

# ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

Thaddeus Tikiun Jr., Chairperson | Vivian Korthuis, CEO | AVCP.org



## Administration

101 A Main St., PO Box 219, Bethel, AK 99559 | T 907.543.7300

August 31, 2020

City of Bethel Alaska  
P.O. Box 1388  
Bethel, AK 99559

Dear Honorable Mayor Barr and City of Bethel Council Members,

The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) is a non-profit Native organization and tribal consortium made up of the 56 federally recognized tribes of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Our mission is to work in partnership to provide community development, education, social services, culturally relevant programs and advocacy for the people and tribes of the AVCP Region, to promote self-determination, protection and enhancement of our cultural and traditional values. We have over 300 employees serving the tribes in our region, with approximately half of those employees based in Bethel.

AVCP supports the ordinance ***An Ordinance Adopting “The City of Bethel COVID-19 Rules and Procedures” Which Adopt State of Alaska Travel Protocols for all Interstate and Intrastate non-essential Travel to the City*** proposed by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC). The ordinance would require all persons arriving in the City of Bethel by commercial air transportation to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result, be tested for COVID-19 and quarantine until results, or quarantine for fourteen days (with the exception of those arriving for critical personal needs and essential services/critical infrastructure). As the number of coronavirus cases rise in the Lower 48 and throughout Alaska, especially in our State’s major cities, the risk of introducing community spread to the YK-Delta increases.

As part of rural Alaska, our communities are heavily dependent on air travel, with Bethel’s airport being one of the busiest in the state. As individuals constantly come and go from locations with COVID-19 community spread, the YK-Delta inches closer and closer to overwhelming the capacity of our regional health service to trace contacts for every COVID-19 case. Mandatory testing for travelers entering the region makes identifying new cases, tracing contacts, and supporting recovery much easier than if individuals are only identified after they begin to feel sick or experience symptoms. Contact tracing is one of the most important ways to prevent community spread (right along with social distancing, hand hygiene, and wearing a

Nunaput umyuallgutkut pinirluteng-Illu, Tegganerput qigcikliki pirpakluki-Illu, ayagyuaput-Illu ciuliqagcimaut yuuyarakun. Our Tribes are united and strong, our Elders are respected and valued, and our youth are guided by Yuuyaraq.

Akiachak, Akiak, Alakanuk, Andreadfski, Aniak, Atmaultluak, Bethel, Bill Moore’s Sl., Chefornak, Chevak, Chuathbaluk, Chuloonawick, Crooked Creek, Eek, Emmonak, Georgetown, Goodnews Bay, Hamilton, Hooper Bay, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Kasigluk, Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Kotliik, Kwethluk, Kwigillingok, Lime Village, Marshall, Mekoryuk, Mtn. Village, Napaimute, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nightmute, Nunakauyak, Nunam Iqua, Nunapitchuk, Ohogamiut, Oscarville, Paimiut, Pilot Station, Pitka’s Point, Platinum, Quinhagak, Red Devil, Russian Mission, Scammon Bay, Sleetmute, St. Mary’s, Stony River, Tuluksak, Tuntutuliak, Tununak, Umkumiut

mask in public). Many states, including Alaska, now require mandatory testing or quarantine of all travelers arriving in the state. With our Region's limited healthcare capacity and transportation infrastructure, community spread might overwhelm the capacity of YKHC, as well as the City of Bethel and our surrounding villages, to support an increase of individuals and families with COVID-19. Mandatory airport testing (or quarantine) will be a significant step in mitigating the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the City of Bethel, and the entire region.

In closing, AVCP encourages the City of Bethel to pass the proposed ordinance. We would also like to thank the City for the work done over the past several months in preparing for, responding to, and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 – especially the support of the current voluntary airport testing initiative. We look forward to supporting the City in taking this next step toward protecting our families and communities.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Vivian Korthuis, Chief Executive Officer, at (907) 543.7304 or [vkorthuis@avcp.org](mailto:vkorthuis@avcp.org).

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ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS



Thaddeus Tikiun, Jr,  
Executive Board Chairman



Vivian Korthuis,  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Dan Winkelman, CEO/President, YKHC