



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Response to House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

Hearing on HB 162: DIGITAL PRODUCT REPAIR

During the hearing for HB 162 on April 16, 2026, the committee members asked several questions that we would like to respond to in writing for greater clarification.

Question about the broad scope of the bill:

It is true that HB 162, if enacted, would be the broadest right to repair law to date. This is purposeful; the bill is intentionally broad with the intention of capturing a wide range of products, including only those exemptions necessary for safety and the protection of profitable business models included within its scope. Our goal is simply to help Alaskans to the greatest extent possible by empowering them to conduct their own repairs. Our state suffers to a much greater degree than the rest of the country from a lack of access to authorized repairs, higher shipping and repair costs, and struggles with the management of electronic waste due to our remote position and gaps in infrastructure. We strongly believe that this bill will help solve this issue.

We have included exemptions for medical devices, life safety and security systems, and physical access control equipment over concerns that repairs to these products may potentially pose risks to safety. Motor vehicles are also exempted because they are currently the only industry that the Federal Trade Commission has stated has a memorandum of understanding sufficient to create a national repair standard and their lobby is strongly against interference with their self-regulatory framework. Both Maine and Maryland have passed right to repair laws targeting the motor vehicle industry, and we believe that Alaska could potentially benefit from the introduction of such a bill in the future, but that is not currently within the focus of HB 162.

Question about enforcement:

Violations of the bill will be included under AS 45.50.471, unlawful acts and practices of trade and commerce, enforced by the Attorney General. Citizens are able to take part in private right of action against manufacturers that fail to comply with the requirements outlined in the bill, similar to states such as California that also include the option for private right of action.

Question about the safety of certain repairs:

When it comes to consumer and independent repairs, the [Federal Trade Commission's 2021 report to Congress](#) found that “manufacturers provided no data to support their argument that injuries are tied to repairs performed by consumers or independent repair shops... Nor have manufacturers provided factual support for their statements that authorized repair persons are more careful or that individuals or independent repair shops fail to take appropriate safety precautions, or that independent repair workers who enter homes pose more of a safety risk to consumers than authorized repair workers” despite being requested to do so.

In the cases of more complex large equipment, such as boats and aircraft, there are federal standards for the maintenance and repair of such products that will not be altered by this bill. The passage of HB 162 would ensure greater safety in these repairs by allowing individuals to access the information necessary to make an informed decision on whether or not such repairs are within their ability, and to carry out repairs safely with the information they need to do so rather than going about repairs blindly.

Question about powersports equipment exemptions in other states:

There are currently twelve states with right to repair laws in effect. Of these twelve, eight exempt powersports equipment or all-terrain vehicles. (See [HB 162 Supporting Document: Enacted Right to Repair Laws by State](#)). However, this is primarily due to industry lobbying rather than genuine reasoning over issues with security or safety. Alaskans depend to a higher extent on powersports equipment like ATVs and snowmachines than perhaps anywhere else in the country, and these products can be essential to survival and livelihood in rural areas especially. It is therefore our goal to include them within the scope of the bill for the benefit of all of the Alaskans who utilize them and are currently impacted by a lack of repair options for these critical resources.

Question about the manufacturers allowed to charge reasonable costs for parts:

As the bill is written, manufacturers are required to provide parts, tools, and documentation to owners and independent repair providers for free or at the actual cost of producing, preparing, and shipping said materials. Exempt from the requirement to provide parts at cost are powersports equipment; power-driven farm, forestry, construction, industrial, utility, mining, road-building, material-handling, and similar equipment; and power producing and storing devices.

These specific products are exempt because they operate based on a dealership model, meaning that the manufacturer does not interface directly with its customers and operates through its dealerships. We heard from companies that fall under this model about how the bill as it was previously written would have made it possible for manufacturers to require them to do all the work of ordering, stocking, and providing repair materials on the manufacturer's behalf without making any money doing so. This prompted the amendments exempting businesses that primarily operate through this model from the requirement to provide parts at cost.

We are not of the position that this exemption should be extended across the board because we believe that manufacturers should not be able to upcharge for the provision of repair materials when they are already carrying out these responsibilities, though we are open to adding additional dealership-reliant industries to this clause if there are any we have unintentionally left out.

Question about parts pairing:

Parts pairing is the practice of digitally serializing product components so that they are paired to only work with that specific part or unit. This practice has increasingly been used to inhibit the repair process as devices become more modernized and include more electronic components. It is primarily used in the consumer electronics industry but has also been used in other products, such as high-tech agricultural equipment, to discourage aftermarket replacements and unauthorized repairs.

Under HB 162, manufacturers are able to practice parts pairing only where they are required to do so under federal law. Beyond this, it is prohibited to practice parts pairing in any manner that prevents or inhibits the installment and enablement of a functional replacement part, or that reduces the functionality of the device or displays misleading warnings that are not readily dismissible. This means simply that manufacturers are not able to serialize parts in a way that prevents their installation or the functionality of the device as a whole. So, for example, a farmer would not have to take their tractor to the dealership just because they installed a new part that then creates persistent warning messages and bricks its functioning.

Question about MOUs in the agricultural sector:

During the hearing, there was a question on how this legislation would impact the memorandum of understanding signed between John Deere and the American Farm Bureau Federation. This MOU was agreed to in order to avoid legislation being passed to regulate the industry and purports to help solve the issue of a lack of access to repairs, which John Deere had to settle a [\\$99 million class action lawsuit](#) over and still has an FTC lawsuit pending for.

However, there are significant gaps in the MOU that prevent it from providing a comprehensive repair landscape that works for farmers. [This U.S. Public Interest Research group article](#) outlines some of the ways that the MOU has failed at providing true right to repair. Part of the MOU requires that the AFBF not support the passage of any right to repair legislation ([Section III](#)), so there is likely nothing we can do to create a bill that could garner their support as long as passage is uncertain because an incomplete right to repair under the MOU is still better than nothing. However, by passing this legislation, we ensure full and lasting right to repair that will close the gaps that currently exist under the MOU, which per the settlement John Deere is only locked into for the next 10 years.

Additionally, there is a [bill advancing through the Iowa legislature](#) aimed at providing right to repair for agricultural equipment that is supported by farmers and opposed by John Deere that is likely to pass. Alaska could join Iowa in staying ahead of the curve, or be left behind.