

**Coalition to
Protect Our Public Spaces**
C/O 1415 Bannister Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508
(907) 242-6687
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November 1, 2019

President Paul Stang
University Area Community Council

Dear President Stang,

The Coalition to Protect Our Public Spaces (POPS) is a community coalition that opposes outdoor encampments in city owned parks, open spaces and natural areas. Its mission is to protect parks, open space and natural areas from unlawful camping by advocating for and assisting in implementation of public policies and strategies that eradicate unlawful camping and its attendant public health and safety risks (See attachment).

We believe that the Municipality has not upheld its public health and safety enforcement responsibilities to the community in relation to illegal camps and that the community must strongly advocate for more effective policies that will compassionately decrease and ultimately eliminate illegal camps. To this end, we are requesting 11 community councils whose areas are heavily affected by public camping to introduce and pass the attached Resolution.

The South Addition Community Council has already voted to sign and send the resolution in its current form (See attached draft). I am happy to talk to you about it and one of our members could appear to speak to this resolution at your community council meeting if you decide to place it on the agenda. I have also attached a background and explanation document to accompany the proposed resolution.

The resolution is written to convey to the community's elected officials a clear message of community priorities and actions that citizens expect from local government regarding illegal camps that have proliferated in the last several years. We do not expect local government to 'solve homelessness'. That task is a long term and ongoing community task that has been allocated to United Way, the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, recent and future non-profit donors, etc. Despite that, this Mayor spends an inordinate amount of his administration's time working to 'solve homelessness' to the exclusion of strategically, compassionately but firmly doing those things required to eliminate illegal camps and the attendant public nuisances that present health and safety threats to all citizens, including those camping illegally.

The role of government is squarely to enforce its own public health and safety laws and prevent and eliminate illegal camps by data collection and analysis of who is camping and why, funding and regulating shelter to assurance there are sufficient shelter alternatives that are clean and safe to abate legally, and follow up with prosecution of those who refuse to move when shelter is available so that we are not spending out abatement resources on the whack a mole proposition of abating camps that move down the trail 20 feet so we have to start again.

Please let me know your response to this request as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Linda Chase
President
Coalition to Protect Our Public Spaces