



CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929

Telephone: (907) 874-2381

Email: mfvillarma@wrangell.com

Office of the Borough Manager

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the City and Borough of Wrangell, we strongly support House Joint Resolution 5, urging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reinstate the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act) and make its funding mechanism permanent.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act has been a cornerstone for sustaining vital services in rural communities like Wrangell, which are heavily impacted by federal landownership and the decline of timber-related revenues. Over the years, the SRS Act has provided essential funding for education, road maintenance, public safety, and other critical infrastructure.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, Alaska received \$12.6 million through this program, benefiting municipalities, boroughs, and regional educational attendance areas across the state, including Wrangell. The program's expiration in January 2025 creates immediate and significant challenges for local governments already facing limited economic opportunities and fiscal constraints. Without this support, the ability of communities to maintain public services is at serious risk.

HJR 5 aptly highlights the urgency of reinstating this program retroactively to ensure stability in rural budgets while advocating for a permanent funding mechanism to provide long-term predictability and security. We join the Alaska State Legislature in urging swift action from Congress to reauthorize the SRS Act and uphold its legacy of supporting communities like Wrangell, which depend on this funding to thrive.

We deeply appreciate your leadership and advocacy on this matter of critical importance to rural Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Gilbert".

Mayor Patricia Gilbert
City and Borough of Wrangell

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mason F. Villarma".

Mason Villarma
Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell

cc:

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative