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## **House Bill 278**

### ***Alaska-Ireland Trade Commission***

#### **SPONSOR STATEMENT**

House Bill 278 establishes the Alaska-Ireland Trade Commission to promote and expand economic, educational, and cultural ties between Alaska and Ireland. This legislation creates a durable framework for cooperation that can help Alaska diversify its economy, attract new investment, and open opportunities for Alaska businesses, workers, and students.

Ireland is a dynamic, innovation-driven economy with strong sectors in energy, technology, fisheries, aviation, and education—areas that align closely with Alaska’s own strengths and strategic priorities. Formalizing our relationship through a dedicated commission positions Alaska to participate in cross-Atlantic partnerships that can support trade in goods and services, collaborative research, and shared approaches to policy challenges.

HB 278 creates a five-member commission appointed by the governor, with members serving two-year terms. The commission’s purposes include: advancing bilateral trade and investment between Alaska and Ireland, initiating joint action on policy issues of mutual interest encouraging mutual economic support and infrastructure investment, and addressing additional matters assigned by the governor or identified by the commission in the course of its work.

Creating the Alaska Ireland Trade commission also aligns Alaska with other states that are engaging more actively with Ireland through the American Irish State Legislators Caucus and similar networks that promote state-level cooperation. By establishing the Alaska-Ireland Trade Commission, we take a step toward building long-term partnerships that can help grow Alaska’s economy, create new markets for Alaskan businesses, and increase educational and cultural exchange opportunities for Alaskans.

I respectfully request your support for HB 278.