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Dear Chair Bjorkman and Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I have been an active member of the Alaska Chapter of the AIA that has opposed previous interior design bills. Today I am speaking to you as an individual, and not representing the AIA or any other group.

I've lived in Alaska for 42 years and have been a registered architect since 1990. I served on the AEELS Board for 8 years, the last 2 of which I was Chair. I have two concerns about SB54 that I hope can be addressed as the bill evolves.

1. I oppose the expansion of the AEELS Board to 13 members (it is currently the largest board with 11). The bill provides separate seats for mechanical and electrical professions. This is unnecessary. Prior to 2023, there was a restriction in statute that did not allow mechanical and electrical engineers to serve simultaneously. That problem was remedied with passage of SB 126 – Thank you, Senator Bjorkman for that work.

The second new seat is dedicated to a registered interior designer. There are less than 2 dozen Alaskan interior designers that will be eligible for registration, so there is a very small pool to draw from for Board service. But my bigger concern is the appropriateness of an interior designer to serve on the Board when they are regulated through a Title Act, which is the purpose of SB54 – a Title Act, not a Practice Act. Under the bill, anyone will continue to be able to practice interior design – only those who are registered will be able to use the title, “Registered Interior Designer.” A seat on the Board gives them authority and **responsibility** to act on the regulated **practices** of engineering, architecture, etc, which is not appropriate since interior design is not a regulated practice itself.

The 2023 statute changes also allowed the AEELS Board staff to take on more of the Board's previous workload. I just cannot think of any need to expand the Board size.

2. I oppose the language of Section 5. that states that the definition of interior design “**must** include the preparation of documents related to non-load-bearing interior construction, space planning, finish materials, and furnishings.” These are essentially non-code related design elements. SB 54 over-reaches the intent of professional registration laws that protect the public Health, Safety, and Welfare. Do we really want to start regulating furniture and appliance placement?

Thank you, sincerely, for your time and I am glad to answer questions.

*Catherine Fritz*, Architect

c: Senator Jesse Kiehl