



April 11, 2019

Senator Click Bishop
Chair, Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee
State Capitol Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Bishop,

Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 50 (SB 50), the Alaska Education Facilities Tax to reinstitute the "education head tax."

On behalf of the 13,000 members of NEA-Alaska, I am writing in support of SB 50. SB 50 is a commonsense proposal to restore the long standing tradition of individual employed Alaskans and non-Alaskans alike supporting public education with a modest annual payment.

Investing this revenue in maintenance and construction for public education facilities is a practical way to support public education while maintaining our aging education infrastructure. Hundreds of our public school facilities currently operating were built before 1980. Many of them require maintenance and repair for basic health, life, and safety issues.

The State of Alaska is facing many budgetary and fiscal challenges. SB 50 is a simple, straightforward, and modest measure to engage Alaskans, as well as non-Alaskans who make a living here, in support of our constitutional commitment to maintain a high-quality system of public schools.

Thank you for your leadership in making sure that Alaska's students have the facilities and support they need to be inspired and succeed.

Sincerely,

Tim Parker
President, NEA-Alaska

Alaska Superintendents Association

234 Gold Street • Juneau, AK 99801
907.586.9702 • (Fax) 907.364.3805



April 3, 2019

Honorable Senator Bishop:

On behalf of the Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA), thank you for sponsoring Senate Bill 50, the Alaska Education Facilities, Maintenance and Construction Tax. Our organization supports this bill and urges the Alaska State Legislature and Governor Mike Dunleavy to approve it as soon as possible.

SB 50 makes a great deal of sense. Our organization carefully considered that working adults in Alaska used to pay a \$10 per head school tax for 60 years, until it was repealed in 1980. We believe that most working Alaskans would readily pay such a tax again if it were reinstated at the proposed \$30 per worker, adjusted for inflation. As a member organization of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, ASA embraces the highest priority in the Joint Position Statements adopted for 2019: Priority Funding for Education. This Joint Position Statement calls for, in part, "timely, reliable and predictable revenue for schools and a call for a Revenue Enhanced Fiscal Plan Imperative. This position statement notes that, "the need remains to finalize and implement a complete long-term multi-revenue fiscal plan that includes additional revenue streams." We believe SB 50 aligns with both of these top two position statements.

In addition, results from a recent survey show that Alaska adults overwhelmingly support government funding for public K-12 schools, ranking them ahead of public health and human services, corrections, public safety and law enforcement, and higher education. This research was a collaborative effort of the organizations that make up the Alaska Council of School Administrators, and our partners at the Association of Alaska School Boards and the Coalition for Education Equity of Alaska. Released in February, the research also shows that Alaskans support elected officials who, in turn, support public K-12 education. You can find out more about this new research at: <http://www.alaskaacsa.org/new-survey/>.

SB 50 provides a productive solution to an ongoing, vexing problem; lack of money for maintenance and repair in our schools. Thank you again for your sponsorship of SB 50. If there's anything more ASA can do to ensure swift passage of this legislation, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,

Lisa Skiles Parady, JD, Ed.D.
Executive Director



One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200 ♦ Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel (907) 586-1325 ♦ Fax (907) 463-5480 ♦ www.akml.org

The Honorable Click Bishop
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

April 9, 2019

Dear Senator Bishop,

The Alaska Municipal League (AML) is comprised of 165 incorporated cities and boroughs, local governments charged with providing essential public services. One of the building blocks of community development is fulfillment of the State's Constitutional obligation to maintain schools in Alaska.

While some in the State argue against increasing State revenues, AML members in August and November identified a mounting number of needs that would necessitate a State budget able to meet its obligations. In November, AML voted in favor of a broad-based tax. AML's 2019 position statement supports "investment in infrastructure and deferred maintenance."

Senate Bill 50 – the Alaska Education Facilities, Maintenance and Construction Tax – is one small step toward meeting the State's responsibility for maintaining public education, consistent with Article 7 of the Alaska Constitution.

We understand the intent to adjust the previous school head tax for inflation, from \$10 to \$30. We believe this is reasonable in its impact on local economies, but would also express concern that the net revenue to the State is insufficient to meet the needs of those school districts. We encourage consideration of an amount consistent with those needs as this bill undergoes the legislative process.

Local governments contribute significantly to school districts, in many cases well beyond their required local contribution. Many municipalities also contribute to construction and maintenance costs of schools. Municipalities have taken on roughly \$900 million in bond debt for school construction, and even with State reimbursement, the annual payments are important in terms of local budgets.

SB50 is a step in the right direction, and we commend the sponsor for following through on the State's commitment to education.

Respectfully,

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director



Yukon Koyukuk School District
4762 Old Airport Way
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Kerry Boyd
Superintendent

Telephone: (907) 374-9416,
Fax: (907) 374-9440

January 29, 2020

The Honorable Click Bishop
Alaska State Senate
State Capital Building
Juneau, Alaska

Subject: Support for SB50, Revenue for School Maintenance & Construction

Dear Senator Bishop:

On behalf of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, this letter is to express support for Senate Bill 50, which will raise new state revenue to help maintain and build schools.

From 1919 to 1980, Alaska had an annual employment tax to help pay for the cost of schools. The tax was repealed in 1980 when Alaska was coming into an era of oil revenue. Over the past 39 years, North Slope oil revenues have blessed our state's public services and infrastructure while our population numbers have essentially doubled. Those nonrenewable revenue sources are now diminishing.

School districts have been closely monitoring the budget debate this session, and it is clear that the State of Alaska needs to come up with solutions to address the need to maintain and construct schools. Senate Bill 50 is a reasonable approach that helps move us forward with a revenue source to address basic needs for public education.

Sincerely,

Kerry Boyd

Kerry Boyd, Superintendent