



Municipality of Anchorage
Mayor Suzanne LaFrance

April 23, 2025

RE: Support for HB 138

Dear Representative Mina,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 138, which proposes a dedicated funding mechanism to enhance Alaska's behavioral health crisis response system.

As with the rest of the state, Anchorage is facing a behavioral health emergency, with some of the highest rates of suicide and opioid-related deaths in the nation. HB 138 offers a responsible and sustainable solution by establishing a \$0.98 monthly surcharge on telephone lines to fund critical services including the 988 crisis hotline, mobile crisis teams, stabilization centers, and culturally-informed outreach.

This legislation builds upon the important foundation laid by HB 172 and aligns with federal guidelines allowing states to fund behavioral health crisis systems through telecommunications surcharges. The current reliance on unstable grants and limited general fund dollars is no longer sufficient to meet the growing need.

The Municipality of Anchorage recognizes the vital importance of a well-supported, responsive behavioral health infrastructure. HB 138 would help reduce the burden on emergency departments and law enforcement, while ensuring individuals in crisis receive timely, compassionate care.

I commend your leadership on this issue and urge your colleagues to support the passage of HB 138.

Sincerely,

Suzanne LaFrance
Mayor of Anchorage

