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PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska Leads the Nation in Protecting Insurance Consumers During the COVID-19 Crisis

Thursday, March 26, 2020 (Anchorage) – In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic emergency, the Alaska Division of Insurance (DOI) Director, Lori Wing-Heier, is leading the nation in reducing auto and other insurance costs for Alaskan consumers.

In the rapidly evolving crisis, DOI has issued several bulletins to provide guidance to insurers and consumers. Recently, Director Wing-Heier was recognized by the Consumer Federation of America and the Center for Economic Justice for setting an example for other state insurance regulators.

“The Division of Insurance is unique, in that it is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic from both the health care angle and the economic crisis aspect,” **said Governor Mike Dunleavy**. “I am pleased that in coordination with the incident command team, Director Wing-Heier is finding solutions to return premiums and reduce payments for Alaskans – providing help now.”

“My entire team has been working on finding innovative ways to provide relief to consumers,” **said Division of Insurance Director, Lori Wing-Heier**. “We recognize the impact that COVID-19 is having on individuals and businesses, and we are doing our best to be proactive.”

Because of the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 disaster, many Alaskans have been laid off, are teleworking, or are otherwise hunkering down. As a result, some are at a lower risk of exposure for activities covered by insurance.

The Division of Insurance (DOI) [Bulletin B 20-10](#) explains that many property and casualty insurance policies calculate premiums based on exposure estimates made at the time the policy is issued. Examples of common exposure bases include: miles driven, sales revenue, receipts, or payroll. Due to the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and the local, state, and federal governments' responses to the pandemic, for many policyholders, initial estimates are expected to be much higher than the estimate would show during this pandemic. Recognizing that there are other difficult-to-quantify effects of the COVID-19 outbreak that will affect exposure to loss in the near term, insurers are encouraged to allow policyholders to self-audit and self-report changes in their exposure or risk profile and adjust premiums accordingly.

The Division of Insurance is an agency housed within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), tasked with protecting consumers in Alaska. For additional information about the division, visit commerce.alaska.gov/web/ins.

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