

PSPA
PACIFIC SEAFOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION
Est. 1914

February 8, 2011

Representative Kurt Olson
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Support for establishment of a workers' compensation fee schedule for emergency transportation services (HB 13)

Dear Representative Olson,

Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA) would like to thank you for introducing HB 13, and express support for the establishment of a workers' compensation fee schedule for emergency transportation services, including air ambulance services.

PSPA is a nonprofit trade association of seafood processing companies with operations in many communities throughout coastal Alaska. Our member companies employ thousands of workers, often in quite remote locations that are far from hospitals and other medical facilities and services. In times of medical emergency, seafood industry employees must often be transported by air ambulance to urban centers to obtain treatment.

While it is not surprising that transport by air ambulance from remote locations is expensive, what is surprising is the extreme variation in the fees that are sometimes charged by different air ambulance services from a given location.

Certainly, when a medical emergency occurs, the first concern is getting the patient to needed care as expeditiously as possible, without regard to cost. The carrier that happens to be most readily available at the moment of need is, of course, always the one that should be used.

Our member companies are all too familiar with the high costs, risks, and challenges of operating in remote locations, and fully appreciate the specialized personnel and equipment and the special risks involved in operating air ambulance services in such places. They are grateful that these critically needed services are available. However, our members believe that fees charged by businesses providing those services should be as fair, reasonable, and consistent as possible. We are hopeful that passage of HB13 will help to advance that goal.

We understand that the provision in HB 13 that requires establishment of a workers' compensation fee schedule for "emergency transportation" would include a fee schedule for air ambulance services. While those services will undoubtedly remain expensive, it is hoped that having a fee schedule in place will at least help to bring some consistency and predictability to this one expense of living and doing business in rural Alaska.

Sincerely,



Mary McDowell, Vice President
PSPA

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