

March 3, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair
Alaska Senate Transportation Committee
Sent via email

Re: Support for House Bill 26

Dear Chair Bjorkman,

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) supports House Bill 26, *“An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan.”*

The Trust is a state corporation that administers the Alaska Mental Health Trust, a perpetual public trust, to improve the lives of beneficiaries. For more than 30 years, the Trust has supported programs, services and policies that positively impact the lives of Trust beneficiaries, those Alaskans who experience a mental illness, substance abuse related disorder, traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia or intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Trust operates much like a private foundation, using its resources to ensure that Alaska has a comprehensive, integrated mental health program.

Through our regular stakeholder engagement, we know that transportation is a top priority for Trust beneficiaries and the organizations that serve them. Accessible transportation options are not only essential for Alaskans who cannot use standard vehicle travel, they benefit our communities. Per the CDC, Adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation. For all Trust beneficiary populations, transportation services are needed to access medical care, therapies, prescription pick-ups, behavioral health services, adult day habilitation and rehabilitation, and many other medical and community-based services. Rural and remote Alaskan communities face even greater barriers to accessible transportation.

HB26 will help ensure that communities and individuals can support the planning efforts that can lead to meaningful transportation solutions and systems. It also supports the development of innovative solutions to Alaska’s unique transportation challenges.

In closing, HB26 can lead to improvements in the transportation systems that Trust beneficiaries rely on for accessing employment, completing activities of daily living, accessing healthcare, and meaningfully engaging in their communities. We very much appreciate your consideration and support of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Mary Wilson, MD,
Chief Executive Officer

Cc Rep. Genevieve Mina