

Senator Cathy Tilton  
State Capitol Room 9  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Cathy Tilton,

My name is Brandi Jo Nyberg, and I am the owner of Sauntering Roots Farm in the Butte area of your district. Sauntering Roots Farm is a diversified vegetable farm focused on feeding my community. We had the pleasure of meeting at the Alaska Grown dinner at the Governor's mansion in February of earlier this year. I am writing this letter to urge your support for SB 208/HB296, both of which create a less arduous and more affordable path for leasing state lands for agricultural purposes.

As a first generation farmer, I can firmly say the most difficult barrier I face is affordable land access *that is near a population center where I can make a profit*. While we are fortunate to have beautiful, rich soil in the valley, our region is growing and affordable access to land is a struggle. In fact, I was not able to purchase as much land as I'd originally hoped; instead of operating my entire farm at my place of residence, in 2025, I also leased from two private land owners. Having affordable leasing options for farmers, particularly on state owned lands with prime agricultural soil, is essential for our state to have a robust local food system that ensures a food secure future. Affordable leasing options for the farmer ultimately mean a more affordable cost for the end consumer.

Farming is not for the faint of heart, particularly in Alaska. While growing food is truly the most basic public service that can be offered, we are not afforded some of the benefits most public services receive, like healthcare, benefits, etc. It is essential that the State of Alaska do all that we can to support farmers and affordable access to farmland. Alaskans are keenly aware of the limited shelf-life and higher costs of produce at the grocery store, all from being shipped here from so far away. To build a more food secure future with a resilient Alaska-grown food system, access to farmland is the first crucial piece.

I am not alone in my struggle to access affordable farmland in our state. In my network of Alaska farmers, or individuals with the skills and experience who want to farm, affordable farmland access is always the key issue. While there are numerous paths to helping alleviate this issue for a food secure future, SB208 is one. And any progress on the issue is a win! I would like to encourage you to support SB208 / HB296 and the farmers of our state.

Thank you for your time,

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