
From: Rob Culbertson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 11:13 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Support for HB61 – Registration for Alaska Commercial Interior Designers

Representative Merrick,

I'm writing to express my support and encourage yours for **HB61 – Registration for Alaska Commercial Interior Designers.**

I am not an interior designer myself, but I work with the industry. I've seen first-hand the impact that an interior designer has on a public space – both good and bad. They must be competent and held accountable in critical areas that impact all of us, including fire, life-safety, building and energy codes, space planning, acoustics, and accessibility standards.

It seems strange to me that we require other professionals, such as hairdressers, to meet an educational standard and be licensed by the state, but not interior designers.

This is not a complex or controversial issue. 27 states currently support professional registration for Interior Designers.

Please show your support for HB61!

Thank you.

Rob Culbertson



Anchorage, AK 99516

From: Michelle E. Klouda [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 1:58 PM
To: Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Kelly Merrick
Cc: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Thomas McKay
Subject: RE: HB 61, licensing of commercial interior designers OPPOSITION

Good Afternoon Representative Foster and Representative Merrick,

I provided the written comments below, last year when HB 61 was heard in House Labor & Commerce Committee. I wanted to let you know that I still oppose this bill as no substantive changes have been made to it.

Thank you for your time,

Michelle E. Klouda AIA NCARB LEED AP BD+C
RIM Architects Owner | Principal

[REDACTED]
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From: Michelle E. Klouda
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 9:55 AM
To: Representative.Tom.McKay@akleg.gov
Cc: Representative.Ivy.Spohnholz@akleg.gov; Representative.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov
Subject: HB 61, licensing of commercial interior designers OPPOSITION

Dear Representative McKay, Representative Spohnholz and Representative Fields,

My name is Michelle Klouda and I am a licensed and practicing Architect in the State of Alaska. I live in District 24 and I am an owner of an Architectural firm that resides downtown at 645 G Street, Suite 400. I would like to state my opposition to HB 61.

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

The top two reasons for my opposition to HB 61 are as follows:

1. Interior designers do not possess comparable qualifications to architects in terms of public health, safety and welfare (HSW). They receive less than half the training in building codes and safety regulations as architects.
There are considerable differences in registration requirements for interior designers compared to architects. To become a licensed architect state laws have established minimum education, experience, and examinations far beyond that of a commercial interior designer. At least 22% of Architectural Registration Exams are related to building code issues which are required to pass the exams. Interior Designer’s certification criteria, through their national organization, NCIDQ, allows them to pass 2/3 of exams with a 50% score and 0 correct answers on building codes and safety.
2. HB 61 will compromise Alaskan’s Health Safety and Welfare.
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 training, testing or experience to guarantee the same competence as an architect to protect public HSW. I have had experience with interior designers trying to play the role of architect or coordination project teams. Their lack a knowledge in the life safety and code aspects of architecture is apparent and they do not always understand all the parts and pieces that are required to put a building together.

I have many more discussion points and would be happy to discuss in further detail.

Thank you for taking time to read and take into consideration my opposition of HB 61, Licensing of commercial interior designers.

I am unable to attend the April 19 hearing, so I have prepared this written testimony in lieu of speaking at Monday's hearing, but ask that my testimony please be included in the record.

Regards,

Michelle E. Klouda AIA NCARB LEED AP BD+C
Principal



www.rimarchitects.com

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From: Shilling, Adam J. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 11:04 AM
To: Rep. Bart LeBon; House Finance
Subject: HB 61 Testimony

Representative LeBon and House Finance Committee members,

My name is Adam Shilling, I live in the city of Fairbanks within House District 1.

I am a licensed Architect and I am opposed to HB 61. My concern is twofold; first, the license for an interior designer does not represent a responsibility for life-safety comparable to an architect or an engineer. Second, the increase in red-tape and state expenses to regulate the industry is not a valuable use of state resources. To expand on the life-safety issue, I acknowledge there is a minor life-safety component to interior design. Selecting appropriate finishes for a healthy and comfortable environment is important, however a license comparable to an architect whose license qualifies them to design in a way that allows the public to occupy a building and exit that building in case of a fire is an overvaluation for an interior designer's responsibility with respect to that of an architect. One could replace 'architect' in the previous statement with 'engineer', the state of Alaska has determined the individual designing a public structure to remain erect during heavy snow or seismic events shall be a licensed structural engineer, and to elevate interior designers to that same threshold of responsibility is diminishing to other licensed design professionals in the state. To expand my second point, adding members to the AELS board and another full time employee is an increase in state spending, bureaucracy and red tape with the intent to protect the public from an amorphous risk that has yet to be made apparent. My opposition to HB 61 is rooted in the lack of responsibility the professional holds for life-safety to the general public with respect to already licensed professions, as well as the disproportionate increase in state spending, bureaucracy and red tape.

Thank you for your consideration,

Adam Shilling, AIA
Architect | Design Alaska, Inc.

[REDACTED] Fairbanks, AK 99701
[REDACTED]

From: Kelsey Davidson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 8:24 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 61 - Letter of Support

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Kelsey Davidson, I am a life-long Alaskan, and a NCIDQ certified commercial interior designer. I am an owner of SALT, LLC a business in Downtown Anchorage, and reside in Eagle River. I am writing to briefly express my support for HB 61, Professional Registration for Commercial Interior Designers.

Interior Design is a specialized field of practice, within the built environment. As an interior designer, I know first-hand the rigor of specialty. My education created a basis of understanding to interpret and apply building codes for practical and safe solutions. I worked under NCIDQ certified interior designers after graduation to establish a contextual understanding of real-world design solutions and best practices for application. Once eligible, I took that same examination (NCIDQ) to demonstrate and confirm my abilities to problem-solve and design solutions to create safe spaces for commercial use. Now, as an owner of an interior design & strategic planning firm I rely on this foundation in my day-to-day practice to ensure that projects are suitable for public use, and designers under my direct supervision are receiving training and exposure to this same diligence in practice.

Many of the projects that my firm completes are multi-disciplinary including consultant teams of mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, structural engineers, and others depending on the project's scope. In a multi-disciplinary team, each consultant assumes responsibility for their work, and HB 61 would enable interior designers to do the same: assume responsibility for our own work as it relates to public health, safety, and welfare. Professional registration for interior designers would not preclude architects from practicing this same scope, or the broader scope within which they are trained & examined to practice within. Most importantly, registration would ensure that those practicing within this specialized area of the built environment are qualified to complete this work based on education, examination, and experience.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter of support for HB 61, Registration for Commercial Interior Designers.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Davidson, ASID
Principal at SALT, LLC, located in Anchorage Alaska
[REDACTED]
Eagle River, AK 99577
[REDACTED]

From: Cara Rude [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 10:08 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Support HB 61 Registration for Commercial Interior Designers

Representative Merrick,

Please Support HB 61, Registration for Commercial Interior Designers

My name is Cara Rude and I am in support of HB 61. I am a lifelong Alaskan, and owner of MCG Explore Design in Anchorage, Alaska. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design and passed my NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualifications) in 2011. I am registered in the State of Texas and have worked in the field for 18 years.

Two years ago, I became an owner of the longest established and among the largest architectural practices in Alaska. Lack of professional registration for commercial interior designers became an impediment and the company had to restructure from a Professional Corporation to an LLC. My partners and many other Architects in Alaska understand our qualifications and competencies as many of them work alongside us.

This bill reflects the reality of the modern design marketplace. Accelerated construction timelines and constant technology advancements has led to the demand for Interior Designers that provide a focused education on environments to support human health, wellness, ethical material chemistry, commercial public life safety and the responsibility to reduce embodied carbon.

I believe this voluntary registration will lead to better built environments and safeguard an elevated design marketplace for consumers.

Cara Rude

[REDACTED] Anchorage Alaska 99517
[REDACTED]

ASID, NCIDQ, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP, NEWH
Principal, Interior Designer
[REDACTED]



www.exploredesign.com



Dear House of Finance Committee Admin,

Please Support HB 61 Professional Registration for Commercial Interior Designers.

My name is Elizabeth Goebel. I have recently moved to Alaska from North Dakota to begin my career as an Interior Designer at a large multidisciplinary architecture firm in Anchorage. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from North Dakota State University's CIDA-Accredited design program.

During my time at NDSU I was involved in multiple student organizations working alongside professionals in the field of Interior Design allowing me to fully understand the extent, function, and discipline of the Interior Design profession. Interior Designers have the insight and ability to create safe, human-centered, durable, health-focused interior environments that can greatly impact the community in which they are placed.

I am currently working towards NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualifications) certification with the goal of proving my knowledge of construction documentation, public safety, and application of regulatory codes and standards. As a young designer I strive to consistently grow and advance in the design industry without limitations. Limitations that could be lifted by advancing the extent of this qualification's constitution.

I strongly support HB61 due to the expansion of Interior Designer's scope limitations in the state of Alaska as well as the increase of individual and state-wide progression of proficient design knowledge, salary opportunities, and benefits that will encourage small businesses, emerging professionals, and existing Interior Design practitioners within the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Goebel, Junior Interior Designer
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

██████████
████████████████████

Informational video: [What Does an Interior Designer Actually Do?](#)

April 20, 2022

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice Chair
House Finance Committee

email: Representative.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov
Representative.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov
Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov

Re: **Opposition to HB 61** REGISTER COMMERCIAL INTERIOR DESIGNERS

Dear Representatives Foster, Merrick & Ortiz,

I am a lifelong Alaskan and licensed architect who has been practicing for over twenty-five years in this state. I am currently the secretary/treasurer for the American Institute of Architects Alaska Chapter. I also sit on the Municipality of Anchorage 1% for Public Art Committee and the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors. I am writing in opposition of HB 61, licensing of commercial interior designers based on the fact this bill is a **Practice Act**. There is no presented evidence that a **Practice Act** like this one offers a solution for a problem that currently does not exist. There are no Health, Safety, Welfare issues currently presented, making this bill an undue burden to existing registrants with no evidence of need. It will not protect the consumer or enhance public safety. Out of respect for your time, I have prepared this written testimony instead of speaking at Thursday's hearing, but request that my testimony please be included in the record.

Only three states in the US currently regulate the **practice** of interior design. These states are Louisiana Nevada, and North Carolina. **Florida recently repealed their statute regulating the practice of interior design because it was deemed unnecessary.** Over half of the states in the country have a statute in the form of a Title Act. A Title Act would be a more appropriate method if the state wishes to provide recognition for qualified interior design professionals.

The current definition of commercial interior design in HB 61 is excessively broad. The proposed legislation contains terms and definitions that do not align with current licensing and construction permitting practices in Alaska. While some interior designers choose to work within architectural offices, many practice in their own Alaskan firms, independent of other design professions. Currently, interior designers can work independently on all types of projects that do not fall *within the practice of architecture or engineering*. Some of these services include analyzing spaces, selecting furnishings, fixtures and equipment, performing field inspections of projects during construction, etc. Under HB 61, these existing businesses will be required to become licensed interior designers. Those interior designers that do not possess the required qualifications will lose their business because this bill requires all interior designers to be licensed.

The following are excerpts from HB 61 Sec. 32, item (24), definition of Commercial Interior Design that illustrate additional concerns:

(24) "commercial interior design" means a professional service or creative work for a building the primary use of which is public occupancy, involving:

(A) analysis, research, planning, and design of the interior spaces of a building for the purpose of enhancing and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public by preparation of interior drawings, specifications, or other technical submissions and administration of nonstructural interior construction;

(B) design and specification of code-compliant interior finishes, furnishings, fixtures, or equipment;

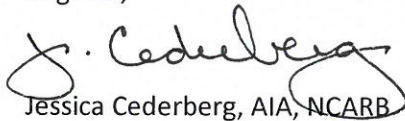
(E) review, analysis, and evaluation of building codes, accessibility standards, or guidelines for interior planning, design, and nonbearing construction compliance;

The highlighted items illustrate terms that are not currently regulated and adds significant confusion. Additionally, the words commercial, public occupancy, code-compliant, internal circulation systems, suite occupant load, and more are also confusing terms that are not used in other areas of the current AELS statute. These items need to be reevaluated prior to acceptance and perhaps tighten up to exclude life safety items like occupancy loads, exiting, egress, fire walls, fire barriers, smoke barriers, etc.

I have been researching interior design statutes in other states, and it is interesting to note that Michigan repealed all interior design regulation in 2014, and Florida repealed their Practice Act in 2020, making interior design a voluntary certification. The lack of clarity in this bill is subject to interpretation with no line of demarcation.

Based on the above comments I urge you to hold HB 61 in committee for further analysis.

Regards,



Jessica Cederberg, AIA, NCARB

American Institute of Architects Alaska Chapter Secretary/Treasurer

cc: Representative Andy Josephson

House Finance Committee
Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

Please Support HB 61 Professional Registration for Commercial Interior Designers

My name is Tiffany Coffman. I'm a lifelong Alaskan and a Senior Interior Designer at the largest multidisciplinary Architectural firm in Alaska. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design and passed the NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualifications) in 2017. I have also passed the American Academy of Healthcare Interior Designers (AAHID) examination earning the CHID (Certified Healthcare Interior Designer) certificate. CHID demonstrates knowledge and experience in a variety of core competencies affecting the acute care, ambulatory care, and residential healthcare interior environments.

In my 10-year career as an interior designer in Alaska, my work and continuing education has focused on design for childcare and early education, environments for elders, and healthcare design. As a commercial interior designer of public-occupied buildings my accredited education, rigorous examination and extensive experience qualifies me to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Alaska's most vulnerable populations.

I strongly support HB 61 because it protects public health, safety, and welfare. Establishing registration for commercial interior designers ensures those providing the limited scope of work defined in HB 61 are qualified to protect public safety and allows registered commercial interior designers to stamp and submit their non-structural construction documents for permit, taking responsibility for their own work.

HB 61 Registration for Commercial Interior Designers is voluntary. Non-registered interior designers may work in the residential field (single to 4- 61 plex), or the commercial field under a registered commercial interior designer or architect. Registration for commercial interior designers is compatible with all design professions and architects are exempt from this registration.

HB 61 Benefits Alaskans. As an Alaskan who left the state to pursue an interior design degree from an accredited program, I understand firsthand the apprehension associated with returning to practice in a state that does not recognize registration for commercial interior designers. HB 61 encourages those earning interior design degrees "outside" to return home for professional registration and hiring of Alaskans instead of "outside experts" for professional interior design. HB 61 increases professional employment and salary opportunities, helps retain high-quality design talent in the state, attracts new talent, and helps reduce the professional "workforce gap". Registration of commercial interior designers expands consumer choice of qualified design professional and encourages small business.

Please support HB 61 Registration for Commercial Interior Designers to protect public safety, expand consumer choice of qualified design professionals, and bring economic benefits to Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Coffman, ASID, NCIDQ, CHID, LEED Green Associate

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska, 99515

[REDACTED]

Informational video: [What Does an Interior Designer Actually Do?](#)

April 20, 2022

Rep. Neal Foster, Co-chair
Rep. Kelly Merrick, Co-chair
House Finance Committee
Email: representative.neal.foster@akleg.gov
representative.kelly.merrick@akleg.gov

Re: HB61 Opposition Testimony Letter

Committee Chairs & Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed legislation that would significantly revise existing state law governing the registration of interior designers and expand the scope of interior design practice to include the practice of interior architecture.

My name is Paul Baril, the Owner and Principal Architect for Nvision Architecture, Inc. in Anchorage. I am testifying in opposition to 2021 House Bill 61. This proposed legislation is unnecessary and confusing. It would not protect the consumer or enhance public safety. It offers a solution where no problem exists.

Only three states, Louisiana, Nevada and North Carolina that currently regulate the practice of interior design, which is what House Bill 61 is proposing. Florida used to be a state included in this, but they recently repealed the statute regulating the practice of interior design because it was unnecessary.

The purpose of laws in Alaska and all other states governing the practice of architecture and professional engineering is to protect public health and safety. Interior designers in Alaska already are providing their services on larger commercial building projects with no registration/license under the purview and responsibility of a licensed Architect. The public HSW is the most important element in my opposition because my experience of working with Interior Designers has shown me the lack of HSW knowledge and expertise that Interior Designers have as compared to Architects.

The proposed legislation contains new terms and new definitions for “commercial interior design,” that lack clarity and are subject to interpretation. It offers no clear line of demarcation between what exactly commercial interior design covers all while covering what architectural services already does, which will create overlap and confusion.

Thank you for your consideration of my opposition to House Bill 61. I encourage you to vote against recommending passage. I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

Sincerely,
Paul Baril, AIA

April 16, 2022

House Finance Committee

Dear Finance Committee Administrator,

RE: Support HB 61 Professional Registration for Commercial Interior Designers

My name is Mary Knopf, I'm a 37-year resident of Anchorage, a partner in an architectural firm and a commercial interior designer.

Interior designers qualified through education, experience and national examination to protect public safety in commercial buildings should be allowed to practice the full scope of commercial interior design and take responsibility for their own work. The interior design examination is recognized throughout Canada and the United States. It has been proven to test a candidate's knowledge on all aspects of design and particularly those related to the health, safety and welfare of the public within commercial buildings.

NCARB – the examination body for architectural licensing and CIDQ the international examination body for interior design certification recently completed an in-depth study of the similarities and differences of both exams. The Vice President of NCARB stated that “Both examinations have well established and rigorous procedures that must be met. And both architecture and interior design, while similar in requirements, are unique and distinct disciplines in practice and required knowledge. Both serve an important role in serving the health, safety and welfare within the built environment.” While the study is quite lengthy, there is a you tube video synopsis that is a broad-brush explanation of the study and samples of the outcomes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wvSvxrmjs>

With the complexity of our current built environments, educated, experienced, credentialed experts are needed in each of our fields, to protect public health and safety within our defined scope of practice. This bill in no way reduces the ability of any other profession within the architecture and engineering disciplines to practice within their defined scopes. It does provide consumers a choice to select a specialist in the commercial interior environment to provide professional services, and to take their project from design through permitting and construction within their more limited scope of practice.

All disciplines within the building environment are currently experiencing staff shortages. With the realization of infrastructure funds coming to Alaska over the next five years, this bill offers an expansion of available professionals to independently complete projects in commercial buildings and expand the pool of other professions to keep the infrastructure projects on track.

Please vote in favor of advancing HB 61 to protect the public health, safety and welfare, to recognize professional interior designers and to offer businesses a choice for their commercial design needs.

Sincerely,



ECI

Mary G. Knopf, FASID, IIDA, NCIDQ, LEED AP BD+C, ALEP
Principal, Interior Designer

House of Finance Committee
Representative Merrick

Dear Representative Merrick,

Please support House Bill 61

I am a 29 year old lifelong Alaskan and West High School school student and Steller Secondary Graduate currently living in Fort Collins, Colorado, where I am completing my bachelor degree at Colorado State University's CIDA-Accredited Interior Design Program. I learned about interior design when I was 17 years old and have been pursuing a degree and career in commercial interior design ever since.

Before moving to Colorado I had the opportunity to work for a busy, interdisciplinary firm in Anchorage as an interior design assistant for several years. I was part of a talented team that completed commercial projects of a variety of sizes and sectors all over the state of Alaska. Having the perspective of working in the industry before returning to complete my degree has shown me how incredibly applicable the skills we learn in our rigorous CIDA-Accredited design programs are to the actual practice of interior design and amongst interdisciplinary teams.

Interior design school is demanding and intense. I am currently finishing the most course-heavy year of my program. This year alone my cohort was exposed to individual courses that covered: building codes, fire & life safety, accessibility guidelines, evidence-based design, design theory, lighting, sustainability, material health and building wellbeing. In addition, we also had our traditional studio classes and implemented all of these topics into our individual and team based studio projects through the year.

I am approaching graduation next May and have begun my final Capstone. Capstone is the culmination of all of our skills and research, demonstrated in one final, individual project or our choosing, its a design students version of a final thesis.

While it would be easy for me to design a building in Colorado, I have decided to focus my final capstone on my home state of Alaska. My capstone will repurpose a currently vacant and existing 140,000 SF building located in Anchorage. I will be designing an Ice Center that focuses on combating the effects of seasonal affective disorder while programmatically designing spaces and rink conditions that support both professional ice athletes, and general community members of the Anchorage Area to increase community well being and connection. I will be considering multiple design theories, implementing specific lighting needs, coordinating all of the integral systems that support the building, performing building and site analysis, integrating sustainable design and material considerations, all while creating a design that best supports the health, wellbeing, safety and experience of prospective users to better the community I love.

Even as students we understand that interior designers offer immense value to the integrative design team and desire to be appropriately recognized for our area of expertise and passion as future interior designers.

I am seeking internships for the coming summer as part of my program's degree requirements and considering post-graduate employment opportunities, prioritizing destinations that provide the best opportunities to achieve my professional goals. Since Alaska does not currently recognize the interior design profession and I would be required to work under the oversight of an architect to do the kind of commercial interior design work I aspired to, opportunities out of state are currently more enticing, especially as more and more states are recognizing their interior design professionals and providing them with better practice opportunities in the Lower 48 with their respective interior design legislative initiatives.

Please vote in favor of HB 61: it will protect the public, increase professional job opportunities, attract high-quality design talent to Alaska, and encourage those earning interior design degrees "outside" to return home for professional registration similar to students like myself.

Thank You.

Chelsey Beardsley, ASID Student Member

[REDACTED]

Fort Collins, CO 80524

[REDACTED]

Charles Bettisworth, FAIA

Architect



Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701

MEMORANDUM

April 18, 2022

To:

House Finance Committee

Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair

Members of the Committee

From:

Charles Bettisworth, FAIA

RE: HB 61, Licensure for Commercial Interior Designers

Dear Representatives Merrick and Foster,

I am a professional Architect, licensed in the State of Alaska, and have been for over 40 years. I sort of retired in 2014 and today work part time. I am a member of the American Institute of Architects, and an AIA Fellow.

For over 40 years I owned and managed an Architectural practice, Bettisworth North Architects and Planners.

I am reaching out to you in active support the passage of HB 61, Registration for Commercial Interior Designers. This Legislation is long overdue.

I have engaged the services of Interior Design professionals for decades. Through the years I came to understand the importance of, and value of, Commercial Interior Designers. This

RE: HB 61, Licensure for Commercial Interior Designers

understanding led Bettisworth North to become a multidisciplinary firm, providing architecture, interior design and landscape architecture services, all disciplines integral to the firm's practice.

Our Interior Design Professionals are indispensable to the firm's ability to deliver professional design services which meet or exceed the stringent Health Welfare and Safety (HWS) requirements required of today's facilities.

Let me give an example: at the onset of COVID, we had one client who was renovating a building for a new enterprise and was highly concerned about the transmission of the virus. This new enterprise was a setting that provided workspace for various independent mobile workers and our client wanted to create an environment that was safe. Our Interior Design Professionals, had specific training and experience in creating a facility that provided the necessary separations, addressed ventilation issues, selected finishes, surfaces, and furnishings that were easily sanitized and made this a safe environment in which to work. This is but one of many examples of the specific Health Welfare and Safety (HWS) education, experience, and credentials that Commercial Interior Designers bring to a project.

From this experience, it is evident that this legislation is in the public interest. It is important: in the future it will serve to protect the life and safety of the occupants of buildings.

Further, in the case of Commercial Interior Designers, much of their work involves the renovation and reconfiguration of space. These services often are contracted directly by owners/lessees, without the engagement of architects. These owner/lessees often do not understand the potential life/safety issues that can be encountered when reconfiguring space, and correspondingly hire interior designers who do not have knowledge of, or experience with the necessary life safety codes.

This legislation, then, provides a method for ensuring that interior designers meet the rigorous national qualifications, standards, and credentials to independently practice a limited, defined scope of work within public-occupancy buildings.

Further it is important to note that HB 61 will not displace architects. However, it will provide commercial interior designers the ability to stamp-sign-seal their own documents and take responsibility for their own work within the established limited scope.

April 18, 2022
House Finance Committee

RE: HB 61, Licensure for Commercial Interior Designers

Finally, the American Institute of Architects, has rescinded its previous objection to the licensure of Commercial Interior Designers. I am aware that the Alaska Chapter of AIA has objections to this legislation: these objections are contrary to the National AIA Policy on this subject. (Note that the Alaska Chapter of the AIA is an affiliate of, and distinct from the National AIA.)

Similarly, the National Council of Architecture Registration Boards, (NCARB) with The Council for Interior Design Qualifications, (CIDQ), has conducted an extensive review of the education, experience, and examination requirements for Commercial Interior Designers, and have found that these are as rigorous in terms of HWS licensure as are the requirements for the licensing of Architects.

HB 61 will protect the public, increase professional job opportunities, attract high-quality design talent to Alaska, expand consumer choice of qualified design professionals, encourage small business and those earning interior design degrees "outside" to return home for professional registration.

I therefore encourage you, this Committee and the 32nd Session of the Alaska State Legislature to approve HB 61.

Thank you and sincerely,



CB Bettisworth, Senior Architect, Retired

April 21, 2022

Dear House Finance Committee,

Please Support HB61, establishing Registration for Alaska Commercial Interior Designers

My name is Barbara Cash. I am an Alaska commercial interior designer and **I support House Bill 61.**

Alaskans expect the buildings they enter are designed by registered professionals educated to protect public life-safety, from the inside-out, including commercial interior design. HB61 will accomplish this.

House Bill 61 is straight-forward.

It establishes professional registration and defines what commercial interior designers do (some building officials are already aware of this scope, as are architects who currently hire and consult with commercial interior designers). It establishes registration qualifications in public life-safety design (where currently none exist) that align with other Alaska design professionals - engineers, architects, landscape architects and land surveyors:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent in interior design
- Work experience under direct supervision of a registered commercial interior designer or architect
- Successful completion of the national 3-part interior design exam, passed in full

And it allows qualified, registered commercial interior designers to take responsibility for their own work.

HB61 is non-threatening; it does not apply to residential interior designers (single family to 4-plex) or architects. It does not affect non-registered interior designers working under the direct supervision of a registered interior designer or architect in the commercial field, and it is self-funded through the AELS Registration Board's fee structure.

HB61 is good for Alaska; it expands the professional design workforce and provides professional design when full architectural services are not needed, encourages small business enterprise, attracts interior design graduates to return (or come) to Alaska, and allows commercial interior designers to practice what they're educated, trained, and tested to do.

Please support HB61 Registration for Alaska Commercial Interior Designers providing public life-safety design.

Respectfully,

Barbara Cash, FASID

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK 99517

[REDACTED]

April 19, 2022

State of Alaska

House Finance Committee: Support HB-61

Representatives,

I am writing to ask you to pass HB-61. I have practiced Architecture since I became registered in 1976, and in Alaska since 1977. In 1986, I founded my firm, RIM Architects, in Anchorage.

I understand that the American Institute of Architects, (AIA) Alaska and National organizations are opposing HB-61. As a long time member and now Fellow in the AIA (FAIA) it is even more important for me to voice my emphatic support for HB-61. This support comes from my years of successful experience working with expert Commercial Interior Designers. **HB-61 will in no way diminish my responsibility or authority as the Architect. Quite the opposite.**

Designing buildings that are safe for the public requires the professional participation of a team of credentialed experts who are registered to practice in their focused disciplines: such as structural, mechanical, electrical, and civil engineers, and landscape architects. It is my responsibility as the Architect to assemble and lead this comprehensive design team. Qualified Commercial Interior Designers have a focused, higher level of expertise in interior finishes regarding fire, smoke, infection control, and toxicity characteristics than most registered Architects, me included. As Architects, we are responsible and liable to make sure that our finished buildings are as safe as possible for the public to use and occupy. **I want to be able to include registered Commercial Interior Designers as integrated members of my team, assuring clients, the public and myself that all life safety characteristics are addressed.**

Commercial Interior Design is a specialized field of practice that is complimentary to my profession of Architecture. The public at large and my clients have benefitted from the integrated safety characteristics added to the buildings through the expertise of Commercial Interior Designers.

For the record, I am pleased to disclose that my wife is a Commercial Interior Designer who founded her own Commercial Interior Design business in Anchorage and successfully practiced for over 40 years.

I ask you to support making buildings in Alaska as safe as possible, inside and out.

Please pass HB-61.

Larry S Cash, FAIA, NCARB

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska 99517

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



April 20, 2022

Representative Dan Ortiz
State of Alaska Legislature, House Finance Committee
Juneau, Alaska

Re: HB 61 – Register Commercial Interior Designers

Dear Representative Ortiz:

I am writing today in opposition of HB61, an act related to establishing regulations for commercial interior designers. I join with many of my fellow architects around the state, firmly opposed to HB61 on the grounds that it is unnecessary and most importantly, may negatively affect public health, safety, and welfare by weakening protective requirements for stamping construction documents. I will not be able to testify in person on the April 21st hearing, so I respectfully request this letter be included as part of the record. My opposition to HB 61 is based on several areas of negative impact to public health, safety, and welfare (HSW):

- Education and Training: Interior Designers do not possess comparable qualifications to architects in terms of public HSW. Interior Designers receive less than half the training in building codes and safety regulations as Architect, and are allowed to pass their national organization certification made up of 3 exams, the NCIDQ, with answering zero questions correctly on building codes and safety. Architects however, must pass a 6 part, 4.5 total hours, of the Architectural Experience Program (ARE) exams with a higher required passing score of 65%, and document and complete a minimum of 3,740 hours in 6 experience areas as part of the ARE. Architects are specifically trained and educated on addressing the full range of public HSW along with project management and design team coordination.
- Unnecessary Redundancy and Uncertainty: This bill will create unnecessary redundancy and confusion amongst the public as to the authority and responsibility of portions of a building's design. Trying to divide out interior commercial work in a clear and precise manner which delineates specific responsibility between an Interior Designer and Architect is nearly impossible. While any project may intend to only complete interior commercial work, as any architect will be able to attest to, the scope may very well change based on provisions of national and local codes. This presents a gray area where an interior designer may be faced with decisions well outside of their ability, training, and understanding to administer because of their lesser training and education in building codes and safety. There has been no evidence to suggest a current problem or threat to the public HSW that HB 61 would remedy. These unwanted uncertainties that HB 61 will create will result in less accountability, more confusion, more potential for mistakes and abuses, and increased complexity through unneeded regulation.
- Alaska's Geographical Risk: The earthquake of 2018 in southcentral Alaska provides a recent and clear understanding that reducing requirements and responsibility of our built environment presents higher risks to the public and higher burden of costs to recover from. There was clear

evidence within residential areas, subject to lesser requirements and workmanship, suffering significantly greater damage to homes and buildings. Alaska's geographical location demands high standards to effectively manage the risks presented by our numerous challenges: permafrost, earthquakes, and more recently, erosion as a result of changing climate conditions.

- Reversal of Prior Bills in Other States: Currently there are only three states which regulate the practice of interior design. Recently the state of Florida repealed their statute regulating the practice of interior design because it was determined to be unnecessary. The Alaska Chapter of the AIA is in support of a more equitable, less costly, and lower public safety risk of exploring the method of creating a Title Act in lieu of a Practice Act.
- Excessive Cost and Management: If HB 61 is to pass, its implementation will create additional costs for all registrants under the AELS as there are less than 2 dozen individuals who would qualify under HB 61. As stated above, if this will is refocused under a Title Act, then the financial burden will not have to be borne by all other registrants of AELS for a select few members. Additionally, a Title Act will not have a negative impact on those businesses currently practicing interior design who would be forced to close because they do not meet the requirements of HB 61.

The Alaska Legislature can help all Alaskans by creating and maintaining the framework for highly qualified professionals to execute their expertise for the benefit of all residents. HB 61 does not maintain the high standard needed, and thus puts greater risk and cost on the residents of Alaska. There is an alternative way through exploring a Title Act which can offer the opportunity for interior designers to distinguish their qualifications within the market, but alleviates the HSW concerns, additional costs and regulations, and ensures all current practicing interior designers can have access to a new statute. Thank you for your time and consideration of the negative implications of this bill to the health, safety, and welfare to the residents of Alaska.

Sincerely,



Timothy Conrad, AIA



April 20, 2022

Representative Neal Foster
State Capitol Room 505
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: HB61

Dear Representative Foster:

My name is Richard Rearick and I am a licensed architect in the State of Alaska and a resident of Eagle River, Alaska. I am past Chair of the Alaska Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). I am also a past Chair of the Alaska State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors (BRAELS). I have also served as a Member Board Member and committee member, representing the State of Alaska, for both the National Council of Architecture Registration Boards (NCARB), and as a Board Member of the Western Council of Architectural Registration Board (WCARB), for which the State of Alaska is a member.

I am writing to you to express that I do not support HB61. As a practicing architect with over 30 years of experience, and through my board work as the Architect Member with the State of Alaska and its member organizations, I believe that the passage of HB61 will have a negative impact to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the State of Alaska. While I respect the services that interior designers can perform, they do not have the same level of education, training, and testing that architects are required to obtain for licensure. Please consider the following reasons:

1. Architects currently have the training and qualifications to perform interior design. Interior design is part of the architecture design. Architects may consult with material specialist or interior designers in consideration of interior finishes, furniture, color selections, etc. While an interior design specialty can contribute to the overall design, the requirements for health, safety, and welfare reside with the architect responsible for integration into the overall building system.
2. Architects have a much more rigorous education typically requiring a professional degree that includes either a five year Bachelor Degree or a Master's Degree from an educational program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).
3. Architects must pass a rigorous 6-part Architecture Registration Exam (ARE) that includes 4.5 hours of testing specific to codes and regulations.
4. Architects must complete 3,740 hours in 6 total experience areas as part of the Architectural Experience Program before obtaining licensure.
5. Architects have always maintained the responsibility for the architectural design that includes building interiors.
6. Licensing interior designers would unnecessarily confuse the public and provide less accountability for meeting the building codes and regulations. This will likely lead to work being performed that should be stamped by a licensed architect.
7. Interior designers are not currently restricted from performing their trade or profession.
8. Creating a new licensed professional will unnecessarily create addition financial burden

Representative Foster

April 20, 2022

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to the citizens of Alaska. There is nothing to demonstrate that there is currently a threat to the public health, safety and welfare.

Respectfully,



Richard Rearick, AIA, NCARB
Architect

RRR:rr

cc: Representative Kelly Merrick
Representative Dan Ortiz