



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health

SENIOR AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Governor's Council on Disabilities
and Special Education

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February 9, 2025

The Honorable Representative Genevieve Mina
House of Representatives
Alaska State Capital
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Mina,

On behalf of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE), I am writing to express our strong support for **House Bill 26 (HB 26)**, *"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan."* We believe that this bill will significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families across the state.

HB 26 proposes to add public and community transportation planning as a responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTP&F). As you know, Alaskans with disabilities face unique and often overwhelming challenges in accessing essential services and transportation is one of those challenges. The provisions outlined in HB 26 will directly address these barriers, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for people with disabilities to thrive in Alaskan communities.

The Governor's Council has long advocated for policies that improve accessibility, inclusion, and equity for individuals with disabilities, especially around employment and transportation. We believe that HB 26 aligns with these priorities and will have a lasting positive impact on individuals, families, and communities throughout Alaska. In particular, the provisions of this bill will improve access to community-based services through appropriate state led transportation planning that ensures individuals with disabilities and disability organizations are involved in developing good community transportation systems across the state. This will be incredibly helpful for Alaskans with disabilities so they can participate in employment and can lead more independent lives.

The Governor's Council stands ready to offer our support in the continued development and implementation of HB 26. We encourage all members of the Alaska State Legislature to support this vital piece of legislation and ensure that Alaskans with disabilities have the resources, opportunities, and transportation they need to participate fully in society.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and we look forward to seeing the positive changes HB 26 will bring to our state.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jena Crafton in cursive script.

Jena Crafton, Chairperson

Handwritten signature of Patrick Reinhart in cursive script.

Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director

Alaska Mobility Coalition
PO Box 1612
Homer, Alaska 99603
Email: alaskamobilitycoalition@gmail.com
Phone: 907.343.9093



February 8, 2025

**The Honorable Representative Genevieve Mina
House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182**

Dear Representative Mina,

Subject: Letter of Support for HB 26 - Statewide Public & Community Transit Plan

The Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) is a non-profit membership organization founded in 2002. We represent public, private, and community transit providers. Our mission is to empower Alaskans to develop transportation systems appropriate for their economic vitality and to improve their quality of life. We advocate in Juneau and Washington, D.C., for Alaska transit capital and operating funding and promote safe, cost-effective, sustainable, and coordinated rides that meet local, regional, and state needs.

As President of AMC, I am writing to support House Bill 26 (HB 26), which would enhance transportation services for thousands of Alaskans who utilize public and community transportation. This bill is crucial in addressing the unique transportation needs of vulnerable populations, such as seniors and people with disabilities, ensuring access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTP&F) has immense responsibilities in overseeing the state's transportation infrastructure. Still, their enabling statute does not explicitly instruct about the statewide public and community transportation needs of Alaskans who cannot afford their own vehicles or drive because of age or disability. Community and public transportation are essential for enabling seniors and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence, access healthcare, go to work, attend social activities, and participate in community life.

Moreover, HB 26 will help fill the gaps in existing transportation services by coordinating efforts between public, private, and non-profit organizations. This collaborative approach will ensure efficient and effective use of transportation resources and reach those who most need them. By supporting HB 26, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society where seniors and individuals with disabilities can live with dignity and autonomy and participate in the economic fabric of our state. We urge all legislators and the Governor to support this critical legislation and help improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable citizens.

We appreciate your consideration.

Warm regards,

[Millie Ryan](#)

President, Alaska Mobility Coalition

Achieving mobility through community appropriate transportation services

Website: <http://Alaskamobility.org> Non-profit Tax ID: 01-0704433



Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska

35555 Kenai Spur Hwy PMB 285

Soldotna, AK 99669

907-263-2011

February 10, 2024

The Honorable Representative Genevieve Mina

House of Representatives

Alaska State Capital

Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Mina,

On behalf of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska (SILC), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 26 (HB 26), “An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan.” The SILC stands with both the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Alaska Mobility Coalition in the belief that HB 26 will significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families across the state.

HB 26 proposes to add public and community transportation planning as a responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTP&F). Alaskans with disabilities experience significant barriers to accessing the essential services to live, work, and play in their communities of choice; a lack of accessible transportation is one of those barriers throughout much of Alaska. The provisions outlined in HB 26 will directly address these barriers, opening up a world of possibility and opportunity.

The SILC has long advocated for safe, affordable and accessible transportation options that promote equity and inclusion for people with disabilities as laid out in Alaska’s State Plan for Independent Living. HB 26 provides Alaskans with disabilities and disability organizations the opportunity to be a part of the State’s planning process, in order to shape transportation systems that ensure access to the community-based services they need to lead full, healthy and productive lives. Without access to critical transportation services, Alaskans with disabilities are not only isolated physically from the communities they want to be a part of, but they are



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also isolated from participating fully in their local economy. Limited transportation options force Alaskans with disabilities to rely on the global online marketplace to acquire goods and services that reliable, accessible transportation would allow them to obtain locally. The changes proposed in HB26 will allow Alaskans with disabilities to participate more fully in their communities, realize increased independence, and thrive as contributing members of society.

The SILC encourages all members of the Alaska State Legislature to support this vital piece of legislation to ensure that Alaskans with disabilities have the transportation services they need to participate fully in a society that benefits all Alaskans.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and We look forward to seeing the positive impact HB 26 will have on our state.

Sincerely,

Jenifer L Galvan

Jenifer Galvan, Chairperson

Michael Christian

Michael Christian, Executive Director

CENTRAL AREA RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM, INC

35139 K-B Drive, Soldotna, AK 99669

Office: (907) 262-8900



House Committee on Transportation
House Committee on Community & Regional Affairs
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th Street, Room 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

February 22, 2024

To whom it may concern,

The Central Area Rural Transit System, Inc (CARTS) is one of only fourteen public transit providers in Alaska, serving eleven rural communities on the Central Kenai Peninsula. CARTS has offered affordable, ADA accessible door-to-door transportation for more than twenty years as the Kenai Peninsula's only public transit provider. Community members can ride with CARTS at an extremely subsidized rate of only \$2.58 per zone, with an average ride crossing three zones and costing the rider only \$7.74.

In a recent report by 100% Communities: Alaska, approximately 1,000 residents of the Central Peninsula were surveyed on the accessibility of ten services identified as vital to survive and thrive. These services included access to food, shelter, education and employment opportunities, etc. Respondents reported that transportation was the second most inaccessible service in the area (Alaska Impact Alliance, 2024).

Rural communities have unique challenges to accessing transportation. Many options that work in urban and suburban areas are unrealistic and cost prohibitive in rural areas like the Kenai Peninsula. Building transit systems in rural areas of Alaska requires comprehensive strategies, strong connections with state and local stakeholders, and diversified funding.

Accessing up-to-date data and rebuilding links lost during the pandemic have been major challenges since the COVID-19 shutdowns. CARTS has struggled to rebuild partnerships and access local sources of financial support due to shrinking funding streams. The communities served by CARTS continue to experience an increase in need.

Alaska Statute 44.42.020, "an Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan," relates to the Powers and Duties of the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF). These include planning, construction, and maintenance of state modes of transportation and transportation facilities; improvements and alternatives to existing means of transportation; and coordination and development of a long-range, intermodal transportation plan for the state.

Web: RideCARTSAK.org

Phone: 907-262-8900



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Soldotna, AK 99669

HB 26 also proposes to amend the statute to include the development of a “statewide public and community transit plan in cooperation with public and community transit operators, local governments, communities, and tribal entities.” In addition, HB 26 supports amendments to AS 44.42.020 to include public, tribal, and community transit programs and services in the definitions and directions of the statute.

As a member of the Alaska Mobility Coalition and a provider of ADA-compliant transportation services in rural Alaska, Central Area Rural Transit System supports the inclusion of public, tribal, and community transit into Alaska Statute 44.42.020. Improved access to data and environmental information will allow community-based and tribal entities to improve cost effectiveness and transit programs among Kenai Peninsula Borough communities.

Please contact CARTS’ Executive Director, Jessica Schultz, for additional information or questions regarding this letter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Jessica Schultz (Feb 24, 2025 09:11 AKST)

Jessica Schultz

Executive Director

Central Area Rural Transit System, Inc.

JSchultz@RideCartsAK.org

(907) 262-6345

References

Alaska Impact Alliance. (2024). *Central Kenai Peninsular Report Identifying the Level of Accessibility of Vital Services*. Retrieved from https://www.alaskaimpactalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/DashboardReport_CentralKenaiPeninsula_Sept2024.pdf



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March 4, 2025

Rep Genevieve Mina
Alaska Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB26 Support

Dear Rep Mina:

AARP Alaska supports HB26 to improve community transit and rural alternative transportation option engagement and planning.

Many older adults wish to remain in their homes and communities as they age (aging in place). Accessible community transit helps them achieve this by providing reliable transportation, enabling them to live independently in familiar surroundings without needing to relocate to care facilities or rely on others for transportation.

As people age, they may lose the ability or desire to drive due to physical limitations, health conditions, or cognitive decline. Community transportation provides older adults with the freedom to travel independently, whether to medical appointments, social events, or other necessary destinations, allowing them to maintain a sense of autonomy.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation to improve the lives of older Alaskans and adults with disabilities.

Respectfully,
Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska

