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**From:** Shockley, Floyd [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 30, 2019 3:47 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** UAF Funding Cuts and the Museum of the North

Dear University of Alaska Board of Regents,

We write to you today as the President of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) and the President of the Systematics, Evolution and Biodiversity section of the ESA, the latter of which comprises the largest community of individuals working on the diversity of insects and their relatives in the world, to express our collective concerns about the current financial crisis at the University of Alaska and the devastating impact that the current proposed course of action would have on entomological research in the state and the collections housed at the Museum of the North. We are justifiably concerned about the livelihood of our colleagues working at the Museum, but we are even more concerned about the potentially irreversible impacts that the Governor's office is proposing on THE most important repository of animals, plants and cultural artifacts of the Arctic and Subarctic regions. Despite already operating on a small budget for a University and Museum with statewide mandates, the faculty and staff that work at the Museum of the North have continued to serve the citizens of Alaska and the global scientific community in ways that would be impossible to replace if the current course of action is not reversed.

As the only research and teaching University in Alaska and as the designated land-grant university for Alaska, the Governor's actions put the University in jeopardy of not being able to fulfill its federal mandate under the Morrill Act and could result in the loss of additional funding allocated to the state of Alaska through the Agricultural Experiment Station provisions of the Hatch Act. Beyond the importance of the University to the citizens of Alaska, the collections of the Museum of the North (with more than 2.2 million specimens) represent one of the largest collections of biological diversity, ethnology and archaeology of the northern latitudes. To quote the ESA's official position statement on the importance of entomological collections, "Collections offer a lens into the past, a snapshot of the present, and a means for predicting the future, particularly with regards to how planetary biodiversity has changed and continues to change in response to global shifts in climate and land use." (full text of the statement:

<https://www.entsoc.org/sites/default/files/files/Science-Policy/ESA-PolicyStatement-EntomologicalCollections.pdf>).

Natural history collections are unique in their capacity to provide sufficiently large amounts of data to tackle large scale questions and serve not only as permanent repositories to preserve specimens but also as living research centers focused on collecting and analyzing evidence of our ever-changing world. This is particularly true for insects and arthropod vectors of human and animal health concern, invasive species and agricultural pests, all of which are best studied in the context of large, well-maintained and accessible natural history collections that allow for analyses of changes in species distributions over space and time, expansion of known hosts, etc.

The collections of the Museum of the North are an irreplaceable resource built over nearly 100 years (even before Alaska statehood) and have accepted specimens from other state and federal agencies including the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and many state agencies. To now endanger those collections by putting the Museum in a position to not be able to guarantee the safety and security of these collections that they agreed to receive and protect in perpetuity is both morally reprehensible and reckless. On behalf of the leadership of the Systematics, Evolution and Biodiversity section of the ESA and the global scientific community, I strongly urge you to reconsider the actions currently facing the Museum of the North and the University of Alaska. The Governor's line-item veto is counterproductive to the University and its mission to conduct research, teach and provide extension services to the citizens of Alaska, and the loss of the collections of the Museum of the North would be devastating to research, not just for Alaskan- and Canadian-based researchers but for scientists across the globe interested in high latitude flora and fauna.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the research at the University and the Museum of the North to helping boost Alaska's economy, in terms of leveraged federal dollars, workforce training of technicians, and working to solve problems that Alaskans face now and in the coming decades, all tangible benefits of which would be greatly diminished if not lost entirely through these Draconian cuts. The entomological, scientific and collection communities all hope that a solution can be found that would restore funding for the University and for the Museum so that they can both continue to perform their vital functions for the citizens of Alaska, the United States, and the world.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert K.D. Peterson  
President, Entomological Society of America

Dr. Floyd W. Shockley  
President, Systematics, Evolution and Biodiversity section  
Entomological Society of America