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University of Alaska Board of Regents Mary Hughes
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September 15, 2015

Chairman Dick Traini
Anchorage Assembly
Municipality of Anchorage
Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Mayor Ethan Berkowitz
Municipality of Anchorage
632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 840
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Chairman Traini and Mayor Berkowitz:

The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) has been a leader in economic development and business assistance for over 25 years. Our 250 investor companies represent the largest employers in Alaska, and are a mix of locally grown and national corporations across every major industry in the state. While our primary mission has always been to grow and diversify the economy of Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska, over the past five years our organization has also focused on community development through our Live. Work. Play. (LWP) initiative with an eye towards making Anchorage the number one place to live, work and play in the nation by 2025.

The LWP initiative isn't a feel good marketing campaign, it is based on tangible, measurable metrics. We, and our 140+ LWP partner companies and organizations, believe this initiative will not only make Anchorage a better place to live but will improve the business climate in general. Recently, the Assembly has been considering ordinances supporting the addition of non-discrimination protections for Anchorage's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) residents. The good news is that 17 of Alaska's 25 largest employers have adopted workplace policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and there is a growing trend to prohibit gender identity discrimination nationwide. These employers, many of them AEDC Investors, recognize that non-discrimination policies increase the available pool of talented job applicants and they also open up new opportunities for innovation, government contracting and business



growth. We support protections for Anchorage's LGBT community and believe that all Anchorage residents should be treated equally in the workplace.

Even in a community as diverse as Anchorage, discrimination against the LGBT community is a pervasive issue. A recent survey conducted by the Williams Institute indicated that 44 percent of LGBT workers in Anchorage had experienced harassment by their employer or co-workers because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In nearly two out of ten cases the harassment was so severe the respondent had to leave their job.

It's time for Anchorage to join the hundreds of communities nationwide that recognize the importance of non-discrimination policies to their community's health and economic growth. On behalf of the LWP Initiative, AEDC's Board of Directors and all of the organizations supporting our efforts to improve this community, we would like to thank the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor Berkowitz for their commitment to creating a more inclusive and welcoming city.

Sincerely,

Bill Popp
President and CEO

Mike Prozerallik
Chairman of the Board