



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

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Mike Navarre
Borough Mayor

March 13, 2017

Representative Harriet Drummond
State Capital Room 108
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: House Bill 172 Cultivation of Industrial Hemp

Dear Representative Drummond:

As Mayor of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, I am writing to express my support for Alaska House Bill 172, an act to define industrial hemp (IH) as an agricultural product in the State of Alaska and allowing for the commercial farming of IH through a pilot program. Adopting legislation authorizing IH is consistent with the actions of the majority of state governments in the US. At least sixteen states have legalized commercial IH production, with 20 having authorized research and pilot programs. IH presents many potential benefits for the state of Alaska and I believe allowing its commercialization is in the best interests of the state and its residents.

The prospect of adding a crop of IH to Alaska's agricultural industry may prove beneficial to the state's economy. Commercial farming of IH in Alaska presents an opportunity for job growth in the agriculture, transportation, and processing industries, and has the potential to create new demand for blue collar jobs that do not require a post-secondary degree.

Industrial Hemp insulation may also help address problems with both affordable housing and the rising cost of energy in Alaska, particularly in rural areas. The use of IH in home construction and insulation has the potential to significantly mitigate waste related energy consumption, lower heating costs substantially due to its high insulation value, and serve as a construction alternative for drywall, OSB plywood, house wrap, and fiberglass insulation. IH products are now used in textiles, farming, nutrition, furniture, paper products and construction materials. Additionally, these plant fiber technologies may be a viable alternative to polypropylene products and chemical dispersants used in oil spills and other bioremediation efforts.

I support HB 172 to define IH as an agricultural product in the State of Alaska and allow for the commercial farming of IH through a pilot program.

Thank you for sponsoring HB 172.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Navarre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "N".

Mike Navarre
Mayor