



**To:** Members of the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee  
**From:** Alaska AFL-CIO  
**Date:** March 13th, 2026  
**Subject:** SB 268

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**The Alaska AFL-CIO opposes SB 268 on the following grounds:**

**All workers deserve paid sick leave:** The Alaska AFL-CIO firmly believes ALL workers deserve the same protections. Just because someone works in a seafood processing plant does not mean their right to sick leave should be taken away. It is important that working people have the chance to recover from illness and to take care of sick loved ones. Additionally, paid sick policies are not just good for working people; they are good for business as a January 2025 Economic Policy Institute paper found.<sup>1</sup>

**Alaskan voters overwhelmingly supported paid sick leave:** In 2024, Alaskans overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative that granted workers paid sick leave. Passage of SB 268 would go against the will of Alaskan voters who supported providing paid sick leave to workers, regardless of the type of work they do. Paid sick leave provisions in Alaska went into effect on July 1, 2025, meaning that it has been less than one year of this policy being in place; it is disappointing to see the attempts to so quickly dismantle what Alaskans support.

**Many of these workers have paid sick leave in their home state:** A 2026 report<sup>2</sup> from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development showed that 81% of Alaska's seafood-processing workers in 2024 were non-residents, the highest of any occupation. Many of these workers hail from states that have paid sick leave requirements that do not exempt seafood processors, specifically Washington.

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<sup>1</sup> Paid sick leave improves workers' health and the economy, January 30, 2025. Access it here: <http://epi.org/blog/paid-sick-leave-improves-workers-health-and-the-economy/>

<sup>2</sup> Non residents working in Alaska 2024, February 2026. Access it here: <https://www.legfin.akleg.gov/BudgetBackupDocuments/FY2027/LegReports/Report182.pdf>



Lynden Inc.  
6520 Kulis Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99502  
Main: (907) 245-1544  
Toll Free: (800) 922-7501  
Fax: (907) 245-1744

March 3, 2026

Dear Senator Merrick and Members of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee:

This letter is written in support of SB 268, which provides a narrow exemption from mandatory sick leave for seafood processors.

The sick leave requirement was implemented via Initiative in 2024 and, in recognition that certain industries operate under unique seasonal, operational and economic conditions, provided several exemptions including fishermen, shrimp processors, and aquaculture and agriculture workers. Seafood processing workers generally fall into the same category as these exempted sectors with many out of state workers coming to Alaska for seasonal jobs during the fishing season. Seafood processors pay for their own travel and room & board while on the job.

Because of the sick leave requirement, the processors must employ additional workers to compensate for the time taken by employees, especially toward the end of their terms. This additional cost, plus the cost of sick leave, is estimated to be over \$20 million per year. However, the operational uncertainty is also exceedingly difficult to account for. If fishermen cannot unload their boats, because too many processing workers took paid leave, the quality and value of those fish go down for everyone – fishermen, processors, communities, and the state.

This comes at a time that our seafood industry is battling a host of economic problems which are depressing the business including Inflation, tariffs, unfair international competition and lower than normal wholesale fish prices that have forced the sale of plants, consolidation of companies and deferral of new plant projects.

Providing a narrow exemption to this new requirement, along with extension of the expiring fish tax credits are the two things that the Alaska Legislature can do this session to provide limited assistance to the industry. Both of which were brought up by the Seafood Industry Tax Force last year.

Please assist one of Alaska's most critical resource industries by supporting SB 268 and adopting it in this legislative session.

Respectfully,



Jim Jansen  
Chairman  
Lynden Inc.