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## To Prospective Estate Planning Clients:

Thank you for visiting our website to find information that will give you an introduction to our law office and background on our experience and skills in estate planning. Our website also contains an “Estate Planning Learning Center” that provides information discussing numerous estate planning issues and techniques. The learning center has an estate tax calculator you may use to estimate your estate tax liability exposure and postings on recent Alaska trust legislation and tax law changes. You can also print directly from our website a Confidential Estate Planning Organizer that you may use to assemble the information we will need to structure and implement your estate plan.

Objectives. In contacting our office you were probably motivated by some specific goals or objectives. Some of the objectives we most frequently hear from our clients include:

- to provide for the orderly disposition of property to loved ones;
- to minimize the risk of infighting among family members;
- to provide for the succession of business interests;
- to provide for the educational needs and support of children or grandchildren;
- to name a guardian for minor children;
- to minimize estate, gift and income taxes;
- to avoid the cost, publicity and delay of probate;
- to provide for the financial security of a spouse or other loved ones; and
- to protect assets from possible creditor claims.

You may have other objectives in mind. We urge you to keep your goals and objectives clearly in mind as you develop your personal estate plan.

Introductory Meeting. If you would like to meet with one of our attorneys on a “no fee” basis before deciding whether to get started with us on your estate plan, one of us would be happy to do so. Call our office and schedule a 15-30 minute introductory meeting. During the meeting, we will discuss general estate planning concepts and answer any questions you may have about our experience or estate planning services. During an introductory meeting, we would not get into the details or issues surrounding your specific circumstances. You would not need to complete the organizer before an introductory meeting.

Getting Started. Once you have decided to proceed with our office in developing your estate plan, we ask that you complete the organizer and call my office to schedule a planning meeting to discuss the specific structure and terms of your plan. If you have decided at

the outset that you would like to work with us, you do not need to go through the step of an introductory meeting; you may begin with the planning meeting.

Planning Meeting. The planning meeting will probably last 1-2 hours. During the meeting, we will review the completed organizer; discuss your objectives, and the techniques that can be used to meet those objectives; and determine, at least tentatively, the structure for your estate plan. After the structure meeting, we usually have sufficient information to proceed with the project. In some cases, more than one planning meeting may be appropriate.

Fixed Fee Letter. Before we draft the documents that will implement the plan, we will send to you a letter outlining the basic structure and terms of the estate plan and proposing a “fixed fee” to complete the plan. We ask you to sign and return the letter with one-half of the fixed fee.

Draft Documents. Within two to four weeks after receipt of your signed authorization for us to proceed, we will send you the draft documents with a cover letter addressing any specific issues or outstanding matters not addressed by the documents. After you review the materials, we will respond to your questions, comments or changes by phone or at a follow-up meeting.

Finalization of Documents. After your questions have been answered and any changes to the documents have been made, we will schedule a brief meeting to execute the documents and discuss any follow-up matters. We will store the original signed documents in our vault and will send to you an estate planning portfolio binder with copies of the documents and other information related to your completed estate plan. In most cases, the entire process can be completed within 30-60 days after our planning meeting.

Estate Taxes. The minimization or avoidance of estate taxes is typically a significant aspect of the estate planning process. Estate taxes can be a substantial cost and can force the liquidation of assets at an inopportune time. Under current law, the excess over \$5 million of one’s taxable estate (which includes retirement accounts and life insurance death benefits) will be taxed at a 35% rate. The current exemption and rate are in effect through 2012. Beginning in 2013, the exemption will be \$1 million and the rate will be 55%, unless Congress acts to change the laws. For clients with large or complicated estates, we frequently project the estate tax burden and how certain techniques can be used to minimize estate taxes.

Fees. We generally quote a fixed fee for our estate planning services that is based upon your specific circumstances and desired plan. After our planning meeting, when we are informed of your specific situation and know the structure and terms of your plan, we will advise you in writing of the amount of the fixed fee to draft the documents and implement the plan. After the planning meeting, if we determine that no need exists to prepare documents, or you decide not to proceed with the project, we will invoice you based upon our standard hourly rates for our consultation services, analysis, and preparation of the letter outlining the proposed plan.

A comprehensive estate planning project for a married couple generally falls within a range of \$3,500 to \$7,500. A comprehensive estate planning project for an unmarried

person generally falls within a range of \$1,500 to \$5,000. An estate plan based upon a living (revocable) trust generally will be \$1,000 to \$2,000 more than the cost of the same plan based upon wills.

In many situations, we are asked to prepare various other types of trusts or to organize business type entities as components of an estate plan. The fees for those types of projects, including family limited partnerships, irrevocable life insurance trusts, limited liability companies, asset protection trusts, qualified personal residence trusts, etc. would be in addition to the general fee ranges described above.

If you have any questions before we get started with your estate plan, please feel free to call us. After you have reviewed these materials, if you would like to schedule an introductory meeting or a planning meeting, give our office a call.

DURRELL LAW GROUP, P.C.