

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION ADDRESS
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-4925



INTERIM ADDRESS
305 Center Ave, Ste 1
Kodiak, AK 99615
(907) 486-4925

Senator Gary Stevens

Senate Bill 268 SPONSOR STATEMENT

“Relating To Minimum Paid Sick Leave Requirements For Individuals Employed In Seafood Processing”

In November 2024, Alaska voters approved Ballot Measure 1 (BMI), establishing a statewide minimum paid sick leave requirement and increasing the minimum wage. Now codified in Alaska law, BMI created clear standards for the accrual and use of paid sick leave for most employees across the state. Meanwhile, this measure also recognized that certain industries operate under unique seasonal, operational, and economic conditions, and thus included specific exemptions for fishermen, shrimp processors, aquacultural workers, and agricultural workers. Those exemptions were not accidental; they recognized the operational realities of these sectors, which typically occur in remote communities. SB 268 is intended to align with the original intent of BMI.

Alaska’s seafood processing sector shares many of the same characteristics that justified exemptions for fishermen, shrimp processors, aquacultural workers and agricultural workers. Seafood processing is highly seasonal, driven by resource availability and weather conditions, and often occurs in remote locations where workforce housing, transportation, and compressed production schedules are integral to operations. Employment in this sector frequently involves short, intensive production windows that are fundamentally different from year-round employment models contemplated in general labor policy. Additionally, fishermen are dependent upon seafood processors’ ability to process fish immediately after catch, in order to preserve quality and value.

By aligning the treatment of seafood processing employees with the structure and intent of the exemptions already, SB 268 ensures consistency within Alaska’s Wage and Hour law. The bill does not seek to overturn the will of the voters; rather, it implements the intent voters approved, and recognizes the interdependence of fishermen and seafood processors.

SB 268 provides clarity for employers and employees. It harmonizes seafood processing with the broader intent created by BMI. And SB 268 preserves the core protections endorsed by Alaska voters while acknowledging the operational realities of one of our most important economic sectors – Alaska seafood.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov