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Governor Mike Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Louise Stutes
Speaker of the House
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Speaker Stutes:

On January 15, 2021, I issued a Disaster Declaration. My administration then introduced legislation at the start of session, pursuant to law, confirming the Legislature as the legal body of government to contemplate any extension beyond 30 days. On February 14, 2021, the Disaster Declaration I issued expired, having not been extended.

My administration conducted a thorough analysis to determine what essential tools were necessary to continue the State's public health response. We concluded we needed limited authorities to support four elements of the state's response:

- The ability to allocate and distribute vaccines and therapeutics.
- Limited immunity for officials performing their duties related to the state's response plan.
- The continued use of enhanced telehealth services.
- Necessary authority accessing federal relief funding as they pertain to the state's continued response and nexus to the federal public health emergency and major disaster declaration.

Though the above items need legislation, none need a disaster declaration, nor the broad authorities contained within the Alaska Disaster Act, to occur. Despite having made it clear that the State does not need a disaster declaration, the House Health and Social Services Committee chose to move the bill, HB 76, forward with a full disaster declaration included.

The worst of this pandemic is behind us. Alaska leads the nation in, and sets the standard for, widespread testing. Between February 14, 2021 and March 17, 2021, when there was no disaster declaration in place, 202,498 tests were completed. In total, 1.8 million tests have been completed since March 2020.

In addition, we continue to lead the nation in providing vaccinations for our citizens who choose to receive them. Between February 14, 2021 and March 17, 2021, with no disaster declaration in place,

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119,831 Alaska residents were vaccinated. Alaska was the first state to completely open vaccine eligibility to all individuals over 16 years of age.

As leaders, we must move our state and citizens into recovery with an aggressive public health response, anchored by limited authorities to support critical response components. I trust the Legislature will move quickly to support our response efforts for the benefit of our state's public health and our economic recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunleavy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Dunleavy
Governor

cc: The Honorable Peter Micciche, Senate President