

PO Box 20385
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February 7, 2012

The Honorable Cathy Giessel
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 7
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Giessel,

Thank you for being so gracious on Saturday evening when I interrupted your dinner at the Baranof. As I mentioned, I was planning to write to thank you for introducing SCR-16, proclaiming May 2012 as *Celiac Awareness Month* and to let you know how grateful I am.

On September 16, 2008, I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease after both a blood test and corroborating biopsy. As SCR-16 notes, while there is no cure, I was glad the treatment was to “merely” give up gluten. I soon learned, however, that the “merely” was forever, and the “gluten” wasn’t as easy to eliminate from my diet as I had hoped. As you know, a world without wheat, rye, (oats) and barley isn’t only about living without some of the grains in breads and cereals, but rather, learning how gluten is hidden in so many other products – such as soy sauce, malt and licorice (really!). And, to make it even more frustrating, it’s discovering that gluten free is not just about eating foods without gluten, but about making sure the gf foods haven’t been *cross-contaminated* with gluten-laden fare.

After reading it, I’m not sure I can add anything to this truly comprehensive resolution, but if you can think of something, please let me know. I so appreciate your efforts in helping to make people realize that eliminating gluten by choice is far different than having to do so.

I’ll be sharing this email with my delegation: Senator Egan and Representatives Kerttula and Muñoz, with the hope they’ll be supportive of your effort.

Sincerely,

Sharon Gaipman

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