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July 9, 2009

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Lieutenant Governor of Alaska
550 West 7th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Lieutenant Governor Parnell:

On behalf of the 97,000 members of AARP in Alaska, we respectfully request that, as one of your first acts as our new Governor, you consider accepting the State Energy Program funds allocated to Alaska in the federal "stimulus package."

We understand that these funds could be made available for community centers, including health clinics. Over the past several years, more and more AARP members have relied on community health centers as they have been turned away by their physicians who will no longer accept them as Medicare patients. As the situation has grown worse, AARP has worked more closely with the community health centers.

We appreciate the funds that the Legislature has provided to these critical "safety net" health centers. However, the more we have dealt with them about senior health care issues, we have also heard them express concerns about their growing utility bills and energy costs.

If you will accept the State Energy Program funds for Alaska, some of these funds could be used for weatherization of some of the older clinics. Rather than simply providing assistance with payment of energy bills, it would be good public policy to reduce those bills through energy efficient weatherization and retrofitting.

One other issue to consider is the reductions that have been initiated by the Denali Commission. This will have significant impact on funding for our rural clinics.

Just think if we rebuilt all the public buildings, including the clinics, that were destroyed in the recent flooding along the Yukon but the new buildings were state-of-the-art models of energy efficiency. They could inspire new public construction and weatherization retrofitting throughout Alaska.

We share the goal of having Alaska a national leader in renewable energy. AARP feels that accepting the State Energy Program funds will help us achieve this objective and get us closer to energy independence.

We sincerely hope you will consider accepting these funds.

If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Patrick Luby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J." and last name "Luby" clearly legible.

J. Patrick Luby

Advocacy Director

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CC: Members of the Alaska Senate and House of Representatives