

January 25, 2021

To: Dr Anne Zink, Alaska Vaccine Allocation Advisory Committee (AVAAC)

CC: Honorable Governor Dunleavy, Commissioner Adam Crum



**Re: Ensure Alaska's Farmers' Markets Industry is Included in Phase 1B Tier 4 of Vaccination Plan**

We appreciate the State's continued leadership and action in addressing the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on Alaskans, and working to achieve an equitable and effective approach to vaccination rollout. We are writing to ask that you ensure the farmers' market industry, including farmers, farm workers, vendors, and farmers' market managers, are included in the Phase 1B Tier 4 vaccination plan, along with other essential workers.

The Alaska Farmers Market Association is a member-based coalition of farmers markets, farmers, and affiliate partners dedicated to promoting the direct farmer-to-consumer relationship, supporting Alaska's independent farmers, and increasing access to fresh, healthy, locally-grown food. We represent markets throughout the State of Alaska and work to ensure local and state regulations strengthen the farmers' market industry.

Farmers' markets, while a small share of the market, remain an important and safe location for Alaskans to access fresh, healthy Alaska Grown products, in an open-air environment. Many low-income Alaskans, including those using QUEST, Women Infants & Children (WIC) benefits, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers, also rely on farmers' markets to meet their families' basic food needs. Additionally, farmers' markets are an essential marketing outlet for Alaska's small and mid-sized farmers.

Farmers Market operators care deeply about the communities they serve, and have worked tirelessly since the beginning of the pandemic to remain open, and take proactive steps to protect market customers, farmers, vendors, and market manager staff. In order to continue to keep the farmers' market essential workers, and those they serve, safe, we ask that you ensure that farmers' market managers, farmers, farm workers, and vendors selling at farmers' markets be included among the other essential workers in the food and agriculture sector, including grocery store workers, in line to get the coronavirus vaccine in phase 1B Tier 4.

Alaska's Farmers Markets play an essential role for state's farmers, economy, and communities across the State. We urge you to ensure that the farmers' market industry workers and small to mid-sized farms and farm workers they support, are protected as soon as possible from the coronavirus.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need any further information or assistance in this matter.

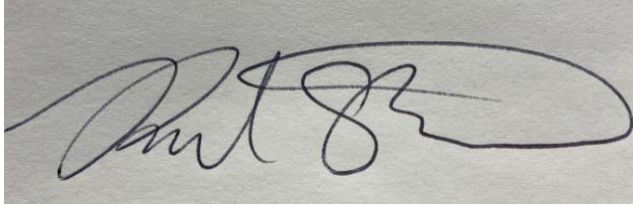
Sincerely,

*Robbi M. Mixon*

Robbi Mixon

President, Alaska Farmers Market Association

info@alaskafarmersmarkets.org, 907-235-4068 ext 23

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Brad St. Pierre'.

Brad St. Pierre

Vice President, Alaska Farmers Market Association

[tvfmarket@gmail.com](mailto:tvfmarket@gmail.com), 907-456-FARM