



Northwest Arctic Borough

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To Whom It May Concern,

The Northwest Arctic Borough endorses House Bill 135 titled, "An Act relating to school district participation in the school construction grant program." As presented in the bill, "The commissioner may extend the time allowed for a district to provide the required participating share if the district applies to the commissioner in writing to request an extension and demonstrates good cause for the requested extension."

The Kivalina Replacement School project is an example of why this exception is needed. In April 2015, the legislature appropriated partial grant funding for the Kivalina Replacement School; thus starting the clock to secure our local share. A grant agreement has not been executed for reasons beyond the control of the Borough and District. First, for FY 2016 a moratorium was placed on approval of the grant pending legislative consideration of the balance of funding. Secondly, the project cannot begin until an access road is constructed as a separate project. The road development is proceeding in conjunction with DOT/PF, but it is not scheduled to be complete before the three-year deadline for the match expires. Without an approved grant agreement, it is difficult to apply for other grant funds that could be used as part of the local share.

House Bill 135 will delegate to the Department discretion in extraordinary circumstances to allow projects such as Kivalina Replacement School to move forward without the potential of having to forfeit appropriated funding, and to continuing managing risk to the State and local entities and support the improvement of educational conditions for the children of Alaska.

In closing, we would like to thank Representatives Westlake, Kito and Gara for sponsoring this important bill.

Sincerely,

Clement Richards, Sr.
Mayor