



Alaska Operating Engineers/Employers Training Trust  
Apprenticeship and Training  
PO Box 0989, Palmer, AK 99645  
Phone: 907-746-3117 Fax: 907-745-6136

March 9, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 - Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs**

Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical and timely investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

As a **[workforce training provider/employer/community organization]**, **[Insert Name of Organization]** has relied on State Training and Employment Program (STEP) grant funding to **[briefly describe impact: provide industry training, operate apprenticeships, upskill incumbent workers, connect job seekers to high-demand careers, etc]**. STEP dollars go directly into training Alaskans for real jobs that employers need filled now.

Demand for workforce training across the state continues to exceed available funding. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has seen nearly double the amount of STEP requests compared to available grant funds. At the same time, training costs have increased, making existing resources stretch further each year. The current funding structure simply does not meet statewide demand.

SB 217 and HB 267 strengthen the long-term sustainability of workforce training by increasing available STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach supports businesses, reduces future unemployment claims, and helps more Alaskans gain the skills needed to fill high-demand jobs, including positions currently filled by nonresident workers.

This legislation is a high-return investment in Alaska's workforce and economy. We respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

Kyle Virgin  
Administrator  
Alaska Operating Engineers Employer's Training Trust



March 25, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Re: Senate Bill 217, Employer Contributions (version 34-GS2585\A)

Dear Chair Bjorkman, and members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

The Alaska Chamber (the Chamber) writes to support Senate Bill 217, an Act relating to employer contributions to the unemployment compensation fund; establishing an employer contribution for the state training and employment program; and providing for an effective date.

The Alaska Chamber is the state's largest statewide business advocacy organization. Our mission is to promote a healthy business environment in Alaska. The Chamber has more than 700 members and represents businesses of all sizes and industries from across the state, representing 58,000 Alaskan workers and \$4.6 billion in wages.

Senate Bill 217 represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to reducing employer costs while strengthening Alaska's workforce development efforts. Alaska's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund is currently in a strong financial position, with a balance of \$833 million, well above the statutory solvency range of \$530 million to \$583 million. Despite this, employers continue to pay a minimum UI tax rate of 1%, preventing rates from adjusting to reflect current economic conditions.

SB 217 addresses this imbalance by allowing the employer UI tax rate to decrease appropriately, even to zero when warranted by fund solvency. At the same time, employers would contribute 0.4% to the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), maintaining compliance with federal requirements while ensuring continued investment in Alaska's workforce.

Employers across Alaska are struggling to find skilled workers, and with major projects on the horizon, workforce shortages are expected to intensify. Existing STEP funding is already insufficient to meet demand, with applications far exceeding available resources and training funds projected to run out before the end of the fiscal year. SB 217 would significantly increase funding for workforce training programs, helping more Alaskans gain the skills needed to fill in-demand jobs and support economic growth statewide.

By reducing the effective tax rate from 1% to 0.4%, SB 217 is projected to save Alaska businesses approximately \$68 million in the first year alone, providing much-needed support while still investing in long-term workforce solutions.

We urge legislators to fully support SB 217. Thank you for your consideration of the Chamber's comments on this resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kati Capozzi'.

Kati Capozzi  
President and CEO



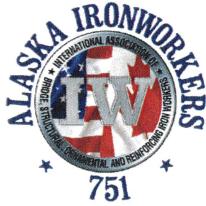
2550 Denali Street, Suite 530  
Anchorage, AK 99503



Office (907) 278-2722



[www.alaskachamber.com](http://www.alaskachamber.com)  
[info@alaskachamber.com](mailto:info@alaskachamber.com)



## ALASKA IRONWORKERS LOCAL 751

8141 Schoon Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99518-3047

Phone: 907-563-4766 office@ironworker751.org

Email: Anthony.Ladd-iwlu751bm@ironworkers.org

AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRIDGE,  
STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL AND REINFORCING IRON WORKERS



**Anthony Ladd**  
*Business Manager*

March 31, 2026

RE: Support of SB 217 & HB 237

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Business Manager of Ironworkers Local 751, I am writing this letter to express our support of SB 217 and HB 267 implementing employer contributions to Workforce Training Programs. This encourages a consistent, dependable construction initiative to support registered apprentices and workforce training across the state.

Local 751's Apprenticeship Program has experienced growth and retention with the help of STEP Funding. Our apprentices learn, grow, and gain on the job training to become highly skilled tradesman. The cost of this training continues to increase, however, the current funding structure does not meet the overall demand. STEP holds the future of Alaska's economy in their hands promoting work for residents by residents – real jobs that need filled by those right here in our neighborhood.

Allowing funds to be appropriated to support employment assistance and workforce training programs is a win-win for both employers and workers.

We support SB 217 and HB 267 as it is now more imperative than ever to support the apprenticeship programs already in place for Alaska's workplace to grow and thrive.

Sincerely,

---

*Anthony Ladd*  
Business Manager & Financial Secretary/Treasurer  
Ironworkers Local 751  
907.590.9539



Anchorage Vineyard Family Resource Center (AVFRC)  
2511 Sentry Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
[mfritz@avfrc.org](mailto:mfritz@avfrc.org)  
907-223-6068

March 28, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature State Capitol Room 427 Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 - Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs

Dear Honorable Senator Jessi Bjorkman:

We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical and timely investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

As a State Training and Employment Program grantee, AVFRC has relied on State Training and Employment Program (STEP) grant funding to help our State of Alaska keep millions of federal grant dollars with the Head Start Preschool Program, to help our residents obtain the Child Development Associate (CDA) teaching credential. This credential is a grant compliance requirement in order for Alaskan programs to keep their grant funding. Achieving this credential keeps Alaskans in their jobs and prevents outside hires for teacher credentialing requirements.

Demand for workforce training across the state continues to exceed available funding. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has seen nearly double the amount of STEP requests compared to available grant funds. At the same time, training costs have increased, making existing resources stretch further each year. The current funding structure simply does not meet statewide demand. Additionally, costs have grown exponentially since Covid19; the cost to deliver services statewide has nearly doubled and in some Alaskan villages, tripled due to the cost of internet and access to training modules.

SB 217 and HB 267 strengthen the long-term sustainability of workforce training by increasing available STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach supports businesses, reduces future unemployment claims, and helps more Alaskans gain the skills needed to fill high-demand jobs, including positions currently filled by nonresident workers.

This legislation is a high-return investment in Alaska's workforce and economy. We respectfully urge your support and our Alaska residents greatly need training programs to keep their jobs and provide for their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MaryEllen Fritz', written over a thin horizontal line.

MaryEllen Fritz M.Ed

President and CEO

Anchorage Vineyard Family Resource Center



# GENERATIONS SOUTHEAST

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

March 4, 2026

To the House and Senate Labor and Commerce committees,

As the Director of Tlingit and Haida's Generations Southeast, a state-funded regional Vocational Training Center with Campuses in Juneau and Klawock on Prince of Wales Island. As a licensed and bonded General Contractor for over 30 years with a Company I founded, Edwardson Enterprises. I am in full support of HB267/SB217. Alaska is facing the most significant Challenges in the workforce that we have ever faced. We are importing 25% of our workforce, and at the same time, we are losing the population of Alaskan residents, leaving the state looking for Job opportunities.

This legislation will have multiple positive effects, it will incentivize employers by reducing an operational expense giving employers a tool that can be leveraged to help their ability to focus on strengthening and maintaining longevity in their businesses, additionally the proposed State training and Employment tax contribution will be directed at helping provide relevant industry training specific to Alaska resident needs, regional training funding opportunities for Alaska's residents provided by this program distributed by JOB Centers that are specific to each region will help inform Alaskans of Job opportunities and prepare with training Alaskan residents for the Jobs that are in fact available in there specific regions.

'Gunalchéesh/Hawaá/Thank you,

*Charles Edwardson*

Generations Southeast - Director  
Community Education & Cultural Heritage - Director  
Direct: 907.463.8018  
Cell: 907.254.9000

Charles Edwardson

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 29, Klawock, AK 99925  
LOCATION: 6565 BOUNDARY ROAD, Klawock AK 99925  
EMAIL: GENERATIONSOUTHEAST@TLINGITANDHAIDA.GOV  
PHONE: 907.463.8019

## HD Medical and Fire Services

P.O. Box 8367  
Nikiski, Alaska 99635



**Harrison Deveer, Owner**  
907-252-8106 - Mobile  
hdeveer@yahoo.com - Email

---

March 27, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

### **RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 – Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs**

Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

On behalf of HD Medical and Fire Services, LLC, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical and timely investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

HD Medical and Fire Services is a workforce training provider specializing in emergency medical services (EMS) education, apprenticeship programs, and workforce development for rural and industrial Alaska. Through the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), we have been able to provide critical training opportunities such as EMT-1, ETT, and Advanced EMT programs to Alaskans seeking employment or advancement in high-demand healthcare and emergency services careers.

STEP funding directly supports the training of Alaskans for real, in-demand jobs. Through this program, we have helped transition individuals into the workforce, supported incumbent worker advancement, and partnered with fire departments, healthcare organizations, and industry employers across the state to address critical staffing shortages—particularly in rural and remote communities where access to trained personnel is limited.

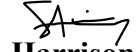
However, the demand for workforce training continues to exceed available funding. We have experienced firsthand the challenges of limited STEP resources, including delayed reimbursements, constrained enrollment capacity, and the inability to fully meet employer and community needs. At the same time, the cost of delivering high-quality training—especially in remote Alaska—continues to rise.

Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 offer a responsible and sustainable solution by increasing available STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach strengthens Alaska's workforce pipeline, reduces reliance on nonresident workers, and helps prevent future unemployment by equipping Alaskans with the skills needed for stable, long-term employment.

Investing in workforce development is investing in Alaska's economic future, public safety, and community resilience. Programs like STEP are essential to building a skilled, local workforce capable of meeting the state's growing demands.

We respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267.

Sincerely,



**Harrison Deveer**

Owner / CEO

HD Medical and Fire Services, LLC



11312 Kenai Spur Hwy #45  
Kenai, AK 99611  
(907) 335-3333  
[www.alaskaCDL.com](http://www.alaskaCDL.com)

Monday, March 9, 2026

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 -  
Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs**

Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical and timely investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

As a workforce training provider, Kenai Peninsula Driving Instruction LLC has relied on State Training and Employment Program (STEP) grant funding for a decade to provide industry training in commercial driver training programs. Commercial drivers are in high demand and many careers, including apprenticeship programs, require a commercial driver's license. STEP dollars go directly into training Alaskans for real jobs that employers need filled now.

Demand for workforce training across the state continues to exceed available funding. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has seen nearly double the number of STEP requests compared to available grant funds. At the same time, training costs have increased, making existing resources stretch further each year. The current funding structure simply does not meet statewide demand.

SB 217 and HB 267 strengthen the long-term sustainability of workforce training by increasing available STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach supports businesses, reduces future unemployment claims, and helps more Alaskans gain the skills needed

to fill high-demand jobs, including positions currently filled by nonresident workers.

This legislation is a high-return investment in Alaska's workforce and economy. We respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexander Douthit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Alexander Douthit  
Owner/Operator  
Kenai Peninsula Driving Instruction LLC



# International Union of Operating Engineers

LOCAL 302 • Washington • Alaska • Idaho • AFL-CIO

Daren Konopaski, *Business Manager & General Vice President*

February 16, 2026

Senate Labor & Commerce  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 217**

Dear Senators,

On behalf of Operating Engineers Local 302, I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217. SB 217 increases training funds that will go directly to training providers across Alaska and provide individual training support and other supportive services to Alaskans seeking to enter or advance in the workforce.

Currently, there are not enough State Training and Employment Program (STEP) funds to support all qualified provider applicants. At the same time, inflation and rising operational costs mean existing STEP funds do not stretch as far as they once did. Without additional funding, training providers are forced to limit class sizes, delay programming, or turn away eligible participants.

This legislation ensures Alaska is positioned to meet future workforce demands, including the potential gas pipeline and other major infrastructure and resource development projects across the state. SB 217 provides a responsible funding structure that supports both small and large businesses while maintaining a balanced and predictable contribution system. By strengthening workforce development today, we reduce long-term economic strain and help stabilize Alaska's labor market.

Operating Engineers Local 302 represents skilled heavy equipment operators, heavy duty mechanics, service oilers and construction professionals statewide. We know firsthand that investing in training is investing in Alaska's future. A well-trained, homegrown workforce keeps jobs in-state, supports families, and strengthens local economies.

We cannot recruit our way out of Alaska's workforce shortage we must train our way out.

Sincerely,

Corey Baxter  
District Representative  
Operating Engineers Local 302  
907-321-4271

---

Sean Jeffries, *President* • Jason Alward, *Vice President*  
18701 120th Avenue NE • Bothell, Washington 98011-9514

Telephone: (425) 806-0302 • Toll-free: 1-800-521-8882 • Fax: (425) 806-0030

Washington Branches: Bellingham • Silverdale • Ellensburg • Spokane • Pasco Alaska Branches: Anchorage • Fairbanks • Juneau Idaho Branch: Pocatello





3760 Piper Street  
P.O. Box 196604  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
t: (907) 562-2211  
providence.org

March 13, 2026

The Honorable Senator Jesse Borkman  
Chair, Senate Labor & Commerce Committee  
State Capitol, Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Providence Supports SB 217 EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear: Senator Bjorkman and members of the committee:

Providence has set the standard for modern health care in Alaska for more than 100 years. Today we remain the state's largest health care provider, and the largest private employer, with more than 4,500 caregivers across the state. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 217, legislation that strengthens Alaska's workforce system by establishing a dedicated employer contribution to training and employment programs.

Providence Alaska recognizes that a well-trained, resilient workforce is fundamental to meeting the state's health, economic, and infrastructure needs. SB 217 supports this objective by directing a portion of employer contributions to the state's Employment Assistance and Training Program Account, helping sustain programs that equip Alaskans with skills required in high-demand fields.

The bill also updates employer contribution parameters within the unemployment insurance framework, ensuring greater clarity and predictability for employers while maintaining flexibility during periods of economic change. This forward-looking approach aligns with Alaska's long-term workforce development needs and provides a more stable, predictable framework for supporting job training and employment services statewide.

Thank you for your commitment to strengthening Alaska's workforce pipeline, supporting economic resilience, and providing a more structured funding mechanism for training programs that are essential to communities across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Florian Borowski".

Florian Borowski  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
Providence Alaska

Cc: Commissioner Cathy Munoz, Alaska Department of Labor



**Southeast Trucking and Training**

4355 Brothers Avenue  
Juneau, AK. 99801  
setrucking2020@gmail.com  
907-789-4285

**03/06/2026**

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 - Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs**

Dear Senator Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical and timely investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

As a workforce training provider and employer, Southeast Trucking and Training has relied on State Training and Employment Program (STEP) grant funding to briefly describe impact: provide industry training, operate apprenticeships, upskill incumbent workers, connect job seekers to high-demand careers, etc. STEP dollars go directly into training Alaskans for real jobs that employers need filled now.

Demand for workforce training across the state continues to exceed available funding. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has seen nearly double the amount of STEP requests compared to available grant funds. At the same time, training costs have increased, making existing resources stretch further each year. The current funding structure simply does not meet statewide demand.

SB 217 and HB 267 strengthen the long-term sustainability of workforce training by increasing available STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach supports businesses, reduces future unemployment claims, and helps more Alaskans gain the skills needed to fill high-demand jobs, including positions currently filled by nonresident workers.

This legislation is a high-return investment in Alaska's workforce and economy. We respectfully urge your support.



Sincerely,

Cynthia Isaak  
Owner  
Southeast Trucking and Training

Cynthia Isaak



9109 MENDENHALL MALL ROAD SUITE 9-301 JUNEAU, AK 99801-7136

February, 15 2025

**Chair and Members**

Alaska State Legislature  
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee / Senate Finance Committee  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska

**RE: Letter of Support — SB 217 (Workforce Training / STEP Funding Stability)**

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of Xtreme Habitats Institute (XHI), a Juneau-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit research organization, I write to express our strong support for SB 217. XHI's mission is to reduce the cost and complexity of construction in extreme and remote environments by advancing practical building innovation—particularly in 3D concrete printing (3DCP), cold-climate materials, and resilient construction methods.

A key constraint on Alaska's ability to adopt advanced construction methods is not technology—it is workforce capacity: trained operators, craft workers, inspectors, and field supervisors who can safely and consistently deploy new tools, materials, and processes at scale. XHI has been actively engaged in workforce development and has trained workers in conjunction with OPCMIA Local 528, helping to build hands-on competency aligned with real-world jobsite requirements and union-quality standards.

SB 217 supports the outcome Alaska needs: stable, predictable investment in workforce training. As introduced, the bill is designed to strengthen and stabilize funding for the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) so Alaska can maintain a reliable training pipeline—even as unemployment insurance (UI) contribution levels fluctuate with economic cycles. That stability matters because construction and infrastructure employers need workforce programs they can plan around, not programs that expand and contract unpredictably year to year.

From XHI's perspective, SB 217 will help Alaska:

- Scale job-ready training for the construction workforce, including hands-on training for emerging construction methods and equipment.
- Strengthen partnerships among employers, labor, training providers, and communities—especially in rural and disaster-affected areas where Alaska's housing and infrastructure needs are most acute.
- Build durable local capability so Alaskans can deliver projects with fewer delays, lower risk, and better long-term outcomes.



9109 MENDENHALL MALL ROAD SUITE 9-301 JUNEAU, AK 99801-7136

- Support resilience and housing outcomes by enabling a workforce prepared to build higher-performing structures—faster—where logistics and weather make traditional methods costly and slow.

XHI respectfully urges the Legislature to advance SB 217 and to continue prioritizing workforce strategies that keep Alaskans working while improving the quality, safety, and resilience of the built environment. We appreciate the Legislature's attention to practical measures that strengthen Alaska's workforce and position the state for long-term success.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me directly if we can provide additional information on our training experience with OPCMIA Local 528, or how workforce development connects to resilient housing and infrastructure outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D. Keith Comstock'.

D. Keith Comstock

Executive Director

Xtreme Habitats Institute

(907) 209-4969

[kcomstock@xtremehabitats.org](mailto:kcomstock@xtremehabitats.org)

## Konrad Jackson

---

**From:** Nick Scott <nscott@opcmia528.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2026 9:35 AM  
**To:** Senate Labor and Commerce  
**Cc:** Franklin Finn  
**Subject:** Support for SB 217 – Employer Contributions  
**Attachments:** Support for SB 217.pdf

Dear Chair Bjorkman and Members of the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee,

The Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association Local 528 respectfully submits this letter in strong support of Senate Bill 217.

Please see attached letter.

Respectfully,

Nick Scott  
(907) 351-0151  
Business Representative  
[nscott@opcmia528.org](mailto:nscott@opcmia528.org)  
OPCMIA Local 528  
State of Alaska