



# Denakkanaaga, Inc.

*"Our People Speak"*

December 14, 2015

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

Dear Senator Stoltze:

On behalf of the Denakkanaaga Board of Directors, it is our pleasure to write this letter of support for legislation to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) for eight years as recommended by the Division of Legislative Audit April 2015 audit report.

For over 30 years, ACoA has embarked on a mission to ensure dignity and independence for older Alaskans through planning, advocacy, education, and collaboration with other agencies. As Alaska leads the nation in per capita senior growth, and older adults are the fastest growing age demographic in our state, the value of ACoA for seniors and their family members has never been greater.

We would like to take this opportunity to share with you our reasons for supporting ACoA's extension. By statute, the ACoA is responsible for developing the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services in order to satisfy a federal requirement for all states receiving federal funds for their senior programs. This funding includes Title VI funds for services to Alaska Native elders. To develop the State Plan, the Commission conducted listening sessions in various areas of the State, including Fairbanks. We were pleased to sponsor one of these listening sessions with the ACoA to focus on the needs of Alaska Native elders. We were impressed to find that the comments provided by our elders expressing the need for culturally appropriate and accessible services in rural Alaska was included in the State Plan's strategic objectives.

The ACoA is a resource and strong advocate for the senior community. We especially appreciate their advocacy efforts promoting greater awareness about senior needs including the importance of funding and legislation to help more elders and seniors live safely in their homes and communities of choice. Further, the ACoA can also be counted on to provide information on a variety of topics related to aging issues, which is helpful to our agency's planning and grant writing efforts.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging. The ACoA deserves recognition for their commitment to helping all older Alaskans and is fulfilling its mission. We at Denakkanaaga value the opportunity to work with the commission, as our mission is to be the "elder voice for the people" of Interior Alaska.

Sincerely,

Luke Titus  
Board First Chief

*Serving the Elders of Interior Alaska*

101 Dunkel Street, Suite 135, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Phone: (907) 451-2000 Fax: (907) 451-2000