



ALASKA FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

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March 5, 2012

Senator Joe Paskvan
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau AK, 99801

Reference: SB 208 "An Act establishing an Alaska intrastate mutual aid system and relating to the duties of the Alaska division of homeland security and emergency management and the duties of the Alaska State Emergency Response Commission."

Dear Senator Paskvan,

On behalf of the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association I want to thank you for introducing SB 208. The Alaska Fire Chiefs Association fully supports this bill and encourages its adoption.

The Alaska Fire Chiefs Association in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Alaska Division of Homeland Security have been working over the last two years to develop an intrastate mutual aid system for the State of Alaska. Currently we are one of only four States who do not have a system in place or the statutory ability that allows communities to come to the aid of other communities in the time of an emergency.

Mutual aid is defined by FEMA as "...agreements between agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions that provide a mechanism to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services. The primary objective is to facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of emergency support prior to, during, and after an incident.

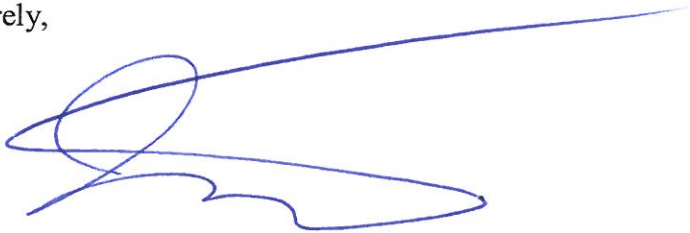
Currently local communities may have mutual aid agreements to provide Fire services to their neighboring communities as provided under AS 18.70.150 "Adoption of Mutual Fire Aid Agreements". However these agreements are limited in scope and do not provide for all of the potential needs of communities.

SB 208 gives us the needed framework that will allow us to develop a comprehensive intrastate mutual aid system. SB 208 addresses several key issues including liability and compensation that are not currently addressed in State Statutes. SB 208 will allow one Alaskan community to assist another Alaskan community no matter the location or need however, in no way are communities obligated or required to provide assistance.

The Alaska Fire Chiefs Association is committed to seeing a comprehensive intrastate mutual aid system work in Alaska and would like to see our organization included as one of the participating groups to whom which the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management would coordinate with in the operation of the Alaska Intrastate Mutual Aid System as amended in SB 208 Sec.2.AS 26.23.040(e).12.

The Alaska Fire Chiefs Association supports SB 208 and urges its adoption. We look forward to working with the State and local communities in the development of an Alaska Intrastate Mutual Aid System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line and a small loop at the end.

Jeff Tucker, Fire Chief
AFCA Legislative Committee Chair