

March 12, 2013



Honorable Rep. Bob Lynn, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

SUBJECT: House Bill 3

Dear Honorable Rep. Lynn:

The City of Dillingham strongly opposes Housing Bill 3: "An Act relating to voter identification at the polls; and relating to the counting of absentee and questioned ballots."

There has been a recent wave of voter ID laws sweeping the lower 48 states under the guise of protecting the integrity of elections and preventing voter fraud. However, according to the National Urban League, "Voter ID laws have grown at an epidemic rate and have a disproportionately negative impact on minority citizens". Rural residents of our state, many of whom are of Alaska native descent, do not have access to, or the ability to, obtain a photo ID. In most cases in our area, the only places to get photo identification are at hub locations in Dillingham and Naknek/King Salmon.

There has been no evidence that we can find that shows rampant and widespread voter fraud in Alaska that would warrant enacting a law that could potentially, if HB 3 passes, limit access to rural residents having the ability to vote. Adding an unnecessary hurdle to an Alaskan resident, a Native elder comes to mind, whose primary language may not be English, seems to be contrary to the spirit of having as many people involved in our elections process as possible.

Voting is a basic right, years of protest and sacrifice have led to the protection of eligible voters from measures taken to disenfranchise them. We should be making the process as easy as possible for voters, not finding ways to make it more difficult.

The City of Dillingham has faith in the current elections system administered by the State to address any possible voter fraud issues. There is nothing wrong with the current list of ID the Division of Elections requires of people when they go to their polling place, so we see no reason to add unnecessary law for a system that clearly is not broken.

Please let the record reflect the City of Dillingham's strong opposition to HB3 for reasons stated above and we urge you to reconsider making any changes to an election process that works.

Thank you for taking this under consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice A. Ruby".

Sincerely,
Mayor Alice Ruby