

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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SENATOR BERTA GARDNER
SENATE MINORITY LEADER

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK
ALASKA INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC COALITION

February 8, 2016

Senator Kevin Meyer
Senate President

Representative Mike Chenault
Speaker of the House

President Meyer and Speaker Chenault,

Sixty years ago, 55 Alaskans reflected on their work crafting the Constitution of the State of Alaska. They were from all walks of life, with differing beliefs and ideologies, each strong-minded with equally strong opinions. Working as a single caucus, they completed a task which tested a different kind of strength - Who was strong enough to compromise? Who had the depth of character to move from a position they knew in their heart was right, knowing that colleagues were equally certain of their own positions, and equally wanted to create a future for Alaska that was bright and full of opportunity?

Today, Alaska faces an unprecedented fiscal crisis. Oil prices are continuing to fall and throughput of the TransAlaska Pipeline continues to decline in throughput. The political burden of developing and passing a sustainable fiscal plan is an essential but tough and politically dangerous task for the House and Senate majority caucuses.

We are offering to share the burden and the risk through formation of a Caucus of the Whole, putting aside our separate caucuses and working together as one body, as Alaskans did to shape the constitution. This is a proven model in which we can all set aside partisanship and, focusing on a shared vision, move forward together as statesmen and stateswomen to find a sustainable plan. Just as the constitutional delegates set aside their differences to craft a governing document that would provide the framework for Alaska's future as a state, we can and must do the same.

We look forward to your response and, hopefully, to working together in a Caucus of the Whole. We have to start working together now, we should not wait until the final days of the session. We hope you will share this vision with us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Berta Gardner".

Senator Berta Gardner

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Tuck".

Representative Chris Tuck