

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



Office of the Municipal Attorney
Civil Division, Suite 730

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Mayor Dan Sullivan

February 8, 2011

Chairman Carl Gatto
House Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 118
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Vice-Chair Steve Thompson
House Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 428
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: House Bill 7 and Senate Bill 17 - *Synthetic Cannabinoids*

Dear Representatives:

The Municipality of Anchorage supports the bills currently before the legislature. As I indicated last Friday before your Committee, the primary reasons to treat synthetic cannabinoids more serious than their organic equivalents is because the potency of the synthetics has been found to be up to 800 times greater than the organic, and the potency from sample to sample varies widely. We have evidence that this high potency induces hallucinogenic reactions and unpredictable behaviors that are far more dangerous to the user, and those who may come into contact with them, than marijuana. The variations in the strength of any one dose can cause users to get a mild reaction in one instance and fall into unconsciousness in another instance. We have had one death in Anchorage that can be directly attributed to the use of synthetic cannabinoids. The Municipality believes felony prosecution for the manufacture, production, distribution, and sale of synthetics is a necessary tool that should be available to law enforcement to discourage the use of these drugs.

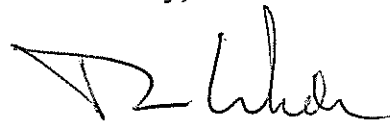
The Municipality supports providing the State Crime Lab with necessary resources to test for these drugs. As of a couple of months ago, we were aware of only two labs nationally that could test for these products in blood or urine. One lab could test urine samples and the other could test blood samples. In order to successfully prosecute people in the chain of production and consumption, we need the capability of testing both seized products and the bodily fluids of users. If properly resourced, having these tests performed locally and having local technicians available to testify, may save both money and time over using out-of-state labs.

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Please find included in our email the Powerpoint presentation our Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor uses. We have been making these presentations to the local military, business groups, and governmental agencies. We look forward to providing additional testimony on the bills in the coming weeks. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Wheeler", with a stylized initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke.

Dennis A. Wheeler
Municipal Attorney

cc: Sara Gill, Special Assistant to the Mayor