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Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
Governor  
State of Alaska

Honorable President Cathy Giessel  
Senate President  
Alaska State Legislature

Honorable Bryce Edgmon  
Speaker of the House  
Alaska State Legislature

December 7, 2020

Governor Mike Dunleavy, Senate President Giessel, and Speaker Edgmon,

On October 23 we requested that the Administration and the Legislature work toward extending the current disaster declaration, in response to the public health emergency and economic crisis. The Governor was able to unilaterally declare a new disaster, effective November 16 and lasting for 30 days. This is set to expire on December 15.

The State, in collaboration with local governments, has worked to address issues related to the pandemic, even as together we have tried to support Alaska's economic recovery. That work does not end on December 15, and functionally we expect to continue to need the emergency declaration in place.

As we have said, the State's declaration has allowed for health mandates that greatly contribute to flattening the curve. More importantly for local governments, the declaration has served as a backstop for individual community-level declarations and ensured the adequate flow of resources.

Effective response during this pandemic has depended on clear guidance from the State and relatively well-understood and enforceable mitigation measures in the form of mandates. Local governments are better able to take action on their own if they can do so by building on the State's response. Compliance is more likely, enforcement less challenging, and public health better assured when these mutually reinforcing levels of guidance are in place.

The State's current and potential mitigation actions give confidence to business activities and provide for the public – our residents – some measure of hope that beyond the voluntary compliance that we are together promoting, government action is helping to mitigate some of the more dangerous potential for this virus to cause harm.

Fundamental to next steps will be the implementation of the State's vaccination plan, to ensure that all Alaskans have the opportunity to benefit from the remarkable scientific work that has gone into development of the COVID-19 vaccine. An emergency declaration is necessary for the continued delivery of healthcare, distribution of scarce resources, management of logistics, and reducing barriers to action. Local governments continue to depend on effective and efficient State response.

Strong collaboration between the executive and legislative branches to achieve this will be critical. While a new 30 day declaration achieves a short-term objective, it does seem as though an extension of the current declaration far enough into the upcoming legislative session to evaluate additional or new/different needs will be an efficient component of working together. Governor, if the Legislature is

unable to call itself into special session, we ask that you do so, setting a limited agenda to achieve the scope necessary for the emergency declaration. We stray into territory outside our purview, in suggesting this, but we are also cognizant of the political realities and the public health necessity.

We have said recently that Alaska faces a potential “cliff” on December 30, too, with the expiration of the CARES Act funding. While we continue to hold out hope that Congress acts before then, it also appears plausible that funding that has supported State and local government response will no longer be available, and Alaskans expecting and depending upon additional relief until the vaccine has achieved its necessary aims and an economic recovery is underway.

An emergency declaration is critical in response to and to address rising case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths; the near-term needs of vaccine distribution; the long-term distribution needs of the vaccine, and outcomes; government action necessary to respond to resource allocation and distribution; economic assistance programs in place; and Congressional action.

AML appreciates continued State leadership, necessary collaboration between branches of government, and the effective exercise of authority and powers, separate but interdependent. We hope that agreement can be reached quickly to resolve the expiration of the current emergency declaration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nils Andreassen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nils Andreassen

Copy:

- Ben Stevens, Chief of Staff
- Senator Tom Begich, Minority Leader
- Representative Lance Pruitt, Minority Leader
- Commissioner Adam Crum, DHSS