



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

www.lysd.org

Edgar Hoelscher
Chairman

John Hargis
Superintendent

Resolution: Support for Key Educational Priorities **Resolution No. 01-2025**

****Whereas**** the LYSD Regional School Board is committed to ensuring that all students receive a quality education that prepares them for success in their future endeavors;

****Whereas**** adequate funding and resources are essential to maintaining and improving the quality of education within the LYSD region;

****Whereas**** the Base Student Allocation (BSA) is a critical component of education funding, and increasing the BSA is necessary to keep up with inflation and the rising costs of education;

****Whereas**** deferred maintenance of school facilities poses a significant risk to the safety and effectiveness of the learning environment, and continued funding for these maintenance needs is crucial;

****Whereas**** early reading proficiency is a key predictor of future academic success, and providing adequate resources for early reading programs, including support for Alaska Native languages, is essential to improve literacy rates among young learners;

****Whereas**** teacher recruitment and retention are major challenges in rural Alaska, and adequate, affordable housing and public school employment benefits are major factors in attracting and retaining qualified educators in our region;

****Whereas**** residential education programs provide vital opportunities for students in remote areas, and increased funding is necessary to support and expand these programs;

****Whereas**** maintaining local school board governance as the authorizer and overseer of charter schools within public school districts is essential to ensure alignment with district and community priorities;

****Whereas**** public school choice exists and thrives throughout Alaska in the form of charter schools, correspondence schools, specialized or theme-based programs, and CTE programs, and adequate support for these diverse education options is critical to student success;



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

www.lysd.org

Edgar Hoelscher
Chairman

John Hargis
Superintendent

****Therefore, be it resolved**** that the LYSD Regional School Board calls upon the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) to advocate for the following priorities:

1. ****Increased Base Student Allocation (BSA) into Statute****: The Alaska Legislature should increase the BSA to reflect the current cost of education and incorporate it into the statute to ensure consistent and predictable funding. (AASB 2.23 Funding for Schools by Establishing the Base Student Allocation in Advance)
2. ****Continued Deferred Maintenance Funding****: The State of Alaska should continue and expand funding for deferred maintenance of school facilities to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students. (AASB 2.67 is a New Topic that is being proposed by the board of directors in order to consolidate 2.8, 2.28, 2.29, 2.12, and 2.51).
3. ****Resources for Early Reading and Support for Alaska Native Languages****: The State should allocate additional resources to support early reading initiatives, including the Alaska Reads Act, and ensure support for programs focused on improving literacy in Alaska Native languages. (AASB 2.6 Funding for Early Learning)
4. ****Teacher Housing and Public School Employment Benefits****: The State should provide funding and support for developing and maintaining adequate housing for teachers in rural areas and improving public school employment benefits, recognizing their importance in attracting and retaining quality educators. (AASB 4.5 Addressing the Teacher, Administrator, School Staff Shortage)
5. ****Increased Funding for Residential Education Programs****: The State should increase funding for residential education programs, including regional boarding home programs, to ensure that students in remote areas can access quality educational opportunities. (Do not currently see in the AASB Where We Stand Document)
6. ****Local School Board Governance of Charter Schools****: The State should continue to support local school board governance as the authorizer and overseer of charter schools to ensure these schools align with district priorities and community needs. (AASB 2.47 Local Control of School Funding)

****Be it further resolved**** that the LYSD Regional School Board urges the AASB to prioritize these issues in its advocacy efforts during the upcoming legislative session and work with lawmakers to secure the necessary funding and support for these critical areas.

****Adopted by the LYSD Regional School Board on September 24, 2024.**



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

www.lysd.org

Edgar Hoelscher
Chairman

John Hargis
Superintendent

ATTEST:

Regional School Board Chair, Edgar Hoelscher

John Hargis, Superintendent

Doniece Gott

From: Nathan Borson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 9:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Closing the budget gap

Dear Finance Committee,

I support a broad-based tax as a long-term solution to Alaska's fiscal crisis. A progressive tax like an income tax is a fair and effective way to sustain the lean government that we have now, and to guarantee education funding and employee pensions into the future.

Sincerely,

[Nathan Borson](#)

[REDACTED]
Gustavus, AK 99826
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Joey Tillson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Staff the state, livable wages

Good day -

>

> My name is Joey Tillson. Many of you are familiar with me as I have represented state employees with AFSCME Local 52 ASEA in the past with the Division of Public Assistance and have spoken to a number of you as well as rallied repeatedly on the steps of the capital due to the continued staffing and pay issues with our workers.

> Our state workers have been physically abused, verbally abused and mentally abused by clients and the administration with excessive workloads, daily pressures due to federal lawsuits to process cases or be fined hundreds of thousands of dollars (many have errors due to limited training and the push from leadership to get numbers down due to the 31,000+ households who have not had their cases processed timely).

> Our workers have to know 8+ policy manuals and programs and processes in order to do even one case. The expectation of 90 minutes per case is not logical especially when you have households of 16 or more family members in the interior. We have workers leaving as fast as they're getting hired. It's like a dog chasing its own tail. It's absolutely asinine that the state would continue to pay federal fines instead of staffing. The state DPA wages are below other entities throughout the state and nationwide when we do 3+ times more of the work — every office is at an All Time Low for morale. . It's absolutely asinine the state would continue to pay federal fines instead of staffing. The people are constantly quitting. People are quitting Alaskans.

> The caseloads increase because people aren't working because of this horrific situation.

> I am now with Alaska public employees, association, union AFT and the problems have not gotten better. In fact they have gotten worse. Administration is now offering a hiring incentive for new employees, but nobody is taking care of the loyal employees and seasoned employees that have been there through all of the pressures. The state has just now approved another 60 long-term non-permanent positions to process heating assistance applications; this has been going on for 15+ years you waste valuable state funds training employees who are only temporarily there to knock the numbers down to get the feds off of the states' back and then they leave.

> When are you going to stop putting a Band-Aid on this situation? Nobody is going to stay in a job that is not offering permanent full-time status so they can take care of their families. Additionally, don't get me started on the outsourcing of jobs to PCG - why are we offering jobs for Alaskans to other entities in other States? Why are we pissing away dollars out of our own state for employees that don't even live here? Why are we not hiring Alaskans and giving them jobs? This continued senseless spending and hiring temporary employees and outsourcing jobs is just stupid wasteful spending and causing catastrophic harm to all Alaskans. When are you all going to step up and start doing what's right we are not taking care of Alaskans and that is on you.

> Ms. Joey Tillson

> [REDACTED]

> Ketchikan

> APEA-AFT current members, previous AFSCME Local 52 ASEA members and chapter president

Doniece Gott

From: Billeen Carlson, <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 2:50 PM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; gov.pressoffice@alaska.gov; House Labor and Commerce; Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Project 2025's Harmful Economic Impact on Alaska

I am reaching out to bring your attention to the significant economic risks that **Project 2025** poses to Alaska. This policy agenda, developed by conservative think tanks, includes sweeping deregulations and federal restructuring that would have **disproportionate and damaging effects on our state's economy, Indigenous communities, and essential services.**

Key Concerns for Alaska

1. **Threats to Fishing & Tourism** – Proposed rollbacks of environmental protections (including the Endangered Species Act and Antiquities Act) could cause environmental degradation, harming industries that generate billions for Alaska's economy.
2. **Loss of Healthcare Access** – The proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would strip healthcare from thousands of Alaskans, increasing financial strain on hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas.
3. **Severe Education Funding Cuts** – The elimination of the U.S. Department of Education would result in lost **Title I** funding, reducing resources for Alaska's schools and disproportionately harming low-income and rural students.
4. **Social Security & Medicare Reforms** – Proposed increases to the Social Security retirement age and Medicaid benefit caps would hurt Alaska's seniors and low-income populations, reducing consumer spending and economic stability.

These policy shifts **prioritize deregulation at the expense of Alaska's long-term economic health.** Given our unique reliance on natural resources, tourism, and federal support for education and healthcare, **Project 2025's agenda would leave our state particularly vulnerable.**

[I have attached a document](#) with **detailed sources and cross-referenced analysis** outlining these threats. I urge you and your colleagues on the **Finance Committees** to assess these risks carefully and advocate for **Alaska's economic and environmental security.**

Doniece Gott

From: Nathan Borson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 9:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: No gas line funding

Dear Finance Committee,

As you struggle to make ends meet, a good way to get a little closer would be to stop throwing good money after bad on a project that doesn't pencil out economically now, much less in a future where renewables dominate new energy production, a project that also worsens the climate change that is eroding Alaskan communities, melting permafrost, and exacerbating wildfires.

Please deny all funding for the Alaska Gas Pipeline.

Sincerely,
Nate

[Nathan Borson](#)

[REDACTED]
Gustavus, AK 99826
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Roman Motyka, [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 9:15 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Making Alaska Great Again

Here's a recipe for making Alaska great again:

1. Fully fund BSA
2. Support the UA system
3. Provide pension plans for teachers, firefighters, police, and all state workers.
4. Provide competitive salaries for teachers and state workers
5. Cap the PFD at \$1000 per person.
6. Bring back state income tax.

Invest in our workforce and in our state's future!

Sincerely,

Roman J Motyka
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

Doniece Gott

From: Branson, Pat [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 1:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FT 2026 budget

Senate Finance Committee Members:

I and two council members were in Juneau last week for Alaska Municipal League meetings and met with several legislators. What we heard was "No money, no capital budget."

But we did hear that setting the PFD in place and holding was a priority as we as a funding education. Though we at the City of Kodiak do not fund schools (Kodiak Island Borough does), I strongly urge you to fund increased dollars to schools districts. The KOBSD recently decided to close one elementary school after multiple meetings and testimonies. It was a hard decision.

And you as legislators have hard decisions to make. Do we need new revenue? Yes we do in order to continue vital services to our communities. There are options for new revenue and I would encourage you to explore those options. Thank you for your service.

Mayor Pat Branson
Sent from my iPad

Governor Mike Dunleavy
Honorable Senator Gary Stevens
Honorable Sarah Vance

February 7, 2025

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Senator Stevens and Representative Vance,

On behalf of Homer Shores Boardwalk I write to express our strong support for the City of Homer's FY26 capital request for local sponsor match funds to reauthorize the US Army Corps of Engineers Homer Spit Revetment General Investigation. While we recognize the considerable fiscal constraints on the State's budget this year, an updated investigation is critical to address severe coastal erosion on the Homer Spit that threatens Alaska Highway Route 1, part of the National Highway System and the access it grants to local, State and Federal critical infrastructure.

The Homer Spit is an incredibly important economic engine for the region, providing freight, emergency response, multi-modal transportation and recreational services to both residents and visitors. Severe erosion is threatening the highway and has already caused loss of uplands, damage to infrastructure and service disruptions, and last year local and state disaster declarations when businesses suffered significant damage and one lane of the highway collapsed. Emergency repairs performed are temporary and costly; there remains the real potential for future life and safety issues during coastal storms.

Personally, my husband and I have owned an acre of ocean frontage on the Spit since 2015. This acre is also the site of our 2,000 sq. Ft. building and summer housing for staff as well as our Boardwalk overall houses 22+ businesses. In the last 10 years, the erosion has been so significant there are areas with 19' of missing beach. Post-Swan Lake Fire, then Covid closures, our Boardwalk was temporarily condemned by the State Fire Marshall due to erosional degradation to the structure despite our bi-annual beach nourishment mitigation efforts (at an annual averaged cost of nearly \$37,000). Fortunately, we were finally able to reopen ALL BUSINESSES after 6-months and after \$25,000 in engineering and survey expense, and a \$775,000 structural investment. I am not alone. Other areas on the west side of the Spit continue to lose ground impacting over 80 small businesses.

This year, we have added another \$50,000 in engineering costs and additional North End revetment measures as required by the State Fire Marshall to bring our new total to \$1.3m reinvested into the structure alone. We still have sand replacement to address in the Spring as does most of the West side of the Spit due to the storm surge which we estimate our repairs to be \$69,500. With the sand loss, our North end revetment cost continues to grow mid project as the ground must be build back up for equipment to access the height the Boardwalk now resides at. We have leveraged our home and our other assets just to complete this work so that businesses

may continue to operate. Other Spit owners are also financially tapped out on repairing the ocean and storm surge damages in part resulting after highway 'temporary stabilization' events of the past 15 years.

This erosion, due to more severe and frequent storm surge weather events, cannot be solved by a singular property owner's action. We support the City's effort to work collaboratively with the Alaska Department of Transportation and the US Army Corps of Engineers to protect the Homer Spit through the General Investigation. I urge the State to contribute to the local sponsor match requirement to help leverage Federal participation in project design, engineering, construction and long-term maintenance.

I understand that the US Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District recognizes the need to update the investigation, and they annually lists the project in their Work Plan. The City of Homer is advocating at the Federal level for the General Investigation and has committed match funds, as well engaging in a productive working relationship with Alaska DOT&PF in addressing the issue.

Sustaining a fully functioning highway and freight route, and the recreational, hospitality and port infrastructure is vital for supporting year-round jobs and generating significant revenue sources for the region. It is vital for the transport of essential goods to smaller, non-road connected communities around Kachemak Bay and throughout Southcentral and Western Alaska.

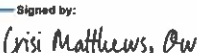
Engaging a General Investigation brings multi-agency focus, scientific expertise and modern technological advances together to support a resilient design for lasting preservation measures that will be more cost effective than frequent emergency road rebuilds and benefit Homer, the Kenai Peninsula, Southcentral and Western Alaska, and Federal interests in so many ways. Thank you for supporting this greatly needed project.

Respectfully,

Named Business Owners, Signatures and Title

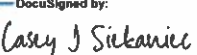
DocuSigned by:


8210339F70104C8
Chad Matthews, Captain & Owner O'Neil's Charters

Signed by:

Crisi Matthews, Owner Homer Shores

DocuSigned by:

Eric M. Raub

DocuSigned by:

Casey J. Sikaniec

Signed by:


David Groesbeck, Owner Diamond Ridge Art Studio


Signed by:

Steve Stead

Signed by:

Debbie Speakman, Owner Sea Sweets, Sea Suites & Shoreline Scoops

DocuSigned by:

Mark G. Speakman

Signed by:

Olga Amaral, Owner Diamond Ridge Art Studio

From: [Billeen Carlson](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: It's time
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 4:33:06 PM

I am writing to urge you to consider implementing a modest, targeted state income tax on individuals earning over \$100,000 annually to address Alaska's ongoing revenue shortfalls. As you are aware, Alaska remains the only state in the nation without an individual income tax, leaving much-needed revenue untapped—revenue that could stabilize our budget, support critical infrastructure, and ensure a sustainable economic future.

Industries such as oil and gas, commercial fishing, and tourism generate significant income within our state but contribute disproportionately little to the tax base relative to the benefits they receive. These industries rely heavily on Alaska's extensive infrastructure, including highways, bridges, ports, and airports, which are maintained at significant cost to the state.

The oil and gas industry benefits from state-subsidized roadways and port facilities for the transportation of equipment and extracted resources, while commercial fishing operations depend on harbors, navigational aids, and state-funded fishery management services. Similarly, the tourism industry profits from the upkeep of national and state parks, recreational trails, and public safety services, including emergency response and law enforcement.

These industries extract resources, utilize public lands, and leverage the state's transportation and communication networks to maximize their profits while contributing little in return to sustain these critical services. On top of this, many non-residents working in these industries extract substantial earnings from Alaska's resources while making use of our roads, ports, emergency services, and public lands—yet they take their untaxed wages out of state.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), a significant portion of wages earned in Alaska leaves the state untaxed, representing a major loss of potential revenue (itep.org)

To address this imbalance, I propose a 5% income tax solely on individuals earning more than \$100,000 annually. This measure would:

- **Ensure higher earners contribute fairly:** A tax threshold of \$100,000 protects lower- and middle-income Alaskans while ensuring that those who have the most financial capacity contribute to state services.
- **Capture revenue from non-residents:** Many workers in high-earning industries, such as commercial fishing, oil extraction, and seasonal tourism, are non-residents. A state income tax would finally ensure they contribute their fair share to the infrastructure they rely on.
- **Diversify revenue sources:** Relying on oil and gas revenue alone is unsustainable, as fluctuating global oil prices repeatedly leave the state in financial uncertainty. A stable income tax would provide much-needed fiscal resilience.

Revenue Potential and Economic Benefits

A previous ITEP study estimated that a 2.5% flat tax in Alaska could generate between \$526 million and \$696 million annually, with \$38 million to \$51 million coming from non-residents. A 5% tax on earnings above \$100,000 would likely yield even more significant revenue while ensuring that the tax burden does not disproportionately affect working-class Alaskans (taxfoundation.org).

By ensuring that high-earning individuals and non-residents contribute to the infrastructure and services they use, we can create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous Alaska. I urge you to champion this initiative to protect our state's future and ensure that all who benefit from Alaska's resources pay their fair share.

Thank you for your time and service to our great state. I look forward to your leadership in addressing this critical issue.

From: L.W.
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Southeast Alaska Budget Testimony
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 7:20:38 PM

I am thankful for the opportunity to provide a public testimony
The cost of living in Juneau is ever increasing
The citizens voted for a seven percent increase back when none of the crisis issues existed
The city will be increasing utilities
The flood victims will have a big expense towards flood aversion work, from what I can see they had no input or choice in the matter
The cost of food is ever increasing and Fred Meyer is under construction which is delaying availability of products
People are being evicted from apartments being converted to co-ops with little to no warning
Businesses have closed entirely, or they close for a day or temporarily because they cannot afford to pay the people who showed up overtime, or the business is suddenly closed because no employees showed up to work
The tourism season has extended from April to October, causing an extra long housing shortage
The legislation is in session but housing is typically secured prior to the session beginning
There is generally six weeks when a person or family can find a more affordable place to live
When I was looking for a place to live in Juneau temporarily, fifteen years ago, the cost for an 8x8 unfurnished room with utilities was about \$1,850 per month with a bunch of room mates, I can only imagine how much it has become more difficult
The AirBnBs and other short-term housing is a problem yet, there's empty places left empty until the summer season
The property taxes are greatly increasing, no matter what, this has to stop, the city needs to figure out another way to maintain their budgets rather than always-always-always-always! putting it on property taxes, enough already
I used to do collections at the housing authority, a tenant said to me, do you think I like working at the one restaurant in town where I have to wear makeup to get more tips and have a new boss all the time who talks down to me? Jobs and hope were low before, it is only getting worse

Move the capital to Mat-Su already, give Juneau affordable housing back, stop messing with our PFD because there's no reserves for tough times for other legislation short-comings, this is not the time to take away income from people who need every cent to survive

The housing shortage in Juneau is because legislative housing overlaps tourism season housing issues, don't vote on it, just move the capital to Mat-Su, do something that is an efficiency decision, Juneau will always-always-always have a historical value for the tourism industry that will never go away to sustain a tourism economy

Tourism is a bigger priority than the happiness of the livelihood of the citizens who were born and raised here, who are indigenous to Alaska, and to those who call Alaska home, we can no longer go to the restaurant with the best view because the biggest cruise ship ever is docked and there's a delusion that tourism is making people rich, even the tourists are upset at the mass tourism traffic hindering their experience, tour cruise ships are contributing more to the air, water, sewer, garbage pollutions than the offset of the income, there are other countries that have graffiti, "go away tourists", "leave tourists", closing their shops to tourists, when will the city draw the line to the level of tourism traffic?

Tourism is not the end all to income, the city needs to diversify especially when there have been mass layoffs and going on vacation is not in people's short term future

When the "No cruise ship Saturdays" was brought forward, there was so much negativity towards anyone who commented on Facebook who supported. When I provided links to resources on existing data because people wanted to know what the data is, my comments of data resources were deleted. People said in private they were scared to sign the ballot. This type of behavior is concerning, I believe the legal term is being under duress.

I learned that luxury cruise ships, such as Virgin and Ritz Carlton have booked Alaskan cruises to start next year. It does not look like the economy can support this, especially by next year. Enough is enough, stop it.

The Alaska PFD is important to the majority of the recipients to use towards bills, towards a much needed break, to help live life in an expensive place to live, there's rumors this will be dramatically reduced, stop messing with our other income that is much needed, I'm betting less people will use this for vacation this year because of the mass layoffs

I know my exhaustion is working against me because of everything going on and I am fatigued from attending town halls and public testimonies and

researching and trying to figure out what is going on today, I am leaving things out at this time
Thank you for your time and consideration

--

Take care,

Leah Williams

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hope is the only thing stronger than fear

Doniece Gott

From: Abigail Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Operating Budget Please Increase BSA by \$1000

Dear Committee Members,

Please increase the base student allocation (BSA) by at least \$1000 per student. Our public charter school here in Fairbanks has shown amazing performance, but we are facing a budget deficit even though we forgo many of the services other schools can afford like a school counselor.

Thank You!

Abigail

--

Abigail Paul
Resource Teacher
Watershed School
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this email. Please notify the sender immediately by email if you have received this email by mistake and delete this email from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.

Doniece Gott

From: Christopher Brown [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 56, 57, and 58

Greetings,

I am writing today regarding SB 56, SB 57, and SB 58, and the need to fund public education through an increase in the BSA. Districts throughout the state are facing a never-ending need to cut. This does not meet the constitutional mandate to fund and maintain schools. The BSA must respond to the inflation we have experienced over the past ten plus years.

Thank you for your support of public education, and the children in our great state.

Respectfully,

Christopher Brown
Homer, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Barbara Stek [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:43 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding

The lack of secure and inflation proofed education funding in Alaska has reached crisis proportions. I am a retired teacher who continues to substitute in special education resource rooms and can easily see what the lack of funds is costing our schools, our students, and our staff. We cannot find qualified educators who want to work in Alaska when they are faced with no proper pension and no Social Security benefits. My school, Baxter Elementary, was on the list for closure. We fought hard and hope that we will survive for many years. However, other schools did not fare so well. And now the custodial staff may be outsourced. We must put our priorities in order and for me, education is number 1. I know this will be a battle, but we must increase the BSA for the good of our state!! Thanks for your time.
Barbara W. Stek Anchorage, Alaska [REDACTED]

Barbara's E2U 

Doniece Gott

From: Celia Foley [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:53 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education

Please make education your top priority.

Thank you.

Celia Foley
[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Lila Lee Little [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 12:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lila Johnson, and I have been a public school teacher in the Kenai Peninsula School District for 17 years. I am emailing you today because I believe in the power of public education and the responsibility we all share in ensuring that every child in our state has access to a quality education.

Funding Alaska's public school system is not just an option—it is a constitutional duty. The vast majority of our students—our future leaders, workers, and community members—attend public schools. Yet, year after year, we have watched funding fail to keep pace with inflation, leading to larger class sizes, fewer resources, and the loss of valuable programs that engage and support our students. These cuts are not just a numbers on a spreadsheet; they have devastating consequences that will impact the children sitting in my classroom today, as well as our entire community here on the Kenai Peninsula and around the state. Already, I see the effects of previous cuts firsthand. I see teachers stretching every resource to its limit. I see students struggling because they don't have access to intervention programs that used to exist. I see families frustrated, knowing that their children are not getting the same level of education they once did.

A Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase of \$1,808 is not an arbitrary number. It is the amount needed to simply keep up with the rising costs of education, ensuring our students have access to the teachers, learning materials, and opportunities they deserve. Without this increase, we are not just cutting budgets—we are cutting futures.

In our district, we are facing a staggering \$17 million budget deficit. To bridge this huge monetary gap, we are looking again at eliminating pools, theaters, arts, sports, and other extracurricular activities, stripping away opportunities that keep students engaged, build confidence, and foster a sense of belonging. These programs are not just "extras"—they are lifelines for many students, offering a creative outlet, a team to belong to, and skills that extend beyond the classroom. Additionally, school consolidations would force hundreds of students into longer bus rides, leading to lost sleep, chronic exhaustion, and missed opportunities to participate in after-school activities that shape well-rounded individuals.

The district is also facing massive teacher layoffs and reductions in support staff, meaning fewer adults to provide individualized attention, intervention services, and the support our students need to thrive. With increased class sizes, students will struggle to receive the instruction and guidance necessary for success, making it harder to close achievement gaps and provide the high-quality education they deserve. These cuts will not just impact schools—they will weaken our entire community, driving families away, reducing opportunities for our youth, and diminishing the strength of our public education system. Without immediate action and proper funding, we are failing our students and jeopardizing Alaska's future.

Our students deserve better. Our communities deserve better. A significant investment in our public schools is needed NOW. I urge you to fulfill your constitutional duty and prioritize the future of Alaska by increasing the BSA.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Alaska's students.

Lila Johnson
Concerned parent of 4 kids attending 4 schools in the K-Pen

Doniece Gott

From: Temperance Tinker [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 8:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Quality Schools

Dear Finance Committee,

I need to add my voice to the conversation as a parent of two children who will attend public school in Anchorage for the next 11 years. PLEASE raise the BSA!

Quality education keeps communities strong and is a predictor of local growth, sustainable budgets, and happy families. Please do not create an education desert for our children by forcing the families with means to flee public education and eventually the state.

I grew up with quality education from Kenai Peninsula School District in the 80's and 90's. My husband grew up in Atlanta and had to go to private school to get a quality education because the county he lived in did not offer safe and equitable education to its residents.

We both used to see Alaska as a great place to raise children full of grit and the outdoors AS WELL AS phenomenal opportunities for things like Spanish Immersion and IB programs. Please restore our faith in education for our young children (our daughter is 6 years old and attending Government Hill Elementary and our son is 3.5 years old and in daycare.)

Please also restore our faith in our own workplaces having teachers in classrooms under 32. I have been teaching at West High for 15 years and have never seen cuts like those proposed. My husband teaches at Central Middle and is constantly worried about how he will teach quality science curriculum if his class size gets any bigger.

Please fund education!

Our kids deserve it.

Our teachers rely on it.

Our communities will be destroyed without it.

Thank you for accepting emails from constituents,

Sincerely,

Temperance Tinker Kays

Doniece Gott

From: zack youngman [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 11:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fund education

Please fund education! Our state constitution is clear that education must be funded for everyone! Looking at all other areas of public service have received increased funding except education! The people have spoken and elected representatives to do just this! Fund public education and keep Alaskas future alive!

Anita Youngman
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Diana Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 11:35 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA ASAP

Senate Finance Committee,

Don't delay increasing the BSA to match inflation. Our schools have been dying a slow death by years and years of cut budgets. We do not need education reform from the top down right now; all we need is funding for the programs and people already in place and on the ground, day in and day out, in our schools.

Diana Johnson

Anchorage resident

Doniece Gott

From: Ricky Lind [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 10:07 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Lind testimony: state operating budget

Good morning Friends,

I am writing in support of education funding within the state operating budget.

I recently left the public elementary school classroom after sixteen years; due to short staffing, I was assigned all duties possible---before school, all three lunches, and after-school. The duty assignments negatively impacted my work/life balance, as my Sundays served as lesson planning days at that point.

In addition, all music classes were moved to an hour-long session per week, including Kindergarten. Music concepts were not well-retained due to this scheduling, but my administration was in a catch-22 situation where student supervision was needed regardless 4-5 open positions who would have served duties in my place.

I worked closely with administration, the teacher union, and a mentor; I previously served as a mentor, but had to dissolve my mentorship with my mentee in order to receive mentoring. Although the process was personally embarrassing to me, obtaining a mentor in order to best deliver music instruction to my students in weekly hour-long sessions was vital.

Prior to leaving the classroom, administration noted my day-to-day schedule projection to be the same; to best avoid another two stomach ulcers, I opted to resign.

I have since changed careers, and recently attended the Alaska Education Retention and Recruitment Center's recent gathering regarding retention and recruitment across generations. So many of Alaska's educational leaders were in-attendance, and I am confident they will practice what we learned those days---combine our practices with adequate funding...Alaska's education will have such a good report.

Blessings,

--

-Ricky Lind, Jr.
he/him/his
BMusEd., Ed.M., CWE

**Southcentral Foundation RAISE Program
NIEA Fiscal Committee**

Doniece Gott

From: Walt Sonen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 4:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: education funding

greetings:

it is time that i spoke up about the woeful state of public education funding in our relatively wealthy state. education is surely a foundation that we are at our own peril to slight or ignore. the kids shape the future for all of us. think of it as infrastructure. a vibrant school is the heart of a vibrant community. it is a place the the whole community can gather 'round and support. in recent years here in seldovia, we have seen families move through to seek better educational opportunities for their kids. we currently have a group of parents who have opted to homeschool. these kids number approximately the same if not more than their peers who are enrolled in our school. the parents' reasons are diverse, but i believe that they choose to take on that effort, time, and responsibility because they feel that the existing school option lacks quality and consistency. safety is also a concern. our rate of teacher turnover is high. we lack the needed level of structure and supervision. basic, caring education especially at the primary level is crucial for the development of our kids.

yes. simply throwing money at a problem does not solve it, i agree. but the system has been underfunded for so long that it seems to lack the vibrancy and our trust that we deserve and have every right to expect.

all of these things seem to have a snowball effect. generous funding gives us a good school which helps us toward a vibrant connected community. this is not wasted money! it is an an investment for the future for all of us and happily done, the product of an engaged society.

thank you, walt sonen

Doniece Gott

From: Hal Neace [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:23 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support Alaska Public Education to the fullest

Dear Senate Finance Committee members,

I implore you to fully fund public education after years of denying adequate financial support to keep our greatest resource in our state....our students. Nothing is more crucial than our development of public education and the support of the thousands of dedicated and honorable teachers who perform the greatest public service for mankind: educating our youth. And by the way, if you think education is expensive, try ignorance!

I am pretty tired of the argument that charter schools and private schools are doing a better job than our public sector schools. You all know this is not true. When you stop selecting out higher-performing students there is no evidence that charter schools do anything better than public schools. Unfortunately, the current governor uses the ole trick of cherry-picking the current data to support his opinions and as a past educator, he should be ashamed of that tactic. If you truly want a level playing field in this discussion then start addressing the inequalities and poverty levels in our culture which nobody seems to do, at least not that I have seen. It seems only fully funding public education will do that. Please fully fund our public school system or as John F. Kennedy said and I quote: **"Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource."**

Hal Neace

PS: please respond to this at [REDACTED]

"The new dawn blooms as we free it, for there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it, If only we're brave enough to be it." from The Hill We Climb by~Amanda Gorman~National Youth Poet Laureate

"Courage is more exhilarating than fear, and in the long run, it is easier. We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just one step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it is not as dreadful as it appeared, [and] discovering we have the strength to stare it down." ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Doniece Gott

From: Tara Craytor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 6:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please support an increase to the BSA!

Esteemed State Legislators,

I am the parent of four children who attend Seward public schools (elementary, middle and high), director of Seward's only dedicated general education preschool program, middle school parent representative for Seward Site Based Council, and, needless to say, a huge advocate for public education.

I must urge you to please support a meaningful increase to our base student allocation. Please do not support the Governor's proposed education package that promotes "school choice". There isn't a choice for most students in Alaska. The only "choice" in Seward is our public schools, our public schools that have been plundered and pillaged to the point they are bleeding out. Teachers have been stretched too thin for too long. Our Seward teachers are incredible professionals doing the best they can, but one individual can not be expected to do the workload of 5 or 10. This is why our Alaska schools are failing, this is why our test scores are at the bottom of the nation. Look at the data, it is the states that FUND education who have the highest test scores!

I trust that you all know that already, so I am going to tell you a personal story of how school choice is not really a choice in my family. My oldest son, a freshman at Seward High School, is on the autism spectrum. His individualized education plan (IEP), as is supposed to be enforced by federal law, states that he is to have the "full time support of a special education staff member providing support to no more than two other special education students". Right now Seward High School has one full time special education teacher, one half time special education teacher, and one full time paraprofessional. I am uncertain of the exact number of special education students at Seward High, but assuming we are near the national average of 15% of a student population on IEPs and with Seward High School enrollment around 170 students, we can assume 25 to 30 students are on an IEP. The math does not work out, my son is not getting his free appropriate public education. This is apparent in the tears, stress and frustration he shares with us on an almost nightly basis at home, lamenting the fact that his school does not care about him. He does not understand that it isn't his school that doesn't care about him, it is his state. The State of Alaska, does not care about him.

This situation is not unique to this year. The lack of staffing in special education has been an issue for our entire experience in Seward schools beginning when he was in kindergarten. When he entered sixth grade at Seward Middle School there were ZERO special education staff. We employed the help of a lawyer from the Disability Law Center, with the intent to sue the school district or the State of Alaska for their inability to provide our son with his free appropriate public education. Our end goal being that the state would provide the funds necessary for the school district to pay teachers and paraprofessionals a livable wage so they could staff the open positions. After many meetings with the lawyer and the school district, we were ultimately told we would likely win a lawsuit, and the ruling would be that the school district would be required to pay for our son to go to a residential facility or boarding school. Let me say that again, we were told that we would have to send our 11 year old child away from home in order for him to get an education that met his needs. Let me be very clear, my child has "high functioning" autism, he is in almost all general education classes, he has an IQ in the "gifted" range, he is not an overly complicated case, but he does have special needs. My point being, if my son's educational requirements are not being met NO special education students are being provided their appropriate education. These students DO NOT have school choice, private schools DO NOT have to admit them. If a private school does decide to admit a student with an IEP their families are required to pay for the additional services they require. Gutting public education only further marginalizes already at risk populations. My son is brilliant. He can, and should, become an incredible, contributing member of society, but he needs educational support to get there. This is why we have special education, this is why we have public education, this is why it MUST be free and must be supported! Alaska schools must be able to staff their buildings, once the positions are posted we must be able to pay teachers a competitive, livable wage, and we must support

Doniece Gott

From: Jennifer Myrick Pedersen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:45 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Public Education

Greetings from Kodiak,

My name is Jennifer Myrick Pedersen, I am a lifelong Alaskan, mother of three children in public schools in Kodiak, and an elementary school counselor. My children's future, and my job is in your hands. I urge you to support HB 69 or a senate version of an education funding bill to raise to the BSA to a minimum of \$680, to include inflation proofing, and a long term funding plan to keep public schools growing the future leaders and community members for our state. Public education in smaller communities like Kodiak, is a vital component of our communities, and we are personally impacted by the closure for the 2025-2026 school year of the school where 2 of my children currently attend, and where I work. Please help be part of the solution for our kids!

If I can answer any questions, please reach out. Many thanks for your support!

Jennifer Myrick Pedersen

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Cliff Wilson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:35 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Educate our kids!

Legislators,

The fact that the budget has been flatlined for so long during a time of epic inflation explains itself. I shouldn't have to go into the details, you all need to fund education properly and make sure that the governor cannot veto it. This is a crime and will lead to a feeble workforce, and serious problem with "brain drain" as people will be leaving as a result of your lack of due diligence.

Please vote appropriately to fund education for the future. I think it is ironic that the governor runs on a platform of "north to the future" and yet he vetoed a budget last year that would barely fund public education, and now we face cutting crucial programs, including my children's French immersion program at O'Malley elementary school, not to mention art and sports, important activities related to science and engineering as well. It is obvious that there are lots of private interests driving the governor's ideology, but elected officials have a broad constituency and a small vocal minority of personal religious goals and agendas related to maintaining an elitist, status-oriented education system cannot override the essential mission of public education which supports a Democratic Society.

This is not a matter of ethics, more one of pragmatics. We need a good workforce and responsible citizens to function. Here in the "last frontier", charter schools and religious education, not to mention homeschooling, do not fully prepare people for engagement in the challenges moving forward for the state, the nation, the world. It enrages me to think that the state budget would prioritize those programs over public education, especially when this has to happen at the expense of programming that allow for high-quality experiences and optimized educational models in our public schools.

Bottom line: if public funding is under funded, my children will not be educated properly and therefore we will be leaving the state which means losing crucial workforce participants in me and my wife. Please vote appropriately.

Cliff Wilson
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, Alaska
99516

Doniece Gott

From: Erin Fagel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase

I am a speech-language pathologist in the Juneau School District as well as a parent of a 6th grader in Juneau School District. I see first hand both as a parent and certified staff that our school districts are in dire need of sufficient funding so that we can hire and retain quality staff and allow are students the high level of education that they deserve. We are not ranked as having high test scores in the US, but that doesn't mean we need to continue that path.

Please support a BSA increase to at least \$1000 or more.

Thank you for your time,
Erin Fagel

Doniece Gott

From: Lia Keller [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support Local Education

Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge you to prioritize and support an increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Alaska's public schools. As an Alaskan, I believe that investing in our public education system is essential to the future success of our state. Without adequate funding, our schools cannot provide the high-quality education that every child deserves.

Public schools are the backbone of our communities, providing equitable access to education for all students, regardless of their background or location. However, without sufficient funding, schools struggle to retain qualified teachers, maintain safe facilities, and provide the necessary resources to support student learning. The consequences of underfunding are dire—not only does it create greater inequities in education, but it also diminishes opportunities for our children to thrive and contribute to Alaska's future.

I am deeply concerned about the increasing shift toward private and charter schools becoming the norm in our state. Public education is a public good that should not be overshadowed by privatization efforts that divert critical resources away from the vast majority of Alaska's students. Strong public schools benefit the entire state, from rural villages to urban centers, ensuring that every child has access to quality education regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Our teachers are working tirelessly to educate and support our students, yet they are often underpaid and overburdened due to inadequate funding. If we want Alaska to flourish, we must invest in our educators and provide them with the resources they need to succeed. Increasing the BSA is a crucial step toward ensuring that our teachers, students, and communities have the support necessary for a brighter future.

I urge you to take decisive action and prioritize increased funding for public schools. Our children, our teachers, and our communities are counting on you. Thank you for your time and dedication to the well-being of Alaska's future generations. I look forward to your leadership on this issue.

Thank you,

Lia Keller

Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: dp [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for increasing the base student allocation

Hello,

I would like to express my support for a \$1000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) this year, followed by \$400 increases in the next two years and annual inflation adjustments thereafter.

Increasing the BSA benefits neighborhood schools, charter schools, and public homeschool options.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support.

Your constituent,

Dylan Proudfoot
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801



Copper Valley Development Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 9, Glennallen, AK 99588 * 907-822-3071 phone

www.coppervalley.org

Senate Finance Committee Testimony

Wednesday February 26, 2025, 1 pm LIO Glennallen

Jason Hoke, Executive Director (jhoke@coppervalley.org)

I. Copper River Region- ARDOR and CRV-Rural Transportation Planning Organization

- YOU are our Borough Assembly!
- Introduction and description of our Region.
- CVDA and RTPO mission and purpose

II. Reallocation of FY2025 Copper River Hwy Wood Canyon Bridget and Trails Ref. #65237 (see attached)

- \$4.25 M for 3 years = \$12.75 M!! NO ROI
- Was not approved or prioritized by RTPO.
- Road to no where with no ROI, only benefitting dip net fees from private lands and corporations, no residents there or any other value for this money.
- State is a partner and supposed to run ADOT projects by the RTPO and this never hit the radar.
- Other priorities for the money identified by the CRV-RTPO, ARDOR, and Regional Stakeholders/ Residents!

III. ENERGY- Solomon Gulch Dam Raise (See Attached) \$6.7 M

- Shovel Ready and will provide extended hydro production lowering energy costs; lessen diesel use
- 2.5 Million additional Kwh/ year for additional eco. development purposes

IV. Gulkana Airport Extension and Expansion- \$6 M with and ROI for STATE!!!

- ADOT, CVDA, RTPO working to build up Gulkana Airport Infrastructure for commercial, economic, and resource development.
- Build several large hangers and warehouses for commercial use
- Sen. Sullivan working with us to extend airport runway to 6800 ft.
- Jan. 22 mtg with business development at Airport promising
- Food Hub-Food Sec. Task Force Priority and Objective
- This money can also be used to leverage other Federal money at airport.

V. Reallocation Request- Please take the money from the “road to no where...again” and allocate it for the Solomon Dam Raise Project and the Gulkana Airport.

- Questions, Comments, Cries of Outrage?
- Additional information can be provided jhoke@coppervalley.org

Copper River Highway Wood Canyon Bridges & Trails**FY2025 Request:****\$4,250,000****Reference No:****65237****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Construction**Category:** Transportation**Location:** Copper Center**House District:** Copper

River/Delta/Tok/Yukon (HD 36)

Contact: Dom Pannone**Impact House District:** Copper

River/Delta/Tok/Yukon (HD 36)

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2024 - 06/30/2029 **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2956**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Construct improvements along the Copper River Highway from Chitna to Haley Creek, including the completion of the O'Brien Creek and Haley Creek Drainage Crossings. Work includes completing road, bridge, wayside, and erosion protection improvements along this entire route, and preservation activities for the early 1900s railway trestles. The improvements will be completed in collaboration with the Chitina Joint Task Force.

Funding:	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	Total
1004 Gen Fund	\$4,250,000	\$4,250,000	\$4,250,000				\$12,750,000
Total:	\$4,250,000	\$4,250,000	\$4,250,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,750,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

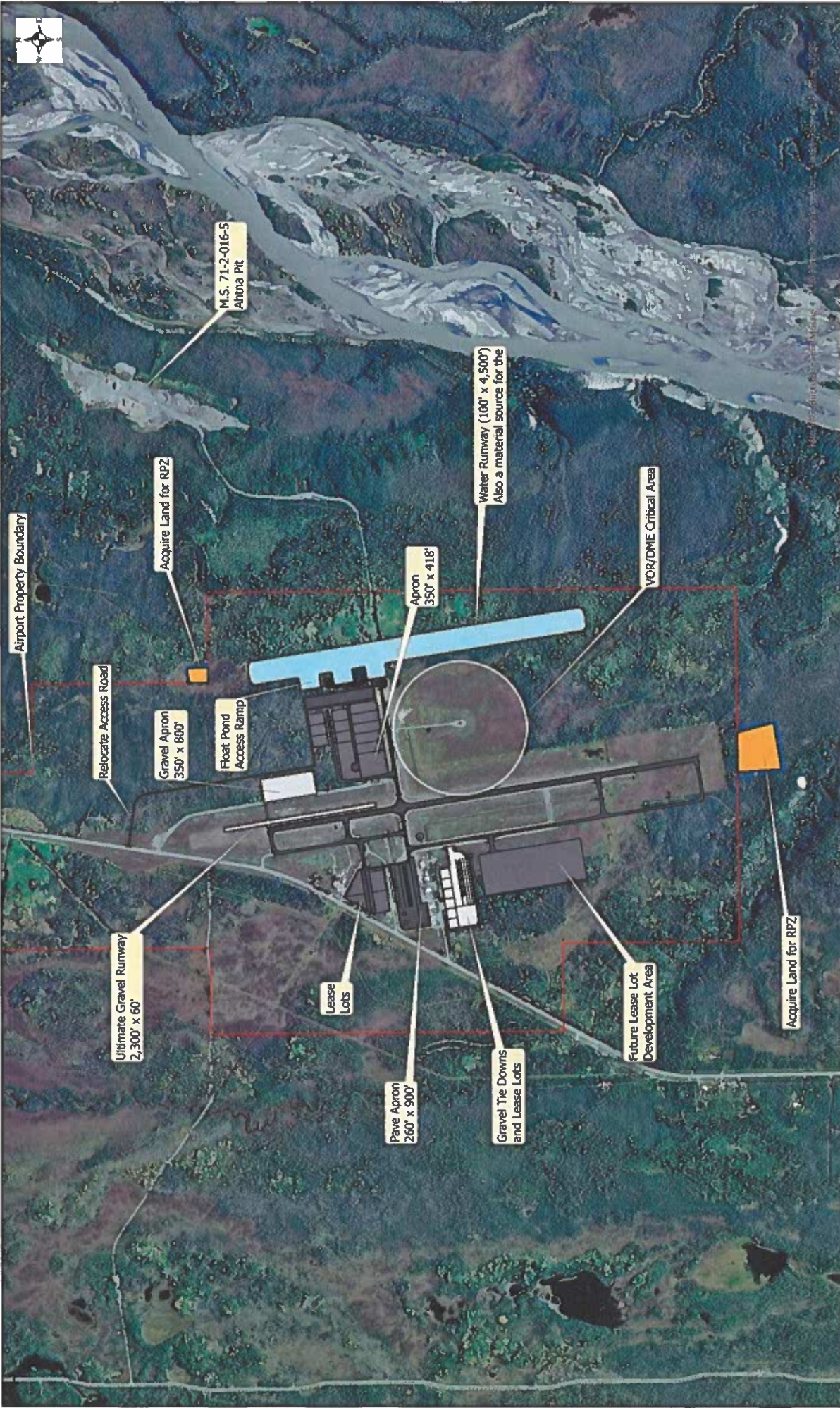
Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:**Project Description/Justification:**

Chitina is a community located in the Copper River Valley in Alaska. Along the Copper River, a trail follows the old alignment of the Copper River Railway, an early 1900's railway route that transported copper ore from Kennicott, Alaska to Cordova, Alaska. A specific section of this old alignment travels between the community of Chitina and Haley Creek, a drainage located approximately eight miles south. This specific length of road and trail is heavily used in the summer by fisherman, as part of the Chitina subdistrict personal use fishery.

The State of Alaska has a right of way along this route which accesses the Copper River in several locations along the eight-mile project area. The right of way is surrounded by private lands, including Native allotments, Native corporations, and other private lands. Over the past several years, the State has been working closely with the Tribe and corporations to ensure land uses for both residents and private landowners are compatible. Several areas of trail improvements have been identified by the Chitina Joint Task Force, a group consisting of local government leaders and landowners.



	STATE OF ALASKA Department of Transportation and Public Facilities 2301 Pegar Road Fairbanks, AK 99709			Date August 2024	Figure 1 Gulkana, Alaska
	0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet				

Gulkana Runway Extension

FAA Runway Extension Pilot Program

Scope of Proposed Project:

This project will extend the Gulkana runway by 1500 feet, enabling turbojets and jet-propelled aircraft to use it on a consistent and growing basis. Ample airport-controlled land exists for this purpose, however the RPZ for the extended runway will require land acquisition.

From the recently approved GKN Airport Layout Plan narrative:

Runway 15L-33R – Retain the flexibility to extend the runway to the south if needed for larger aircraft than are currently forecasted. Resurface the 2007 runway pavement and replace the medium intensity runway lighting system from 1992. Both the runway surface and lighting are performing well now.

Budget:

Project	Cost	Description
Runway extension	\$20M-30M	Extend runway 15L-33R to 6,500 feet, extend parallel taxiway to both ends of runway, and extend runway and taxiway lighting to ends of runway.

Airport Background:

The Gulkana Airport (GKN), classified as a Community On-Road Airport by the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP) is located about 3 miles from the crossroads of the Glenn and Richardson Hwy, located in Gulkana, within the Copper River Census Area (CVCA), a 2023 regional population estimate of 2677. It is about 5 miles from Glennallen, one of the larger communities in the CVCA with one of the largest concentration of businesses in the region. The airport is about 117 miles north of Valdez and 242 miles south of Fairbanks. In 2023, the Denali Commission Distressed Communities Report designated 70% of the communities in the CVCA as distressed. The estimated 2023 population of the CRCA is 2667 and Upper Tanana area is 9,670. This combined area is largely road accessible with some off-road communities associated with Gulkana. Tok Junction and Gulkana airports are currently the bases for most of the air taxi and private general aviation traffic in the Copper Basin region and they host most of the enplanements, operations, and based aircraft at public airports in the Copper Basin Region. The Gulkana airport also serves community and locally classed airports off the road system, including McCarthy and May Creek. Gulkana airport supports seasonal firefighting operations.

Gulkana Airport is primarily used for scheduled and charter flights, military training, medevac services, law enforcement, firefighting, recreation flying, and flight training. Reeve Air Alaska currently has an Essential Air Service (EAS) subsidy for scheduled air service to and from Anchorage, and Copper Valley Air Service currently has an EAS subsidy and a mail contract between Gulkana and May Creek and McCarthy. Much of the air traffic at this airport is generated by flights to the Wrangell – St. Elias National Park and Preserve and other back country areas for tours, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and other back country activities. During summer and fall

hunting season, a large amount of General Aviation (GA) traffic by aircraft not based at Gulkana Airport uses the airport to access fuel and other services. The airport is owned and operated by the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF).

Table 1 shows airports within the Interior Alaska Transportation Plan area boundaries. Gulkana Airport is the “Regional Hub” airport identified in the AASP Airport Classifications table.

Table 1. Summary of IATP Airport Ownership & Classifications

IATP Airport Ownership	IATP AASP Airport Classifications
• 39 DOT&PF	• 1 Small Hub
• 4 Municipal/Local Government	• 1 Regional Hub
• 5 National Park Service (NPS)	• 6 Community On-Road
• 3 Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	• 11 Community On-Road
• 2 Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	• 1 Local NPIAS High-Activity
• 1 Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)	• 10 Local NPIAS Low-Activity
• 4 Private	• 6 Local Non-NPIAS
• 4 Public Domain	• 18 Unclassified Landing Strip

NPS: National Park Service | BLM: Bureau of Land Management | DNR: Department of Natural Resources | ADF&G: Alaska Department of Fish & Game | NPIAS: FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

Operations

Limited reliable data is published for small airports like GKN. One data source, the USDOT Air Carrier Activity Information System (ACAIS) only publishes data on scheduled commercial air traffic. Other sources, such as the FAA's Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) are not reliable for low activity airports. TAF and ACAIS data for Gulkana and shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Gulkana Airport 2021 Terminal Area Forecasts

Enplanements	414
Operations	5,122
Air Carrier	996
Air Taxi/Commuter	540
Military	155
GA	1,855
Local	1,576
Based Aircraft	21

Source: FAA Terminal Area Forecasts.

Table 3. Gulkana Airport Passenger Enplanement and Operations Data – ACAIS 2015 to 2021

	Enplanements	Operations
2015	147	648
2016	354	612
2017	327	594

2018	406	758
2019	381	638
2020	150	622
2021	408	602
Change - 2015 to 2021	15.7%	-1.0%

Because of the limited data, a recent forecast developed by Southeast Strategies in 2021 for the Upper Tanana Airport Planning Study relied heavily on interviews of airport users and generators of aviation demand such as the Wrangell – St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The base year of 2019 was used because it was prior to the pandemic. Copper Valley Air Service, who offers scheduled and charter flights was interviewed and accounted for over 1,300 operations per year. Others interviewed included Essential Air Service provider Reeve Air Alaska, McCarthy/Wrangell Mt. Air, 40 Mile Air, air ambulance providers Guardian and LifeMed, Gulkana Fuel, and Maritime Helos. Agencies who provided data included the National Park Service, Alaska State Troopers, Civil Air Patrol, and DOT&PF Leasing and M&O staff.

Fleet Mix and Traffic

Air Carrier/Commuter Traffic – Scheduled air carrier/commuter traffic at Gulkana consists of twice weekly service from Anchorage under an EAS contract with Reeve Air Alaska, and two or more trips weekly under a U.S. mail contract to nearby communities off the road system (mainly McCarthy and Chitina) from Copper Valley Air Service. Aircraft used for this service are King Air 200s, Cessna 172s, Cessna 185s, Cessna 206s, and De Havilland Beavers. Carriers providing both services have expressed plans to increase the number of flights at this airport substantially in the next few years.

Air Taxi Traffic - Air taxi traffic into Gulkana Airport is robust, and includes mostly flight seeing and access to recreation, fishing, and hunting in the Wrangell – St. Elias National Park and Preserve and other back country areas. Backcountry access for goldmine camps, fish hatcheries, remote cabins, remote utility sites, and other off-road areas also creates air taxi traffic at this airport. In 2019, only one air taxi had based aircraft at Gulkana, but several air taxis frequently stop at the airport. Charter helicopters connect Gulkana Airport to remote mining camps and other facilities and back country locations in the region. Air taxi operators sometimes convert to skis or wheel skis in winter, and at least one aircraft uses floats in the summer season. One air taxi operator expressed plans to increase their fleet and operations at Gulkana.

General Aviation Traffic - GA traffic includes private aircraft as well as agency aircraft such as fire-fighting tankers, medevacs, and corporate aircraft. There are 12 private GA aircraft based at Gulkana Airport, accounting for much of the local GA traffic there. The Alaska State Wildlife Troopers and the National Park Service account for three aircraft based at Gulkana Airport. A helicopter based at the airport is chartered to a resource industry, and takes nearly daily flights from Gulkana.

During summer and fall hunting season, a large amount of GA traffic by aircraft not based at GKN uses the airport to access fuel and other services. Aircraft traveling to and from fly-ins and air shows also use the airport. Medevac flights with the King Air 200s and Learjets account for more than weekly itinerant GA traffic at Gulkana. One medevac company was considering building a hangar and establishing a manned medevac base in Gulkana.

Agency and corporate aircraft not based at Gulkana also use the airport. These aircraft can include Canadian Air jets, Gulfstream V corporate jets, and Q-400s and Convair fire tankers.

Military Traffic - Military traffic at GKN consists mostly of helicopter stops (Blackhawks, Chinooks, and sometimes Apaches). They often arrive in groups and perform touch and goes. Infrequently, military C-130s may visit this airport.

Based Aircraft and Fleet Mix - According to FAA TAF data and anecdotal evidence, the number of aircraft based at the Gulkana Airport had been slightly decreasing over time. In 2019 there were about 23 aircraft based at Gulkana Airport. Of those craft, 22 were single-engine fixed wing aircraft, and one was a helicopter. Of the single-engine aircraft, seven were commercial air taxis (such as Cessna 172, 185, and 206, and DHC2 Beavers), three were agency aircraft (PA 18 and Cessna 185), and 12 were private GA aircraft (such as PA 12, PA 18, Cessna 185, and Citabria). The one helicopter (Bell 407) was leased to a corporation from an air taxi company. One air taxi operator expressed plans to increase their fleet and operations at Gulkana.

Aviation Forecast

Air Carrier/Commuter Traffic – Scheduled air carrier/commuter traffic at Gulkana consists of twice weekly service from Anchorage under an EAS contract with Reeve Air Alaska, and two or more trips weekly under a U.S. mail contract to nearby communities off the road system (mainly McCarthy and Chitina) from Copper Valley Air Service. Aircraft used for this service are King Air 200s, Cessna 172s, Cessna 185s, Cessna 206s, and De Havilland Beavers. Carriers providing both services have expressed plans to increase the number of flights at this airport substantially in the next few years.

Air Taxi Traffic - Air taxi traffic into Gulkana Airport is robust, and includes mostly flight seeing and access to recreation, fishing, and hunting in the Wrangell – St. Elias National Park and Preserve and other back country areas. Backcountry access for goldmine camps, fish hatcheries, remote cabins, remote utility sites, and other off-road areas also creates air taxi traffic at this airport. In 2019, only one air taxi had based aircraft at Gulkana, but several air taxis frequently stop at the airport. Charter helicopters connect Gulkana Airport to remote mining camps and other facilities and back country locations in the region. Air taxi operators sometimes convert to skis or wheel skis in winter, and at least one aircraft uses floats in the summer season. One air taxi operator expressed plans to increase their fleet and operations at Gulkana.

General Aviation Traffic - GA traffic includes private aircraft as well as agency aircraft such as fire-fighting tankers, medevacs, and corporate aircraft. There are 12 private GA aircraft based at Gulkana Airport, accounting for much of the local GA traffic there. The Alaska State Wildlife Troopers and the National Park Service account for three aircraft based at Gulkana Airport. A helicopter based at the airport is chartered to a resource industry, and takes nearly daily flights from Gulkana.

During summer and fall hunting season, a large amount of GA traffic by aircraft not based at GKN uses the airport to access fuel and other services. Aircraft traveling to and from fly-ins and air shows also use the airport. Medevac flights with the King Air 200s and Learjets account for more than weekly itinerant GA traffic at Gulkana. One medevac company was considering building a hangar and establishing a manned medevac base in Gulkana. Agency and corporate aircraft not based at Gulkana also use the airport. These aircraft can include Canadian Air jets, Gulfstream V corporate jets, and Q-400s and Convair fire tankers.

Military Traffic - Military traffic at GKN consists mostly of helicopter stops (Blackhawks, Chinooks, and sometimes Apaches). They often arrive in groups and perform touch and goes. Infrequently, military C-130s may visit this airport.

3.6.7.5 Gulkana Airport (GKN) Forecasts

The Airport Layout Plan update for Gulkana Airport (GKN) is being prepared concurrently with the development of this IATP technical memo. The draft narrative includes forecasts for GKN for the 2019-2045 period (Table 46), indicating that the two main drivers of aviation activity for this airport are population and visitor growth. Population in the Gulkana and Glenallen areas has been declining very slowly, and the slow downward trend is anticipated to continue, according to DOLWD statistics. Conversely, visitor volume is anticipated to show strong growth. Development plans and stakeholder input additionally contributed to an expectation of growing aviation activity for GKN. The existing critical aircraft for GKN is identified as the Cessna 206 (ARC A-I), and the ultimate critical aircraft is the Beechcraft King Air (B-II).

Gulkana Airport (GKN) Draft Forecasts, 2019-2045

Activity	2019	2025	2035	2045	Average Annual Rate of Change
Enplanements	481	491	599	731	+2.0%
Commercial Operations	738	743	798	857	+0.7%
Total Operations	10,110	10,192	11,054	11,989	+0.8%
Based Aircraft	24	24	25	25	+0.3%

Historical Mail Volume Trends by Borough/Census Area, 2013-2022

Borough/Census Area Deplaned Mail Volumes (pounds)	2013	2019	2020	2022	Avg Annual % Change 2013-2022	Avg Annual % Change 2013-2019	Avg Annual % Change 2020-2022
Copper River Census Area	39,100	40,187	40,660	65,582	+5.9%	+0.5%	+27.0%
Denali Borough	401	840	1,373	2,537	+22.7%	+13.1%	+35.9%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	531,663	544,773	174,372	408,345	-2.9%	+0.4%	+53.0%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	166,718	130,770	92,354	117,816	-3.8%	-4.0%	+13.0%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	1,572,324	1,250,898	824,573	1,491,147	-0.6%	-3.7%	+34.5%
IATP REGION TOTALS	2,310,206	1,967,468	1,133,332	2,085,427	-1.1%	-2.6%	+35.7%

Mail volume data for years 2013-2021 were sourced from the AASP internal website, which reports BTS T-100 Market statistics in their entirety for each year. Mail volume data for 2022 were sourced directly from the BTS T-100 Market statistics, since the AASP data pull lags for the most recent year's reported data, thus under-reports 2022 volumes. There are no mail volume data reported for IATP airports in the Denali Borough or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for the 2013-2022 time period.

Historical Air Cargo Trends by Borough/Census Area, 2013-2022

Borough/Census Area Deplaned Cargo Volumes (pounds)	2013	2019	2020	2022	Avg Annual % Change 2013-2022	Avg Annual % Change 2013-2019	Avg Annual % Change 2020-2022
Copper River Census Area	63,699	29,524	27,526	47,006	-3.3%	-12.0%	+30.7%
Denali Borough	4,875	16,385	28,026	16,781	14.7%	22.4%	-22.6%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	9,627,038	8,473,434	4,630,913	17,977,506	+7.2%	-2.1%	+97.0%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	89,054	104,564	87,862	142,876	+5.4%	+2.7%	+27.5%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,957,342	2,323,590	1,394,214	3,323,702	+1.3%	-3.9%	+54.4%
IATP REGION TOTALS	12,742,008	10,947,497	6,168,541	21,507,871	+6.0%	-2.5%	+86.7%

Cargo volume data for years 2013-2021 were sourced from the AASP internal website, which reports BTS T-100 Market statistics in their entirety for each year. Cargo volume data for 2022 were sourced directly from the BTS T-100 Market statistics, since the AASP data pull lags for the most recent year's reported data, thus under-reports 2022 volumes. There are no cargo volume data reported for IATP airports in the Denali Borough or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for the 2013-2022 time period.

Benefits of Runway Extension – Economic growth potential:

Gulkana Airport (GKN) is already considered a regionally significant airport by many users, even though it is not officially classified as such. GKN is currently a GA-Local airport in the NPIAS and a Community On-Road airport in the AASP classification system. The update to Gulkana's ALP is approved by the FAA, giving consideration to development needs for this airport to become a regional facility. Primary drivers for this work include anticipated growth in visitors to the area, forecasts that indicate the airport may see increasing numbers of operations by larger aircraft, community desires to increase cargo operations, and the potential to support medevac and fire tanker bases.

Anchorage International Airport is first in the nation in CY2023 for landed cargo weight. Alaska's freight system connects the state's shippers and receivers to the global supply chain. Moving goods safely and efficiently is important to the growth of Alaska's economy. Cargo companies currently using the Anchorage International Airport distribute freight from local warehouses to points all over the state, including the Copper Basin, via surface transportation using Alaska's Primary Highway and Highway Freight System. An extended runway will allow cargo planes to land at Gulkana Airport directly from shippers and bypass Anchorage or in smaller planes that originate from Ted Stevens. In either case surface transportation traffic to and from Anchorage through the region and surrounding areas will be lessened, diesel consumption will be reduced therefore carbon emissions decreased, improve the highway safety & security. Reduced Truck traffic will also mean less wear and tear on the road system and help keep the roads in a state of good repair using less M&O dollars.

Use of GKN as a distribution point to serve the region with truck and plane distribution of cargo and supplies operations located at the airport, cargo needs throughout the Copper Basin and Upper Tanana areas could be better and more cheaply served in this part of Alaska.

Access to off road portal off-road destinations in the eastern and coastal parts of the state are also more easily served from Gulkana. However, a runway extension is necessary to increase jet-capability at this airport.

Wrap up:

The primary needs for developing the airport into a regional facility include the runway extension, an apron and lease lot expansion to spur economic opportunities for the region and be the catalyst for economic vitality, mobility and access, safety and resiliency. The Gulkana Airport is the only airport in the region with a documented need for additional lease lots and additional parking area that will increase economic opportunities in the region. Copper Valley Development Association, CVDA is the Regional ARDOR with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development serves the Copper River Census Area (CRCA), an area of approximately 20,649 square miles (about the size of West Virginia) a State of Alaska (un-incorporated) borough with no municipalities, counties, townships, or local government and functions as a public and private partnership to address natural resource and economic development opportunities. The CVDA with community support has plans to increase cargo, refrigerator and freezer storage at the Gulkana Airport for improved cargo storage.



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner

PO Box 112500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500
Main: 907.465.3900
dot.alaska.gov

July 26, 2024

Michael O'Hare
Regional Administrator
Alaskan Region
Federal Aviation Administration
222 West 7th Ave. #14
Anchorage, AK 99513

Subject: Proposal for Gulkana Airport Runway Extension under FAA Section 726 General Aviation Airport Runway Extension Pilot Program

Dear Mr. O'Hare,

Thank you for your time last week to discuss the State of Alaska's opportunities with the FAA reauthorization. We are excited to see how the new provisions can benefit Alaska's aviation system.

I am writing to propose the Gulkana Airport (GKN) as a candidate for the FAA Re-authorization program's Section 726 General Aviation Airport Runway Extension Pilot Program. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) believes that Gulkana Airport is an ideal candidate due to its critical economic and safety roles, strong community support, and alignment with regional transportation plans. The airport is integral to the Governor's priorities of food and energy security and overall economic development.

Alaska's aviation system uniquely serves a vast geography, spanning two and a half times the size of Texas. Gulkana Airport serves as a strategic transportation hub for Glennallen and the surrounding Copper River Valley region. Located over 150 air miles from Anchorage and 200 air miles from Fairbanks, an expanded runway will enhance the airport's capacity to accommodate larger aircraft, improving the movement of goods and services. This improvement is vital for local businesses, tourism, and resource-based industries such as fishing and mining.

An extended runway will facilitate more frequent and reliable cargo flights, reducing costs and improving supply chain efficiency for local businesses. Enhanced airport infrastructure will also attract more visitors to places like Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, boosting tourism and generating economic benefits for the entire community.

Additionally, Gulkana Airport serves as a key emergency and medical evacuation point due to its location along the interstate highway system. Improving the runway will enhance operational safety margins for current medivac aircraft and allow faster and more efficient aircraft to respond to

"Keep Alaska Moving."

emergencies. This is crucial given the airport's role in supporting search and rescue missions, disaster response, and critical medical transport services in a region where road access can be limited or non-existent.


This proposal is strongly supported by local communities, businesses, and government organizations. Public meetings and consultations have received positive feedback and endorsements from key stakeholders, demonstrating the community's enthusiasm and backing for the project. The community has revised the Airport Layout Plan to include a lengthened runway as an ultimate development, and the concept is approved by the FAA. Many community members who have shown support are cc'd on this letter.

Extending the runway at Gulkana Airport aligns perfectly with the objectives of the FAA's Section 726 General Aviation Airport Runway Extension Pilot Program. The project promises significant economic benefits, enhanced safety, and support for sustainable development, addressing both immediate and long-term needs of the region.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal and look forward to discussing how this project can advance the goals of the FAA and support the communities of Alaska.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Anderson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Cc:

Jason Hoke, Copper Valley Development Association
Jen Bowman, Copper Valley Development Association
Bruce Caine, Copper Valley Rural Planning Organization
Joe Bovee, Ahtna, Inc
John Becker, Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce
Jaime Matthews, Copper Valley Electric
Joshua Beug, Copper Valley Telecom

Doniece Gott

From: Holly Cannon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:18 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Increased Education Funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Holly Cannon. I am a registered voter from Anchorage. I am writing to you in support of significant and sustained funding for our K-12 schools.

Education is critically important to Alaska and Alaska's future. How are our students, who are already struggling, supposed to become more successful and learn more efficiently with fewer teachers to help guide them and fewer programs to get them excited about learning?

Alaska's constitution requires the Legislature provide for a system of public schools open to all children, [defined](#) by the courts to include "adequate funding so as to accord to schools the ability to provide instruction in the standards." Schools need predictable and flexible funding to meet their mandate.

Business and labor leaders support investment in education because they understand that a strong economy requires a trained and well educated workforce.

Strong schools attract and keep families in Alaska, while an underfunded system drives families away, making it harder to hire and retain a resident workforce and accelerating economic decline.

Thank you for your time,

Holly Cannon

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Hughes [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please increase the BSA

Senate Finance Committee,

Please increase the BSA for our students. I have three students in the Anchorage area.

We need more funding to keep up with the cost of inflation.

Please invest in our students for the future of our community.

Thank you,
Laura Hughes

Doniece Gott

From: Elayne Hunter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Please support a \$1000 increase in the student base funding.

When classroom sizes are large our students will not receive the needed instruction to be proficient in important skills and strategies to be productive and successful adults in our community.

Unsuccessful adults and students are unable to support themselves and vulnerable to crime, substance abuse problems. they become an expensive life long burden to our community.

Incarceration and welfare are more expensive.

Our school funding is inadequate compared to other states and we can not recruit good teachers.

Elayne Hunter

Doniece Gott

From: Carey Carpenter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA Funding

Strong Schools Attract and Keep Families

My name is Carey Carpenter, from Anchorage, AK and I'm a registered civil engineer, nonprofit director, volunteer in the Anchorage School District and have two kids ages 14 and 17 at Dimond High School.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email.

My kids have enjoyed so many parts about being in the Anchorage School District. When they have a good teacher, one that cares and that is invested in kids and learning, the outcome of their attitude toward the class is overwhelmingly positive.

However, without additional funding, the cuts proposed by the ASD will erode so many of the opportunities they enjoy at school - sports such as swimming, cross country running, tennis, skiing, track and field, and bowling. Also, the continual news about how Alaska is not funding schools to keep up with inflation hurts our economy. We want professionals such as teachers, doctors, engineers, and project managers to choose to move to Alaska. When interviewing for a choice of jobs, the first question that is asked is, "How are the public schools there?" If we can't answer that we fund them so that kids can enjoy smaller class sizes, many different sports and clubs, offer a variety of classes, and have career counselors that can support them in life choices for after high school - then we are doing a huge disservice to our community and our state.

We will continue to see an outmigration of our population as people leave for better opportunities and jobs and educational systems in other parts of the country. If you don't increase educational funding then the failure to reverse the outmigration of our population will sit at the feet of every legislator that votes against increasing school funding.

Please support a minimum increase of \$1,000 to the BSA and make the formula inflation-proof so we can stop having this annual conversation and get moving towards solving other problems that our state faces. The inefficiency of this discussion is appalling. Fix the problem.

Thank you,
Carey Carpenter
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK 99515

Doniece Gott

From: Nikki Love [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:25 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please continue and increase support to early education programs

Dear lawmakers,

I'm concerned about the future for Alaska's young children and families. Families are leaving our state due to lack of supports like childcare, housing , and access to programs.

Please dedicate \$30M across the sector to support increasing the Child Care Grant program, Head Start, Infant Learning, Best Beginnings, and Parents as Teachers.

Thank you for your continued work,
Mrs. Nikki Love

Doniece Gott

From: Katherine Helmuth [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:25 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Greetings,

I would like to add my voice to the cry for an increase in the BSA for our students.

In the 15 years I have worked for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District I have seen class sizes increase, staff sizes decline, and fewer services being offered to our students. This includes tight budgets with fewer resources, less technology and students being less prepared to either go onto higher education or into our workforce. It also has meant higher dropout rates, lesser abilities to read or do math, and a lower economic standard for our young workforce.

This can not continue if we hope to sustain a viable economic future for our state and our citizens. Please increase the BSA by \$1000 per student as this serves a far higher purpose for the state not just today but for our long term future.

Thank you very much for your time,

Katherine Helmuth

Doniece Gott

From: Mitch Laird [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:25 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

We need a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Mitch Laird
Sent from my iPhone

From: [victory.lavalle](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Save Alaska Schools!
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:27:11 PM

Gut Salmon, Not Schools!

WHAT WE NEED

A Significant and Sustained Funding Increase – To make up for lost buying power, we need a \$1000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) this year, followed by \$400 increases in the next two years and annual inflation adjustments thereafter. *Increasing the BSA benefits neighborhood schools, charter schools, and public homeschool options.*

-

State funding for education has not kept pace with costs. Since 2011, the base student allocation has fallen behind inflation by 25%.

-

We are spending more and more on incarceration and less on education. Since 2017, state spending on the Department of Corrections rose 44% while spending on the Department of Education and Early Development, which includes aid to districts, fell 4% *without accounting for inflation.*

-

We spend less than the national average on education. According to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at UAA, Alaska's per-student spending was 15% below the national average in 2023 when adjusted for geographic costs.

-

Districts are unable to recruit and retain teachers. The state had [598 vacant teacher positions](#) on the first day of the current school year, the highest number ever recorded, and more than double (+230%) the number of vacancies in fall of 2020.

-

Alaska is losing its allure - and its workforce. More people have left Alaska than moved to Alaska for 12 straight years, and Alaska's nonresident workforce hit a [record high](#) of 24% in 2023, the most recent year for which data are available.

PLEASE!

-

Invest in schools, not prisons. We can be proactive and invest in education, or pay for incarceration on the back end.

-

Strong schools attract and keep families in Alaska, while an underfunded system drives families away, making it harder to hire and retain a resident workforce and accelerating economic decline.

-

Business and labor leaders support investment in education because they understand that a strong economy requires a trained and well educated workforce.

-

Public schools serve all kids. We must protect our neighborhood schools - many Alaskans do not have options such as homeschooling or charter schools, and they choose neighborhood schools.

-

Education is a constitutional obligation. Alaska's constitution requires the Legislature provide for a system of public schools open to all children, [defined](#) by the courts to include "adequate funding so as to accord to schools the ability to provide instruction in the standards." Schools need predictable and flexible funding to meet their mandate.

5 MYTHBUSTERS

-

Claim: "Throwing more money at the BSA won't solve our problems." (Gov. Dunleavy)

Reality: All we are asking for is funding that keeps up with costs. After years of losing buying power, our schools are at a breaking point. It's hard to innovate when you can't balance the budget. It's hard to attract and keep the best when you can't offer a competitive salary and benefits. It's hard to build community confidence when everyone is fighting over whose school to close.

-

Claim: Alaska's test scores are in the tank.

Reality: When Alaska's schools were well funded and teachers earned a pension, our test scores were above national averages. Funding matters.

Also reality: In recent years, more students - especially homeschool and charter - are opting out of tests, making these metrics less and less meaningful.

-

Claim: Districts want funding without accountability.

Reality: Local school boards are accountable to their communities through elections, public meetings, and processes for public input. State and federal laws provide guardrails, reporting systems, and interventions when needed. State policy makers must also be held accountable: legislators enacted the Alaska Reads Act with multiple layers of accountability for districts, and then failed to fund it.

•

Claim: Alaskans support the Governor's proposals.

Reality: The Governor's own 2024 polling found an overwhelming majority of Alaskans - 77% - want more funding for education. While many said they support "reforms," this does not mean they support state approval of charter schools.

•

Claim: We can't afford big education funding increases.

Reality: We can't afford not to invest in education. Education should be our first priority, not our last. We have revenue-generating capacity - we just need political will.

Our Children Are Our Future: Invest in Education Now

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Victory Cheney

761 S 25th Ave

Anchorage AK 99508