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Governor Looks Forward to Public Discussion on Stimulus Funds

March 20, 2009, Juneau, Alaska - Governor Sarah Palin today reaffirmed her desire to generate public discussion and to work with legislators on identifying any additional spending from the federal stimulus package that Alaska could sustain with state money once stimulus funds have expired.

At a news conference on Thursday, the governor indicated that she is not requesting nearly \$300 million being offered to Alaska out of an estimated \$930 million. She cited concerns about budget sustainability and federal "strings" that would dictate state policy.

Governor Palin also said that she expects a good discussion about the funds still on the table, including \$170 million for education.

The governor said during her opening statement at Thursday's news conference: **"What we think we need is kind of a time-out where we back up and pause, and we really think about what we're doing here, and we work with the lawmakers and their priorities, and we think about what we're spending, why we're spending it. We have to be real about this. And we're going to invite Alaska's discussion via our lawmakers on this issue.**

"I will not request stimulus package funds that subject Alaska to more federal control and ever-increasing federal mandates. And that's why we're seeking more information on every line item that we'd have to include if we were to request more from the feds. That's what the open, legislative, public process will provide – more opportunity for more information."

Regarding the education funds in the stimulus, the governor wrote to a concerned parent Thursday: "I have to certify that every dollar we apply for will legitimately create new jobs and stimulate the economy. I can't certify that fact until the Legislature is comfortable with what education's fiscal landscape will look like if we apply for the funds, grow more programs, hire teachers but then have to lay them off if the Legislature isn't willing to continue funding.

"We've increased education funding in Alaska at historical levels during my administration because it is our priority. We want to make sure any new dollars complement what we've already grown."

More information on the federal economic stimulus package is available on the Office of Management & Budget website at alaska.gov/recovery. Audio of the governor's

quote from Thursday's press conference can be found at the following link:
http://www.gov.state.ak.us/audio/StimulusPressConf_Mar19-2009-GovClip.mp3

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