

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 19, 2018

Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

The Alaska Delegation writes to inform you of an impending vacancy in the Federal Co-Chair position at the Denali Commission and requests you appoint an Interim Federal Co-Chair for the reasons explained below.

The process to appoint a Co-chair for a term of four years involves the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House sending a list of names to you for consideration, from which you select and appoint one. The current Federal Co-Chair term expires April 20, 2018. The current Federal Co-Chair, Joel Neimeyer has served the Commission well, but his term expires on April 20, 2018. Mr. Neimeyer has informed the Delegation that he does not intend to stay past his current term. The Alaska Delegation has nearly completed its review and final list of nominees to be considered for the President pro tempore and the Speaker of the House to submit to your office. However, the Commission cannot function without a Federal co-chair as there are specific duties set in statute that only the Federal Co-Chair can execute, and it is very unlikely a new Federal Co-Chair can be appointed by April 20, 2018. Therefore, the limited time available requires an Interim Co-chair until such time as a Federal Co-Chair is appointed. Pursuant to your authority under Sec. 303(c)(2) of the Denali Commission Act of 1998, as amended, we urge you to appoint John Torgerson as Interim Federal Co-Chair.

The Delegation has vetted Mr. Torgerson and believe him to be well qualified with the experience required to serve as Interim Co-Chair. Mr. Torgerson has lived in Alaska since 1950, and has been in a variety of public service positions over the years. He served in the U.S. Army, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, President of the Alaska Municipal League, the Alaska State Senate, Acting Director and Business Manager Division of Agriculture, Special Assistant to the Alaska Commissioner of Transportation and acting Commissioner Marine Highways, Deputy Commissioner of Alaska Department of Transportation for Airports, Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District, Acting Director of Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center. A copy of his resume is included for your review.

As exhibited by his experience, John is a wealth of knowledge in government business, structures, and budgeting. His acumen for organizing and strengthening fledging government agencies is unsurpassed. Coupled with his vast experience in rural transportation and infrastructure, he clearly has the ability to meet the needs of the Denali Commission and the Department of Commerce,

particularly in this time of transition. We implore you to act quickly and place John as the Interim Federal Co-Chair as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

Don Young
Congressman for all Alaska