

January 30, 2025

Senator Bjorkman  
Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 105  
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of Support for SB77

Dear Chair Bjorkman and committee members,

As the Vice President and Alaska General Manager for TOTE Maritime Alaska, a Jones Act cargo ship operator delivering critical goods to the State of Alaska since 1975, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 77, which seeks to allow Alaska residents attending a maritime academy outside the state to maintain their eligibility for the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD).

Alaska's maritime industry is vital to the state's economy and communities, providing essential goods, services, and employment opportunities. To ensure the industry remains strong and sustainable, we must encourage young Alaskans to pursue careers in maritime fields. Unfortunately, Alaska does not currently have an in-state maritime academy, requiring aspiring maritime professionals to seek education and training opportunities out of state.

Senate Bill 77 addresses a significant barrier faced by these students: the risk of losing their PFD eligibility while they pursue a career in maritime. By recognizing the unique challenges of our state's geography and the critical importance of the maritime industry, this legislation ensures that students are not penalized for seeking specialized education that is unavailable within Alaska.

By supporting young Alaskans pursuing maritime careers, we are not only helping young Alaskans achieve their professional goals but also strengthening our communities and ensuring a robust pipeline of talent for one of our state's most essential industries.

I respectfully urge the committee to advance Senate Bill 77, providing much-needed support for the next generation of maritime leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Art Dahlin  
Vice President and Alaska General Manager | TOTE Maritime Alaska, LLC



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January 31, 2025

Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 105  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: SB77 – PERM FUND; EMPLOYMENT; ELIGIBILITY**

Dear Chair Kiehl and committee members,

Matson is in support of SB77, which would resolve the issue concerning the loss of the permanent fund dividend for Alaskans seeking training outside of the state to pursue a maritime career.

SB77 helps promote local hire of Alaskans in an industry where family wages are the norm. Historically, Alaskans are among the best candidates we have found for these career ladder positions as demonstrated by the maritime industry's 25-year initiative to work with the State of Alaska to recruit, train (at no cost to the individual or state), and guarantee employment for all graduates.

Matson joins a large coalition of maritime companies who are all addressing the shortage of commercial mariners across the United States and appreciates your support of SB77.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vic Angoco", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Vic Angoco  
Senior Vice President, Alaska  
Matson



February 3, 2025

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Re: Senate Bill 77, Perm Fund; Employment; Eligibility (version 34-LS0394\N)

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

The Alaska Chamber (the Chamber) writes in support of Senate Bill 77, an Act relating to national criminal history record checks for certain employees of the Department of Revenue; relating to allowable absences for eligibility for a permanent fund dividend; relating to the confidentiality of certain information provided on a permanent fund dividend application; relating to the duties of the Department of Revenue; and providing for an effective date

The Alaska Chamber was founded in 1953 and is Alaska's largest statewide business advocacy organization. Our mission is to promote a healthy business environment in Alaska. The Chamber has more than 700 members and represents businesses of all sizes and industries from across the state, representing 58,000 Alaskan workers and \$4.6 billion in wages.

The Chamber has a formal policy position to support clarifying vocational training absences for purposes of receiving PFD benefits. We support the enactment of clarifying changes to the PFD statute in order to assure Alaskans who are members of the uniformed services or those attending merchant marine training programs remain eligible to obtain their PFD, provided they have met all other eligibility criteria.

Since 1997, over 700 Alaskans have been recruited, trained, and placed in deep-sea maritime employment by attending the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. Many of these candidates were youth, Alaskan Natives, displaced workers, and veterans who attended an apprentice program paid for through a labor-management training trust fund. In so doing, management can be assured the individuals they hire to crew their vessels are thoroughly trained to USCG standards and uniformly meet their security, safety, and competency standards. Furthermore, by recruiting Alaskans for this apprenticeship opportunity companies in the Alaska maritime trade, like Alaska Tanker Company, Crowley Maritime, Matson Navigation, and TOTE Maritime Alaska, continue to meet their commitment to hire local. Denying PFD benefits to Alaskans, particularly younger Alaskans, while engaged in this required training, discourages them from considering this pathway as a career opportunity. The purpose for the local hire effort is for these individuals to be trained outside and to return to Alaska to spend their earned wages and enjoy their benefits on their time off.

In closing, the Chamber supports SB77 and encourages swift passage of this straightforward and good for business bill. Thank you for considering the Alaska Chamber's comments.

Sincerely,

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

Kati Capozzi  
President and CEO



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