



**Association of Village Council Presidents
Regional Housing Authority**

P.O. Box 767 - Bethel, AK 99559
907-543-3121
1-800-478-4687
907-543-3933 (FAX)
www.avcphousing.org

COPY

Empowering Tribal Communities of the ACP Region through locally-developed quality housing and facilities

March 20, 2009

cc Darwin
Miles

TWENTY-SIXTH ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

State Capitol
Juneau AK 99801-1182
Mailstop: 3100

RE: Gov. Palin Stimulus Funding Request

Dear Hon. Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I sincerely apologize for not writing a personal letter to each of you, however this letter is going out to all members of the State Legislature and time is of the essence.

We have all heard that Governor Palin is only asking for 69% of the ARRA stimulus funding, and I believe she should be asking for all what Alaska has been allocated. If Gov. Palin believes nearly \$650 million is good for Alaska, then consider how much more an additional \$290 million would be beneficial to our state. And that \$290 million that Gov. Palin failed to ask for would offer supplemental funding in some of the most important activities needed right now in the state of Alaska: Education, unemployment services, emergency food assistance, children's services, public safety, housing, weatherization, etc.

We all understand stimulus funding is one-time funding, and we don't expect the State of Alaska to try and cover the funding when it runs out. We are not ignorant of this fact. We basically consider ARRA funding to be a "shot in the arm" in the overall economy. It can do nothing but help us in this period of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Therefore, we should use the opportunity presented by President Obama's administration to try to stimulate all sectors of our economy.


Alaskans can only benefit from stimulus funding. Since ARRA is already law, why cheat ourselves by not accepting all funding offered to Alaska? What I mean by that is, since ARRA is now law, we're ALL going to pay for its funding by paying our taxes to the IRS. Alaskans are not going to be excluded. So if we don't get all of the ARRA funding slated for Alaska, each of us won't feel right by paying taxes on something our state is not getting. Even if we agree with Gov. Palin and not request all of the ARRA funding, each of us will STILL be paying for the ARRA funding

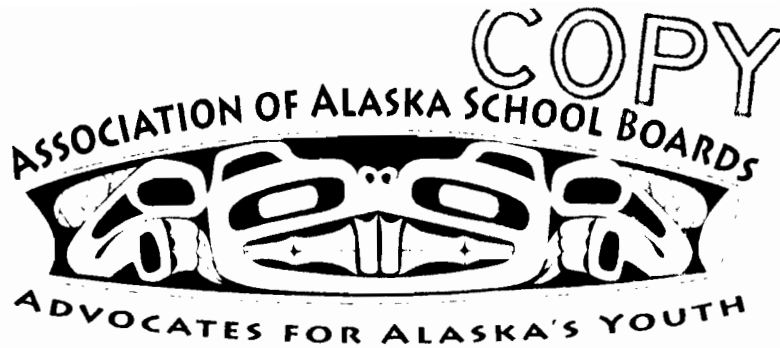
whether we like it or not -- but it won't be us Alaskans that fully benefit from the law, but residents of the other 49 states which get full ARRA funding. Therefore, if we don't take all of the ARRA funding for Alaska, we will lose in more ways than one.

AVCP Housing in Bethel will do its part by seeking all ARRA funding that its member tribes are eligible for under the federal ARRA guidelines. AVCP Housing truly believes in being part of the solution to housing and infrastructure needs in its service area. We request the State Legislature to do the same for all of Alaska, and be part of the solution to improving the overall economy of the State and the rest of the nation.

Thank you very much for your kind considerations.

Sincerely,


Ron Hoffman
President/CEO



cc Darwin
Miles

The Honorable Sarah Palin
Office of Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

March 20, 2009

Dear Governor Palin,

The announcement by your administration of your intent to decline an estimated \$170 million in federal funding for public education programs in Alaska startled many members of the education community. I am writing this letter to explain why our 53 member school districts believe it makes sense for the State of Alaska to accept this funding on behalf of our public school children.

As you may know, Alaska and other states have been under a federal mandate since 1975 to provide educational services to disabled students. This laudable initiative for approximately 18,000 Alaska children has been hampered, however, by the failure of the federal government to provide adequate funding for this mandate. The State of Alaska has requested assistance to overcome this unfunded mandate of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but until the stimulus package was proposed in Congress, only incremental progress was made in eliminating this funding gap. The \$33 million proposed for IDEA programs in Alaska public schools would go a long way towards providing relief from what amounts to a federal tax on our schools.

Another \$29.5 million in stimulus funding is proposed for Title I schools in Alaska. By declining to accept this funding, the State of Alaska would be forfeiting an opportunity to help approximately 285 schools across the state that serve predominately children from economically disadvantaged families. At a time when schools in every district in Alaska face ever higher standards to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, the extra Title I funds offered by the federal government would be most welcome.

The fiscal stabilization funds offered to Alaska total \$113.7 million, of which \$93 million would be dedicated to early childhood, K-12 and post-secondary education. As fashioned by Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, these monies can go towards most anything in our schools, including modernization, renovation or repair of classrooms and student housing. It cannot be spent on school district central office administration.

The "strings" attached to the fiscal stabilization money require the state to document plans to improve teacher effectiveness, establish better student tracking data through their educational career, enhance academic standards and support academically struggling schools. As yet, we have not heard from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development whether statutory changes would be necessary to implement these requirements. Our member districts may also face additional burdens due to the

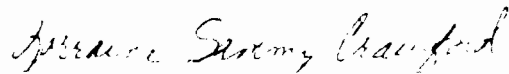
requirements of this funding program. But, I understand, the stimulus bill has grant money available, if needed, to help meet the requirements.

In conclusion, our association asks that your administration and the Legislature consider the impact of turning away \$170 million for our schools. The funds would provide relief from a federal tax on local schools, improve programs for some of our most needy students and allow our education community to tap the innovative spirit of Alaska's teachers and students.

Sincerely,



Carl Rose
Executive Director



Sammy Crawford
President, Board of Directors

cc: House Speaker Mike Chenault
Senate President Gary Stevens
Larry LeDoux, Commissioner, Department of Education & Early Development