

Comments of Edward S. Itta
Mayor, North Slope Borough
To the House Finance Committee
On FIN CS for HB106 – ACMP

Thank you, Mister Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to address the Committee on the latest version of HB106. First of all, I want to thank the Governor and his staff for the enormous effort and time they have devoted to finding a way forward on this bill, a way forward that works for **all** the parties involved. I particularly want to thank Attorney General Burns, Commissioner Hartig for their commitment to the process we've been going through.

I also want to thank a few legislators who have contributed their input and participated in finding a solution. In particular, I'd like to recognize the work that Rep. Feige and Rep. Herron did in the House Resources Committee and their persistence in reaching a solution that they could bring to this committee. I also want to recognize the efforts of Reggie Joule, my Representative in bringing this matter to the committee's attention.

Earlier this year, I appeared before you with Attorney General Burns, Commissioner Sullivan and Rex Rock, my fellow whaler and President of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. We all spoke about the concerns and challenges that we share as Alaskans, as well as the belief that we are in this together. I believe that is the spirit that has brought us back here today. We recognize that the best solutions come from working side by side, and that this process helps us to understand each other better and paves the way for a more effective process in the future.

Sure, we have different perspectives on some issues, but our goals are much more closely aligned than we often allow ourselves to believe. We all stand together in our desire for a strong economic foundation that allows communities to thrive; and we all see the inherent value in preserving the qualities of Alaskan life that make this state unique.

I do have concerns with this bill. But this bill echoes these two pursuits. It helps bring local communities to the table, whereas for the past few years they have felt like they were pushed to the back of the room as big projects were planned for their communities. HB106 gives them a way to discuss their deepest concerns as development moves forward.

I'm very pleased to see that this bill reconstitutes a coastal policy board and we understand that designated areas have been eliminated. It also establishes clearer mechanisms for the State and the districts to engage in the process leading to approved policies.

Again, I want to thank Governor Parnell for committing his administration to the task of finding a solution to this, and I support moving the measure that is embodied in the Finance CS of this bill from the committee.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.