

April 7, 2008

Representative Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Meyer and Representative Chenault:

This letter is written to support the proposed Bioscience Building (BIOS) to be built on the campus of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks (UAF). The purpose of the building is to improve the educational research, and workforce development needs in the Life Sciences. BIOS will address critical research and teaching needs in biomedicine, wildlife biology, physiology, ecosystem and global change science, and population genetics. Currently there are about 500 biology majors enrolled in the life science programs, the largest single school on campus at UAF. Since FY 2002, grants to Biology and Arctic Sciences totaled about \$50 million.

In order for UAF to compete with other institutions nationally and internationally, students require modern facilities with the latest technology for teaching and research. BIOS would provide labs for 18 lead scientists and 170 researchers. Many of the existing facilities on campus were built more than 40 years ago, when the campus was much smaller and when the fields of modern cellular and molecular biology didn't even exist. Current teaching facilities and labs are stretched across the entire breadth of the 1.5 mile long campus, which makes it inefficient to commute for both students and faculty. A modern facility built on West Ridge near the existing Institute of Arctic Biology (IAB) building will compartmentalize and streamline the efficiency of the overall program mission.

In terms of cost, the total cost of the 110,000 square foot BIOS facility is estimated to be \$113 million; broken down this amounts to \$66 million in FY2009 and \$47 million in FY2010. Some costs were designed to improve utility availability for the entire West Ridge part of campus. If funded this year, BIOS could be occupied by 2013. In terms of integration, BIOS fits in well with several smaller projects, including the West Ridge Research Building (2004), the Biological Research and Diagnostics Facility (2006), and the State Virology Lab (2007). Some have expressed to us the belief that the needs indicated in the BIOS project have been met by the UAF Natural

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Sciences Building. That facility, completed in the mid-1990s, houses the needs of the geology, chemistry and physics programs—not the Life Sciences nor its labs. The

Natural Sciences Building @ UAF has greatly enhanced the overall stature nationally of those fields in the University of Alaska system. We would expect the same result for the Life Sciences with BIOS.

We have carefully reviewed the issue of competition between UAA and UAF. For example, UAA just received funding for a large science facility. The more than 500 biology majors at UAF need critically modernized apparatus to conduct teaching and research. Synergism between the two campuses is ongoing. For example, the biomedical work at UAF closely cooperates with applied UAA medical programs tied to the Providence Medical Center and other applied medical units in Anchorage. And ongoing research at UAF's Institute of Arctic Biology, which would be merged into the proposed BIOS facility, include hibernation, human dietary biomarkers (HDB), sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and musk ox research. All of these programs contribute to the UAA applied needs on the Anchorage campus.

In summary the Natural Resources Committee of the GFCC urges you to support the BIOS project on the UAF Campus. It will provide a good home for an already nationally respected program at IAB and can work synergistically with the expanded roles of applied medical research on the Anchorage (UAA) campus. This project has merit not just from a Fairbanks perspective, but also for all Alaskans that support high quality teaching and research objectives in the 49th State.

Thomas K. Bundtzen

Thomas K. Bundtzen
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 Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

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Hugh (Bud) Fate
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Rick Solie

Rick Solie
 Chair, Board of Directors
 Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

cc: House Finance Committee Members

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