



ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS of ALASKA

8005 Schoon Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99518
Telephone (907) 561-5354 • Fax (907) 562-6118

April 4, 2024

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Building
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Opposition for SB 60 and HB 63

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

We write to you today in opposition of SB 60 and HB 63, repealing the Alaska Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission. The abolishment of the Commission and shifting the appeals to the Superior Court would elongate the time it takes for cases to be heard and resolved, impacting both the parties involved and the efficiency of the overall legal system.

Associated General Contractors of Alaska is the construction industry's largest professional trade association, representing over 620 Alaskan contractors, specialty contractors, suppliers, manufacturers, and businesses statewide. AGC members abide by the best practices in the industry and take pride in our work to support vital infrastructure and connect Alaska.

If the Commission were to be abolished, cases would likely take longer to reach a resolution in the Superior Court than they do through the Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission, while the costs associated with legal representation and court proceedings may also escalate. This would impose financial burdens on the parties involved, particularly if they must bear prolonged legal expenses.

Lengthier processes, the complexities of pro se claimants, and increased costs may deter parties from pursuing their right to appeal unfavorable decisions. If the threshold for initiating an appeal becomes higher due to potential delays and expenses, individuals or organizations may opt to forgo pursuing appeals altogether, thereby affecting access to justice and potentially diminishing accountability in the workers' compensation system.

The Appeals Commission provides educated stability to the decisions during the progression of a workers' compensation claim, including consistent application of current law. In conclusion, balancing efficiency, access to justice, and the rights of individuals involved in the workers' compensation system should be a priority when considering such structural changes. Please join us in opposing SB 60 and HB 63.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alicia Amberg'.

Alicia Amberg
Executive Director
Associated General Contractors of Alaska