



North Star Council on Aging  
Meals on Wheels  
1424 Moore Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: 907-452-1735 / Fax: 451-9974  
nscoa.manager@alaska.net

Dear Senator Anna MacKinnon,

I am here to speak on behalf of the seniors in our community, who at times are unable to communicate to the legislators when decisions are being made that will directly affect their well-being. At a time when the **senior population is expediently growing, especially the 85 plus cohort which has a current growth rate of 112%**, it is our job as a state, neighbor, leader and politician to make sure their basic needs are met. The aging population crisis is real and any funds deviated from the Senior programs and Services only set the seniors and our community up for failure.

I administer the **Meals on Wheels program** here in the interior and being at the front line, I hear stories of food insecurities and lack of services to assist them in living in their homes. **Currently, there are 15,000 seniors in the Fairbanks North Star Borough with only 250 beds available** for the daily care that will become a necessity in the aging process. The Fairbanks Pioneer Home is a key facility in providing the care needed with age. **The FNSB senior population will hit 20,000 in 4 years and is expected to reach near 25,000 by 2030 with approximately 5,000 of the 25,000 being part of the 85 plus cohort.**

**Statewide there is a projected 64% increase in the senior population by 2034**, as the expected "Silver Tsunami Wave" impacts Alaska. Cutting any senior program at this time will chip away at the foundation needed to be prepared on all fronts for the **180,000 seniors in Alaska by 2034**. It is our moral responsibility to assure we do not neglect those seniors who need our care the most in their elder years. No seniors should live in filth, poverty, be malnourished, have fear of not being able to find the services needed for safe living and/or provide a roof over their heads.

Alaska was built by those who are now entering their senior years and the lack of services for seniors will lead to the exiting of these seniors from Alaska, where as a whole, **contribute at least \$2.4 billion annually to Alaska's economy**. Keeping the seniors in our communities instead of them having to leave Alaska due to lack of services, beds and vital support will create a decrease in cash flow from a important factor in Alaska's economy and history.

Respectfully,

Darlene Supplee  
Executive Director