



April 8, 2019

Commissioner Tamika Ledbetter  
Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1930  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Commissioner:

The University of Alaska would like to suggest revisions to Senate Bill 65 and House Bill 67 “*An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.*” Earlier this session, Fred Villa, UA Associate VP for Workforce Programs, discussed this legislation with Deputy Commissioner Munoz, and I’m happy to follow up to continue the dialogue.

The University proposes two small amendments to the legislation:

Page 2, Line 10 - Remove the word “*programs*”

Page 2, Line 12 – Remove “*providing or funding the programs*” and replace with “*career and technical education*”

These amendments retain the administration’s goal of codifying Department of Labor & Workforce Development’s (DOL&WD) role in Career and Technical Education (CTE), without broadening its authority to monitor and coordinate CTE program delivery. This is a subtle but important distinction that respects the distinct role that the University and the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) in providing these programs.

The stated intent of the legislation is to give the department more authority and to designate it as the lead agency with regard to CTE. This is concerning to the University. As the largest provider of workforce training in Alaska, UA has been working productively with DOL&WD for decades without incident. We serve together on the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, which is an excellent venue for setting priorities, working through issues, and collaborating on joint initiatives.

The University, DEED and AVTEC all serve important, but distinct roles with regard to workforce development training. CTE programs are often funded through multiple state and federal authorities, with varying funding streams and reporting requirements. For example, the University works with DEED on a number of high school dual enrollment CTE programs that should not require specific coordination with the department.

As drafted, the bill may be interpreted as giving the department authority over program delivery which could have unintended consequences that potentially impede the coordination DOL&WD is seeking. The University respects the department's desire to maximize its ability to advance the state's workforce development and policy goals. However, as drafted, we are concerned that the bill impedes on the University's independent academic mission.

Thank you for considering our concerns regarding SB 65 and HB 67. We hope we can work with you to find a compromise that accomplish the department's objectives.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Layer".

Paul W. Layer, Vice President for Academics, Students and Research, UA

cc

Jim Johnsen, UA President

Sen. Natasha von Imhof, Co-Chair Senate Finance Committee

Rep. Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair House Education Committee

Rep. Andi Story, Co-Chair House Education Committee