From:	Janice Caulfield
To:	House State Affairs; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Stanley Wright; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Andi Story
Subject:	OPPOSE HB 61, Limitations on Firearms Restrictions
Date:	Friday, April 7, 2023 2:00:29 PM

To: House State Affairs Committee

I am 44 year resident of Alaska, my family owns a gun used for hunting, and I oppose HB 61.

I listened to the House & Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee hearings regarding HB 61/SB63 and I understand the proponents' interest in equity in commerce. If HB 61 was amended to address just this interest — that gun/ammo stores and gun ranges would remain open under a disaster declaration if other commercial businesses were allowed to remain open — then I would not oppose that version of the bill.

However, as currently written, the bill goes far beyond that, and includes sections that could threaten public safety in times of disaster.

First — Bill proponents state that it would not eliminate existing restrictions or prohibitions on gun use and possession during time of disaster. However, that is not really the point of concern. What is critical and potentially dangerous is that the bill would not allow the Governor, state agencies or municipalities to place **any additional, temporary** restrictions on gun use and possession during a declared emergency — including sensible restrictions that may be temporarily needed to protect public safety.

Are you really saying that municipalities or disaster responders running emergency shelters in areas where guns are not currently prohibited (for example, a retail parking lot, a YMCA) would not be allowed to prohibit carrying firearms at those shelters, or even make smart rules about how shelter residents' firearms are stored? Wouldn't you agree that some rules about gun possession and use might be needed in that shelter to keep families and children safe in these crowded and potentially chaotic conditions?

Disaster agencies need to be able tor respond to the particular risks and dangers in each emergency to keep us safe. Tying their hands and taking away needed tools and authorities makes no sense.

Second — It is outrageous that this law would be enforced by civil suit (including suits by special interest groups) and that those bringing suit could receive triple punitive damages from Alaska's governments or disaster response entities. The fear of costly litigation would be a dangerous distraction to state and local officials as they manage rapid disaster response in a crisis situation, and would dampen good decision-making that is in the public interest.

I am curious if the bill proponents — or members of this Committee — have asked Alaskan municipalities, the Alaska Municipal League, first responders, or disaster relief organizations their views regarding losing the authority to temporarily and in a limited manner restrict gun use or possession during a disaster, AND the potential that they would be sued and suffer costly penalties if they took such action to protect the public.

I encourage you to fully understand ALL sections of this bill. Purportedly, the main interest is to keep gun stores open in a disaster. But, this bill goes far beyond ensuring "equity in commerce". I urge you to address that interest only, and delete the bill sections that limit the authority of state and municipal responders in times of emergency and that invoke enforcement by civil suit.

Thank you for your attention to my comments,

Jan Caulfield
Juneau, AK