety, and welfare (HSW) since 1949 by providing safe, code-compliant building designs. Architects coordinate a complex team of engineers and specialists, while overseeing a myriad of construction details, to ensure that buildings are constructed in accordance to design. Comparatively, interior designers only work on a narrow scope of a building's design and **do not** have the same level of rigorous training, testing, or experience to guarantee the same competence as an architect to protect public HSW.

By licensing interior designers, HB61 will compromise the proven, public protections already in place and unnecessarily increase the risk to Alaskan's HSW. There is simply no replacement for the intense training and testing an architect receives, which often spans ten or more years through three highly-regulated developmental stages from student to licensed architect.

- 1.) Obtain a degree from an educational program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB);
- 2.) Complete on-the-job training and document experience through the Architecture Experience Program (AXP);
- 3.) Pass the Architect Registration Examination (ARE), a rigorous series of six examinations required by every US jurisdiction.

Don't Architects Already Provide these Services? - **YES**

HB61 would create unnecessary redundancy and confusion amongst the public as to the authority and responsibility of portions of a building's design. Currently, architects successfully provide the services needed to design the interior and exterior of buildings. It would be harmful to the public as well as the practice of architecture to allow interior designers partial authority over an architect's scope. The unwanted effects of HB61 include less accountability, more confusion, more potential for mistakes and abuses, and increased complexity through unneeded regulations.

Does HB61 Address a Public Threat/Gap in Services? - **NO**

There is no evidence to suggest a current problem or threat to the public HSW that HB61 would remedy. HB61 has not grown out of a request from the general public, nor the interior products and construction industry. There are less than two dozen people with interior design education and experience in Alaska who have requested HB61 - regulations that they believe would raise their professional standing. However, there is nothing to demonstrate a current threat to public HSW.

Please do the right thing for Alaskans and OPPOSE HB61!

ARCHITECTS

- Education and training addresses the full range of public HSW building concerns (code compliance, safety regulations), including project management and design team coordination.
- Must pass the 6-part ARE exam with 65% average score or better before licensure, which includes over 4.5hrs of testing specific to codes and regulations.
- Must complete a minimum of 3,740 hrs in 6 total experience areas as part of the Architectural Experience Program (ARE) before licensure.
- Stamping responsibilities ensure that construction documents have been prepared and vetted by trusted industry experts with the highest qualifications.

INTERIOR DESIGNERS

- Do not possess comparable qualifications to architects in terms of public HSW building concerns. Receive less than half the training in building codes and safety regulations as architects.
- Have less vigorous criteria for certification from their national organization, NCIDQ. **Can pass 2/3 exams with a 50% score and 0 correct answers on building codes and safety.**
- Stamping of plans would be redundant yet incomplete with architects' scope.
- Are not currently restricted from practicing their trade or profession.
- Are divided on wanting additional regulations and liability.

ALASKANS

- Deserve qualified experts to stamp construction documents for buildings.
- Don't need the confusion of multi-tiered licensing regulations.
- Didn't request additional government regulations or expenses.
- Are not currently under-served or under-protected.



AIA
Alaska

HB61 – A CLOSER EXAMINATION

Specific Concerns about HB61

AIA Alaska Chapter **opposes** HB61 on the grounds that it does not improve public HSW, splinters portions of the building designer's responsibilities and liability, and leads to an increased risk to project coordination and success. Architects have more than twice the training in building codes and safety regulations as interior designers - training that covers egress, fire ratings, fire suppression systems, and ADA compliance. Additionally, AIA Alaska takes issue with several specific sections of HB61, finding them ambiguous, redundant, or not in the public's best interest.

Sec. 24. AS 08.48.281 - reads that a person who is not a registered commercial interior designer is not prohibited from practicing commercial interior design if the services are performed within the scope of another professional license held by that person. As the **entire scope** of interior design is part of the scope of architecture, this shows how redundant it would be to license interior designers separately from architects.

Sec. 32. AS 08.48.341, item (24), subsections (a), (c), (d), (e) proposes changes to the Alaska Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors (AELS). Subsection (a) contains references to "analysis, enhancing, and administration" regarding the definition of a commercial interior designer that are not referenced in the description of any other discipline mentioned in section 29, **nor are they applicable or relevant to the HSW mission of the AELS board**. There is serious ambiguity regarding concepts such as "nonstructural interior construction" or "nonstructural components." HB61 makes no mention of whom would determine whether or not a component is non-structural. Furthermore, how could an interior designer, who is not trained in structure, determine what qualifies as "non-structural" or not? Subsection (d) defines part of a commercial interior designers duties to include "number and configuration of exits for suite occupant load." AIA Alaska does not feel that interior designers are thoroughly qualified to address a building's exiting systems, which are crucial to the public's HSW.

Negative Effects to the AELS Board

HB61 seeks to add (2) additional members to the AELS board and introduce a new licensed profession which the board must and regulate. The AELS board already faces a significant workload and HB61 does not adequately address how the additional workload, costs, and strain would be mitigated, or more importantly how any discernible benefit to the public could outweigh the additional costs. Members of the AELS board have already raised concerns to HB61 sponsor Rep. Claman.

Unintended Consequences of HB61

While HB61 seems at first glance to be a positive bill meant to empower interior designers, a more thorough understanding reveals unintended negative consequences. It is hard to imagine a scenario where a commercial interior designer with limited expertise could better protect the public HSW than an architect. Applying the "Right Touch Regulation" approach encouraged by the Alaska Department of Commerce, shows that regulating interior designers neither reduces risk to the public nor presents an appropriate use of government intervention. Additionally, fragmenting the practice of architecture with a second, partial authority creates ambiguous situations regarding liability, building design cohesion, and project management. Alaskans deserve the best protections they can get, and that means leaving State statutes alone and architects in charge of stamping construction documents.



FINDING COMMON GROUND

Architects are problem solvers, often striving to "make everyone happy" by balancing the needs of their clients, other design professionals, contractors, and various government regulators.

In the spirit of good faith & support to our interior designer colleagues seeking increased distinction, respect, recognition, and professional standing, we support the following alternatives to an Alaska Interior Design Practice Act.

- A "Title Act" which would grant select interior designers additional distinction and recognition after meeting defined requirements, without granting stamping privileges for construction documents.
- Encouraging interior designers who want more authority to become licensed architects. There are many avenues to becoming a licensed architect, some that even substitute an accredited degree for experience (Alternative Education Path).
- Embrace the distinction of NCIDQ certification. There already exists a national organization to certify and therefore differentiate interior designers who have put in the additional time and resources to earn this distinction.

Architecture is vital and enduring because it contains us; it describes space, space we move through, exit in and use. - Richard Meier



AIA
Alaska

[REDACTED]

From: Paul Baril [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2021 3:12 PM
To: Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Roger Holland; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lora Reinbold; Sen. Joshua Revak; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Ronald Gillham; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Grier Hopkins; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. James Kaufman; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Rep. Christopher Kurka; Rep. Bart LeBon; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Ken McCarty; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Kelly Merrick; Rep. David Nelson; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. Sara Rasmussen; Rep. George Rauscher; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Liz Snyder; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky
Subject: HB61 Effect on Alaskan Public Health, Safety & Welfare (HSW)
Attachments: AIA Alaska ID Bill Opposition - Position Paper - 20210311.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Alaska State Representatives,

My name is Paul Baril, AIA and I am a licensed architect and small business owner in Anchorage, Alaska. I am also on the board of the APDC (Alaska Professional Design Council) and the AIA (American Institute of Architects) Alaska Chapter State Government Network Representative responsible to advocacy of our profession.

I am writing today regarding HB61, an act related to establishing regulations for commercial interior designers. Like many architects in the state and AIA Alaska, I am firmly opposed to HB61 on the grounds that it is unnecessary and most importantly, may negatively affect public health, safety, and wellness by weakening protective requirements for stamping construction documents. Attached is a short position paper handout outlining AIA Alaska's concerns about HB61.

Additionally, I would like to invite all of you to attend a virtual presentation, over your lunch hour, on Monday, March 15th at noon AKST to examine the merits of HB61 in closer detail. Please see Zoom meeting link and info below. We understand that this is short notice, but we wanted to give all of you an opportunity to see our presentation before HB61 goes into hearing with the House Labor and Commerce Committee. Depending on attendance, we will host a second presentation with a date and time to be determined.

As architects, we have an incredible respect for interior designers and their contributions to our field. However, we feel that HB61 goes a step too far by granting interior designers the authority to stamp construction documents – an authority that we feel should be reserved for architects, whose more rigorous training, testing, and experience provide the most protection for the Alaskan public's health, safety, and welfare.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a 95,000 member organization whose Alaska Chapter has hundreds of members, the majority of which also oppose HB61. I, along with several of my colleagues, plan to testify in opposition of HB61. Until then, we would like to open a dialogue with Alaskan State Representatives to promote our position and raise

awareness of the full implications of HB61. Please read our attached briefing and join us on Monday, March 15th at noon AKST to hear from Alaskan architects who want the best for the Alaskan public.

MEETING LINK BELOW -

Paul Baril is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: HB61 Effect on Alaskan Public Health, Safety & Welfare (HSW) - Presentation from AIA Alaska

Time: Mar 15, 2021 12:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86257916124?pwd=UTluTURFVUF6dmhobUI0VlljaW4wQT09>

Meeting ID: 862 5791 6124

Passcode: 747698

One tap mobile

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+13462487799,,86257916124#,,,,*747698# US (Houston)

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+1 346 248 7799

+1 669 900 6833

+1 301 715 8592

+1 312 626 6799

+1 929 436 2866

Meeting ID: 862 5791 6124

Passcode: 747698

Sincerely,

Paul R. Baril, AIA

Principal Architect

Nvision ARCHITECTURE, INC.



celebrating **35+** *years*

From:

To:

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Subject: HB61 Effect on Alaskan Public Health, Safety & Welfare (HSW)

Date: Friday, March 12, 2021 3:28:46 PM

Attachments: [AIA Alaska ID Bill Opposition - Position Paper - 20210311.pdf](#)

Dear Alaska State Representatives,

My name is William T. Guevremont, AIA and I am a licensed architect living in Fairbanks, Alaska.

I am writing today regarding HB61, an act related to establishing regulations for commercial interior designers. Like many architects in the state and AIA Alaska, I am firmly opposed to HB61 on the grounds that it is unnecessary and most importantly, may negatively affect public health, safety, and wellness by weakening protective requirements for stamping construction documents. Attached is a short position paper handout outlining AIA Alaska's concerns about HB61.

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Thank you in advance for help in not supporting this proposed Bill! [Preview attachment AIA Alaska ID Bill Opposition - Position Paper - 20210311.pdf](#)

Alaska ID Bill Opposition - Position Paper - 20210311.pdf

William (Bill) Guevremont, AIA

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Sen. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Matt Claman](#)
Subject: Position Statement on HB61
Date: Monday, March 15, 2021 12:01:59 PM
Attachments: [AIA Alaska ID Bill Opposition - Position Paper - 20210311.pdf](#)

Dear Alaska State Representatives,

My name is Tim Conrad, AIA and I am a licensed architect in Anchorage, Alaska.

I am writing today regarding HB61, an act related to establishing regulations for commercial interior designers. Like many architects in the state and AIA Alaska, I am firmly opposed to HB61 on the grounds that it is unnecessary and most importantly, may negatively affect public health, safety, and wellness by weakening protective requirements for stamping construction documents. Attached is a short position paper handout outlining AIA Alaska's concerns about HB61.

As architects, we have an incredible respect for interior designers and their contributions to our field. However, we feel that HB61 goes a step too far by granting interior designers the authority to stamp construction documents – an authority that we feel should be reserved for architects, whose more rigorous training, testing, and experience provide the most protection for the Alaskan public's health, safety, and welfare. As we saw first-hand in the significant earthquake event of 2018, holding our built environment to the highest standard possible ensures not only the safest outcome, but one which provides the greatest opportunity for limited financial loss to property owners. Maintaining a clear directive that charges architects with their specific and rigorous training and professionalism, ensures safe and quality design which results in a resilient built environment for Alaska.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a 95,000 member organization whose Alaska Chapter has hundreds of members, the majority of which also oppose HB61. I, along with several of my colleagues, plan to testify in opposition of HB61. Until then, we would like to open a dialogue with Alaskan State Representatives to promote our position and raise awareness of the full implications of HB61.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the implications of this bill to the health, safety, and welfare to the residents of Alaska.

Respectfully,

TIM CONRAD, AIA

ARCHITECT | **UMIAQ DESIGN, LLC**

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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