IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

ORDER NO. 8148

Regarding Grand Jury Proceedings

The court system is authorized to resume grand jury proceedings statewide on June 1, 2020. Upon review, it appears that many court locations lack a courtroom designed to accommodate a grand jury, witnesses, interpreters, clerks, and prosecutors with appropriate social distancing. Also many grand jury locations continue to require quarantines that will interfere with air travel. Therefore, under the authority of Supreme Court Order No. 1957, and despite the contrary provisions of Alaska Criminal Rule 6,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. The presiding judge may allow witnesses and interpreters to appear at grand jury proceedings by videoconference or teleconference;

2. The presiding judge may allow the grand jury to meet in two or more courtrooms at a single location connected by videoconference or teleconference; a technician may be present while the grand jury is in session if necessary for a videoconference presentation;

3. For videoconference or teleconference proceedings, the prosecutor shall ensure that all grand jurors can hear the other participants and that all grand jurors can communicate with the other participants;

4. If a witness or interpreter participates by videoconference or teleconference, then the prosecutor shall require that participant to state their location, to verify that their participation cannot be overheard, and to notify the grand jury immediately if any person can overhear their participation;

5. If the court facilities at the location designated in Criminal Rule 6(b) are inadequate for social distancing, then the presiding judge may convene a grand jury at another location in the same district; and

6. All participants shall maintain the secrecy of grand jury proceedings as required by Criminal Rule 6(l).

DATED: May 20, 2020

Joel H. Bolger
Chief Justice

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