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Opening Doors to Independence

Senator Bill Stoltze
Alaska Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

December 11, 2015

Dear Senator Stoltze,

As the Executive Director of Access Alaska, it is my pleasure to offer our support for the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA). Since their early days, ACOA has partnered with Access Alaska to advocate for the needs of older Alaskans, ensuring them dignity, health, safety and independence.

ACOA serves as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and advises the AMHTA on the needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Commission, in partnership with the AMHTA and other agencies, published *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015)*. The Commission also makes recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs for Senior Trust Beneficiaries (older people with dementia and other cognitive impairments) and the use of funds that benefit this vulnerable population.

ACOA and Access Alaska have worked collaboratively on a number of projects over the years, including the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) project, senior and accessible/affordable housing, coordinated transportation, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Roadmap mentioned above, and many others. As we have supported each other and combined our efforts, these projects have reached fruition, allowing older Alaskans to continue living in their home communities, among loved ones that appreciate and include them in community activities.

We very much appreciate your proposal of legislation for ACOA's reauthorization. Access Alaska will be happy to offer any information or any other means of support for ACOA during this process. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James C. Beck", written over a light blue horizontal line.

James C. Beck
Executive Director