

State of Alaska

Legislative Affairs Agency

Office of Information & Teleconference



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Rep. David Guttenberg, Chair
Legislative Council

FROM: Tim Powers, Manager TP
Information & Teleconference

DATE: July 30, 2018

SUBJECT: Information and Teleconference Budget

The Unalaska/Dutch Harbor Field Information Officer will resign at the end of the summer. Additionally, the current lease for the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor LIO expires September 30, 2018. I propose closing the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor LIO and using the savings to return all year-round LIO's to full time operation, ending Friday afternoon closures during the interim and restoring equity between LIO staff and the rest of the Legislative Affairs Agency.

Opening its doors in 2011, Unalaska is the newest LIO, and is seasonally-staffed for 6 months a year, usually December through May. Due to its remote location and a 60% geographic differential pay scale for employees, at \$106,000 annually, Unalaska is one of the most expensive LIO's to operate.

Historically, Unalaska is the least utilized LIO. Teleconference participation in each LIO is tracked by the Digital Witness Registration System, which was implemented for the 2016 legislative session. The Unalaska LIO had five participants in 2016, two participants in 2017, and zero participants in 2018. Given these participation levels, it might be possible to partner with local government or another interested party to provide an option that provides constituents with an information resource at a significantly reduced cost.

The Information and Teleconference section has had several budget cuts in recent years. In FY 17, Legislative Council required all year-round LIO's to close at noon on Fridays during the interim; 17 employees were reduced from 12 months to 11.3 months, resulting in a 6.1% reduction in annual salary. The example of the Court System closure is not comparable because the entire Legislative Branch does not close at noon on Fridays. Constituents, staff and legislators are often confused by the LIO section closure while other legislative business sections are still operating.

The annual savings from closing the Unalaska LIO (\$106,000) will cover most of the funding necessary to restore LIO positions previously reduced (\$107,000). I ask that Legislative Council move to reallocate the funding for the Unalaska LIO to return LIO's to full-time year-round, restoring parity to all sections of the Legislative Affairs Agency.

MOTION: I move that Legislative Council approve closing the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor LIO and restore 17 positions currently budgeted for 11.3 months to 12 months effective immediately.