

March 21, 2026

Senator Loki Tobin
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Via email: senator.loki.tobin@akleg.gov

RE: Support for SJR 28

Dear Senator Tobin and Members of the Committee:

My family and I have owned and operated Black Diamond Resort Company in Healy, Alaska since 1995. Black Diamond provides seasonal access to a beautiful full-service restaurant, 9-hole golf course, back country ATV adventures, and horse drawn carriage rides into the wilderness. Additionally, we operate the Aurora Denali Lodge year-round.

I write in support of Senate Joint Resolution 28, which recognizes the essential role that J-1 Exchange Visitor Program participants play in sustaining Alaska's seasonal industries. The Denali region experiences some of the most dramatic seasonal workforce swings in the nation. For businesses like ours, which must scale up rapidly each summer to serve visitors from around the world, access to lawful, reliable temporary worker programs is not optional—it is foundational to our ability to operate.

Despite extensive local recruitment, the small year-round population in the Denali Borough simply cannot meet the seasonal demand. J-1 participants fill critical roles

that allow us to maintain safe, high-quality operations, support other local businesses, and contribute to the broader Denali-area economy.

I would also like to draw the Committee's attention to the importance of the H-2B visa program which allows US employers to hire foreign nationals for temporary, non-agricultural, seasonal, or peak-load work when local workers are unavailable. The program is capped at approximately 66,000 nationwide and is extremely difficult to obtain.

We urge the Legislature to advance SJR 28 and continue advocating for predictable, functional federal workforce pathways that allow seasonal communities like Healy to thrive.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Usibelli

Black Diamond Resort Co.