



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

1900 First Avenue Ste 210 • KETCHIKAN, ALASKA 99901

• 907/228-6625 • fax 907/228-6684

www.kgbak.us

OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER

February 5, 2021

Honorable Senator David Wilson
Chair of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Senate
Email: Senator.David.Wilson@akleg.gov

RE: In Support of an Extended Disaster Declaration

Senator Wilson:

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough has endeavored to protect the community and its residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and has worked closely with the State of Alaska to reopen our economy. The State's declaration of emergency has provided the Borough with the ability to utilize services and programs that may not be otherwise available.

This office appreciates the Legislature's interest in and commitment to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of decision-makers during a disaster. The past efforts made to protect public health, both in the form of mandates and guidance, effectively flattened the curve and preserved hospital and healthcare capacity, as they were intended. The Legislature will have an important role in continuing the recovery in Alaska.

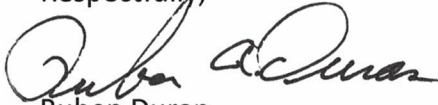
While the vaccination program is being rolled out throughout the state, the pandemic has not subsided. It remains incumbent on all levels of government to work together to get through this public health emergency and economic disaster. We hope that the Legislature will work together with the Administration and local governments to continue to meet this threat.

This community and all of Alaska needs a disaster declaration – or the necessary statutory authorities, including to waive procurement and regulatory restrictions or timelines as articulated in AS 26.23.020(g) – in place, allowing the State to continue to respond to the public health emergency. Important in the declaration is access to AS 26.23, Alaska's Disaster Act – we believe that Sections 2 and 3 are the relevant elements of the bill. Additional aspects of the bill, or other issues related to disaster response, could be taken up as next steps. Given the projected vaccination schedule for Alaska, the extension may need to go through September of 2021.

As the Borough Manager, I commend the work of the Legislature, in its continued effort to keep Alaska residents safe and to rebuild our economy. I encourage you to pass legislation to extend

the emergency declaration and assist us with keeping our residents safe and aiding with the rebuilding of our economy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruben Duran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Ruben Duran

Borough Manager

Ketchikan Gateway Borough

cc: Senator Bert Stedman, District R