

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

*Alaska Commission on Aging*

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March 19, 2012

The Honorable Cathy Muñoz, Chair  
House Community & Regional Affairs Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 403  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

**Subject: Support for HB 366, Disaster Planning and Emergency Management Services**

Dear Chair Muñoz:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support of HB 366, a bill to establish a comprehensive intrastate mutual aid system (IMAS) that would allow all political subdivisions to transcend their jurisdictional boundaries to receive and render aid to other political subdivisions in the event of disasters and emergencies. This legislation is sponsored by the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee. We believe that this legislation is good public policy that will provide for a consistent and integrated mutual aid system to ensure an effective response in disaster situations.

Older persons with health problems are among the most vulnerable of Alaska's residents. When an emergency or natural disaster occur, they are the most likely to suffer from the direct impact of the force. Many have physical or cognitive impairments that limit their ability to respond and seek help. Frail older persons with special health problems on medication, equipment, or who have mobility needs are at heightened risk during a disaster and require special assistance to get to places offering food and emergency shelter. The horrific experiences of Hurricane Katrina and the loss of life of older adults who were abandoned in nursing homes and assisted living facilities highlight the need to improve disaster response preparedness and planning for vulnerable populations.

Disasters know no political boundaries. They can happen at any time, in any place, and to any one. HB 366 provides an integrated and structured framework to provide efficient and effective emergency aid and relief to older Alaskans and all Alaskan residents when the unthinkable strikes. Thank you for your consideration and support of HB 366. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, by phone (465-4879) or email ([denise.daniello@alaska.gov](mailto:denise.daniello@alaska.gov)) should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Sharon Howerton-Clark  
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

  
Denise Daniello  
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Neal Foster, Vice Chair  
Representative Alan Austerman  
Representative Alan Dick

Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative Sharon Cissna  
Representative Berta Gardner