



DILLINGHAM CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 170

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

1/23/26

To Whom It May Concern,

The Dillingham City School District is submitting this public comment to propose an alternative to the sale of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Applied Science Building on the Bristol Bay Campus in Dillingham. This sale would reduce local access to education and workforce training, create additional barriers for students in our region to participate in Career and Technical Education, and have negative economic, financial, and social consequences for the Dillingham community. Rather than downsizing the campus, we suggest working with us to develop clear pathways for students to take advantage of courses offered at the Bristol Bay Campus. We see this potential partnership as part of a comprehensive approach to rebuilding enrollment while also meeting the needs of our highest-performing students.

As the Superintendent of the Dillingham City School District, I believe our district is well-positioned to help bring more students to the Bristol Bay Campus. We see our proximity to the campus, our need to expand our course offerings for our highest-performing students, and our connections with community partners as elements that make us an ideal partner.

In addition, strong dual enrollment and early college pipelines have been part of a comprehensive approach to help similar community colleges rebuild their enrollment and programs. Partnering with the Dillingham City School District to create pathways to your degree programs allows students to earn college credit, credentials, or certificates while still in high school. Ultimately, this benefits our students, families, school districts, and the university.

The Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education program relies on access to the Applied Sciences Building to host its annual CTE intensives. Dillingham hosts multiple BBRCTE intensives throughout the school year, bringing students from across the region to participate in hands-on learning experiences. These intensives regularly use space in the Applied Sciences Building, and loss of access to this facility would directly limit our ability to offer them. The BBRCTE consortium has worked hard to ensure students have access to these opportunities, and our partnership with the Bristol Bay Campus is essential to the program's success. We also see these intensives as a way to introduce students from across Bristol Bay to the full range of programs and resources available on campus and to help them understand how the Bristol Bay Campus can be a strong starting point for their future careers.

Across the country, many two-year colleges facing enrollment declines have successfully reversed this trend without selling off core facilities. They have done this by aligning programs directly with local workforce needs, re-engaging adults and students through targeted marketing and incentives, expanding student support services, and streamlining the enrollment process. These strategies align well with the realities of rural Alaska

and the needs of our community, and have proven effective in helping rebuild enrollment in public colleges and universities.

The programs housed in this building are central to our local economy. Dillingham is home to the largest health care provider in the Bristol Bay region, and the lab for the two-year nursing program is currently located in the Applied Science Building. Relocating this lab to the main campus building would require difficult decisions about which components to retain and which to lose, resulting in a clear reduction in the lab's capacity.

Our region is known worldwide for its sockeye salmon fishery. The Marine Advisory program, housed in the Applied Science Building, requires substantial lab space to meet its needs. Moving this program into the main campus building would require significant rework, limiting its ability to fully address key instructional areas.

The decision to sell the Natural Resource Building places both the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Bristol Bay region at an important crossroads. One path leads to lost opportunities and a slowdown in regional growth. The other leads to a partners with the community to drive economic growth in the Bristol Bay region for years to come.

I respectfully ask that the University of Alaska Fairbanks delay any action on selling this building and instead work with our community to implement the solutions outlined above. We value education in Dillingham just as UAF values education. We want students of all ages to see this campus as a resource and a pathway forward. I believe we share common ground in these beliefs and that by working together, we can find a solution that benefits both the Dillingham community and the UAF system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to stop the sale of this building and come to the table with us to do this work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chris Aguirre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Aguirre" clearly distinguishable.

Chris Aguirre
Superintendent
Dillingham City School District