



February 12, 2026

The Honorable Nellie Unangiq Jimmie  
Chair, House Finance Public Safety Subcommittee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 513  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chair Jimmie,

Thank you for inviting the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to present an overview of the Governor's FY2027 Budget to the House Finance Subcommittee on February 5, 2026. This letter is provided as follow-up to questions raised during the House Finance Subcommittee on Public Safety hearing regarding departmental vacancies, the programs and components impacted by those vacancies, and the fiscal implications if all budgeted positions were fully staffed.

The information below reflects a point in time and is based on Department of Personnel reports current as of January 31, 2026, the FY2026 enacted operating budget, and the FY2027 Governor's proposed operating budget.

**1. Representative Holland requested detailed information on the number of vacant positions, their locations, and the programs affected by these vacancies.**

**Question 1, Part A: Vacancies**

As of January 31, 2026, the Department of Public Safety had 1,052 authorized positions statewide, of which 138 were vacant. These vacancies include both sworn and non-sworn positions and are distributed across multiple divisions, programs, and geographic locations.

Vacancy levels fluctuate throughout the year based on retirements, Alaska Law Enforcement Training academy cycles, recruitment timelines, and separations. Larger population centers carry higher vacancies in absolute terms due to scale, while rural and hub communities may experience greater operational impact from one or two vacancies because of limited staffing depth.

Attachments A and B provide two tables of the department's vacant positions. Attachment A reflects a component-by-component snapshot of authorized and vacant positions as of January 31, 2026, and Attachment B reflects a community-by-community snapshot of authorized and vacant positions as of the same date.

### **Question 1, Part B: Programs and Components Impacted**

Vacancies affect nearly all areas of the department, though operational impacts vary by program.

Within Alaska State Troopers and Alaska Wildlife Troopers, vacancies affect response times, investigative capacity, and proactive enforcement activities. Division leadership evaluates where vacancies can be absorbed with the least disruption, but staffing shortages may result in longer response times, reduced proactive patrol and traffic enforcement, and delays in report completion and follow up investigations. Overtime usage and travel costs can increase as personnel are reassigned to maintain safe staffing levels, particularly in rural and remote communities where alternative coverage options are limited.

In Statewide Support functions, vacancies affect the speed and efficiency of services that support the entire department and partner agencies. Vacancies in permitting and licensing functions increase workload and heighten the risk of missed statutory timelines. Vacancies in criminal records processing delay completion of criminal history records relied upon by law enforcement, prosecutors, employers, licensing agencies, and the public. Vacancies within information technology and communications infrastructure reduce capacity to complete planned upgrades and maintenance within desired timelines and may require contractor support to maintain essential systems.

Within victim services and grant funded programs, required program oversight and compliance reviews precede payment. These responsibilities include confirmation of allowable costs, review of progress reporting, and adherence to State and federal requirements. Vacancies increase workload associated with these compliance functions and reduce the department's capacity to absorb fluctuations in volume while maintaining required standards. In the Violent Crimes Compensation Board, vacancies affect the pace at which claims are reviewed and processed, increasing workload on existing staff while maintaining statutory requirements for eligibility and documentation.

In the Crime Lab, vacancies have significant impacts due to the specialized nature of the work. Training new forensic scientists requires substantial time and resources, and experienced analysts must be diverted from casework to train new staff. As a result, vacancies contribute to increased backlogs, longer turnaround times, and long-term capacity constraints beyond the immediate staffing gap.

### **2. Representative Holland requested the dollar impact if all vacant positions were filled.**

The FY2027 Governor's proposed budget includes vacancy factors across most department components. These vacancy factors reflect assumed ongoing vacancies and are used to calculate available personal services authority within the proposed budget.

Fully staffing all authorized positions under current funding assumptions would not be cost-neutral. The proposed budget is structured with the expectation that a portion of authorized

Chair Jimmie

Department of Public Safety FY2027 Governor's Budget Presentation Follow Up

February 12, 2026

Page 3 of 3

positions will remain vacant at any given time. If all positions were filled simultaneously, the personal services authority assumed in the proposed budget would be insufficient absent additional appropriations or reductions in other operating areas.

Attachment C summarizes the vacancy factors planned for inclusion in the FY2027 Governor's proposed budget and illustrates how those factors affect available personal services authority. These figures reflect budget structure and do not represent available balances or projected spending.

During the hearing, the department noted that vacancy funding has been used as a management tool to address operating pressures in the current fiscal year. While this approach allows services to continue within the department's available authority, it is not a sustainable long-term strategy. Continued reliance on vacancy funding reduces hiring capacity over time and increases workload and overtime demands on the existing staff.

In summary, vacancies within the department reflect both recruitment and retention challenges, as well as the structural way in which the budget is built. Vacancies impose operational impacts while vacancy factors are incorporated into the calculation of available personal services authority. The department actively manages these conditions on an ongoing basis, balancing staffing, training, overtime, and service delivery within the funding provided.

Sincerely,

*Dianna L. Thornton*

Dianna L. Thornton  
Administrative Services Director

cc: Lacey Sanders, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office  
Alexei Painter, Director, Legislative Finance

## Department of Public Safety Vacant Positions by Component\*

| Component                                       | Total Positions | Current Vacant |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Administrative Services                         | 36              | 0              |
| Aircraft Section                                | 34              | 5              |
| Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol                 | 3               | 1              |
| Alaska Bureau of Investigation                  | 88              | 12             |
| Alaska Bureau of Judicial Services              | 34              | 5              |
| Alaska Fire Standards Council                   | 1               | 0              |
| Alaska Police Standards Council                 | 5               | 1              |
| Alaska Public Safety Communication Services     | 25              | 0              |
| Alaska State Troopers Detachments               | 360             | 47             |
| Alaska Wildlife Troopers                        | 129             | 17             |
| Alaska Wildlife Troopers Marine Enforcement     | 12              | 1              |
| Commissioner's Office                           | 25              | 2              |
| Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault | 11              | 1              |
| Criminal Justice Information Systems Program    | 62              | 8              |
| Dispatch Services                               | 27              | 9              |
| Fire and Life Safety                            | 30              | 7              |
| Information Systems                             | 24              | 0              |
| Laboratory Services                             | 49              | 3              |
| Special Projects                                | 8               | 1              |
| Statewide Drug and Alcohol Enforcement Unit     | 36              | 8              |
| Training Academy                                | 11              | 2              |
| Training Academy Recruits                       | 17              | 6**            |
| Victim Services Administration and Support      | 15              | 1              |
| Village Public Safety Operations                | 5               | 1              |
| Violent Crimes Compensation Board               | 5               | 0              |
| <b>Department of Public Safety Total</b>        | <b>1052</b>     | <b>138</b>     |

\*Data based on Department of Personnel Positions filled report current as of January 31st

\*\*Number of vacant trooper recruit positions has been adjusted to subtract the current academy enrollment.

## Attachment B

### Department of Public Safety Vacant Positions by Location\*

| Location                           | Total Positions | Current Vacant |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Cantwell                           | 4               | 2              |
| Delta Junction                     | 6               | 0              |
| Fairbanks                          | 124             | 21             |
| Galena                             | 3               | 0              |
| Glennallen                         | 8               | 1              |
| Healy                              | 2               | 0              |
| Mcgrath                            | 1               | 0              |
| Nenana                             | 1               | 0              |
| Tok                                | 7               | 1              |
| Interior Subtotal                  | <b>156</b>      | <b>25</b>      |
| Anchor Point                       | 13              | 0              |
| Kenai                              | 8               | 1              |
| Soldotna                           | 57              | 8              |
| Kenai Borough Subtotal             | <b>78</b>       | <b>9</b>       |
| Palmer                             | 63              | 5              |
| Wasilla                            | 45              | 4              |
| Matanuska-Susitna Borough Subtotal | <b>108</b>      | <b>9</b>       |
| Aniak                              | 6               | 1              |
| Bethel                             | 37              | 8              |
| Dillingham                         | 11              | 2              |
| Dutch Harbor                       | 1               | 0              |
| Emmonak                            | 5               | 1              |
| Hooper Bay                         | 2               | 0              |
| King Salmon                        | 5               | 0              |
| Kotzebue                           | 13              | 3              |
| Nome                               | 15              | 2              |
| Saint Marys                        | 7               | 2              |
| Selawik                            | 2               | 0              |
| Togiak                             | 2               | 0              |
| Unalakleet                         | 3               | 1              |
| Western Coast Subtotal             | <b>109</b>      | <b>20</b>      |
| Anchorage                          | 439             | 48             |
| Cordova                            | 3               | 1              |
| Kodiak                             | 28              | 1              |
| Valdez                             | 2               | 0              |
| South Central Subtotal             | <b>472</b>      | <b>50</b>      |
| Craig                              | 8               | 2              |
| Haines                             | 2               | 1              |
| Hoonah                             | 2               | 1              |
| Juneau                             | 46              | 6              |
| Ketchikan                          | 24              | 4              |
| Petersburg                         | 3               | 1              |
| Seward                             | 10              | 1              |
| Sitka                              | 15              | 3              |
| Trooper Recruit Positions          | 17              | 6**            |
| Wrangell                           | 2               | 0              |
| Southeast Subtotal                 | <b>129</b>      | <b>25</b>      |
| Department of Public Safety Total  | <b>1052</b>     | <b>138</b>     |

\*Data based on Department of Personnel Report for DPS of positions filled report current as of 1/31/2026.

\*\*Number of vacant trooper recruit positions has been adjusted to subtract the current academy enrollment.

## Attachment C

### Department of Public Safety FY2027 Governor's Budget Personal Services with Vacancy Factors

| Component  | Total Personal Services Costs | Vacancy Factor | Vacancy Factor Reduction | Pay not subject to Vacancy Factor* | Vacancy-Adjusted Personal Services Authority |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Fire and Life Safety</b>  | \$ 5,225,572                  | 5.00%          | \$ 261,279               | \$ 38,728                          | \$ 5,003,021                                 |
| Alaska Fire Standards Council  | \$ 102,555                    | 0.49%          | \$ 506                   | \$ 2,151                           | \$ 104,200                                   |
| <b>FLS Facility Maintenance and Operations</b>                             | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Special Projects   | \$ 1,182,786                  | 1.85%          | \$ 21,892                | \$ 358,606                         | \$ 1,519,500                                 |
| Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol  | \$ 687,168                    | 2.00%          | \$ 13,743                | \$ 250,000                         | \$ 923,425                                   |
| Alaska Bureau of Judicial Services   | \$ 5,641,689                  | 6.00%          | \$ 338,501               | \$ 10,758                          | \$ 5,313,946                                 |
| <b>Prisoner Transportation**</b>   | \$ 11,000                     |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ 11,000                                    |
| Search and Rescue  | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| <b>Rural Trooper Housing</b>   | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Dispatch Services  | \$ 4,311,589                  | 3.46%          | \$ 149,379               | \$ 53,790                          | \$ 4,216,000                                 |
| Statewide Drug and Alcohol Enforcement Unit                                | \$ 8,686,382                  | 4.53%          | \$ 393,543               | \$ 15,061                          | \$ 8,307,900                                 |
| Alaska State Trooper Detachments   | \$ 84,532,343                 | 7.00%          | \$ 5,914,930             | \$ 139,853                         | \$ 78,757,266                                |
| Training Academy Recruit Salaries  | \$ 2,007,949                  | 1.11%          | \$ 22,249                |                                    | \$ 1,985,700                                 |
| Alaska Bureau of Investigation   | \$ 18,804,963                 | 6.72%          | \$ 1,263,846             | \$ 71,483                          | \$ 17,612,600                                |
| Aircraft Section   | \$ 6,557,252                  | 4.71%          | \$ 308,548               | \$ 562,396                         | \$ 6,811,100                                 |
| Alaska Wildlife Troopers   | \$ 30,686,738                 | 7.00%          | \$ 2,148,072             | \$ 183,093                         | \$ 28,721,759                                |
| Alaska Wildlife Troopers Marine Enforcement                                | \$ 2,121,710                  | 4.00%          | \$ 84,868                | \$ 423,667                         | \$ 2,460,509                                 |
| AST Facility Maintenance and Operations                                    | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Village Public Safety Officer Program                                      | \$ 802,231                    | 3.20%          | \$ 25,685                | \$ 6,454                           | \$ 783,000                                   |
| <b>VPSO Facility Maintenance and Operations</b>                            | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Alaska Police Standards Council  | \$ 913,800                    | 3.00%          | \$ 27,414                | \$ 8,606                           | \$ 894,992                                   |
| APSC Facility Maintenance and Operations                                   | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault                            | \$ 1,933,543                  | 3.44%          | \$ 66,455                | \$ 17,212                          | \$ 1,884,300                                 |
| Violent Crimes Compensation Board  | \$ 784,032                    | 3.00%          | \$ 23,521                | \$ 8,606                           | \$ 769,117                                   |
| Victim Services Administration and Support                                 | \$ 2,266,570                  | 2.84%          | \$ 64,289                | \$ 25,819                          | \$ 2,228,100                                 |
| <b>IVA Facility Maintenance and Operations</b>                             | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |
| Commissioner's Office  | \$ 4,678,998                  | 4.72%          | \$ 220,817               | \$ 25,819                          | \$ 4,484,000                                 |
| Training Academy   | \$ 2,960,650                  | 4.00%          | \$ 118,426               | \$ 6,454                           | \$ 2,848,678                                 |
| Administrative Services  | \$ 6,340,899                  | 5.35%          | \$ 339,178               | \$ 245,183                         | \$ 6,246,904                                 |
| <b>DOA Payroll and Account Payable Realignment Authority Adjustment***</b> | \$ (772,300)                  |                |                          |                                    | \$ (772,300)                                 |
| Alaska Public Safety Communication Services                                | \$ 4,342,045                  | 5.00%          | \$ 217,102               | \$ 52,457                          | \$ 4,177,400                                 |
| Information Systems  | \$ 4,513,023                  | 3.58%          | \$ 161,427               | \$ 535,604                         | \$ 4,887,200                                 |
| Criminal Justice Information Systems Program                               | \$ 8,280,275                  | 7.00%          | \$ 579,619               | \$ 123,822                         | \$ 7,824,478                                 |
| Laboratory Services  | \$ 8,397,884                  | 6.00%          | \$ 503,793               | \$ 101,809                         | \$ 7,995,900                                 |
| <b>State Facilities Maintenance and Operations</b>                         | \$ -                          |                | \$ -                     |                                    | \$ -   |

#### Methodology

Personal services amounts are from the FY2027 Governor's proposed operating budget for the Department of Public Safety. Vacancy factors are those included in the Governor's budget and reflect assumed ongoing vacancies used to calculate available personal services authority.

The 'FY2027 Personal Services Costs' represent the portion of personal services authority in each component reduced by the vacancy factors. These figures are illustrative of budget structure only and do not represent available balances, savings, projected underspending, or a forecast of future costs.

These budget numbers are limited to personal services and do not include non-personal services expenditures or other budgetary adjustments which may occur in FY2027.

\* 'Pay Not Subject to Vacancy' reflects compensation items that are not applied at the individual PCN level and are therefore not reduced by vacancy factors.

\*\* Personal services expenditures such as commissioned officer per diem related to prisoner transport travel.

\*\*\* Includes an interagency receipt (I/A) authority adjustment for the Division of Administrative Services component to reflect department-wide services paid to the Department of Administration. This adjustment aligns personal services authority with the current allocation methodology and is not related to vacancy factors.