

# ALASKA LEGISLATURE

## *Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins*

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Committees:  
State Affairs, Chair  
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Sitka, Alaska 99835 (May – Dec.)  
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### HB192 - ARDORs Reauthorization

HB192 extends the date of the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance program, enabling the creation and continued operation of Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs). This bill extends the termination date of the program by ten years, until July 2031.

There are 9 ARDORs across the state which serve as the state's contribution to economic development in Alaska's urban and rural areas. They enable local officials, tribal organizations, and businesses to pool their limited resources to work together on economic infrastructure and workforce development projects, develop public and private partnerships, and provide technical assistance to rural communities who lack broadband service and financial resource availability.

In 1988 the ARDORs were formed in state statute. ARDORs are non-partisan and can bring entities together to reach common goals while encouraging and supporting economic development. The ARDORs have leveraged past state funding by at least three to one and as much as eight to one as EDA recognized Economic Development Districts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ARDORs have been instrumental in getting funds to businesses, communities, nonprofits and fishermen under the AK CARES program, as well as steering federal money to critical infrastructure projects such as broadband expansion in underserved regions. ARDORs have been actively engaged in upgrading regional disaster recovery/resilience plans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In appropriations bill HB69, \$20 million has been authorized to be utilized by the ARDORs for the purposes of tourism promotion. ARDORs are the most knowledgeable economic development organizations in their regions with decades of direct engagement with the businesses and industries that are proven economic drivers throughout the state. ARDORs are familiar with past, current and future visitor industry impacts in their region, and strongly support and advocate the stability and growth of tourism that creates jobs, generates local sales tax, and supports small businesses who depend on the visitor season for critical revenue.

I urge your support of HB192.