

ANCHORAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT



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*Jodie Hettrick
Fire Chief*

February 8, 2021

The Honorable Senator Josh Revak
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Revak,

Thank you for your work on Senate Bill 21 Licensing Mobile Intensive Care Paramedic. The Anchorage Fire Department currently employs over 90 Paramedics and more than 300 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) within our all hazards response organization. As the Fire Chief of the largest career emergency service provider, I support Senate Bill 21 – Licensing Mobil intensive Care Paramedics.

Our Department responds to over 36,000 calls for service annually, close to 25,000 of which require emergency medical care. Paramedics and EMTs are essential to the service we provide to our community. Our responders provide an incredible level of service and care under the direction of our Medical Director who is responsible for ensuring these care providers are educated, certified, licensed, and maintained in accordance with state requirements and industry best practices.

Nearly all our Paramedics are also certified within the Office of EMS as Paramedic Educators, Multi-Level EMT Instructors, and as Advanced Level EMTs. This dual certification/licensure creates significant redundancy for our staff in the maintenance of multiple tracking and reporting systems. SB 173 provides an opportunity to eliminate these redundant efforts.

I believe the dedicated staff at the Office of EMS will be better positioned to process new provider EMT certifications and Paramedic Licensure. The Anchorage Fire Department has brought nearly 50 new employees into our system in the last 24 months and we see no reason to expect that our workforce development support needs will decrease. In our experience the Emergency Medical Services unit has demonstrated an aptitude for processing requests for certification reciprocity and new provider approval.

Unfortunately, we have experienced significant delays with the of processing of new paramedic licenses by the Medical Board during the past year. For example, one of our new Paramedics has waited more than six months for his license. This impacts our ability to complete his department required training and allow him to serve as a paramedic.

SB 21 ensures our EMTs and Paramedics all work in a single system that has our high confidence and has supported us well to date.

Sincerely,

Jodie Hettrick
Fire Chief
Anchorage Fire Department