



City of Gustavus

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January 19, 2024

Dr. Richard Spinrad
Administrator and Under Secretary
NOAA/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Administrator Spinrad,

The City of Gustavus is excited that the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL&WD) is proposing to prepare Alaska for a climate-ready workforce. For a state impacted so significantly by climate change, the proposal by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) is a step towards increasing Alaska's resilience.

As a public sector employer in Alaska, the City of Gustavus understands that its workforce, including the workforce needs for our local businesses, particularly in a rural accessibility challenged area with limited housing, must adapt to changing circumstances and be better prepared to ensure that we have the tools and skills necessary to increase Alaska's resilience in the face of change and challenge. Our responsibility for critical infrastructure means that we have a role as a partner and/or employer and provide further commitment as follows:

Partner Commitment – As a Strategic Partner, the City of Gustavus is committed to participating actively in the project's governance and implementation. In particular, this means that the City of Gustavus will contribute its expertise and time to helping the project incorporate principles and knowledge of climate resilience and/or assist in implementing workforce development activities to the extent that we are able with a small population and smaller municipal workforce. The City of Gustavus is also a valuable partner in sharing resources, partnering with both NGO's and government organizations alike, such as the National Park Service, and in contributing to outreach activities.

Employer Commitment – As an Employer, the City of Gustavus recognizes the important role it will have in developing and hiring a climate-ready workforce. For us, that means reskilling both incumbent workers and our volunteers - upon whom we heavily rely - to ensure appropriate responsiveness to change and a focus on resilience at all levels. We have already undertaken measures to add disaster planning and related trainings as a priority to our Fire Chief's duties. We would seize opportunities to have our local workforce participate in applicable training and workforce development programs. At the same time, subject to Council approval, any new positions, such as the potential for future public works authority,

and currently EMS, Marine or landfill operations (DRC) are considered climate ready, so they can meet a variety of needs and roles.

Alaskans understand that extreme weather events, retreating sea ice, thawing permafrost, and other changes are impacting our way of life, our infrastructure, and our future. A climate-ready workforce in so many ways is simply how we must prepare ourselves for an uncertain and changing future. As a project partner, the City of Gustavus believes that we can be most effective by participating actively, sharing our insights related to current and future workforce needs, and doing what we can to ensure the project's success.

Thank you for your consideration of this effort, and NOAA's leadership in strengthening the resilience of our communities and nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelley K. Owens', written over a faint, illegible background.

Shelley K. Owens
Mayor, City of Gustavus