



FW: Letter of support

From Maridon Boario <Maridon.Boario@akleg.gov>

Date Mon 4/27/2026 8:18 AM

To Doniece Gott <Doniece.Gott@akleg.gov>

SB 208

From: Tim and Lisa Meyers

Sent: Friday, April 10, 2026 10:38 AM

To: Maridon Boario

Subject: Letter of support

Dear Senator Hoffman,

I am writing as a constituent from the Bethel region and a farmer in Western Alaska to express my strong support for Senate Bill 208 and House Bill 296.

Access to affordable, workable land is one of the biggest barriers facing farmers across our state. While Alaska has significant land resources, the current leasing structure often makes it financially unrealistic for small agricultural producers to expand or even sustain their operations. The requirement to appraise land based on its highest possible use, rather than its agricultural value, creates lease rates that are out of reach for many farmers.

This issue is actively preventing agricultural development. In cases I'm familiar with, parcels historically used for farming are being appraised as if they were intended for industrial or commercial development. This results in lease costs that do not reflect the realities of farming, especially in rural Alaska where margins are already tight and operating costs are high.

SB 208 offers a practical and much-needed solution by restructuring the fee schedule to account for agricultural use and land limitations. By aligning lease rates with actual farming value, this bill would make it possible for more Alaskans to access land, grow food locally, and contribute to the state's food security and economic resilience.

Supporting Alaska's farmers means supporting local food systems, reducing reliance on imported goods, and strengthening rural communities. Legislation like SB 208 and HB 296 is a critical step toward making agriculture viable and sustainable in our state.

I strongly encourage your support of these bills as they move through the Senate Finance Committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued service to our region.

Sincerely,

Tim Meyers

Meyers Farm

Bethel, Alaska

Tim & Lisa Meyers

www.meyersfarm.net

meyersfarm@gmail.com

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

Albert Einstein

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,

Brandi Jo Nyberg
1405 N Kuhn Dr.
Palmer, AK 99645
saunteringrootsfarm@gmail.com

April 11, 2026

Dear Senator Hoffman,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 208 and HB 296, and to respectfully urge your support as Co-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

As someone deeply invested in the well-being of rural communities, I see firsthand the challenges we face in accessing affordable, fresh food. Expanding agricultural leasing opportunities across Alaska is a meaningful and practical step toward addressing food insecurity, particularly in regions like ours with limited access and high transportation costs.

Our region could directly benefit from agricultural expansion efforts. Increasing production capacity would create opportunities to supply communities across the Cook Inlet and beyond—something that is critically needed. It is a top ambition to make Alaskan grown food more accessible to rural Alaskans.

Affordable agricultural leases are essential to keeping operational costs down for farmers across the state. When producers are supported in this way, those savings can be passed along to consumers—making healthy food more attainable for families who already face disproportionately high grocery costs.

Additionally, preserving Alaska's prime agricultural soils for production is vital to strengthening long-term food security. These lands are a limited and valuable resource, and ensuring they remain in agricultural use benefits not only producers, but all Alaskans who rely on a stable and resilient food system.

There are also clear benefits for our schools. Procuring produce from Alaska-based producers increases shelf life, reduces spoilage, and decreases waste—an important consideration for school districts like ours that are already managing tight budgets and logistical challenges.

Simply put, I am fighting to get food to our communities. These bills represent a tangible way to support that effort.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued service to Alaska.

Quyana/Chin'an,

Evelynn Trefon
Owner of E&A Produce Market
School Advocate
Community Member and Mom
Newhalen, Alaska



432 E Pioneer Ave, Ste C
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-8177
info@homerswcd.org

To: Senator Gary Stevens

CC: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Resources Committee

Subject: SUPPORT: SB 208 – Enhancing Agricultural Land Leases and Merit-Based Sales

Dear Senator Stevens and Members of the Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD), I am writing to express our strong support for SB 208, version T.

Our District plays a unique role in Alaska's agricultural landscape: we provide the technical expertise and local oversight required to review and approve **State Farm Conservation Plans (SFCP)**. We see firsthand the challenges Alaskans face when trying to access state land, and we believe SB 208 offers a pragmatic, merit-based solution to these hurdles.

From the District's perspective, this bill is significant for several reasons:

- **Prioritizing Viability Over High Bids:** With present ag title parcels, the highest-bidder has often locked out qualified, hardworking producers. By shifting toward a merit-based evaluation of agricultural proposals, the state ensures that these new ag parcels are awarded to those with the most viable, conservation-minded plans.
- **Strengthening Land Stewardship:** Sustainable farming requires long-term investment. The provisions in SB 208 that allow for extended leases and a path to ownership encourage farmers to implement long-range conservation practices. When a farmer knows they have a 10-year lease with a path to purchase, they are far more likely to invest in the soil health and water management practices that HSWCD advocates for.
- **Protecting Prime Soils for Food Security:** We view prime agricultural soil as a critical infrastructure asset for Alaska. SB 208 strengthens the intent of agricultural covenants, ensuring that these rare soils remain in production rather than being lost to non-ag development.
- **Technical Partnership:** As a District, we stand ready to continue our partnership with the Division of Agriculture to ensure that the management plans required by this bill are appropriate, site-specific, and geared toward successful Alaskan-grown production.

We urge the Committee to move SB 208 forward. It is a necessary update to our state's land management policy that recognizes farming not just as a business, but as a vital component of Alaska's security and land stewardship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kyra Wagner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Kyra' being more prominent than the last name 'Wagner'.

Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Kyra@homerswcd.org

432 E. Pioneer Ave., Homer, AK 99603
(907) 299-4920