

From: Molly Sturdevant
To: Alekka Fullerton; dg_clerk
Cc: Paul Rogers; Jerry Lapp; Debra Schnabel; Gabe Thomas; Brenda Josephson; Zephyr Sincerny; Stephanie Scott; Jan Hill; mvsturdevant
Subject: Re: Public comment on Haines Borough COVID response
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 1:08:09 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not open links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am so sorry! Accidentally sent before done. Here is the completed letter:

Public comment on Haines Borough COVID response

Dear Alekka,

I wrote comments (at bottom of this letter) about COVID response to all Assembly members a couple of weeks ago but neglected to ask that it be included in the packet for a specific assembly meeting. I don't see it posted anywhere. While some things have changed, I still think the comment points are relevant and ask that they be included in tonight's meeting packet (April 28). I see that Heather Lende's comments on COVID are already posted there.

Please also note that these comments will be the 3rd of 3 comments I've sent for this meeting (although I only see one posted).

I would also like to commend Mayor Jan Hill, Manager Debra Schnabel, the EOC, and the Borough Assembly Members for their very hard work on all the complicated issues around this pandemic. Holy cow - what a challenge!! I think our officials and the community have overall done an outstanding proactive job to ensure local safety and wellness and reduce vulnerability of residents to potential infection, and have responded to the changing state mandates well as they came out. I read the criticism of Manager Schnabel "spending too much time" on COVID response and thought, "Wow, are you kidding!?? This is A-Number-One top priority, and kudos to Debra for taking it to heart!" In retrospect, had we known what a huge job it would be, maybe we could have a special interim paid position to handle such a crisis from the outset.

The reason I still think my original comments (below, from about 2 weeks ago) remain relevant is that we are NOT out of this mess yet. Although it seems to have slowed, Alaska is still getting new cases of COVID. *A new case was documented in a Sitka nursing home just a few days ago - a closed small facility where only staff are allowed in, in a community where no other case has been documented.* This is extremely concerning, and indicates that the virus is lurking out there in someone with no symptoms, someone who is theoretically practicing all the right precautions, and who has still exposed a highly vulnerable population to a deadly infection.

Second, I also note that many people around town during my weekly trip in for groceries, etc. aren't taking precautions: many don't wear masks even in the stores, don't wear gloves handling purchases, and even a couple folks (gasp!) were seen hugging in public. I observed that only some people not wearing masks who were later putting their groceries in vehicles had out-of-state license plates, but it was by no means all of them. And I appreciated the store employees who wore masks at work, wondering why they all didn't. I heard that people coming off the ferry were no longer greeted with Alaska/Haines health mandate information (early on, I also heard the mayor was commendably doing this service). These observations suggest we need further education on taking precautions against spreading infection.

Overall, I urge the Borough to proceed with "opening" town very slowly, encourage businesses to hang in there and continue to support and protect our residents as travelers for essential services trickle in. I was disappointed that the Borough's Emergency Quarantine Ordinance did not pass, and commend our assembly members who did support it (Zephyr Sincerny and Stephanie Scott). Yes it had problems, but we could have worked the kinks out and solved those. We must avoid a possible 1st round of local infections that could come from lax monitoring, in what would elsewhere be a resurgence. I'm not comfortable with a policy that says it's okay if people get sick and die as long as we have enough hospital beds, ventilators, and morgues to handle them.

As Dermot Cole said recently, "Because of that two-week delay, no one should take comfort in the repeated promises by Dunleavy to take action immediately if hospital admissions and COVID-19 tests show a big spike in the number of cases.... We have embarked on a risky political experiment.... Dunleavy needs to give more credence to the detailed [steps outlined by the National Governor's Association](#) to get resources and safeguards in place as Alaska pursues this untested public health experiment." Source: [Reporting From Alaska- Alaska's experiment with reopening during pandemic could be prudent or catastrophic](#). I also highlight the concerns expressed in this April 24 Anchorage Daily News report: Alaska is reopening for business far ahead of widespread COVID-19 testing (<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/04/24/alaska-is-reopening-for-business-far-ahead-of-widespread-covid-19-testing/>). The governor's mandates for essential services have definitely improved since my original letter below, but these articles point out some limitations. People - your friends, family, neighbors, and even those you don't like so much- are FAR more important than a couple more months of limiting business.

The only way we can be sure everything possible is done to protect Haines is to monitor travelers ourselves. We can't rely on those with the almighty buck foremost in their minds (their out-of-town employers) to do the right thing.

Thank you all for your sincere efforts in this difficult position.

Sincerely, Molly Sturdevant

ORIGINAL LETTER

- Subject: Quarantine for ALL travelers, essential services or not
From: Molly Sturdevant <mvsturdevant@yahoo.com>
To: jhill@haines.ak.us, dschnabel@haines.ak.us, sscott@haines.ak.us, zsincerny@haines.ak.us, jlapp@haines.ak.us, gthomas@haines.ak.us, progers@haines.ak.us, bjoephson@haines.ak.us
Cc: mvsturdevant, Senator Jesse Kiehl, Rep. Sara Hannan, Margaret Friedenauer

Sat, Apr 11 2020 at 3:50 PM

Dear Mayor, Haines Assembly, and Emergency Operation Command,

I'm very concerned about an upcoming public safety issue related to COVID. We need Haines to remain as a community with no identified cases of the virus!

As you know, workers coming in for a variety of "essential service" projects in Haines aren't required by the state to quarantine themselves before beginning work. It's my understanding that Haines Borough does not have the authority, at this

point, to implement stricter guidelines than the state's. Therefore, even though the State Health Mandate on critical infrastructure (#012) was updated two days ago, **I hope you will "lobby" the governor and our legislators to either reverse the particular regulation that removes power from local municipalities to be more stringent, AND/OR encourage them to implement pre-testing AND a 2-week quarantine for all itinerant "essential service" workers arriving here and in all communities in Alaska in another update to that mandate.**

I don't know how many workers are expected to arrive in Haines over the coming months for "essential services projects", but Bristol Bay (BB) communities are particularly vocal about their similar concerns regarding fisheries workers soon to flock into their region from many locations outside Alaska. The April 8 [Haines Borough COVID 19 Information Page](#) stipulates under Individual's Responsibilities in preventing COVID-19 transmission: "If you must travel (because you work for an "Essential Business") you are NOT exempt from requirements. Per State of Alaska Mandate 12, you still must take reasonable care to protect staff and operations during this pandemic." This is too vague, to say the least. In the BB case (see Anchorage Daily News link below), even if processors could enforce their proposed and more detailed regulations and could adequately monitor canner/processor workers, the out-of-state fishermen arriving are independent from them. This leaves at least some seasonal travelers from out-of-state able to expose our rural communities to the virus.

I recognize this is a thorny challenge, and I'll use more about the BB processor group's proposal as an example to build on. The BB processor group laid out the precautions it intends to take to assuage the communities' concerns and fears of contamination. While their intentions are laudable, these precautions aren't completely clear and they don't appear to go far enough (at least from the newspaper article), **so I hope that Haines would have stiffer requirements.**

Because individuals can be silently contagious, with no symptoms of infection, "minimizing the risk" by "...questioning at airports, attempting to monitor temperature, and doing [unspecified] medical checks" aren't enough precautions. Why aren't they testing all workers for COVID-19 infection before they even get on a plane or boat to Alaska? This should be done for all workers who are being allowed to travel to any community under state sanction according to "essential services and infrastructure" definitions, and THEN those who pass the test should all still be quarantined to rule out false negatives. Local, state and federal governments should be doing their damndest to make plenty of standard test kits available in advance and should also implement the rapid COVID-19 test versions to use in monitoring all "essential services" workers. These rapid tests would help us and the whole country as we face this type of concern while all kinds of essential seasonal work begins. After initial testing, quarantine should still be mandatory, even if it requires that people arrive at their place of seasonal work two weeks before the fish get there or the road work begins or the crops get planted (whatever).

Quarantine should be an equal requirement for all travelers, not just for "non-essential" residents returning home. Testing should be an additional requirement for all seasonal, itinerant/temporary workers before they head for Alaska from their out-of-state home.

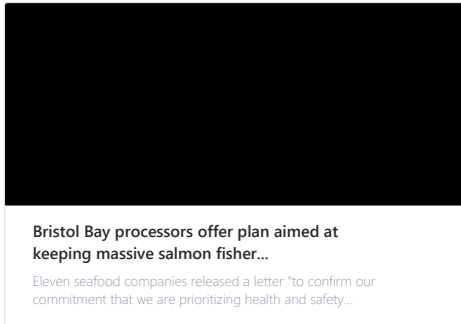
Alaska is still on the upswing curve of identified COVID-19 cases and we must do everything we can to eradicate spread of the virus in this continuing period of vulnerability.

Thank you for your attention and your hard work for Haines.

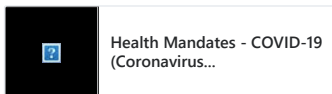
Molly Sturdevant
766-2571

Attachments:

- 1- [Bristol Bay processors offer plan aimed at keeping massive salmon fishery safe](#) (ADN 4-9-2020)



- 2- Health Mandate 010: International and Interstate Travel – Order for Self-Quarantine <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>
- 3- Health Mandate 012: Intrastate Travel – Limiting travel between communities to critical infrastructure or critical personal needs - Updated 04/09/2020 [Health Mandates - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information](#)



On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 12:36:34 PM AKDT, Molly Sturdevant <mysturdevant@yahoo.com> wrote:

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Overall, I urge the Borough to proceed with "opening" very slowly, encourage businesses to hang in there and continue to support and protect our residents as travelers for essential services trickle in to town. Let's avoid a possible 1st round of local infections that could come from lax monitoring. As Dermot Cole said recently, "Because of that two-week delay, no one should take comfort in the repeated promises by Dunleavy to take action immediately if hospital admissions and COVID-19 tests show a big spike in the number of cases.... We have embarked on a risky political experiment.... Dunleavy needs to give more credence to the detailed [steps outlined by the National Governor's Association](#) to get resources and safeguards in place as Alaska pursues this untested public health experiment." Source: [Reporting From Alaska- Alaska's experiment with reopening during pandemic could be prudent or catastrophic](#)



ORIGINAL LETTER

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To: jhill@haines.ak.us, dschnabel@haines.ak.us, sscott@haines.ak.us, zsincerny@haines.ak.us, jlapp@haines.ak.us,

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Cc: mysturdevant, Senator Jesse Kiehl, Rep. Sara Hannan, Margaret Friedenauer

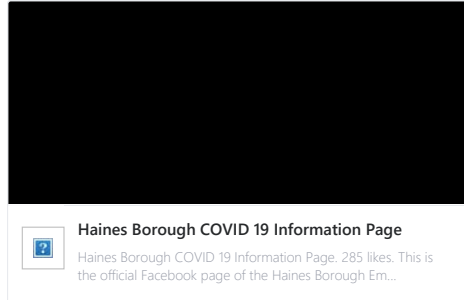
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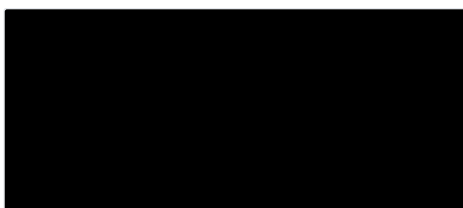
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Molly Sturdevant
766-2571

Attachments:

- 1- <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/04/08/bristol-bay-processors-offer-plan-aimed-at-keeping-massive-salmon-fishery-safe/> (ADN 4-9-2020)
- 2- Health Mandate 010: International and Interstate Travel – Order for Self-Quarantine <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>
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Health Mandates - COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Information

COVID-19 Health Mandates Issued By: Governor Mike Dunleavy
Health mandates are orders issued by Governor Mike Du...