



September 24, 2008

The Honorable Lisa A. Murkowski  
United States Senate  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-0203

Dear Senator Murkowski,

The Community Building Code Administration Grant Act of 2007 (S. 2458/H.R. 4461), now before the Senate Banking Committee, is one of a very few bills developed to assist local governments in promoting local building and fire code compliance. On behalf of the Alaska Municipal League, I request your consideration of co-sponsorship of this legislation.

The impact of Hurricane Ike this past month, is another national reminder of our ongoing vulnerability to the forces of nature. Like our friends in the Gulf Coast, we Alaskans also know from regular experience, the power that Mother Nature can unleash on us and on our homes and businesses. We know the value of being able to protect ourselves in our homes and buildings, as well as the need to make sure we build to strong codes to ensure our comfort and safety. The role of ensuring that we do build to code is one that falls on local government. This legislation will develop an important tool to assist our communities in carrying out local programs that enhance code compliance.

There are communities across Alaska and across the nation with unmet ambitions to better guide local work in constructing stronger, greener and more efficient and more accessible buildings. Although devoted to improving local conditions, the bill also has clear benefits to the federal taxpayer in terms of reducing future national costs in response to and recovery from hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and similar disasters. A report completed for Congress in 2005 by the National Institute of Building Sciences, demonstrates that future federal disaster assistance is reduced by nearly \$4 for each \$1 of federal support for local programs in disaster mitigation.

The legislation recognizes that building code enforcement is a local link to public safety and disaster mitigation function, but that many communities cannot readily afford plans to improve compliance with state or locally adopted codes. As a straight-forward federal grant program, S. 2458 promotes and supports local code enforcement and provides federal return on investment through reduction in future costs. The Act is designed to assist those jurisdictions short on resources,

but committed to improvement of the quality and durability of building through effective on-going local code administration.

We appreciate your review of this legislation, welcome further discussion with you and your staff, and request your support and efforts in promoting its passage by the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathie Wasserman". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Kathie Wasserman  
Executive Director

cc: Mark Dinneen