



THE STATE  
*of* **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Health

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
Director's Office

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January 16, 2024

House Labor & Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 124  
Juneau, AK 99801

Chair Sumner and Committee Members

On behalf of the Alaska Division of Public Health, I am writing in support of HB 149 and to encourage you to schedule a hearing to resume discussions about advancing this legislation that will allow Alaska to join the nurse licensure compact (NLC). By 2030, Alaska is projected to have the highest percentage of nursing vacancies in the United States with over 5,000 openings representing a 22% shortfall. Nurses are vital for ensuring access to healthcare in our state, and Alaska currently does not create enough nursing graduates to meet the need.

Public Health continues to experience challenges recruiting and retaining public health nurses statewide. This bill will allow for a more efficient licensing process which will bring nurses to our state to live, work, and meet our populations health care needs more quickly. This is even more important when we need to respond to emergencies and disasters.

This compact has been successful in 41 other states while also providing the same level of safety and oversight that the public has come to expect from the state licensing process.

I urge you to please hear and move to pass HB 149.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsey Kato".

Lindsey Kato  
Director