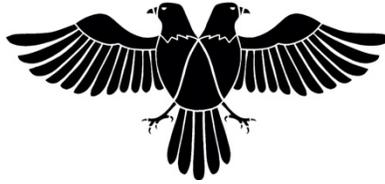


# Alaska Historical Society



**P.O. Box 100299  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299  
907.276.1596/alaskahistoricalsociety.org**

April 21, 2022

The Honorable Dave Bronson, Mayor  
Municipality of Anchorage  
632 West 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Mayor Bronson:

We write on behalf Alaska's two largest historical societies and our 600 members to express our concern about the Loussac Library's Alaska collection, its preservation and the public's access to it. We request that the library and Mayor's office expeditiously proceed with design and construction of space in the library which is critical to making the entire Alaska collection more available to the public. Without timely action by your administration on this issue, Anchorage could lose federal grant funds and an opportunity to renovate space for this collection, an effort to which community members have dedicated significant time and creative energy over the past several years.

As you know, a December 12, 2017, flood from a broken water pipe damaged and ultimately led to closure of the rotunda which housed the bulk of the Alaska collection. This meant the relocation of much of 25,000 books, maps, unique city documents and artwork. In response, two years ago a 25-member Task Force was created to advise the library administration on planning for new space, dubbed the Alaska Room, and to ensure the public accessibility of its historical materials. To partially fund this effort, the Anchorage Library Foundation secured a competitive \$390,000 National Endowment for Humanities (NEH) grant. In 2021, Anchorage voters approved Bond Proposition 2 that earmarked \$500,000 for this project, and various groups have raised additional public contributions. Through a robust process, the Task Force worked closely with the interior design firm Salt LLC to develop a proposal for this space on the third floor. It is our understanding the Task Force's recommendation was submitted to the library's deputy director for approval.

On March 4, representatives from the Alaska and Cook Inlet Historical Societies met with Judy Eledge, deputy director of Library Services, to understand why progress on this renovated space had stalled, despite the dedicated public bond funds and grant money explicitly secured for this purpose. In that conversation and future communications, Eledge stated "the decision about the Alaska Room and any renovations lies within the Bronson Administration." That is why we are now elevating our concerns to you.

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Failure to move forward jeopardizes the NEH grant, impedes future fundraising efforts and wastes the hundreds of hours of work by the Task Force, composed of well-intentioned Anchorage residents who hold a deep commitment to our public library. Meanwhile, some of the materials boxed up following the flood remain in storage, inaccessible to researchers, students and even Alaska families interested in learning of their history.

Therefore, the Alaska Historical Society and Cook Inlet Historical Society jointly request that your administration prioritize renovation of space in the library--ideally a new Alaska Room--and proceed at once with the design and construction plan approved by the Task Force. We remain available to assist you and your administration in this process.

Sincerely,



David Ramseur, President  
Alaska Historical Society



Dick Mylius, President  
Cook Inlet Historical Society

CC: Members of the Anchorage Assembly