

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Alaska State Legislature

Session Address:

Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-2828
Toll Free: (800) 964-5733



Interim Address:

145 Main Street Loop, Ste. 226
Kenai, Alaska 99611-7771
Phone: (907) 283-7996
Fax: (907) 283-8127

Senate Bill 208 Agricultural Land Leases
Explanation of Changes Version G to H to T
April 10, 2026

Version H to T

Section 2 adds language directing the Department of Natural Resources to create a regionally based schedule of per-acre prices for agricultural land that may be below the fair market rate.

Section 3 changes the newly created merit-based sale program from allowing the buyer to select any available parcel of State land to allowing the Department of Natural Resources to select the parcels that are available for sale for agricultural uses. Version T adds language requiring the Director of the Division of Mineral, Land, and Water to consult with the Director of Agriculture when scoring applications.

Section 6 changes the allowed lease terms from 10 to 20 years.

Section 8 changes the newly created leasing program by allowing initial lease terms and renewals of 20 years, by requiring the final approved agricultural development plan, including timeline, be incorporated into the lease terms, and by allowing leases to be sublet or transferred with Department approval. The changes in Version T also require the Director of the Division of Mineral, Land, and Water to consult with the Director of Agriculture when scoring applications. This new version also changes the definition of agricultural uses to include using gravel and removing and disposing of timber so that the period of time in which a farmer is preparing the land for production will be in compliance with the requirement that the land be used for agricultural uses.

Section 10 adds additional conforming changes regarding giving a lessee first preference to purchase land they have been working.

Section 11 softens the language regarding the assessment of civil penalties by the Department.

Version G to H

Adds new Sections 1 – 5, creating an optional merit-based process for sales of state land for agricultural uses in AS 38.05.059 and makes conforming changes to affected statutes.

Amends Sections 6 – 9 (Sections 1 – 4 of Ver G), making changes to the new leasing program that reflect stakeholder feedback. This includes clarifying the information required from applicants, allowing the Department of Natural resources to reject any application that isn't in the best interest of the state, allowing activities such as building housing and clearing timber rather than designating them as "agricultural use," and requiring regular inspections of leased land.

Adds new Sections 10 – 11, establishing civil penalty authority for the Department of Natural Resources to enforce agricultural covenants in AS 38.05.32(k) and makes conforming changes to affected statutes.

Adds new Sections 12 and 13, to create an immediate effective date for the Department to draft regulations implementing SB 208.

Renumbers Section 14 (Section 5 in Ver G), making the provisions in the bill effective on January 1, 2027.