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March 17, 2015

Alaska State House Members
Alaska State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: HB 75: Municipal Regulation of Marijuana; Local Election

Dear House Members,

Since the beginning days of session, (H) CRA Committee has done an exemplary job of working with municipalities to craft a bill that guides municipalities through the upcoming “unknowns” with regards to the legalization of marijuana.

First and foremost, it is imperative that municipalities have the flexibility to deal with issues that we haven't yet identified. We feel it would be a detriment to the people of Alaska for us to not be able to allow our residents the ability to realize those issues for which they voted, while yet being able to protect all of our residents from negative aspects that might unexpectedly occur.

The many “issues” that have suddenly popped up on this bill by various Legislators, are basically impossible to resolve as they are all over the board and, in some cases, conflict with each other. As far as the numerical “limit” of plants, the municipalities are simply concerned with having a “limit” that can serve as an aide to law enforcement. Pick a number. Any number between 12 and 24. We simply need parameters and guidance.

The (H) CRA Committee worked closely with AML; the Municipal Attorneys Association the initiative sponsors and Mayors, Council members and Assembly members throughout the State. Not surprisingly, there were many different opinions on how various municipalities across the State would deal with marijuana, but they were all adamant, that they be given the ability, as stated in the initiative, to have local control at the local level.

This past process has been totally transparent, totally collaborative and the product, HB 75, is as close as we could come to finding solutions to which all parties could agree. To that end, we would hope that this bill would continue to move through the process, so that the thoughtful work done thus far would not go to waste. It would be terribly disappointing to find so many groups collaborate, only to find this bill die in a committee. We understand that there may be changes that are necessary with regards to things we have not yet realized, but this bill offers us the flexibility to address issues further down the road. Please help to see that this bill is made into law.

Sincerely,

Kathie Wasserman
Executive Director