

## Konrad Jackson

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**From:** Michele Elfers <michele@alaskaflyfishinggoods.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 03, 2023 7:20 PM  
**To:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman  
**Subject:** Support SB 73, Professional Registration for Interior Designers

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

My name is Michele Elfers, I am a licensed Landscape Architect (LA) in the State of Alaska and I have been working in the field since 2005. I support this bill as it ensures that the construction, repair and upgrades to our commercial and public facilities in the state are designed by professionals who are experienced and qualified to ensure the public health, safety and welfare of our families and fellow Alaskans. The recent earthquakes in Syria and Turkey have shown how disastrous it can be when the built environment is not designed by professionals to meet adequate standards. This bill will require professional interior design practitioners who are currently designing our buildings as part of teams with engineers, architects, surveyors and landscape architects to be educated, have experience under another professional and successfully pass an exam. These are the same standards we have for the other design professionals.

In the early 2000's, the profession of landscape architecture went through this same process of becoming licensed in the state of Alaska. At the time, many states were also moving to licensing LA's and some engineers and architects were opposed to the change. Just like some professionals are doing now, they thought that additional licensed professionals working on design teams would encroach in their practice and take work away from them. Now, Landscape Architecture is licensed in all 50 states. In Alaska, LA's work side by side on teams with engineers, architects, and surveyors successfully. We also collaborate on shared issues of importance through the Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) of which I am a member.

Please understand that the pushback that you are seeing from a few professionals does not represent everyone and is a natural part of change, some will be resistant. However, licensing Interior Designers will make our buildings safer and healthier for our community and it will benefit all of our professions who are already working together.

Finally, I want to add that licensure will help to attract and retain professionals in the state. I completed graduate school for Landscape Architecture and moved back to Juneau and was able to find a job in my profession. It was very important to me to get licensed so that I knew I was practicing at the top of my field and recognized for it. If licensure was not an option in Alaska, I would not have moved back to the state, I would have stayed down south to practice and realize my personal and professional goals. We need to do everything possible right now to keep working people in Alaska.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michele Elfers PLA, ASLA, APDC

Professional Landscape Architect

**Amy K. Mestas, PE, SE**  
**3641 North Point Dr.**  
**Anchorage AK 99502**

March 31, 2023

Senator Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 9  
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SB 73 Register Interior Designers

Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing as a registered civil and structural engineer with 17 years of experience practicing in the design industry, as a Board Member and Legislative Committee Chair of the Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC), as a member of the Structural Engineers Association of Alaska (SEAAK), and as member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

I am in support of registration for Interior Designers. These professionals design new, and modify existing, interior spaces in public or private buildings. Their work includes non-structural design elements often involving components affecting life safety, whether it be accessibility, exiting access components, fire ratings of walls, or fire ratings of finishes. To protect public safety through licensure, registered Interior Designers will ensure that those responsible for this work are qualified based on education, experience, and national examination (or are under direct supervision of qualified individual), as are other design professionals. It is becoming more common for Military projects to require a registered interior designer. We will be putting our local designers at a disadvantage when compared with outside firms if they are not permitted to obtain a license in Alaska (or require them to get licensed in another state to work in our own back yard). SB 73 will allow registered Interior Designers to stamp their own interior construction documents for permit within their scope of practice, as are other disciplines, and take responsibility for their own work.

This bill recognizes a design profession that has existed in our market for decades and allows those who show competence via their education, experience, and examination, to practice independently. As we are experiencing a shortage of design staff in the state, it would also seem prudent to the economy to license interior designers. There are many interiors projects which deal with life safety which could be designed by a licensed interior designer without the involvement of a registered architect. This would alleviate some of the workforce shortages our design industry is currently facing. It does not prevent architects from doing interior designs, nor does it prevent unregistered Interior Designers from working on projects that do not affect the public safety, health, and welfare.

The American Society of Interior Designers – Alaska Chapter has worked closely with the Alaska American Institute of Architects to adjust the language presented in the bill to be acceptable to both architects and interior designers. I urge you to pass this bill with the amendments ASID will be proposing based on their sincere efforts toward compromise with AIA for the registration of Interior Designers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy K. Mestas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy K. Mestas, PE, SE

**Charles Bettisworth, HPHD, FAIA**  
**Architect**  
**204 Front Street**  
**Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701**

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May 7, 2023

To:  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Honorable Senator Bjorkman, Chair  
And  
Members of the Committee

**RE: SB 73 Licensure of Registered Interior Designers**

Dear Senator Bjorkman,

I am writing to you to urge you to support SB 73, Licensure of Registered Interior Designers.

I am a professional Architect, licensed in the State of Alaska, and have been for over 50 years. I sort of retired in 2014. I am a member of the American Institute of Architects, and an AIA Fellow.

I am the founder of Bettisworth North Architects and Planners, which was founded some 45 years ago. I sold the business to employees in 2014 and have been mentoring this group and working as a Senior Architect managing projects ever since. As noted below Bettisworth North is a multidiscipline design firm with over 40 employees in offices in both Fairbanks and Anchorage.

SB 73, the Registration for Interior Designers is Legislation is long overdue.

I have engaged the services of Interior Design professionals for decades. Through the years, I came to understand the importance of, and value of, Interior Designers who have a CIDQ certification. This understanding led Bettisworth North to become a multidisciplinary firm, providing architecture, interior design and landscape architecture services, all disciplines integral to this firm's practice.

As a Fellow, I am an Advisor to the Alaska Chapter, AIA Board of Directors.

To me this legislation is very much in the public interest. It is important: it will serve to protect the life and safety of the occupants of Alaska's new and renovated buildings.

May 6, 2023

**RE: SB 73 Licensure of Registered Interior Designers**

For Interior Designers, much of their work involves the renovation and reconfiguration of space. These services often are contracted directly by owners/lessees, or contractors without the engagement of architects. These folks often do not understand the potential life/safety issues that can be encountered when reconfiguring space, and correspondingly hire interior designers who do not have knowledge of or experience with the necessary life safety codes.

This legislation, then, provides a method for ensuring that interior designers meet the rigorous national qualifications, standards, and credentials necessary to independently practice a limited, defined scope of work within public-occupancy buildings.

Further it is important to note that SB 73 will not displace architects. However, it will provide registered interior designers with the ability to stamp-sign-seal their own documents and take responsibility for their own work within the established limited scope.

Over the years, I have actively supported this effort and have engaged with the ASID group and the State of Alaska AIA Chapter in working to develop legislation that meets the concerns of both groups.

Note, as an Alaska AIA member I was asked to respond to a Survey of Alaska AIA Chapter Members regarding SB 73. My response was that this survey was highly biased against SB 73, and in no way represented the facts associated with the legislation, specifically the licensing requirements necessary for registration of interior designers.

There will those who will claim that the National American Institute of Architects does not support licensure of qualified Interior Designers. This is not correct: AIA National has changed this stance, it no longer opposes this licensure, and has left this decision up to the States, therefore SB73, which is before you this session.

Finally, it is worthwhile noting that the US Corps Of Engineers now requires the inclusion of Registered Interior Designers on teams designing its projects. Without SB 73, COE work in Alaska will be left to registered interior designers not residing in Alaska.

May 6, 2023

**RE: SB 73 Licensure of Registered Interior Designers**

In sum, SB 73 will protect the public, increase professional job opportunities, attract high-quality design talent to Alaska, expand consumer choice of qualified design professionals, and encourage small business. It will encourage those Alaska designers earning interior design degrees "outside" to return home for their professional registration and become a productive part of Alaska's economy.

I therefore encourage you, this Committee and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Alaska State Legislature make SB 73 become law.

Thank you and sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "CB Bettisworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

CB Bettisworth, Senior Architect, Retired, HPHD, FAIA.

