Catholic Social Services
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March 19, 2012

Senator Hoffman, Finance Committee Co-chair
State Capitol Room #518
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Stedman, Finance Committee Co-chair
State Capitol Room # 516
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: **SB 221 – An Act relating to the disposition of proceeds from the alcoholic beverage tax and to the alcohol and other drug abuse treatment and prevention fund.**

Dear Senators Hoffman, Stedman and members of the Finance Committee,

Catholic Social Services (CSS) is writing in strong support of Senate Bill 221. As one of the largest social service agencies in Alaska, we see first-hand the devastating impact of alcohol and drug abuse. CSS operates eight multi-faceted programs including two emergency homeless shelters, a home for teens, a food pantry, supportive housing, an adoption and pregnancy support program, services for individuals with disabilities, and a refugee resettlement & immigration program. During fiscal year 2011, CSS served 20,317 clients in Alaska.

Alcoholism and drug abuse are inextricably linked to Alaska's epidemic levels of domestic violence and sexual assault, suicide, child neglect cases, and rising corrections costs. According to a 2005 McDowell report, costs incurred as a result of substance abuse neared $738 million annually. With a small statutory change, all monies collected from alcohol taxes can be put toward proven substance abuse treatment and prevention programs.

I strongly urge you to join in support of SB 221 to allocate 100 percent of existing alcohol tax revenue to substance abuse treatment and prevention.

Sincerely,

Susan H. Bomalaski, Ph.D., LPC
Executive Director

Cc: Sen. Finance Committee: Senator Olson, Senator Egan, Senator Thomas, Senator Ellis, Senator McGuire
Sen. Health & Social Services Committee: Senator Davis (chair), Senator Meyer, Senator Dyson, Senator Ellis, Senator Egan

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