



Governor Michael J. Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you on February 28, 2019. I enjoyed our time together during your visit to Alaska. The generosity and attention you extended to our servicemen and servicewomen stationed in the Last Frontier is greatly appreciated – clearly, we share the same respect towards those who stand on the frontlines to keep our nation safe. I want to also reiterate that Alaska supports your vision for our great country and we look forward to working with you to make it a reality.

As such, I wanted to take the opportunity to share with you some matters that are of great importance to Alaskans. The following is a synopsis of issues facing Alaska that I believe by working together can advance our shared goals of economic growth and energy dominance:

U.S. Department of the Interior

- **Statehood Land Selections** – Alaska is ready to complete our statehood land selections. It's important for the Department of the Interior to lift the current secretarial orders that are preventing priority selections from attaching. One key example is Public Land Order 5150 - put in place for the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). It is time for the state to own that right-of-way, then this land can finally generate economic development. Lifting that single Land Order will satisfy close to half of the land we were promised. The Land Orders were put in place without a land plan or environmental analysis, but now the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is demanding both an updated plan and environmental review to lift each order. Alaska views BLM's demand as an example of a government agency creating unnecessary work that only stalls economic growth.
- **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge 1002 area lease sale** – U.S. Fish and Wildlife career employees undermined seismic work this winter, so the sale will occur without valuable data, likely lowering the bids. These same U.S. Fish and Wildlife employees are working to undermine the lease sale. ANWR has the potential to become the next Prudhoe Bay, and is a key element for your goal of America to achieve energy dominance.

- **National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A)** – Former President Obama took half of the NPR-A off the table for oil and gas development. This land needs to be put back into the leasing plan. A new land plan and environmental review needs to be done before that can be put up for lease.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (U.S. Corps) / Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- **Waters of the U.S. Rule (WOTUS)** – The U.S. Corps and EPA have a long history of misinterpreting the Clean Water Act to give themselves more and more power. The Clean Water Act applies to “*waters* of the United States” – not *wetlands*. Lands are not waters. In 2017, you issued a Presidential Executive Order directing the Corps and EPA to revisit WOTUS regulation, which defines federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. Instead, what the Corps and EPA have proposed isn’t much different than before and doesn’t give much control back to Alaska – if any at all. When you’re flying over Alaska, you can see wetlands everywhere. In fact, Alaska has 174 million acres of wetlands – more than all states in the Lower 48 combined. I understand that people are concerned about the disappearing wetlands in the Lower 48; but, we don’t have that problem in Alaska. We are a young state, with tremendous undeveloped resource potential that could be of great benefit to our country’s energy security. However, this proposed federal regulation is something that has prevented Alaska’s economy from growing and prohibited natural resource development, which ultimately is a roadblock to America becoming energy dominant – something that is a priority of yours. Please urge your departments to not adopt a regulation that is counter to your vision for our great nation.
- **Clean Water Act 404 veto** – Natural resource development in Alaska is handicapped due to the EPA’s failure to officially announce that a preemptive Clean Water Act 404 veto is not going to be used anywhere in the state. The Pebble Mine Project is the poster child, but every potential investor must evaluate whether that preemptive veto could be used against their project; which results in a serious brake that chill potential resource development opportunities.
- **Clean Water Act 401 permits** – My team is available to assist the EPA in rewriting the handbook on Clean Water Act 401 Water Quality permits. By working together, we could create a federal policy that is of benefit to both the nation and Alaska.
- **Clean Air Act – Fairbanks air quality** – Fairbanks has some of the nation’s coldest weather and highest costs of energy, and people have been burning wood because it’s all they can afford. This is nothing new, as Fairbanks has been doing this for decades. But now, the EPA says we have an air quality problem due to woodsmoke. Keep in mind, Fairbanks has temperatures as cold as -50 below zero. Being able to heat your home isn’t a luxury – it’s a matter of survival. Fairbanks has been making great strides to reduce woodsmoke emissions, but EPA is telling us it’s not enough and that we need to implement costly and intrusive regulations. In concert with the measures already taken, a potential long-term plan is to get affordable natural gas to Fairbanks. We need the EPA to be patient and ask they also explore potential regulatory changes that consider Fairbanks’ Arctic climate and high energy costs.

Medicaid

- **Medicaid Block Grants** – Your Medicaid Administrator, Seema Verma, has urged us to be the first state to receive Medicaid dollars as a block grant. We are eager to do this, but your support of her on this “first” will keep the proper focus and speed on the application.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

- **Tongass National Forest / Roadless Rule** – The USFS is working hard to reverse a Clinton-era rule that virtually shut down logging in the Tongass Forest. New York State logs more timber commercially than Alaska. That rule-making must go perfectly to be completed timely and save what’s left of our timber industry. In January 2018, former Governor Walker petitioned the USDA for new rulemaking to completely exempt the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule and to rescind the interlocking 2016 Tongass Transition Plan. USDA began the process in August 2018 and is now considering what the preferred alternative in the DEIS should be. Secretary Perdue should maintain the policy determination made by the USDA in 2003 by selecting total exemption as the preferred alternative in the DEIS. We look forward to you providing clarification to the Secretary of Agriculture on the roadless rule exemption for the Tongass EIS. This would be a significant victory for the timber industry in Southeast Alaska and their efforts to increase the annual timber harvest, which creates jobs and fosters economic opportunity.

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP)

- **Tourism Opportunities** – Iceland continues to allow tourists to travel throughout their country for a few days without a visa, and business is booming. Anchorage Airport built a special terminal so that Asian tourists without visas could de-plane during fuel stops, shop at Duty Free, then re-board, or even get on a different flight headed to another foreign destination. These tourists could not leave the terminal. Business was booming. Then, after 9/11, CBP ended this program. It is time for CBP to allow the restart of this program. Anchorage lost all that business to the airport in Vancouver, Canada.

Fisheries Appointments

- **U.S. Pacific Salmon Commission** – I have submitted the appointment request for Mr. Doug Vincent Lang, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, as our selection for the Alaska seat on the U.S. Pacific Salmon Commission.
- **North Pacific Fishery Management Council** - Our nominations for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council have been forwarded to Secretary of Commerce Ross, and we look forward to his appointments soon.

Thank you again for taking time to visit our nation’s troops and for your voiced support of Alaska’s needs. I know many of the items listed will require mutual attention from the State of Alaska in concert with the federal government. Alaska stands ready to do our part to materialize the dream of a great state supportive of a great nation, and I look forward to our next visit.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Dunleavy
Governor