



Coastal Villages Region Fund Calls for COVID-19 Vaccine Priority for Rural Alaska Due to Extraordinary Risk

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – December 21, 2020 – Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) took a stand to fight for the health and safety of rural Alaska to receive priority in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. CVRF sent a letter to the Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force urging this prioritization.

“Across our state, there are villages with overcrowded housing that lack running water and sewer-conditions that significantly increase their vulnerability in the face of a dangerous virus like COVID-19,” said Eric Deakin, CEO of CVRF. “Rural Alaska is unique, and well-intentioned government policies often do not fit here. Our indigenous populations have been ravaged by sickness brought from the outside before, and with the COVID-19 vaccine, we have the opportunity to avoid past mistakes.”

The region that CVRF represents is at the epicenter of the rural Alaska housing crisis, with many of the residents living in 3- and even 4- generation overcrowded housing units. These conditions are ripe for the spread of the virus, especially amongst elders. There are no long-term care facilities in the region; elders live with their families by tradition and because there is no other option.

Compounding this risk, only two of the 20 CVRF communities have sub-regional health clinics. When viral outbreaks occur, they spread quickly because there is often no capacity or ability to care for the sick or remove them from the homes they share with many other family members. Additionally, since many of the residents in these communities lack running water and sewer, normal hygiene practices such as frequent handwashing are not possible.

Deakin continued, “We strongly encourage the Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force to deeply consider the way rural Alaska communities operate, and to keep that top of mind as they develop the vaccine distribution plan, in order to ensure an equitable prioritization throughout our state.”

For more information on CVRF and its communities, please visit: <https://www.coastalvillages.org/>.
For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine in Alaska, please visit: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/VaccineInfo.aspx>

About Coastal Villages Region Fund

Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) uses Bering Sea fishing rights granted to it by the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program to foster sustainable and diversified local economies in western Alaska. CVRF is organized as a 501(c)(4) Alaska non-profit corporation and operates in 20 member communities located along the west coast of Alaska, from Scammon Bay to Platinum. CVRF generates the money to fund its programs by harvesting fish in the Bering Sea with its own fleet of vessels.

CVRF is dedicated to creating sensible, tangible, and long-term economic development opportunities that generate hope for the more than 9,300 residents of its communities. It is

governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one member democratically elected from each community. CVRF is the largest Alaskan-owned seafood company in history and the first CDQ group to own and control the vessels that harvest the vast majority of its CDQ allocations. For more information, visit www.CoastalVillages.org and www.facebook.com/CoastalVillagesRegionFund.

###