

March 7, 2026

House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Supplemental Written Testimony Regarding SB 26, HB 229, and HB 41

Dear Members of the Committee:

I have already submitted written testimony opposing SB 26 and supporting HB 229. I am writing separately to raise an additional point that I believe deserves a place in the committee record.

Alaska has its own time zone because Alaska is its own place. That is not a sentimental observation. It is a geographic and cultural reality that has defined this state since long before statehood. Alaska Standard Time exists because Alaska occupies a unique position on the globe, spanning a longitudinal range that no other state comes close to matching. Our time zone is one of the few remaining markers in daily life that reflects the simple truth that Alaska is not an extension of the West Coast. We are not Seattle with bigger mountains. We are not San Francisco with longer winters. We are a place apart, and our clocks have reflected that.

SB 26 asks this Legislature to voluntarily surrender that distinction. It asks Alaska to adopt the time zone of Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada, not because that time zone has any relationship to the position of the sun over our communities, but because it would be more convenient for tourism operators and financial institutions who would prefer not to account for a time difference when doing business with the Lower 48. That is not a reason to change a time zone. That is a reason to buy a better watch.

Every legislator in this building has at some point told constituents that Alaska is different from the rest of the country and that its unique character is worth protecting. I am asking you to apply that same principle here. If Alaska is truly distinct, if this state truly stands apart, then there is no justification for adopting a time zone designed for the Pacific coast simply to make scheduling easier for industries that could solve the same problem with a calendar application.

Millions of visitors come to Alaska each year because this place is unlike anywhere else in the country. I have lived here for the same reason. The irony of sacrificing Alaska's time zone identity to accommodate the tourism industry should not be lost on this committee.

I respectfully ask that this supplemental testimony be added to the committee record for SB 26, HB 229, and HB 41.

Respectfully,

Joseph S. Russo

Fairbanks, Alaska