Alaska’s Nonprofits Support Swift Disbursement of CARES Relief Funding

Testimony of President/CEO Laurie Wolf to the Senate Finance Committee, May 18, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Laurie Wolf, President/CEO of the Foraker Group, which serves as Alaska’s nonprofit association and the capacity building organization for nonprofits and tribes across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the almost 6,000 Alaska nonprofits that partner with federal, state, and local governments and businesses to serve Alaskans and that are currently responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to strongly encourage you to move critical CARES Act funds to Alaska’s nonprofits and small businesses as fast as possible. Every day that these funds are delayed is one more day that we risk nonprofits and businesses not reopening their doors and not meeting the needs of Alaskans.

In the midst of this pandemic, nonprofits are filling significant gaps while facing resource challenges. Truthfully, without CARES funding flowing through state and local governments AND a generous outpouring of donations, nonprofits will face major changes, deep cutbacks, and some closures.

Government, businesses, and Alaskans rely on a thriving nonprofit sector. When nonprofits close, the result is more pressure on government to respond.

Thankfully, nonprofits are a part of the CARES Act fiscal relief packages before you.

To that end, we are working closely with Commerce Commissioner Anderson to ensure that nonprofits have equal access to the Alaska CARES grant program for nonprofits and small businesses, and we are willing and able to assist further in the communication and distribution phases.

We are also working closely with the Alaska Municipal League, the Alaska Small Business Development Center, and the Anchorage Community Land Trust to ensure that when CARES funds make it to local government, they include nonprofits and small businesses as essential and equal players in every local economy.

In closing, my testimony today on behalf of the state’s nonprofit sector is simple: Thank you for expediting distribution of CARES Act funds as soon as possible. We need it today so we can be here tomorrow.

I’m happy to take any questions you may have.