# Senator Jesse Bjorkman

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## Senate Bill 208 Agricultural Land Leases
## Sponsor Statement – Version T
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In Alaska, farming takes grit and perseverance. One of the hardest parts of farming in the far north isn't the weather. It's finding land a person can afford to farm.

Senate Bill 208 is about opening the gate to farming opportunity.

It makes it easier for Alaskans to lease state land for agriculture by cutting unnecessary costs, reducing red tape, and giving farmers a fair shot to get started or expand their operation. Costly upfront surveys and appraisals of land can stop a good idea in its tracks. This bill lets the Department of Natural Resources require them only when needed and allows for land leasing at a rate designed with farmers in mind.

Lease applications will be judged on the farmer's viability , the soundness of the plan, and the benefit to the State, not just who can pay the most. When it comes time to sell agricultural land, this bill recognizes that farmland should go to people who will farm it. The people who win bids should be those who will work the land, care for it, and keep it producing for years to come.

Senate Bill 208 also gives the State better tools to ensure that land stays in production by encouraging compliance without immediately resorting to taking land back from those trying to make it work.

If we want more food security, we need more Alaskans farming. Senate Bill 208 helps make that possible. It supports the people willing to take on the risk, put in the work, and grow something real for their communities.

When you support an Alaskan farmer, you're not just supporting a small business. You're strengthening our way of life.

I urge your support for Senate Bill 208.

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