



ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room
119 Juneau, AK 99801

March 3, 2025

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki and the Alaska Legislature,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

There is good rationale as to why the State of Alaska should develop such a program. Governments around the country, both state and local, have provided considerable investments into their cultural institutions, ranging from museums to libraries to performing arts centers. In all of these contexts, the investment of the government entity created a positive social and economic benefit. Cultural institutions and museums do so much for communities. They are spaces for collaboration, education, and celebration. The heart of many programs thrives due to the contributions that are made by museums in various contexts and locations. As the only living statewide cultural center that represents all Alaska Native cultures, we have educated over 1,000,000 people from around the globe, and we have served a much of the Alaska Native community with projects and programs that have developed significant benefits.

Our organization has navigated several capital projects in our 25 years of operations. We have had to build village sites, construct a ceremonial house for meetings/programs, add a wing to our building, develop a garden space, replace the roof, and many other efforts that would have benefitted from the investment from the State of Alaska. We situate ourselves in the tourism industry through the lens of Cultural Tourism, as we serve visitors from the perspective of the Indigenous community, emphasizing the beauty and diversity of cultures in Alaska. While the State of Alaska has provided significant investment in several tourism efforts throughout the years, not a single investment of state funds has been made to support Cultural Tourism. Our organization has long served as a coordinator of this industry, and we have seen a resurgence in interest in Cultural Tourism. You can see this materializing through investments in the Bristol Bay and the Doyon region, as well as through continued partnerships held amongst National Park Service affiliates. There is also demand amongst the cruise industry which is going to continue to increase.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions.

The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in **strong, safe, and secure buildings**, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to **expand educational offerings** to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that **enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth**, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that **encourage community participation**, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to **advance research capabilities** and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center just completed the first renovation of its public facing areas in our primary facility. We are now focusing our efforts on the expansion of our campus to develop a Community Hall space where we will be able to host much larger groups of visitors, as well as larger community events that will help advance our mission of preserving and strengthening the traditions, languages, and arts of Alaska Native peoples through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature, and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Please feel free to reach out any time. My email is [REDACTED] and my phone number is [REDACTED]. Thank you for considering this important initiative.



Sincerely,
Emily Edenshaw
President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center

March 3, 2024

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capital Room 119
Juneau, AK 9980



Re: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

On behalf of the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository, I am writing to express our strong support for SB110 as amended. This bill establishes a matching grant program for museum construction/expansion in Alaska—like the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide essential support for the development and enhancement of museum facilities throughout our state and advance the preservation and sharing of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of key facilities for community education and tourism, and support the long-term sustainability of Alaska's collecting institutions. This badly needed program would:

- Ensure that our art, artifacts, and heritage objects are preserved for future generations;
- Advance public education for students, residents, and visitors by creating more space and opportunities for engagement—strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation;
- Stimulate economic development by enhancing opportunities for programs that engage the visitors and generate jobs and income; and
- Advance opportunities for heritage research among students, artists, and scholars.

I know first-hand what a help this program would be to museums. The Alutiiq Museum is in the final months of a major building renovation. This \$14M project took nearly a decade to complete and required numerous grants and gifts. Some might argue that the SB110 isn't needed. Museums can apply for capital funding from the Alaska legislature. However, this process is strongly influenced by political and budgetary issues. It did not work for us despite significant support from community sources. We had matching funds but were not able to attract capital support. By recognizing the need to support museum facilities and creating a pathway for state assistance, this bill will help our cultural organization enhance their facilities and impacts.

Thank you for stewarding this bill in the Alaska State Legislature. We are grateful.

Quyanaa,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "April Laktonen".

Dr. April Laktonen Counciller
Executive Director, [REDACTED]

cc. Senator Gary Stevens

March 5, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

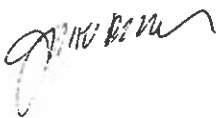
I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, like the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage and future. By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and cultural belongings will be stewarded in **strong, safe, and secure buildings** for access by future generations
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to **expand educational offerings** to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that **enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth**, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
5. Enabling museums and cultural centers to **advance research capabilities** and attract scholars and experts in various fields.
6. Supporting **emergency preparedness, energy efficiency**, and new technologies
7. Supporting the improvement of **technology infrastructure, such as security cameras and WIFI capabilities** and 21st century capabilities, creating **leading-edge centers for community events**

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110.

Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community. I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Director/CEO



With Spirit and Strength

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in strong, safe, and secure buildings, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will enhance educational offerings to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that encourage community participation, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.

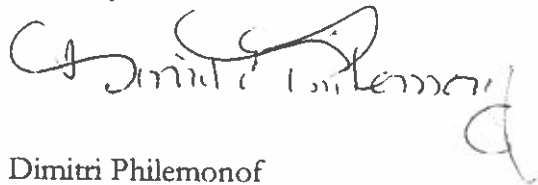
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to advance research capabilities and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

SB110 would contribute to economic growth and greatly enhance the quality of life and well-being of the Aleut/Unangax' people of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region. As more museums increasingly comply with NAGPRA regulations, our communities need space to support our growing collection of cultural items. Presently, due to inadequate facilities and a general lack of storage space in the region, only one of our thirteen tribal communities can store cultural items. Consequently, our thirteen tribes have requested that APIA establish a shared repository to meet communal storage needs and ensure the safe care of cultural materials. The new center would serve as the hub for cultural pride and a place of learning to ensure that our traditions are celebrated and preserved.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110.

Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community. Please contact Darian LaTocha, APIA's Curator of Collections, at [REDACTED] if you have questions about our collections program or if you need additional information. I can be reached at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Dimitri Philemonof
President / CEO



Native Village of Eyak
PO Box 1388
705 Second Street
Cordova, AK 99574
Eyak-nsn.gov

Ilanka Cultural Center
PO Box 322
711 First Street
Cordova, AK 99574
Ilankaculturalcenter.com



10,000 years in our Traditional Homeland, Prince William Sound, the Copper River Delta, and the Gulf of Alaska

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

March 3, 2025

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in strong, safe, and secure buildings, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to expand educational offerings to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that encourage community participation, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to advance research capabilities and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

The Native Village of Eyak is in the beginning planning stages of building a new cultural center to house our Tribal museum. We are currently renting a building that is not compliant with museum standards. We do not have humidity, pest, or light control and are crammed into a small building that we have been renting for years. Our situation is typical for many cultural centers and museums in rural Alaska. It is our responsibility and honor to advance the conditions of our museum to care for our ancestral items for generations to come.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature, and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Teal Hansen
Native Village of Eyak's Cultural Coordinator & Ilanka Museum Steward



101 EAST MARINE WAY

KODIAK, AK 99615

(907) 486-5920

KODIAKHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in strong, safe, and secure buildings, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to expand educational offerings to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that encourage community participation, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to advance research capabilities and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

The Kodiak History Museum (KHM) is housed in the Russian-American Magazin, a National Historic Landmark, the oldest building in Alaska, and the earliest existing Russian structure in America. Spanning approximately 4,000 square feet with surrounding grounds covering roughly half an acre, this historic site provides a unique setting for the Museum's collections and programs, deepening its connection to Kodiak's rich cultural and historical heritage. The City of Kodiak owns the building and supports its preservation by providing in-kind contributions for repairs, maintenance (both building and grounds), and utilities, ensuring its continued use as a community resource.



KODIAK HISTORY MUSEUM

101 EAST MARINE WAY

KODIAK, AK 99615

(907) 486-5920

KODIAKHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

In 2022, the National Park Service assisted KHM in obtaining a Historic Structure Report for the Russian-American Magazin. This report assessed the building's current condition, provided guidance for future preservation and repairs, and outlined strategies for maintaining its historic integrity. The findings from this report have been instrumental in preparing KHM our ongoing efforts to align facility preservation with best practices in museum operations.

Of particular concern is the Museum's roof, which requires significant repairs. Preserving the roof is essential to maintaining the historic integrity of the facility and retaining our National Historic Landmark status. However, this necessary work will place a substantial financial burden on our organization and partners. A Senate bill such as SB110 would provide critical support in addressing these costs.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature, and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Kristin O'Lear
Executive Director, Kodiak History Museum

[Redacted contact information]



M O R R I S T H O M P S O N
C U L T U R A L A N D V I S I T O R S C E N T E R

101 Dunkel St, Suite 210
Fairbanks, AK 99701
morristhompsoncenter.org
907.459.3701

March 3, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

On behalf of the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center (MTCVC), I write to express strong support for SB110. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction, major expansions, and renovations in Alaska, providing a critical mechanism to preserve and enhance the state's cultural institutions.

As a key cultural and visitor hub in Interior Alaska, MTCVC, by the end of 2025, will have seen 2 million visitors, providing world-class exhibits, educational programs, and community events that celebrate the cultures and lifestyles of those of us who call the Interior home. However, like many of our fellow museums and cultural centers, we face infrastructure challenges that threaten our ability to sustain and expand these services.

SB110 would leverage public and private investments, fostering the development of modern, secure, and energy-efficient museum spaces that allow institutions like ours to:

1. Ensure that Alaska's history, art, and culture are preserved in safe, climate-controlled environments, protecting invaluable artifacts and collections that are tangible augments to the stories of we Alaskans.
2. Expand educational offerings to better serve students, visitors, researchers and life-long learners from everywhere. MTCVC hosts pre-K field trips through Osher Lifelong Learning programs, as well as provides space for public meetings for a variety of entities, from the Alaska Department of Geological and Geophysical Survey hosting a minerals open house to the Bureau of Land Management sharing how to reserve and get to public use cabins.
3. Improve accessibility and the visitor experience, increasing tourism and contributing to economic growth and job creation. We want to share the stories of Alaska with everyone who comes through our doors.

4. Support and showcase Alaska Native traditions and culture, helping our neighbors and MTCVC partners engage in traditional knowledge-sharing, skill preservation and language perpetuation.
5. Strengthen community engagement by creating adaptable spaces for public programs, performances, and events.

Over 20 years ago the project to build MTCVC was initiated, and was successful through a combination of federal, state and private funds, with our doors opening in 2008. We have meticulously and conscientiously maintained our facility, but try as we might, wear and tear and entropy are facts. We expect to need to replace our roof and completely renovate our parking lot in the next ten years, likely sooner. These are major projects that will require a diverse portfolio of backing to complete. Infrastructure support such as SB110 proposes will allow cultural institutions to have the capacity to continue to provide these services to our communities in facilities capable of doing the job.

The passage of SB110 will lay the groundwork for future funding opportunities at the state and national level, ensuring that Alaska's museums and cultural centers remain excellent community resources and are sustainable. While this bill does not immediately provide funding, it is a necessary first step in creating a framework for long-term investment in our state's cultural heritage and showing that we value the knowledge made available through these places and what we can learn from them ourselves, as well as share with others.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing this important legislation and urge your colleagues to support SB110. Please feel free to reach out if we can provide any additional information or testimony in support of this bill.

Sincerely,



Tania Clucas

Executive Director

Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center

Sally Rafson

From: Senate State Affairs
Sent: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 8:36 AM
To: Sally Rafson
Subject: FW: SB110
Attachments: MOTA-LOS-SB110.pdf

From: Virginia Hatfield [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 3, 2025 2:24 PM
To: Senate State Affairs <SenateStateAffairs@akleg.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: SB110

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

On behalf of the Museum of the Aleutians, I am writing to express our strong support for SB110, the Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant Bill. This legislation is vital for preserving and protecting Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

Our museum, like many across the state, faces significant infrastructure challenges that directly impact our ability to properly care for irreplaceable cultural artifacts and provide meaningful educational experiences for visitors. The matching grant program proposed in SB110 would enable essential facility improvements and upgrades that are currently beyond our financial reach.

I have attached our formal letter of support, which outlines in greater detail how this bill would benefit not only our institution but museums throughout Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued advocacy for Alaska's cultural institutions.

Virginia Hatfield (she, her)

Executive Director

Museum of the Aleutians

 director@aleutians.org

 Work: 907-581-5150

 [REDACTED]

 www.aleutians.org

 314 Salmon Way, Unalaska, AK 99685

The mission of the Museum of the Aleutians is to collect, preserve, and share the rich cultural legacy of the Aleutian Islands Region.



MUSEUM OF THE ALEUTIANS

(907) 581-5150 • 314 Salmon Way Unalaska AK 99685 P.O. Box 648 Unalaska AK 99685 • www.Aleutians.org

March 3, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in strong, safe, and secure buildings, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to expand educational offerings to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that encourage community participation, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to advance research capabilities and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

The Museum of the Aleutians board and staff are planning for a much-needed facility expansion. Our region is anticipating the return of numerous objects through several repatriation projects that will bring these artifacts back to their homelands. Additionally, the Museum has been operating for over 25 years and currently cares for over 600,000 objects. We have reached 75% capacity in our storage facilities. We are planning to expand our facility and redesign our permanent exhibit in the next few years and have initiated an outreach project to assess the needs and interests of stakeholders. This bill would be a welcome support for the future of our facility and allow us to continue to meet our mission to preserve the rich cultural legacy of the Aleutians.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Virginia Hatfield

Virginia Hatfield
Executive Director
Museum of the Aleutians



March 6, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119 Juneau, AK 99801
Subject: **Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant**



Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in **strong, safe, and secure buildings**, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to **expand educational offerings** to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that **enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth**, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that **encourage community participation**, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to **advance research capabilities** and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

This bill would have important benefits to the UA Museum of the North (UAMN), particularly in leveraging private philanthropic support for major museum projects. UAMN relies heavily on charitable giving to pay for major projects, such as our new planetarium, which is funded almost entirely by a single private donor. Passage of SB110 would greatly increase the success rate and funding levels for future projects. For example, the planned renovation of our flagship Gallery of Alaska will require building modifications and improvements. A state-sponsored matching program would be an extremely attractive motivator to the private donors (individuals and corporations) who will bear most of the project costs. This, in turn, will be a major boost to Interior tourism and to maintain UAMN's reputation as world-class museum.

Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

Thank you for considering this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick S. Druckenmiller".

Patrick S. Druckenmiller, PhD
Director, University of Alaska Museum of the North
University of Alaska Fairbanks
1962 Yukon Dr., Fairbanks, Alaska, USA 99775



March 10, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for SB110: Museum Infrastructure Matching Grant

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to advocate for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska, similar to the existing Library Construction Grant Program. It would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state, fostering the preservation and promotion of Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

By providing matching funds, the state would leverage public and private investments, foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in **strong, safe, and secure buildings**, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to **expand educational offerings** to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that **enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth**, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that **encourage community participation**, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to **advance research capabilities** and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

As the museum association for the state, we are constantly learning of plans for renovations, expansions, and new buildings across the state—from Alaska Native Tribes seeking to create new cultural centers to tell their own stories with repatriated belongings to historical societies seeking to update old buildings or create new buildings that will more efficiently and securely hold Alaska's history, art, and cultural treasures. Based on surveys, we know that more than half of Alaska's museums and

cultural center organizations have plans for capital projects in the near future and a grant program like this would be an important tool to assist these organizations in matching donations and grants to reach their goals.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program for museum construction, House Bill 333 (2014) and Senate Bill 61 (2015), garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature, and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you or your colleagues may have. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dixie", followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Dixie Clough
Director, Museums Alaska



PRATT
m u s e u m

homer society of
natural history, inc.

March 5, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

I'm writing to show my support for the passage of SB110 with the proposed amendments. This bill would establish a matching grant program for museum construction and major expansions in the state of Alaska and would provide crucial support for the development and enhancement of museums and cultural centers throughout the state.

By passing this bill, the state would help to foster the development of world-class museums and cultural centers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Alaska's cultural institutions. The benefits of this grant program would include:

1. Ensuring that Alaska's history, art, and culture will be stewarded in strong, safe, and secure buildings, so future generations have access to and appreciation for their rich cultural legacy.
2. Enabling museums and cultural centers to create facilities that will allow them to expand educational offerings to students, visitors, and residents.
3. Creating more modern, accessible buildings that enhance visitor experiences, boost tourism, and stimulate economic growth, creating jobs and generating revenue for communities.
4. Allowing museums and cultural centers to create spaces for public programs and events that encourage community participation, strengthening social cohesion and cultural appreciation.
5. Facilitating the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, enabling museums and cultural centers to advance research capabilities and attract scholars and experts in various fields.

The award-winning Pratt Museum is dedicated to exploring and preserving the culture, science, and art of the Kachemak Bay Region, one of the richest biological and cultural crossroads in Alaska. Built as Homer's centennial project in 1967 and opening in 1968, the Pratt has become one of the nation's leading community museums. Over the past fifty-eight years, the harsh Alaskan weather conditions have taken their toll on the building, and professional assessments have identified the need for complete replacement of our deteriorating roof system. If SB110 is passed, it would help institutions like the Pratt secure funding to make their facilities safe, functional, and sustainable.

The previous attempts to establish a matching grant program garnered considerable support and recognition of the need for such a program, and I'm encouraged by the recent introduction of SB110. Thank you for your support in introducing and advancing this legislation in the Alaska State Legislature, and adapting it to reflect the current needs and priorities of Alaska's museum community.

Sincerely,

Whitney Harness
Co-Executive Director, Pratt Museum



3779 Bartlett Street, Homer, Alaska 99603 • tel 907-235-8635 • fax 907-235-2764 • info@prattmuseum.org

Michael Mason

From: Susan A [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 2:52 PM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: SB 110

Informal Legal Breakdown of SB 110

Title: An Act establishing the museum construction and major expansion matching grant program; and providing for an effective date.

Jurisdiction: Alaska State Legislature

Statutory Reference: AS 14.57 (proposed amendment)

I. Legislative Intent and Purpose

SB 110 proposes a state-managed matching grant program under the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) to fund museum construction and major expansion projects. The bill defines six eligible activities, including increasing square footage, artifact storage, acquisitions, service expansion, infrastructure renovation, and separate facility purchases or leases.

The program requires local and private financial participation:

State covers up to 50% of project costs (subject to appropriation).

Local governments must contribute at least 20%.

Private donors must fund the remaining balance.

The bill provides no sunset date, meaning it would establish a permanent funding mechanism contingent upon annual appropriations.

II. Legal Analysis

A. Potential Loopholes and Overlaps

Unclear Prioritization Criteria

The bill does not specify how grants will be awarded if total funding requests exceed state appropriations.

No rural or tribal prioritization—wealthier, urban institutions may receive disproportionate funding.

Legal Risk:

Potential equal protection violations under Article I, § 1 of the Alaska Constitution, if grants are allocated unfairly.

Case Law Reference: State v. Erickson, 574 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1978), which emphasizes that state-funded programs must have clear, non-discriminatory criteria.

Overlap with Existing Grant Programs

Alaska already funds cultural preservation through programs such as the Alaska State Museum Grant Program and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Matching Grants.

SB 110 does not specify whether it supersedes, complements, or competes with these existing sources.

Recommendation:

Amend the bill to include a coordination mechanism preventing redundant funding.

B. Constitutionality & Tribal Rights

Inclusion of Tribal Museums

SB 110 references AS 14.57.290 for the definition of a "museum," but does not explicitly mention tribal or Indigenous cultural institutions.

Tribal museums often fall under federal trust obligations (25 U.S.C. § 5304), meaning state funding must be structured to comply with tribal sovereignty.

Legal Concern:

Potential violation of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) (25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq.) if tribal museums are not explicitly included.

Recommendation:

Include language ensuring tribally operated museums qualify for funding.

Fairness in Fund Distribution

The requirement that local governments contribute 20% of project costs may disqualify tribal museums in areas without municipal support.

Legal Risk: Unequal access to funding could violate Article VII, § 1 of the Alaska Constitution, which mandates that state public services be provided equitably.

Recommendation:

Allow tribal contributions to count toward the 20% local match.

C. Corporate Accountability

Lack of Anti-Corruption Safeguards

The bill does not prevent private donors from influencing museum content in exchange for funding.

This could allow corporate historical revisionism if large donors condition funds on certain narratives.

Legal Concern:

First Amendment Issues (*Southworth v. Board of Regents*, 529 U.S. 217 (2000))—Publicly funded institutions cannot be coerced into adopting private speech agendas.

Recommendation:

Amend the bill to require disclosure of donor conditions and prohibit content-based funding contingencies.

D. Worker and Environmental Protections

No Labor Standards for Construction Projects

The bill does not include prevailing wage or hiring requirements for construction projects.

This omission allows state funds to support projects without ensuring fair labor practices.

Legal Concern:

Potential conflict with Alaska's Little Davis-Bacon Act (AS 36.05.010), which mandates prevailing wages for public construction.

Recommendation:

Require museum construction projects to comply with state prevailing wage laws.

No Environmental Review Requirements

Museums receiving grants may expand in ecologically sensitive areas, but the bill does not mandate environmental impact assessments (EIAs).

Legal Concern:

Potential violation of the Alaska Coastal Management Act (AS 46.40) if projects affect coastal ecosystems.

Recommendation:

Require environmental impact statements for projects over a certain size threshold.

E. Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms

No Clawback Provision for Misuse of Funds

The bill does not specify penalties for failing to complete projects or misusing grant funds.

Museums could receive state money, fail to deliver the project, and face no consequences.

Legal Concern:

Alaska's Public Money Protection Clause (Article IX, § 6) requires that state funds be safeguarded against misuse.

Recommendation:

Add a clawback provision requiring full repayment plus penalties if a museum fails to complete a project within a set timeframe.

III. Conclusion and Recommendations

SB 110 creates a beneficial funding structure but requires modifications to ensure legal robustness, equity, and accountability. The following amendments would strengthen the bill:

Clarify Prioritization – Establish a weighted scoring system favoring rural and tribal museums.

Ensure Tribal Eligibility – Explicitly include tribal museums and allow tribal funding to count toward matching requirements.

Prevent Donor Influence – Require full disclosure of private donor conditions and prohibit content-based funding agreements.

Mandate Labor & Environmental Protections – Require prevailing wages for construction and environmental impact assessments for large projects.

Add an Enforcement Mechanism – Implement a clawback provision to recover funds from non-compliant projects.

Formal Legal Breakdown of SB 110

Title: An Act establishing the museum construction and major expansion matching grant program; and providing for an effective date.

I. Legal Citations and References

A. Equal Protection and Fair Distribution of Funds

State v. Erickson, 574 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1978).

This case emphasizes the need for clear and non-discriminatory criteria in distributing state funds to avoid violations of equal protection under the Alaska Constitution.

State of Alaska v. Erickson, 574 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1978). Retrieved from <https://scholar.google.com>.

Alaska Constitution, Article I, Section 1.

Equal protection clause that ensures that laws are applied equally to all citizens, without arbitrary distinctions, including in state funding programs.

Alaska State Constitution, Article I, Section 1. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq.

Ensures that tribal entities have the ability to administer federal programs, including grants. If tribal museums are excluded, this act would need to be considered.

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq. Retrieved from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/25/5301>.

B. Prevailing Wage and Labor Laws

Alaska's Little Davis-Bacon Act, AS 36.05.010.

This act mandates the payment of prevailing wages for construction projects funded by the state.

Alaska State Code, AS 36.05.010. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Southworth v. Board of Regents, 529 U.S. 217 (2000).

This case addresses concerns of government funding influencing free speech, particularly regarding content-based restrictions. It supports the argument for transparency in private funding of public institutions.

Southworth v. Board of Regents, 529 U.S. 217 (2000). Retrieved from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/99-1898.ZO.html>.

C. Environmental Impact Assessments

Alaska Coastal Management Act, AS 46.40.

Requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for construction projects that may affect coastal ecosystems.

Alaska Coastal Management Act, AS 46.40. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Environmental Protection Agency, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of proposed projects. The principles of NEPA could be adapted to guide state-funded projects like museum expansions.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/nepa>.

D. Public Money Protection

Alaska Constitution, Article IX, Section 6.

Requires strict accountability for state funds, including mechanisms for recovering misused or unspent funds.

Alaska State Constitution, Article IX, Section 6. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Reference Page

State v. Erickson, 574 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1978). Retrieved from <https://scholar.google.com>.

Alaska State Constitution, Article I, Section 1. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 5301 et seq. Retrieved from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/25/5301>.

Alaska State Code, AS 36.05.010. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

Southworth v. Board of Regents, 529 U.S. 217 (2000). Retrieved from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/99-1898.ZO.html>.

Alaska Coastal Management Act, AS 46.40. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/nepa>.

Alaska State Constitution, Article IX, Section 6. Retrieved from <https://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/aac.asp>.