



**ALASKA STATE
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS**

22 January 2016

Dear House State Affairs Committee Members,

I am writing today to share my enthusiastic support of HB217, which would create an arts license plate for Alaska. Artists have the unique ability to translate the overwhelming power of *place* in Alaska to visual imagery, and this program would be a wonderful way to spotlight Alaska's cultural and artistic riches, while also brightening up citizens' experiences at the DMV!

We at the Alaska State Council on the Arts gladly welcome the responsibility of managing this program. One of our specialties is conducting professional and transparent selection processes for artists of high caliber. We have the knowledge, capacity and infrastructure already in place, and will be able to hit the ground running once HB217 is enacted. Indeed, we have been increasingly partnering with non-arts entities (for example, the US Forest Service and the early childhood education organization *thread*) to develop and help them manage calls for artists.

This program is a win-win—it would rely on no state revenue; in fact, it would further diversify the revenue streams of the Alaska State Council on the Arts by providing a modest income source from the sales of the license plates. The artists who are selected will enjoy a great boost of exposure, and a bit of income, too—we strongly believe that artists should be paid for their work.

What I like most about the program is that it will rotate every four years, so we will have a chance to spotlight more than just one artist. And they will become collector's items! A lot of states have arts license plates, but none of them have an element where new artists are selected to design them on a regular basis. This is a quintessentially Alaskan innovation that should be applauded.

I hope you will join me and the arts community in supporting this worthwhile bill.

Sincerely,

Shannon Daut
Executive Director
Alaska State Council on the Arts