

I'll keep this short. Please tax me: income, fuel, sales, carbon. Please be the grownups in the room and solve this problem in a manner that makes sense not just for today, but the future as well. I was born in Alaska 69 years ago and have always felt proud to contribute to this great state and have always taken pride in all that has been done to develop and beautify our communities. I was raised on a homestead and then homesteaded in interior Alaska myself, but I support the notion of providing services: safety, infrastructure, quality education, arts, parks, trails, and I look forward to supporting them with my taxes. My husband and I also own a small business: Montana Creek Campground. Still I say, "Tax me!" I consider taxes an investment in our state and in our future.

Thank you.

Sheila Lankford
Anchorage (and Montana Creek - Mat-Su)

Dear All,

As a long time Alaskan, I think it is time for the Alaska Legislature to finally address our current fiscal crisis by supporting HB 115. We can no longer balance our budget by cutting it, we need to generate more revenue. I support an income tax for Alaskans and a cap on the annual PDF pay out. Please take this issue seriously and help resolve the budget woes in a responsible way.

Sincerely,

Pam Groves

Dear House Finance Committee,

I'm writing in support of a state income tax. An income tax is more equitable than a state sales tax. An state income tax would be deductible from federal income tax helping off-set its effects. Non-residents working in Alaska benefiting from our resources and using our public facilities and infrastructure would finally be giving back to our state which gives so much to them. The proposed 15% tax approach would be straight forward and easy to institute on a 1040 form

We need a balanced fiscal plan THIS YEAR. It is crucial. Please do right by Alaskans and support a state income tax.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service,

Jayne Naze
Fairbanks, AK 99709

I strongly support a sustainable fiscal plan that includes a State Income Tax, Permanent Fund restructuring and Oil Tax revision.

You MUST reinstate an income tax and restructure the Permanent Fund this year.

I will be voting against any legislator who doesn't vote for this.

Gary Steele
Anchorage, AK 99502
Life-long Alaskan and
Super Voter

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for your hard work. I know you are in a tough position right now, but I urge you to restructure the Permanent Fund and institute a state income tax during this legislative session. I've lived in Alaska for approximately 48 of my 50 years, and believe strongly that basic government services do not need to be reduced any further.

I'm not only old enough to recall Governor Jay Hammond fondly, but have read and reread his books. He wanted to protect the PFD and he regretted the complete elimination of the state income tax. If the Alaska does not stem the bleeding from our savings accounts, we will diminish our PFD payouts. The PFD is vital for lower income families. Though I'm not in that category, as a school teacher-librarian, I see the results of poverty every single day at work.

I am one of those fortunate Alaskans who will pay more and receive less if HB 115 passes, due to a modestly comfortable income. I will also be able to offset part of that additional cost by writing it off on my federal taxes.

I have been a teacher in the Mat-Su Valley for nearly 15 years and have seen some big changes. Class sizes were usually reasonable until a few years ago. We are now overcrowded in our classrooms and have far less time to give individual students. That's a tragedy.

We have fewer aides, which means far less support for teachers, but children's behaviors are becoming more challenging, not less. I assure you, this is not because I am not good at classroom management. Furthermore, those paraprofessionals (aides), are inadequately compensated and I'm embarrassed that they receive so little in pay and benefits for all of their hard work.

The same goes for our substitute teachers, and the direct result is we are regularly scrambling to find a qualified sub. The result is unacceptable.

I want outstanding educators who are fairly compensated, roads and other infrastructure to be well maintained and expanded when needed, and adequate law enforcement and emergency services workers in my area. I can't imagine living in an area where people refuse to pay minimal taxes for the basic services of government.

Again, I urge you to find new revenue for basic government institutions, instead of trying to "right size" the budget anymore. I'm willing to pay a fair share, as I feel I have fair representation.

Sincerely,
Kim Evans
Non-partisan-Super-Voter-for-decades
Palmer, Ak

Dear House Finance Committee,

I fully support implementing an income tax in our state. For years, I have seen people coming into our state and benefiting from our natural resource jobs and then leaving the state when their season is done, taking their money with them. I worry that as a state we don't have a sustainable financial plan and feel that an income tax is a step in the right direction.

I also support limiting the PFD in order to keep government programs and schools running. I do worry that a flat rate on the pfd would disproportionately harm families living in poverty. The negative effect would be compounded if PFD was limited as well as social welfare programs.

It seems a lot of the comments made against the state income tax and not limiting the PFD focused on individual needs. Please do not forget that the government is there to help keep communities functional, schools successful, and bodies healthy for all people.

Thanks you for working to solve our budget crisis.

-Emily Milligan
Kodiak, AK

Good Afternoon,

I would like to thank you for taking steps towards salvaging our economy. I want to make it clear that I do not oppose an income tax, however, I am opposed to paying the same amount of taxes as a non-resident Alaska worker, instead of a 1.5% tax for all, it should be a 1% tax for residents and 5% tax for non-residents. On average non-residents make more than the majority of residents. Also, any funds taken from an Alaskan family equates to less money that they can spend in the Alaskan marketplace. Non-residents cannot vote for our government, do not pay property taxes in AK and they do not reinvest their paychecks into our economy. This group of people will continue to thrive due to a lower cost of living paired with higher incomes than the average Alaska resident. This state is about Alaska hire and these people are a drain on our infrastructure; they do not contribute to our state and steal our jobs. Please make this a fair impact on household income and expenses by taxing out of state workers in a higher bracket.

Alaska residents have already given half of their dividends, pay property tax, pay city taxes (in some areas), pay vehicle tax, pay gas tax and support our businesses. These people need to share in the burden of keeping our state functioning. An equal tax has a disproportionate impact on our families and the businesses in the state.

Please take care of your constituents first.

Sincerely,

Dori Howington

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to share my support for the budget proposal House Bill 115. I believe that cutting the PFD and instituting a state income tax is necessary now. We've already cut too much from our budget. Please look after Alaska's future by passing this bill.

Thank you,

Eric Knudtson
Homer, AK 99603

Hello,

I've lived in Anchorage for about a year now and have followed Alaska state budget woes with some interest. I believe your proposal of a moderate income tax and changes to the PFD is a reasonable one that I support. Thank you for your work on this critical issue.

Ted Eischeid
Anchorage AK 99508

Co-Chairs, Vice Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee:

As homeowners in Anchorage since 1965, we have ridden Alaska's roller coaster economy for 52 years. We have experienced the damaging effects of 90% reliance on a single volatile industry to fund state government. A prudent person would never invest in a single stock or bond. The system that funds state government should follow this principle. Diversity is the key to security.

We appreciate the committee's work to develop, improve and polish the diversified revenue structure included in HB 115. You spent the time to hear from experts and produced an excellent bill that will give Alaska continuing revenue to fund state government.

It is clear by now that additional cutting of public services is not a solution. We are losing a stream of productive citizens – 9,000 last year. For Alaska to flourish, the state must have a consistent revenue stream. At Friday's hearing a contractor said Alaska employers like him were cutting back or not hiring because of uncertainty about the future of Alaska's economy. As he put it, "Businesses in Alaska are holding their breath."

Enacting a bill, based on HB 115, will give employers like him, potential investors in Alaskan enterprises, government agencies, national credit rating companies, citizens who want to stay in Alaska, including retirees like ourselves, assurance that the state has a sound economic future.

Further, HB 115 is based on the goal of fairness to all Alaskans. By protecting the Permanent Fund and the Permanent Fund Dividend, rural Alaskans will continue to have help in heating their homes and subsisting. Everybody, including ourselves, will have the privilege of paying a progressive state income tax based on each individual's ability to pay, and contributing to the quality of life throughout Alaska.

There is no way you can please everybody, especially with a bill like HB 115 that combines revenue sources and provides the diversity that is essential to stability. Still, we ask that you pass HB 115 out of committee as quickly as possible.

Know that we and many others support the House Finance Committee's courageous bill. We will continue our support in the House and Senate to encourage legislators to come together, as statesmen and stateswomen, to enact a fiscal plan based on the foundation you have established in HB 115.

Janet and David McCabe

I support HB 115. I will accept a reduced dividend as well as the proposed state income tax.
It is time to accept a new reality in this state; one that will cost its citizens more.

Sincerely, Rikke Mery,
Resident since 1981
Fairbanks. 99709

Representative/Senator,

I have been a citizen of Alaska for 36 years. As elected officials I believe it is your job to make the hard choices to solve our fiscal crisis and would ask that you make this happen this session. I personally believe that an income tax should be the biggest revenue generator. If you only take money from the permanent fund that will hurt rural and low income people the most. I can except house bill 115 and believe it is a good start although I would prefer a higher income tax. If you can find places to cut the budget that is great but I would like to hear where you plan to cut versus just hearing platitudes without any concrete suggestions. One problem with cutting the state budget is that in some cases you are just putting the tax burden on local agencies. A good example is in Girdwood where we now pay for police services that were once provided by the state. So in fact we are paying higher taxes because the state is lowering their budget.

I don't mind having to pay for government services. I think it is the responsibility of citizens of the state to have some stake in paying for state government.

Just cutting the permanent fund without doing anything about a state income tax and oil industry taxes is unacceptable to me.

I love the state of Alaska and feel we as citizens should take greater responsibility in its funding.

Thanks for listening,

Jerry Fox
Girdwood AK

I support the bringing back the income tax.

I support the bill sponsored by the House coalition. There is an expectation of government cuts with a reasonable expectation that everyone earning an income will contribute to the infrastructure and government services support the general public.

I'm tired of Alaska being treated like a colony by seasonal or out of state workers. It is estimated that almost 10% of the revenue generated by an income tax would come from these workers, which is likely a higher rate of recovery if a sales tax was put in place.

A state sales tax would be very detrimental to many communities who already collect these taxes to make the local government budgets balance.

Bill Tremblay
Petersburg, AK 99833

Please reference Dermot Cole's Alaska Dispatch News column of this date. It is a thorough and thoughtful analysis (not his first) of options available to address the state's budgetary problem.

I, for one, will absolutely not vote for re-election of any legislator who does not vote to establish some kind of income tax. It is unconscionable that out-of-state workers who are employed in our most lucrative industry pay no income tax, all the while benefiting from state services.

Using a combination of funds from the Permanent Fund earnings reserve plus an income tax of 15% of federal tax seems sensible. In addition, the short-sighted SB-21 of a few years ago needs to be revised. If the energy companies intend to continue to do business in the state, there needs to be some relief.

I appreciate the challenge of putting together a belt-tightening plan, and applaud the legislators who have the courage to do what is best for the citizenry. If one of my legislators is cowardly enough to value their own political longevity over the well being of the state and its people, they will not get my vote. Legislators who act with compassion and grace along with determination and openness will prove themselves worthy of continuing to serve the people.

For the record, I live in Eagle River, zip code 99577, and am an Undeclared voter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sue Ellen May

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to support the proposed fifteen percent income tax that the House majority has put forward to meet Alaska's current state budget crisis. I have lived here for forty years and have certainly benefited from the state's oil wealth, but now accept the need for citizens to pay for government.

Thank you.

Walter Van Horn
Anchorage, Alaska. 99518

Note to all state legislators, including those on the finance committee:

Please reinstate our state income tax. So far I've not heard any politician who wants to be reelected breathe those words. Since 1980, we've skated by without personally having to pay income taxes for the services we receive. Only a few other states have no income tax. I've seen ads in the ADN and the Frontiersman paid for by Bob Gillam, (richest man in Alaska with reported net worth of 320 million) that claim that a personal income tax will be the death knell for this state. Well, it seems that not injecting cash soon into the state's economy will in itself will have the same effect. It seems that we have already cut the budget to the bone. The income tax could again be a certain percentage of our federal income tax, with the percentage subject to change depending on the fortunes of oil and our other resources. Trump's promise to reduce our corporate and personal federal income taxes, if actually instituted, will free up our personal money to then fund the needs of our home state. The return to hundred dollar oil is dependent on geopolitical factors beyond our control and even less predictable now than ever given the now inevitable chaos in world markets. Denial of our fiscal predicament must be overcome and we must face hard facts and accept the fact that magical thinking rarely works in economics. Numbers will continue to be numbers, and will not be wished away.

David P. Werner
Palmer, Ak. 99645

Good morning!

I listened with interest to part of the public testimony on HB 115 this past Friday.

I would like to share my support of this bill as a key part of a responsible and balanced fiscal package.

Please keep up the good work!

Very truly yours,

Cindy Lelake
Anchorage

I am writing in support of HB 115.

We need a balanced solution to our fiscal crisis, one that spreads the burden, safeguards our PFD, and doesn't gut state services. HB115 is a good compromise.

Wait another year and it will just get more difficult.

Thanks for your careful consideration of this bill.

Steve Fleischman
Anchorage AK 99501

I'm writing to express support for HB 115. It is a reasonable and fair solution to the Ak debt crisis.

Thanks for your continuing work on this.

Mike Kreger
Anchorage AK 99508

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

As a 42 year resident of this great state and current owner of a small business, I would like to offer my strong support for HB115. I recognize that other bills have been introduced to address Alaska's budget deficit, but I do not believe that they can sufficiently bridge our budget gap. I also believe that further severe budget cuts will hurt, not help Alaska's economy in the long term.

I particularly like the fact that HB115 employs a progressive income tax that captures income earned by non-residents and minimizes the impact to those at lower income levels. I prefer an income tax to a statewide sales tax given the choice.

I originally came to Alaska in 1975 for a summer job, but then I stayed because I was attracted to the high-quality education I could receive at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. I even chose UAF over a prestigious college in California because I appreciated the small-city charm of Fairbanks and the more personal atmosphere at UAF. In 1975, oil wealth had not yet dominated the Alaskan economy and we had an income tax. But even so, we had a top notch university. I hope, through appropriate taxation, structured use of the permanent fund earnings reserve account and budget cuts, that we can maintain the quality of our universities, because I believe they are a huge asset to our state.

I have seen the pain of a major Alaskan recession and I hope that we can avoid another one through wise decisions made by our legislature during the current session. I believe that implementing the options in HB115 will help us avoid another devastating recession.

I think Alaskans have had a great vacation from taxation, but I am ready to pay for the services I have come to enjoy and expect. Our family hunts, fishes, hikes, and in general enjoys the bounty that Alaska offers. I do not believe that we should enjoy these benefits without paying for wise management of our resources and state-provided services. I hope that Alaska can remain a vibrant community that can attract and keep a talented workforce - something I believe will be critical to our long-term economic success.

Again, I urge you to support HB115.

Thank you so much for considering my testimony. I waited for three hours to testify today in person at the Anchorage LIO office, but could not stay any later to testify, hence this letter\email.

Debby Burwen
Anchorage, AK 99501

To the Alaska legislators:

I support House bill 115. I further feel we need to change the oil tax agreement to favor the State more than the current one does.

Please pass this legislation,

Janette Cadieux
Cooper Landing

Strongly support the proposed income tax. It's about time.

Brenda Dale
Kenai, Alaska

Dear House Finance Committee,

First I would like to thank you for your good work on HB 115. This multi-pronged approach is the best for finding a solution to Alaska's financial crisis.

I strongly support the reinstatement of the income tax and decreasing the PFD to help solve Alaska's financial problems. Not only is this a fair way to have all Alaskans pay for services, it will capture those of state workers. Trying to find savings by continued cutting of the budget will only harm our infrastructure which cannot continue. We need to increase revenue and I feel HB115 is a good start.

Thank you for your work on this difficult problem.

Lillian Anderson-Misel

Fairbanks

Suggest you implement the \$1100ish PFD with a small sales tax e.g. 1-2% vice an income tax to balance the crippling state budget. Continue to implement efficiencies in the state work force, e.g. how many state employees make 6 figures?

Thanks,

Jeff Meinel

Peters Creek, AK

Good day,

Thank you for your focus on the fiscal crisis that our state faces. I am in favor of HB115 and the modest income tax. Cuts alone can not hope to fix our fiscal gap. While I am certain there is waste at the state operating level, gauging departments is not the answer and does more harm than good. And the fact is, that even then waste in state government appears, just as waste appears in my own personal finances. But, when I am in desperate need, my first recourse is to secure more income as well as tighten the belt. The state has tightened its belt. Services have been cut. Departments have been downsized. HB115 is a logical and fair solution to a problem that isn't going away without it.

Thank you for your continued work. I hope and pray that you are able to work across party lines and show the Senate- and the nation's capital- how working with each other is far more productive.

Good luck,

Emily Forstner
Palmer, Ak

I'd like to comment on Bill 115 concerning taxing capital gains. I strongly disagree with a blanket tax on capital gains. It does not account for differences in income brackets like the federal tax does. For example, for people in the 15% and under federal tax bracket, capital gains are NOT TAXED. The Alaskan Bill 115 would tax capital gains at the same rate no matter how much your income tax bracket is. Indirectly, the 15% rate on federal tax does account for the differences in taxable income because higher tax payers are in higher tax brackets, thus higher federal tax rates. For many retirees, like me, my main source in retirement is from capital gains. Using Bill 115's rates and my 2016 1040, with \$67,000 in taxable income with a federal tax of \$6,200 and capital gains of \$20,000 with \$0 federal tax; my tax under Bill 115 would be 15% of \$6,200 which is \$930 and 10% of capital gains would be \$2,000, for a total state tax bill of \$2,930 which is 4.4% of my taxable income, almost 50% of my federal tax bill! The bill is being advertised as only charging around 1.3% tax, but is not true if you factor in capital gains, especially with people in low tax brackets.

I agree we should all pay a fair share and if income tax is established again in Alaska, the 15% rate of the federal tax is fair. But adding a 10% rate to all capital gains, no matter what your income, is unfair and a total disregard to income level. Please take this in consideration when you decide on a final bill to go to the legislature. This tax will really hurt me and others in similar circumstances.

Sincerely,

Dave Daum
Fairbanks, AK 99709

To the house finance committee,

I would like to express my support for HB 115. Our budget deficits are not sustainable without sacrificing some of the benefits that came along with years of high oil prices. The legislature has cut state services in the last two sessions and it is time to change the way the permanent fund is managed as well as to begin collecting an income tax. I am a State employee and was laid off in May of 2016 due to a lack of State funding. I hold no grudge against the legislature for reducing ADFG funding, in fact I agree with their decision. As a resourceful life long Alaskan I found work elsewhere. I believe that it is time for all Alaskans to sacrifice some of our permanent fund and to begin paying income taxes. In my mind these two items addressed in HB 115 go hand in hand and are essential, fiscally responsible, parts of our State's future.

Sincerely,

Martin Schuster

To whom it may concern,

My wife and I are retirees living in Haines (after 36 years in Juneau) and contributing tens of thousands of dollars per year to the Haines and Juneau economies through real estate taxes, sales taxes, purchase of consumer goods and health care, etc., and requiring nothing from either community or the State for education, parks & rec, social welfare, etc. The best way the Alaska Legislature can drive us out of this state is by instituting an income tax based on federally taxed income (e.g., my social security, out-of-state investment income, etc.) rather than Alaska earned income. Whereas the latter would be very reasonable, sensible, and catch so many high-income nonresidents exploiting Alaska natural resources (such as oil field workers, miners, commercial fishermen, etc.), the former would be grossly unfair, especially to retirees. If such a federal-based tax is instituted, we will be gone before the tax forms can even be printed. And I am sure that we will not be the only retirees exiting immediately. The cost of living in Alaska as a retiree already is very high. We have no economic incentive to stay here. A grossly unfair income tax on retirement investments would be the cherry on the cake to make it unaffordable without question.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Hanley
Haines, AK 99827

HURRY UP WITH.....THE DNG INCOME TAX.
chailleyasuda@gmail.com