

HOUSE BILL NO. 253

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE BYNUM

Introduced: 1/20/26

Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to the fisheries enhancement loan program; and providing for an
2 effective date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** AS 16.10.500 is amended to read:

5 **Sec. 16.10.500. Declaration of policy.** It is the policy of the state, under
6 AS 16.10.500 - 16.10.560, to promote the enhancement of the state's fisheries by
7 **making**

8 **(1)** [MEANS OF] grants for organizational and planning purposes to
9 regional associations described in AS 16.10.510 that have qualified under
10 AS 16.10.380; [,] and

11 **(2)** [BY MEANS OF] long-term, **low-interest** [LOW INTEREST]
12 loans for hatchery planning, construction, and operation, and for planning and
13 implementation of enhancement and rehabilitation activities, including [, BUT NOT
14 LIMITED TO,] lake fertilization and habitat improvement, **to**

1 **(A) regional associations described in AS 16.10.510 that**
 2 **have qualified under AS 16.10.380; and**

3 **(B) federally recognized tribal organizations that operate**
 4 **(i) fish hatcheries on an Indian reservation; or**
 5 **(ii) under the terms of a federal permit.**

6 * **Sec. 2.** AS 16.10.510 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 16.10.510. Powers and duties of the commissioner.** The commissioner
 8 may

9 (1) make loans to permit holders [,] under AS 16.10.400 - 16.10.470,
 10 including those holders issued permits before June 24, 1977, **and tribal organizations**
 11 **under AS 16.10.500(2)(B),** for the planning, construction, and operation of hatchery
 12 facilities;

13 (2) make loans to qualified regional associations that have formed a
 14 nonprofit corporation, [OR] a local nonprofit corporation approved by a qualified
 15 regional association, **or a tribal organization under AS 16.10.500(2)(B)** for
 16 preconstruction activities necessary to obtain a permit;

17 (3) designate agents and delegate powers to them as necessary;

18 (4) adopt regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
 19 AS 16.10.500 - 16.10.560, including regulations to establish reasonable fees for
 20 services provided;

21 (5) establish amortization plans for repayment of loans, not to exceed
 22 30 years unless the commissioner has extended the term of the loan beyond 30 years
 23 under (11) of this section;

24 (6) establish the rate of interest for loans not to exceed nine and one-
 25 half percent a year;

26 (7) establish regional and local offices and advisory groups to carry
 27 out, or assist in carrying out, the duties and authority of the commissioner;

28 (8) make grants for organizational and planning purposes to qualified
 29 regional associations that have formed a nonprofit corporation, in amounts not
 30 exceeding \$100,000 **a** [PER] region and up to an additional \$100,000 on a 50/50 cash
 31 matching basis with the regional associations that have an authorized royalty

1 assessment under AS 16.10.540; the state portion of the matching share shall be
 2 available when a final vote for assessments is made under AS 16.10.540; this
 3 provision also applies to qualified regional associations that have formed a nonprofit
 4 corporation before June 24, 1977;

5 (9) make loans to qualified regional associations that have formed a
 6 nonprofit corporation, [OR] to local nonprofit corporations approved by qualified
 7 regional associations, or to tribal organizations under AS 16.10.500(2)(B) for
 8 planning and implementation of fisheries enhancement and rehabilitation activities
 9 including, but not limited to, lake fertilization and habitat improvement;

10 (10) refinance a debt obligation incurred by a borrower under this
 11 section if the borrower otherwise qualifies for a loan under AS 16.10.500 - 16.10.560;
 12 the interest rate for a loan to refinance a debt obligation incurred under this section
 13 may not exceed the interest rate that is in effect for new loans under this section at the
 14 time that the loan commitment for the refinancing loan is made; a loan made under
 15 this paragraph is not subject to AS 16.10.525;

16 (11) extend the term of a loan made under this section if the
 17 commissioner finds that extension of the term of the loan would alleviate an undue
 18 financial hardship on the borrower; the commissioner shall submit annually a report to
 19 the legislature summarizing the commissioner's decisions during the prior calendar
 20 year to approve or deny requests to extend loans under this paragraph and the reasons
 21 for the decisions;

22 (12) charge and collect the fees established under this section.

23 * **Sec. 3.** AS 16.10.520(a) is amended to read:

24 (a) A single fisheries enhancement loan may not exceed \$10,000,000 for a
 25 hatchery or other enhancement or rehabilitation activity conducted under a permit
 26 granted to a qualified regional association that has formed a nonprofit corporation,
 27 [OR] to a local nonprofit corporation approved by a qualified regional association, or
 28 to a tribal organization under AS 16.10.500(2)(B). A loan for any other nonprofit
 29 hatchery corporation or tribal organization project may not exceed \$1,000,000.

30 * **Sec. 4.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2026.