

March 20, 2014

RE: Alaska Development Corporation – STEM Talent for Alaska’s Economic Competitiveness, TPS #62349

Senators Meyers, Kelly, Fairclough, Bishop, Dunleavy, Hoffman, and Olson

I urge you to support capital request #62349, *Alaska Development Corporation - STEM Talent for Alaska’s Economic Competitiveness*. This is a strategic investment in K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs for Alaska students.

Labor trends show STEM skills are the gatekeepers to job opportunities. STEM jobs in Alaska are second only to health care in projected growth, yet most Alaska students lack the background and training to pursue these opportunities.

The STEM AK program has a proven track record in efficiently delivering STEM programs in Alaska. These programs directly build workforce ready skills and prepare students to hit the ground running in Alaska’s technical industries, including oil and gas development, marine navigation, and cold weather construction. In 2013, over 2,500 students participated in STEM AK programs in 25 School Districts.

Funding for the STEM AK program comes from corporate sponsors such as BP, Alaska Airlines, ACS, and GCI, as well as private foundations, individuals, and volunteers. State funding is critical to furthering industry dollars. In three years, the Alaska Department of Labor projects 8,000 new job openings that will require STEM mastery. Investing in the STEM AK program will ensure Alaska graduates are ready to fill those openings.

We respectfully request you include capital request #62349 in the 2015 capital budget.

Sincerely,

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