

# United States Senate

March 9, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On October 1, 2020, the final phase of REAL ID implementation will take effect and every individual 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, or other acceptable form of identification, to access certain federal facilities or fly within the United States. While I commend the Department of Homeland Security on the tremendous amount of progress that has been made towards the full realization of the REAL ID Act, I am concerned that this October implementation date will unduly restrict the freedom of movement of Alaskans. Implementing the final phase of REAL ID on this date will cause great harm to the livelihoods of my constituents, undercut our military readiness, and hurt our travel and tourism industries.

While Alaska joined the growing number of state licensing authorities that have begun issuing REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses last year, the overwhelming majority of Alaskans are still carrying non-compliant licenses. This is consistent with slow adoption rates of REAL ID-compliant licenses nationwide. A survey found that most Americans do not realize that they must get a new, compliant license, and that as many as 99 million Americans do not have any type of REAL ID-compliant identification<sup>1</sup>. Especially troubling for my state, the Department of Homeland Security has not done enough to assure Alaska Natives that their federally-recognized tribal photo identification will be accepted after October 1, 2020.

This is a big problem. Many Alaskans rely on access to federal facilities and military installations for jobs, healthcare services provided by the Veterans Administration, and even right of entry to private property. Enforcement of REAL ID standards for access to these locations would have a tremendous negative impact on those affected. It would also be disruptive to construction projects on Alaska's military installations that heavily rely on civilian contractors and skilled labor.

I am increasingly troubled by the potential disruption of air travel this October. Large portions of Alaska are only accessible by air or water with as many as 80% of Alaska's communities not connected to the road system. Many of these communities do not have residential addresses further complicating the application process for a REAL ID.

Alaska is not the only state that will be hurt by the impact to air travel. Nationwide, estimates place the lost revenue for the travel industry at over \$1 billion in just the month of October if the REAL ID requirements are enforced on the current deadline<sup>1</sup>.

Plain and simple, Alaska needs more time – America needs more time.

I urge you to postpone the October 1, 2020 implementation date to allow Alaskans, and all Americans, adequate time to obtain REAL ID-compliant licenses or other acceptable forms of identification. I appreciate your prompt attention to this important matter and I look forward to working with you to ensure America's federal facilities, military installations, and air transportation system remain safe, secure, and efficient.

Sincerely,



DAN SULLIVAN  
United States Senator

cc:

The Honorable Chad Wolf, Department of Homeland Security

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1. Real ID Survey. [https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/media\\_root/document/REALID\\_SurveyFindings.pdf](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/media_root/document/REALID_SurveyFindings.pdf)