

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senator Mia Costello
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 75

“An Act relating a license to drive a commercial motor vehicle.”

Nationally and in state, there is a commercial driver shortage. Currently, Alaska is looking to court projects of considerable size, like the Alaska LNG pipeline. The demand for interstate freight transportation must be met.

To qualify for a Commercial Driver’s License a person must be 19 years of age. However, there is a federal restriction for driving interstate commerce, requiring that the driver be 21 years of age. Presumably, two identically loaded tractor trailer rigs would require differing ages to drive them if one trailer had freight that originated from outside of the state. This arbitrary inconsistency in regulation restricts job opportunities for our young people and burdens our trucking industry.

SB 75 changes the statute regarding the license to drive a commercial motor vehicle to reflect two changes. First, it changes the minimum age requirement from 19 years old to 18 years old when driving intrastate commerce. Second, it adds a new subsection regarding interstate commerce, changing the minimum age requirement for a Commercial Driver’s License to 18, if the federal law regarding interstate commerce is also changed.

In the long run, SB 75 will increase pressure to change the Federal statute. As a more immediate effect, it will also increase the available pool of drivers for intrastate commerce by recruiting graduating high schoolers who wish to immediately enter the work force. This bill will help businesses and create jobs alike.