

Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce  
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Date: 3/16/22



Re: Chugiak Eagle River Chamber of Commerce  
Letter of Support for HB 304 Chugach State Park/Eagle River Lions Land Transfer

To: Representatives Kelly Merrick, Zack Fields and Ken McCarty HB 304 Sponsors  
Alaska State Legislature

The Chugiak Eagle River Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 304 that will formalize ownership and permanent management and stewardship of the parcel known as Eagle River Lions Park on Eagle River Road in Eagle River, Alaska.

Eagle River Lions Park and all the amenities and facilities that have been developed over the past fifty years by the Eagle River Lions Club, holds great value to the Eagle River and Chugiak community. We support their continued stewardship. It is truly a very important community asset.

The Eagle River Lions Park is the home to a softball and baseball complex, football fields, soccer fields and tennis courts that are utilized and enjoyed by all ages and skill levels. There are newly remodeled tennis courts as well as picnic and playground areas. The Park is the home of Knik Little League that was formed in 1963. The Lions host many community events, the biggest being the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day Extravaganza with all events free, including fireworks display at 12:00 am July 4<sup>th</sup>, the first Independence Day celebration in the state.

The Park houses a large building, which provide the meeting area for local Lions Clubs and many community meetings, events and local fundraisers. The building is one of the largest meeting venues in the area and has a commercial kitchen. Our Annual Chugiak Eagle River Dinner and Auction that is held in the venue each year in the fall.

The Lions Club building is a building very critical to the residents of the community. It is the venue of annual free community Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. The Boy Scout troop which is sponsored by the Lions routinely provide youthful volunteers for these holiday dinners. It is also a venue for celebrations; landmark anniversaries, weddings and memorials to say goodbye to friends and community pioneers.

The previous leases, especially the recent longer leases, have been adequate to this point, but unfortunately this option will not be available after 2024 because of a recent court decision. We appreciate the proactive efforts of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Director Ricky Gease, and the support of Governor Dunleavy's Administration, as well as the legislative sponsors.

We appreciate your consideration, and ultimately support of HB 304 to allow this half century success story to continue, and for recreational and community opportunities to not only continue, but to expand and improve!

Approved by Chugiak Eagle River Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors on 3-16-22

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Rinckey, Executive Director