



St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Juneau, Alaska

[svdpjuneau.org](http://svdpjuneau.org)

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*We provide material and  
spiritual charity and work  
for social justice for all  
people.*



## St. Vincent de Paul Society

### Diocesan Council of Southeast Alaska, Inc.

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Alaska Legislature, House Labor and Commerce Committee

Representative Kurt Olson, Chair

Honorable Representative Olson;

We are pleased to have this opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 50, allowing AHFC to finance development projects that mix residential and commercial uses.

The mixed development concept (generally commercial on the ground floor and multifamily residential above) is certainly not new. Throughout human history, cities have grown and prospered as the center of both residential and commercial activity. Buildings that incorporate both needs are the rule in all the world's great cities. As demographics and lifestyles change, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is shaping up to be the urban century. Alaska's cities will undoubtedly develop as modern, livable, vital models for development in the North. HB 50 will make it easier and more economically feasible.

For more than 20 years, our organization has built and managed housing opportunities in Juneau. Our modest Thrift Store is the economic engine that has leveraged our multifamily developments. Starting in 1992 with 5 transitional apartments,



we now have more than 100 under direct management and expect to grow to more than 150 over the next year.

More important is the fact that an urban environment is most livable when a family's needs—mundane as well as cultural—are met within a couple of blocks of their apartment. Or better yet, just downstairs! Mixed development encourages revitalization of downtown areas and neighborhoods, leading the way for diverse local economic development on a human scale.

HB 50 will allow the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to support restricted commercial development within residential projects they finance. Developers, for profit, non-profit and joint ventures, will not have to secure two separate lenders in order to build appropriate mixed developments.

We believe the changes to AHFC statutes proposed in HB 50 will help Alaska cities take their place as leaders in the “urban century”.

Dan Austin, General Manager/Director

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