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SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



January 19, 2017

Mayor and Assembly
City and Borough of Juneau
155 South Seward Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Ordinance 2016-44

Honorable Mayor and Assembly Members,

With all due respect and regard for your efforts to support the business owners of downtown Juneau, we are not able to support Ordinance 2016-44. This ordinance, which would ban camping on private property in the downtown district, would criminalize citizens who are the most impoverished residents and who suffer with physical, mental and social illnesses. It would impose penalties on citizens who have the least capability to pay fines, ultimately leading to their incarceration.

The immediate objective of the proposed ordinance is the removal of camping in the downtown district. We believe that issue can be resolved in a humane and compassionate manner with the establishment of a site for camping elsewhere in the City.

Perhaps the City might consider a recommendation to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority that the proceeds from their sale of Trust lands to the Develop Juneau Now LLC in downtown Juneau be dedicated to funding a camping site for those citizens who are not eligible to utilize existing shelters. We have confidence that the City can develop and implement innovative solutions to address this issue in the same way the City created a land base in the Gastineau Channel for the display of a monumental whale sculpture.

We would also like to thank the City, the Juneau Homeless Coalition and the caring citizens of Juneau for their efforts to end homelessness in our community. Our organizations have also contributed to this cause notably through contributions to the Housing First project and sponsorship of fundraisers for the Glory Hole by the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska. We realize that it will take multiple solutions and partnerships to resolve this issue and the recommendation we are advancing in response to Ordinance 2016-44 responds to only one aspect of homelessness.

We urge the Juneau Assembly to abandon its effort to enact Ordinance 2016-44 and initiate action to provide for camping elsewhere in the City.



Rosita Worl
President
Sealaska Heritage Institute



Richard J. Peterson
President
Central council Tlingit & Haida Indian
Tribes of Alaska



Anthony Mallott
President and CEO
Sealaska



Charles Clement
President and CEO
SEARHC

