



March 11, 2026

Representative Andrew Gray
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building, Room 118
120 4th St, Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for HB 308

Dear Representative Gray,

On behalf of AAA Mountain West Group, which serves millions of members across several states including Alaska, we respectfully write in support of House Bill 308. This legislation would strengthen Alaska's impaired-driving laws by lowering the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for operating a motor vehicle, aircraft, or watercraft from 0.08 to 0.04.

Substance impaired driving remains a major traffic safety issue in the United States. Alcohol is involved in roughly 30 percent of traffic fatalities nationwide, killing more than 12,000 people in 2023 alone. Research also shows that impaired drivers are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors such as speeding, driving while drowsy, and failing to wear a seat belt factors that significantly increase the severity of crashes and fatalities.

Scientific evidence demonstrates that impairment behind the wheel begins well before a driver reaches Alaska's current limit of 0.08. At a BAC of 0.05, drivers may experience impaired judgment, reduced alertness, diminished coordination, and slower responses to emergency situations. Because of these well-documented risks, leading safety organizations including the National Transportation Safety Board support lowering the legal BAC.

Lowering the legal BAC limit is a proven safety strategy. These laws not only allow law enforcement to remove more impaired drivers from the road but also create a strong deterrent effect that discourages people from driving after drinking. Research shows that drivers with BAC levels between 0.05 and 0.09 are at least seven times more likely to be killed in a single-vehicle crash than sober drivers.

Addressing impaired driving requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention policies, effective enforcement, and strong public awareness. HB 308 represents an important step toward strengthening Alaska's impaired-driving framework and advancing the shared goal of safer roads and communities.



AAA Mountain West Group appreciates Representative Gray's leadership on this issue. Alaska has the opportunity to lead the nation in adopting a bold, evidence-based policy that prioritizes the safety of everyone on its roads, waterways, and in its airspace. We respectfully urge the Legislature to support HB 308 and help advance the shared goal of safer communities and fewer preventable tragedies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Zahriya', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Mahmoud Zahriya
Government & Public Affairs Lead
AAA Mountain West Group

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of the Chairwoman

Washington, DC 20594



March 20, 2026

The Honorable Andrew Gray
State Capitol Room 118
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Gray:

As chairwoman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), I encourage the state of Alaska to implement our safety recommendation to lower the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) per se limit from .08 g/dL to .05 g/dL or lower.¹

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

In 2023, there were 12,429 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in the United States, accounting for 30 percent of all traffic fatalities.² In 2023, 25% of all traffic deaths in Alaska were caused by alcohol-impaired driving crashes.³

We are pleased that Alaska is considering implementing one proven solution to impaired driving: lowering the state's per se impairment threshold from .08 to .04. We have long recommended that states take this action.

¹ National Transportation Safety Board. Safety Recommendation H-13-5. Available at: data.nts.gov/carol-main-public/sr-details/H-13-005.

² The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports drivers as alcohol impaired at .08 BAC or greater. However, in 2023, an additional 2,117 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes in which a driver had a BAC of .01 to .07 g/dL. See <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunken-driving>.

³ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. May 2025. Alcohol-Impaired Driving: 2023 Data. Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 713. Washington, DC: NHTSA.

The science behind lower BAC limits is clear, well-documented, and irrefutable. More than 100 countries across the world have some type of .05 or lower BAC law. It has been estimated that if every state enacted a BAC law of .05 or lower, 1,700 lives could be saved each year.⁴ This is not surprising because similar benefits were realized when BAC limits were reduced in the United States from .10 to .08. Unfortunately, many of the now disproven arguments that were used to fight against the BAC limit being lowered to .08 are resurfacing, such as lower alcohol sales and tourism, or jamming up the court system with more arrests.

We also have strong evidence from Utah—the first state to pass a .05 per se limit in the United States—that lowering BAC is effective. A comprehensive study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showed that, following the passage and enactment of the law, there was a 19.8% reduction in the fatal crash rate and an 18.3% reduction in the fatality rate in Utah. This same study showed that Utah drivers have also reported changed behaviors, such as arranging alternate transportation when drinking away from home, and found that there was no impact on alcohol sales, tax revenues, or tourism, nor were there substantially increased arrests.⁵ In fact, alcohol sales in Utah have consistently increased year over.⁶

There is a reason that it is already illegal for commercial truck and bus drivers to drive with a BAC of .04 or higher. Let's be clear: by the time a driver reaches a BAC of .05, they are impaired and can experience decreased alertness, reduced coordination, impaired judgment, and difficulty tracking moving objects.⁷ Most of us would not want to be in the same vehicle as a driver experiencing those impairments, and neither should we want to share the road with those impaired drivers. These abilities are critical for safe driving and explain why drivers with a BAC of .05 have a 38% increase in the risk of being in a crash compared to sober drivers.

The NTSB recommended that states and territories lower the BAC from .08 to .05 or lower in 2013. We are in good company, as the following other national organizations support this policy:

- American Medical Association

⁴ Fell, J.C. & Scherer, M. (2017). Estimation of the potential effectiveness of lowering the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for driving from 0.08 to 0.05 grams per deciliter in the United States. *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 41, 2128-2139.

⁵ Thomas, F.D., Blomberg, R., Darrah, J., et al. February 2022. *Evaluation of Utah's .05 BAC per se law*. Report No. DOT HS 813 233. Washington, DC: NHTSA. Available at <https://rosap.nhtsa.gov/view/dot/60428>

⁶ Utah Department of Alcohol Beverage Services. *2024 Year in Retail*. Available at <https://abs.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/89th-DABS-Year-in-Retail-2024.pdf>

⁷ NHTSA. July 2016. *The ABCs of BAC: A Guide to Understanding Blood Alcohol Concentration and Alcohol Impairment*. Report No. DOT HS 809 844. Washington, DC: NHTSA. Available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/809844-theabcsofbac.pdf>

- World Health Organization
- Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine
- National Safety Council
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
- National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

Progress toward eliminating impaired-driving fatalities has unnecessarily stagnated. More can—and should—be done to prevent these tragedies. The NTSB believes that the only acceptable number of deaths on our roads is zero, and it has been our charge since our founding to determine how to eliminate transportation fatalities. Deaths due to impaired driving are 100% preventable, and Alaska can be a leader in implementing policies that will save lives and prevent impaired driving.

We look forward to Alaska passing House Bill 308 and taking the necessary steps to lower the legal BAC in the state to .04 g/dL.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Homendy
Chairwoman