

Alaska State Legislature

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COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Date: 2-3-05

To: Representative Olson, Co-Chair House C&RA

From: Representative Thomas, Co-Chair House C&RA

Re: Sponsor Statement for HB 119 An act extending the termination date of the Alaska regional economic assistance program, and providing for an effective date.

The Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDOR's) were created in 1988 by the Alaska Legislature. ARDOR's are non-profit organizations comprised of local volunteers working together to promote economic development in their regions. The advantages of having a program like this working on the regional level are that the ARDOR's are able to coordinate with other economic development activities and collect and distribute economic information within their regions. In addition, ARDOR's serve as a liaison between the region and the state and federal governments.

Today, there are 13 ARDOR's assisting 13 regions in the state. Each ARDOR has a board whose members are appointed by various organizations within the region. It is the responsibility of the board to ensure that an annual work plan is executed.

Each ARDOR's grant is approximately \$50,000. This money is not earmarked for a specific use. Rather, the ARDOR's are free to use the money where they need it most. This allows them to be more flexible and efficient in achieving their goals. To date, this funding formula has been especially effective resulting in substantial economic growth throughout the state.

The ARDOR's program has repeatedly presented itself to the Alaska State Legislature and has repeatedly proven itself a worthy investment of the state's resources. Further, in order to continue the achievements of the ARDOR's program, it is necessary that the program be able to count on a certain level of funding in the future. It is for these reasons that HB 119 extends the sunset date for the program to 2013 allowing for eight year's more growth of this valuable program. I strongly urge your support of HB 119.