



For the record, my name is Kati Capozzi, and I serve as the President and CEO at the Alaska Chamber. The Alaska Chamber was founded in 1953, and our mission is to advocate for a healthy business environment in Alaska. The Chamber has more than 700 members and represents businesses of all sizes and industries from across the state.

The Alaska Chamber supports the passage of SB56 and the extension of the current emergency declaration.

Businesses in Alaska have suffered immensely over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and eleven months into this public health and economic crisis, many are struggling to keep their doors open. Despite the twists and turns the business community has endured since last March, we *are* beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel and plotting our course for recovery. Economic recovery, however, hinges on our continued vigilant response to COVID-19.

Healthy people are the foundation of a healthy economy. Addressing public health concerns contributes to Alaska's ability to recover. While Alaska has had lower case counts and hospitalizations, and we lead the nation in vaccinations per capita, it is more important than ever we keep the tools in place that allowed for this positive trend.

Any lapse in the state's ability to accept and distribute vaccine, procure PPE or receive other health care resources immediately impedes the progress we've made and adds unacceptable uncertainty to our collective recovery, both from a health and economic perspective. Without the extension, operations throughout the state and across many industries are under threat, causing an unnecessary and avoidable obstacle to getting our economy back on track.

We want to be clear that, from the business community's perspective, the emergency declaration extension does *not* represent more restrictions and burdensome mandates, quite the opposite. The State's health orders authorized by the disaster declaration place a priority on critical infrastructure industries, implement workplace safety protocols, and retain state primacy for promoting safe travel into and within Alaska. The State's declaration supports the business community and ensures that commerce continues.

Our fragile economy depends on the certainty the emergency declaration provides. The Alaska Chamber urges swift passage of SB56.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kati Capozzi'.

Kati Capozzi  
President and CEO