



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LAW

House Finance Subcommittee – 2/9/2026 12:00pm

Civil Division Overview; Litigation – Statehood Defense and A Better Childhood

Cori Mills

Deputy Attorney General
Civil Division

Amber LeBlanc

Division Director
Administrative Services Division



CIVIL DIVISION

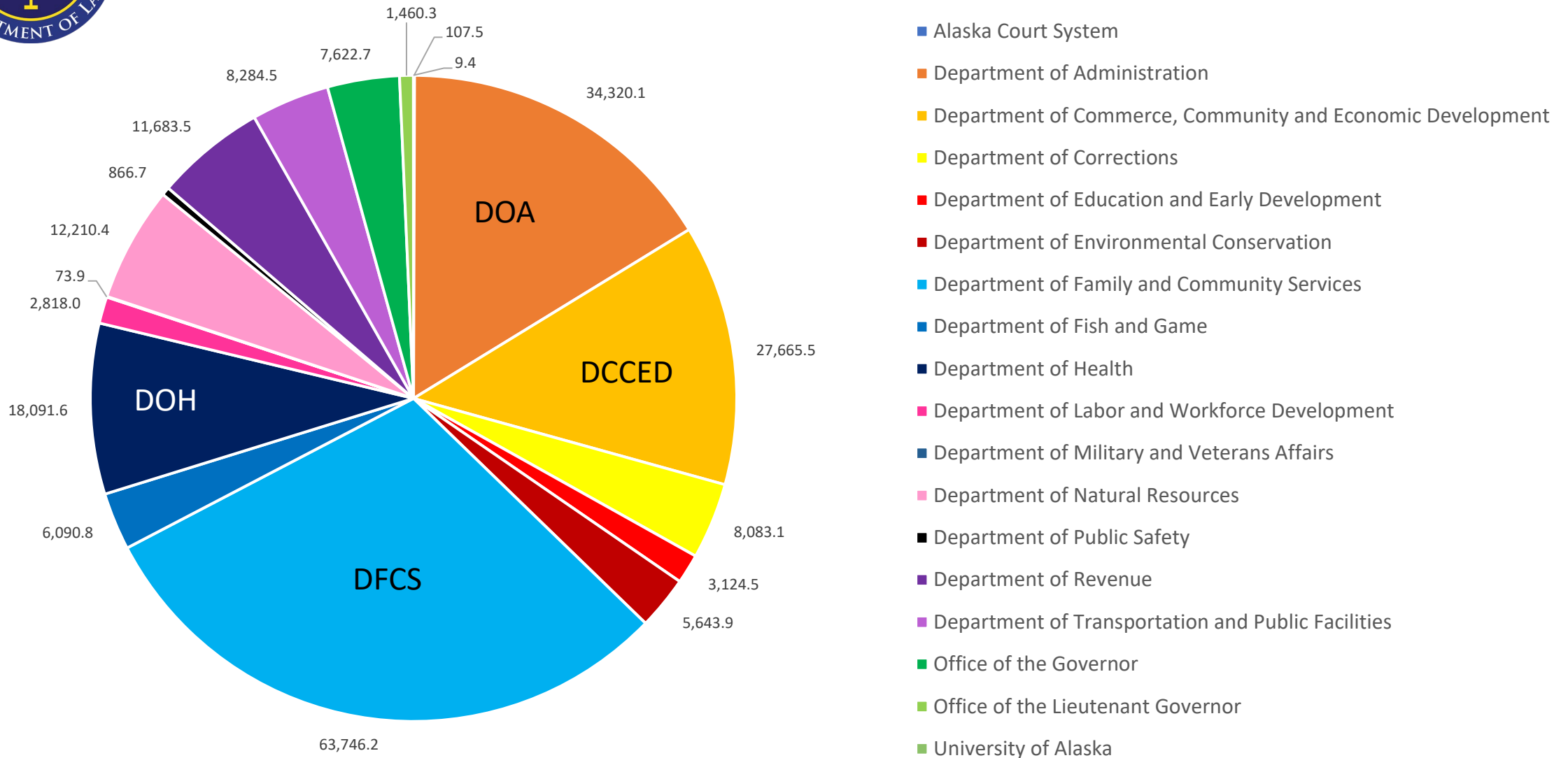
MISSION

To provide high-quality legal representation to executive branch agencies for the benefit of all Alaskans.





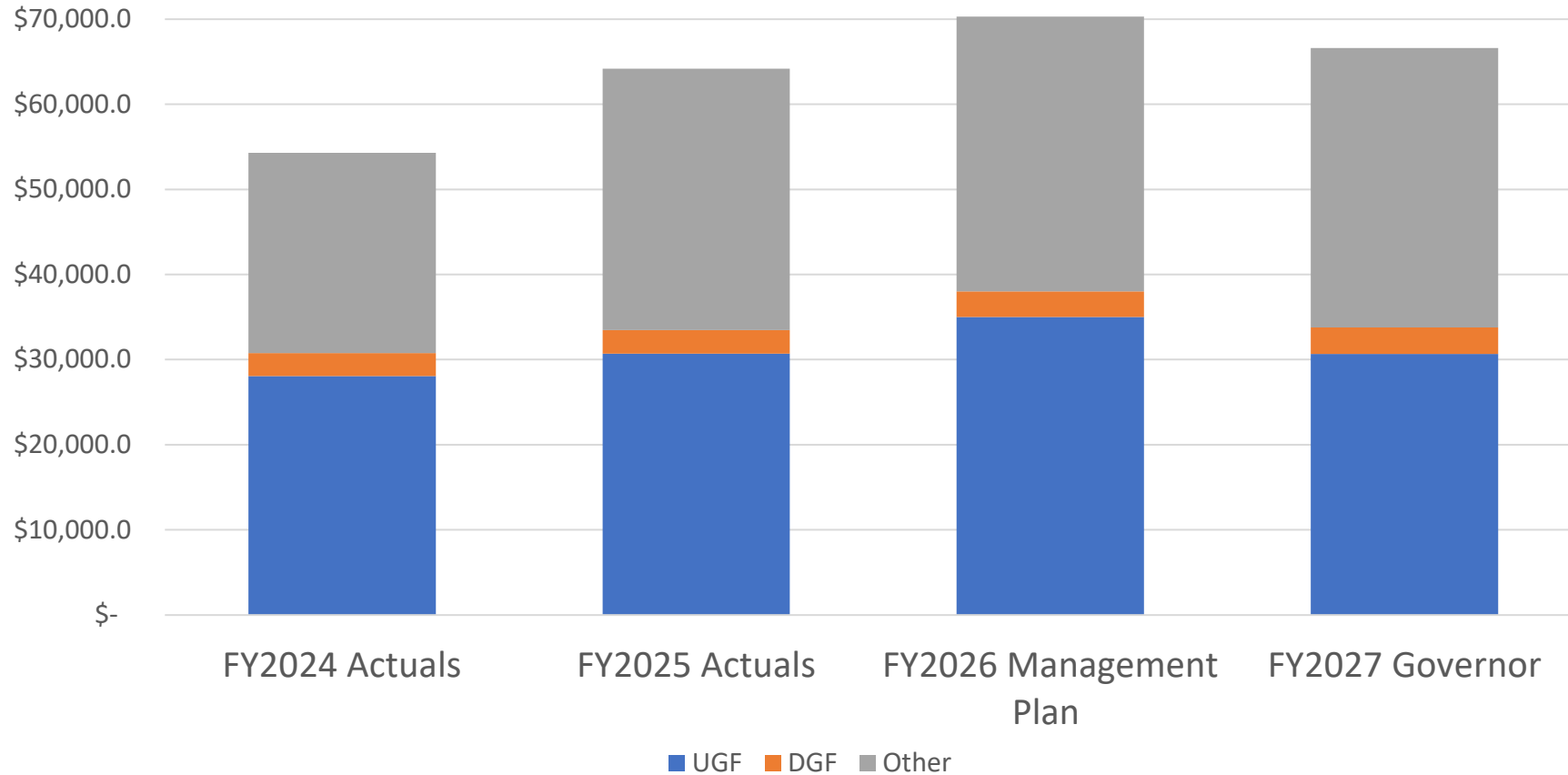
FY2025 Civil Hours Billed to Client Agencies





Civil Division: FY2024-FY2027 Budget

Note: \$ in thousands

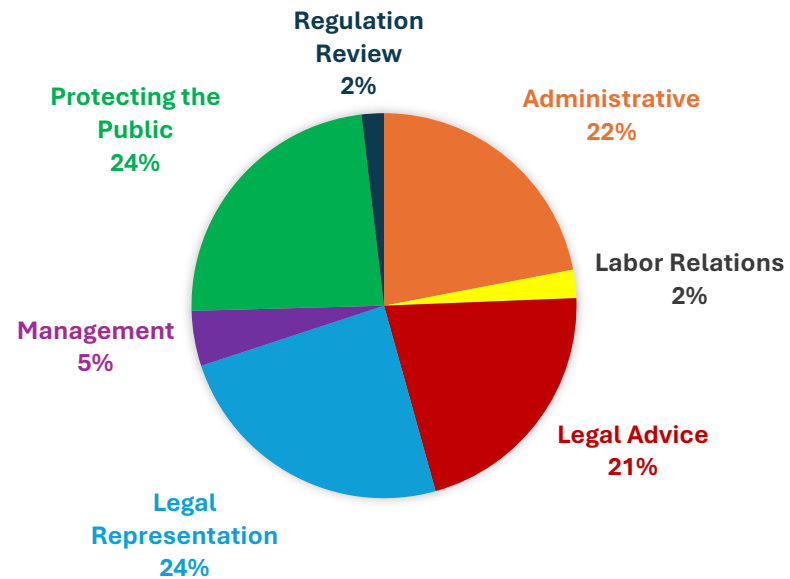


Funding Source	FY2024 Actuals	FY2025 Actuals	FY2026 Management Plan	FY2027 Governor
Unrestricted General Fund	\$ 28,048.8	\$ 30,715.1	\$ 34,998.3	\$ 30,676.2
Designated General Fund	\$ 2,704.2	\$ 2,748.1	\$ 3,027.4	\$ 3,091.9
Other	\$ 23,549.5	\$ 30,701.0	\$ 32,282.0	\$ 32,850.1
Total	\$ 54,302.5	\$ 64,164.2	\$ 70,307.7	\$ 66,618.2



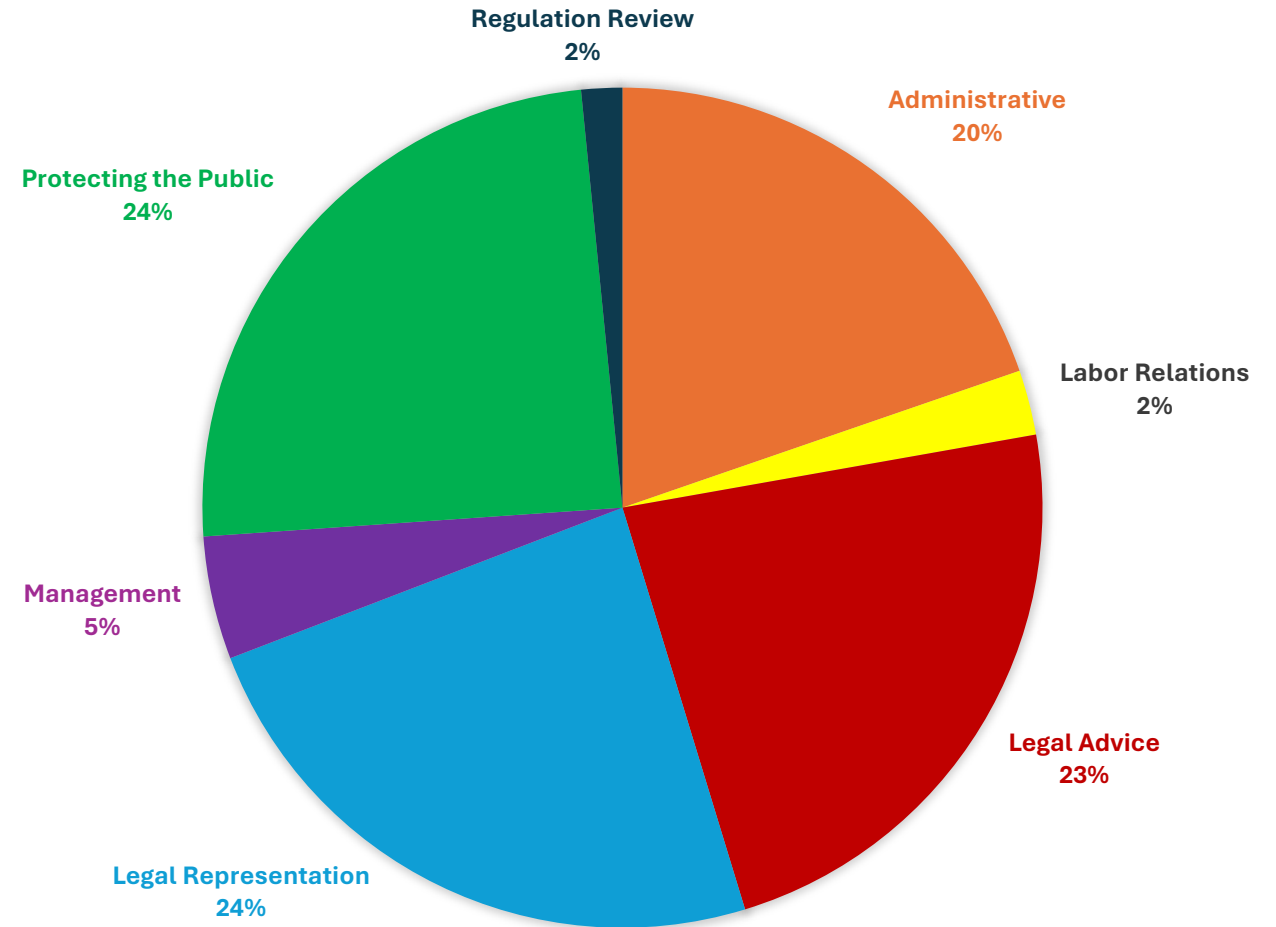
FY2025-FY2026 Hours Billed by Mission Statement Category

FY2025 HOURS BILLED PER MISSION STATEMENT CATEGORY



FY2025 Total = 355,679.6 hours

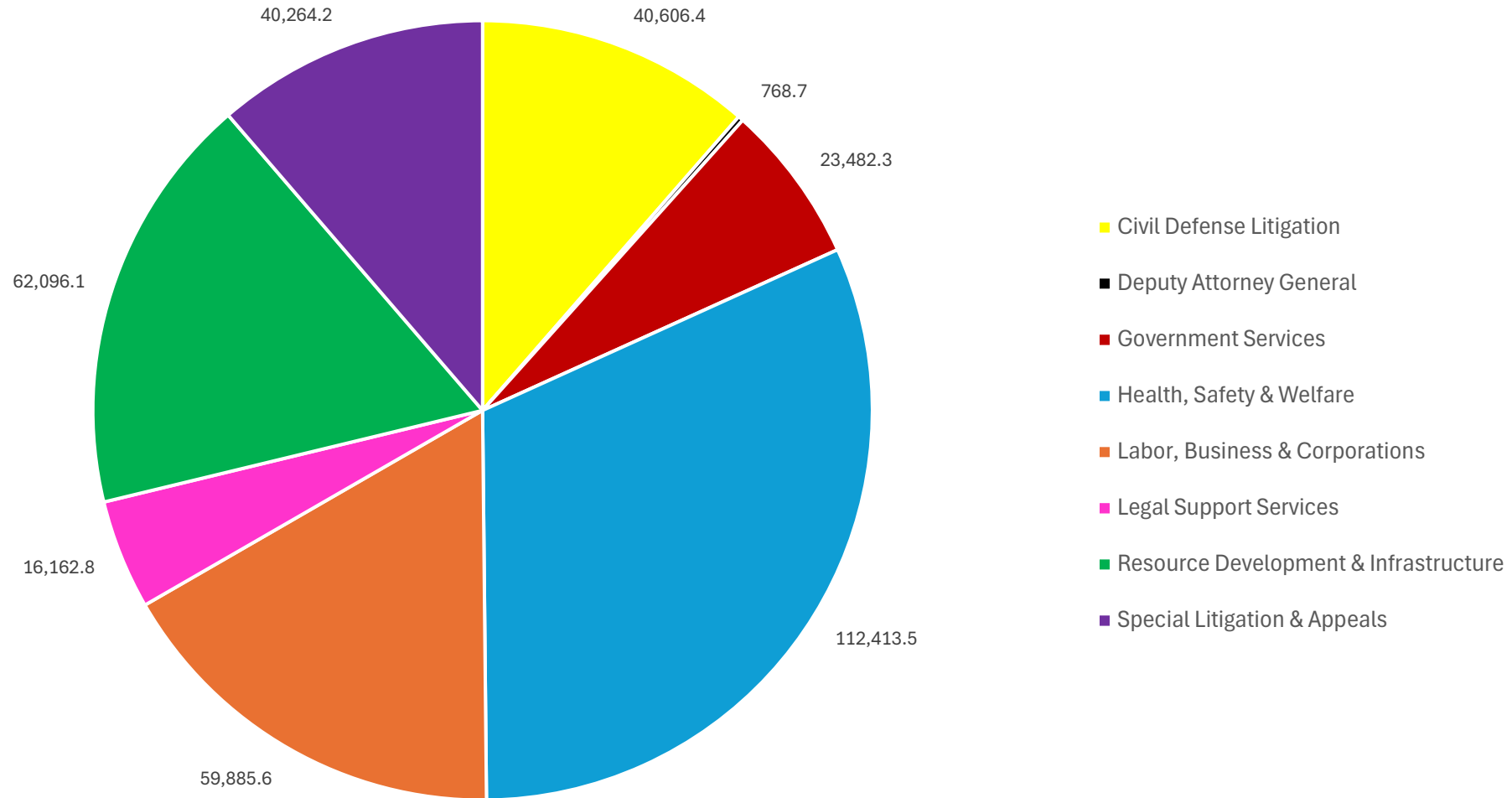
FY2026 YTD HOURS BILLED PER MISSION STATEMENT CATEGORY



FY2026 YTD = 190,684 hours



FY2025 Hours Billed by Civil Budget Component



Total = 355,679.6 hours



Litigation Over the Past Seven Years

More than **95%**
Success in ~**13,800**
Child In Need of Aid
(CINA) Cases

60 Consumer
Protection/Antitrust
Wins

271 Torts Cases
Concluded

~**84%** Success Rate
on **263** Appeals on
the Merits

126 Successful
Outcomes Out of
243 Workplace and
Employment Cases

936 Civil
Commitment
Petitions Granted

30 Out of **39**
Favorable
Resolutions in
Special Litigation



FY2025 MONIES COLLECTED

Note: \$ in thousands

Health, Safety, and
Welfare
\$4,000.0

Labor, Business, and
Corporations
\$3,985.0

Resource
Development and
Infrastructure
\$27,419.0

Special Litigation and
Appeals
\$1,203.0

Civil Defense
Litigation
\$6,639.0

\$43,246.0



FY2025 MITIGATION

Note: \$ in thousands

Oil & Gas
\$90,000.0

Transportation
\$2,000.0

\$92,000.0



CIVIL DIVISION STRUCTURE



Rachel Witty, Director
Government & Social Services,
Business, Employment & Labor



Jessica Leeah
PDPS, Juneau



Rebecca Polizzotto
LRLR, Juneau



Alan Birnbaum
IPS, Anchorage



Carla Erickson
CP, Anchorage



Steven Bookman
HS, Anchorage



Jeff Waller
RAPA, Anchorage



Susan Sonneborn
PCGS, Anchorage



Rebecca Hattan
CFB&CS, Juneau



Tom Flynn
LSA, Anchorage



Matthew Jendrusina
LABR, Anchorage



CIVIL DIVISION STRUCTURE



Charles Gartland, Director
Natural Resources, Infrastructure,
Appeals & Litigation



Anne Nelson
NR, Anchorage



Mary Gramling
OG, Juneau



Jenn Currie
ENV, Anchorage



Sean Lynch
TR, Juneau



Georgia Smithee
TWC, Juneau



Kevin Dilg
COR, Juneau



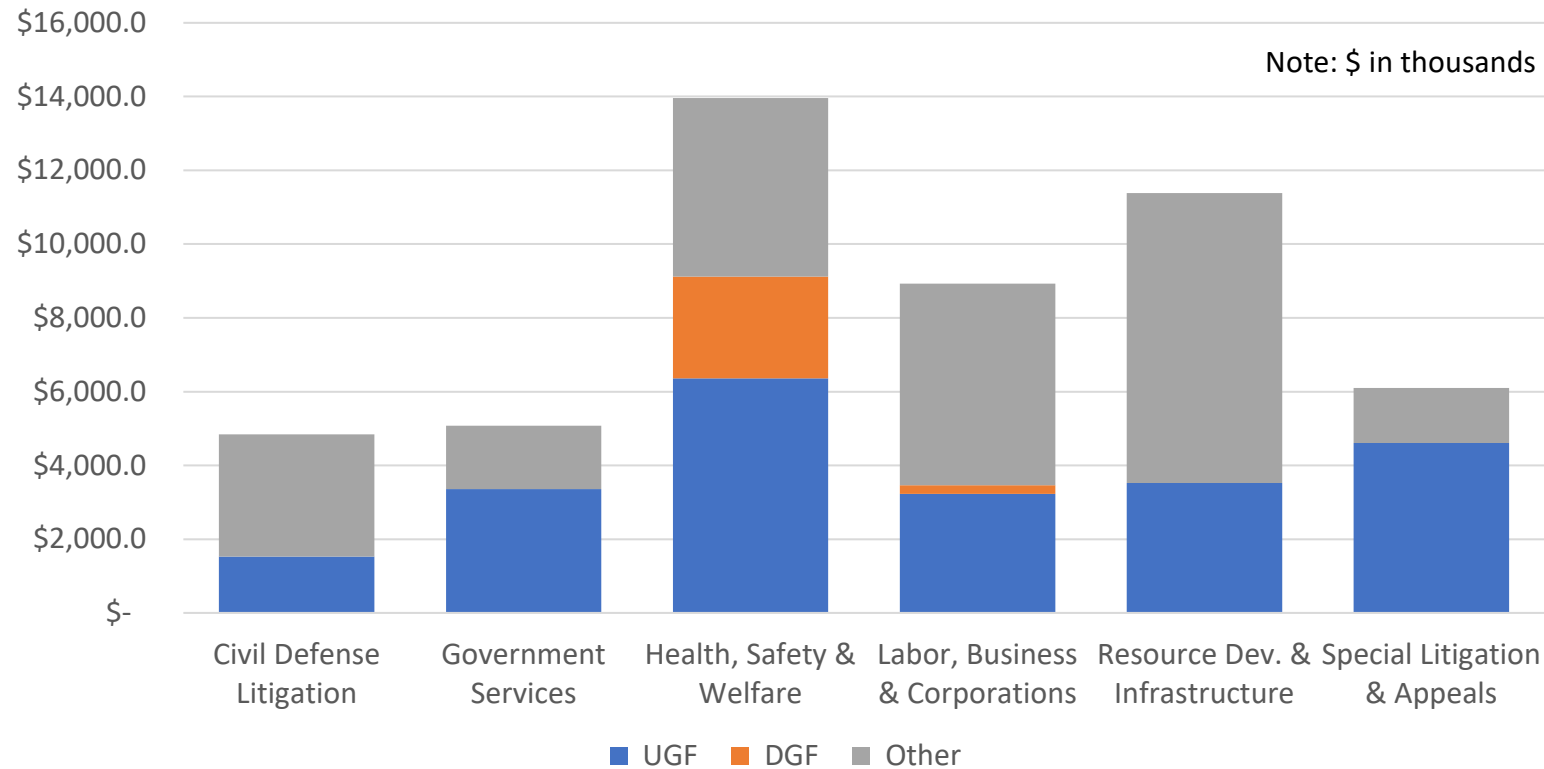
Jessie Alloway
OAE, Anchorage



Margaret Paton-Walsh
SL, Anchorage



Civil Division Components: FY2027 Governor



Component*	UGF	DGF	Other	Total
Civil Defense Litigation	\$ 1,530.7	\$ -	\$ 3,316.9	\$ 4,847.6
Government Services	\$ 3,358.8	\$ -	\$ 1,715.0	\$ 5,073.8
Health, Safety, & Welfare	\$ 6,358.5	\$ 2,763.4	\$ 4,838.6	\$ 13,960.5
Labor, Business, & Corporations	\$ 3,230.9	\$ 230.6	\$ 5,468.1	\$ 8,929.6
Resource Development & Infrastructure	\$ 3,523.9	\$ -	\$ 7,861.6	\$ 11,385.5
Special Litigation & Appeals	\$ 4,609.0	\$ -	\$ 1,490.3	\$ 6,099.3
Total	\$ 22,611.8	\$ 2,994.0	\$ 24,690.5	\$ 50,296.3



Labor Relations (CY2025)

- Total number of **Grievances** resolved: **62**
- Total number of **Class Actions** resolved: **4**
- Total number of **Employees** affected by resolution of grievances: **642**
- **Arbitration:** Successfully defended grievance brought by the union on behalf of 12 correctional supervisors who claimed they were entitled to a supervisory differential under Article 24.11 of the APEA collective bargaining agreement



Consumer Protection Unit

Note: \$ in thousands

- Alaska's Consumer Protection Law is the Nation's Toughest
 - \$1.0 Minimum & \$25.0 Max per Instance
- Unit Has Its Own Three-person Investigation Team — Scours State for Unfair & Deceptive Trade Practices
- Unit Partners with Other States to Leverage Outside Resources for Harms in Alaska
- Year over Year, Consistently Obtaining Civil Penalties averaging \$7,600.0 over a 5-year span
 - FY2025, \$5,000.0+
 - FY2024, \$13,000.0+
 - FY2023, \$15,600.0
 - FY2022, \$140.0
 - FY2021, \$4,700.0
- Highlights from 2025: Juul, Lithia, Mercedes (totaling ~\$3,500.0)

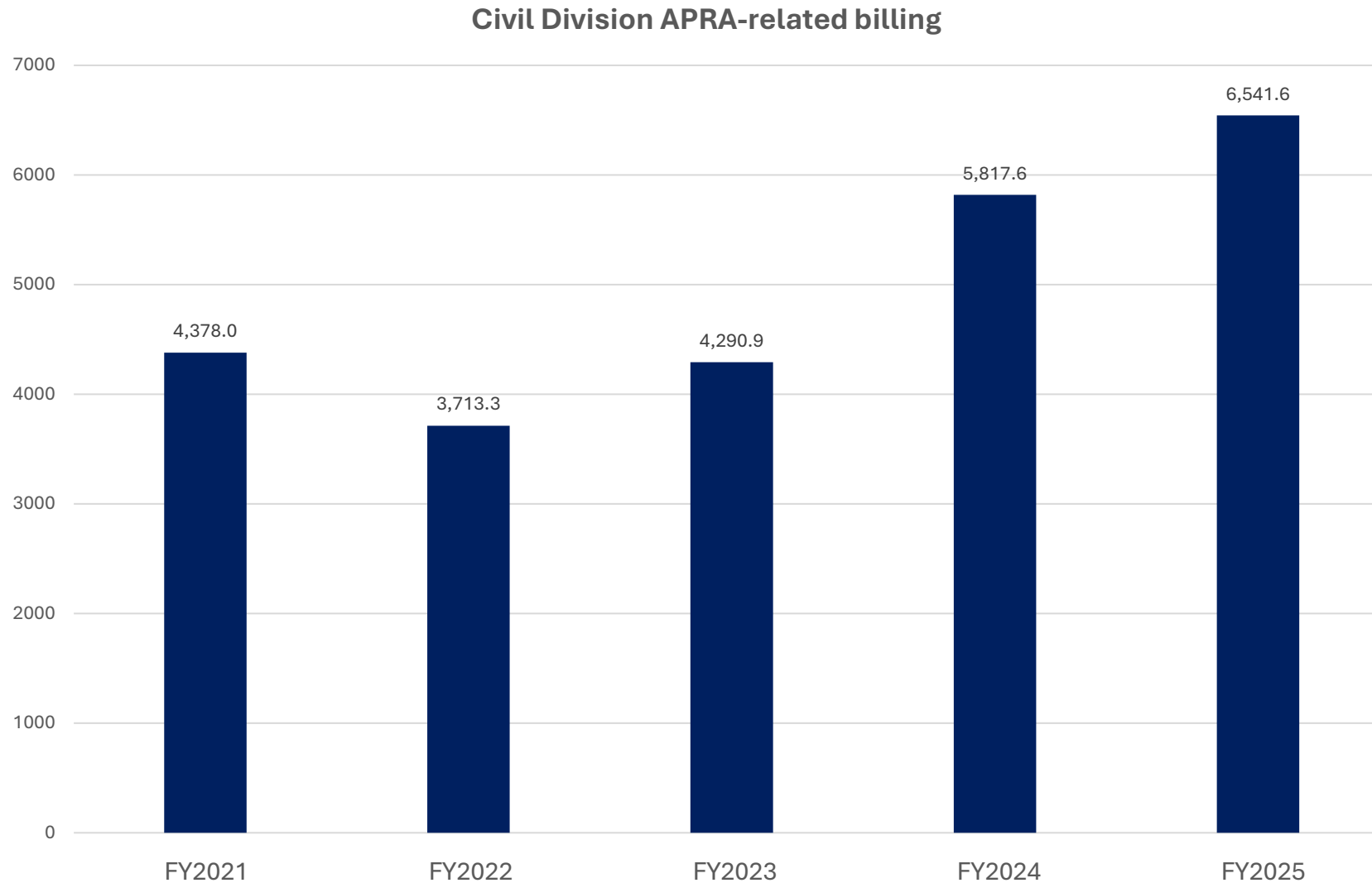


Child Protection

- **Strengthened Workforce Stability:** Fostered a supportive and collaborative environment that prioritized attorney training, professional growth and well-being, ensuring continuity in representation for children and families.
 - **Note:** Additional positions from previous legislative years have allowed the section to move away from a crisis driven case management system.
- **Created Advancement Pathways:** Developed a structured promotion track for senior and supervising attorneys, reinforcing career growth opportunities and long-term retention within the agency.
- **Promoted Timely Permanency:** Advocated effectively in court to move cases forward, helping children achieve safe and permanent homes without unnecessary delays.



Alaska Public Records Act – Hourly Billing





Child Welfare Reform Lawsuit (*ABC federal litigation*)

What was this case about?

Suit is an “institutional” or “structural” reform case asking the federal court to direct the State on how much money must be spent on child welfare, exactly how that money should be used, and other specific measures.

What happened last session?

Legislature appropriated sufficient funds to take the case through trial (\$4 million).

Why is the case so expensive?

Compared to other states that settled before trial, the State spent under half of what other states spent (averaging between \$15 to \$20 million). The amount of documents that had to be reviewed and produced was excessive; the preparation for a three-week trial; and depositions and other witness preparation in advance all add to the cost. The State successfully kept costs down by doing the bulk of the legal work, including trial work, in-house.

What is the current status?

Trial was completed in late August through early September. The Department awaits the judge’s ruling. (This was not a jury trial.)



Vail (Class Action Lawsuit)

What is this case about?

This class action constitutional suit, filed by the ACLU in federal court in May of 2025, seeks systemic reform of inmate health care in the Department of Corrections (DOC) prisons and jails through the judicial branch. This is a national trend against correctional systems. The plaintiffs allege that everything from deficient medical devices, to understaffing, to inadequate recordkeeping constitutes violations of Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. The putative class is "all prisoners who are now, or will in the future be, subjected to medical, mental health, and dental care policies and practices of the Alaska DOC."

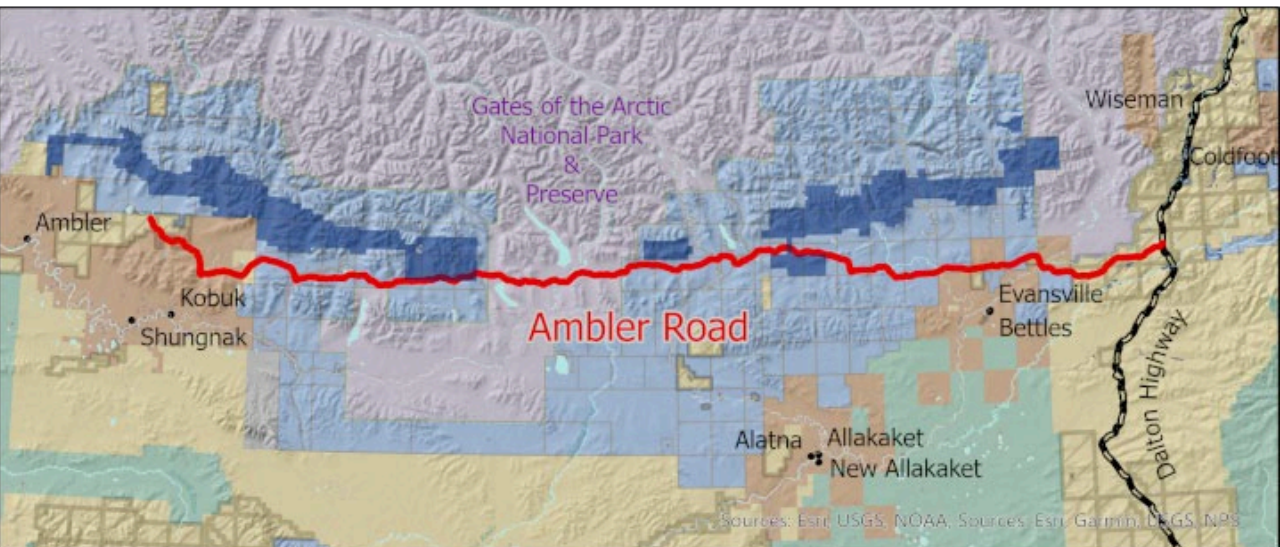
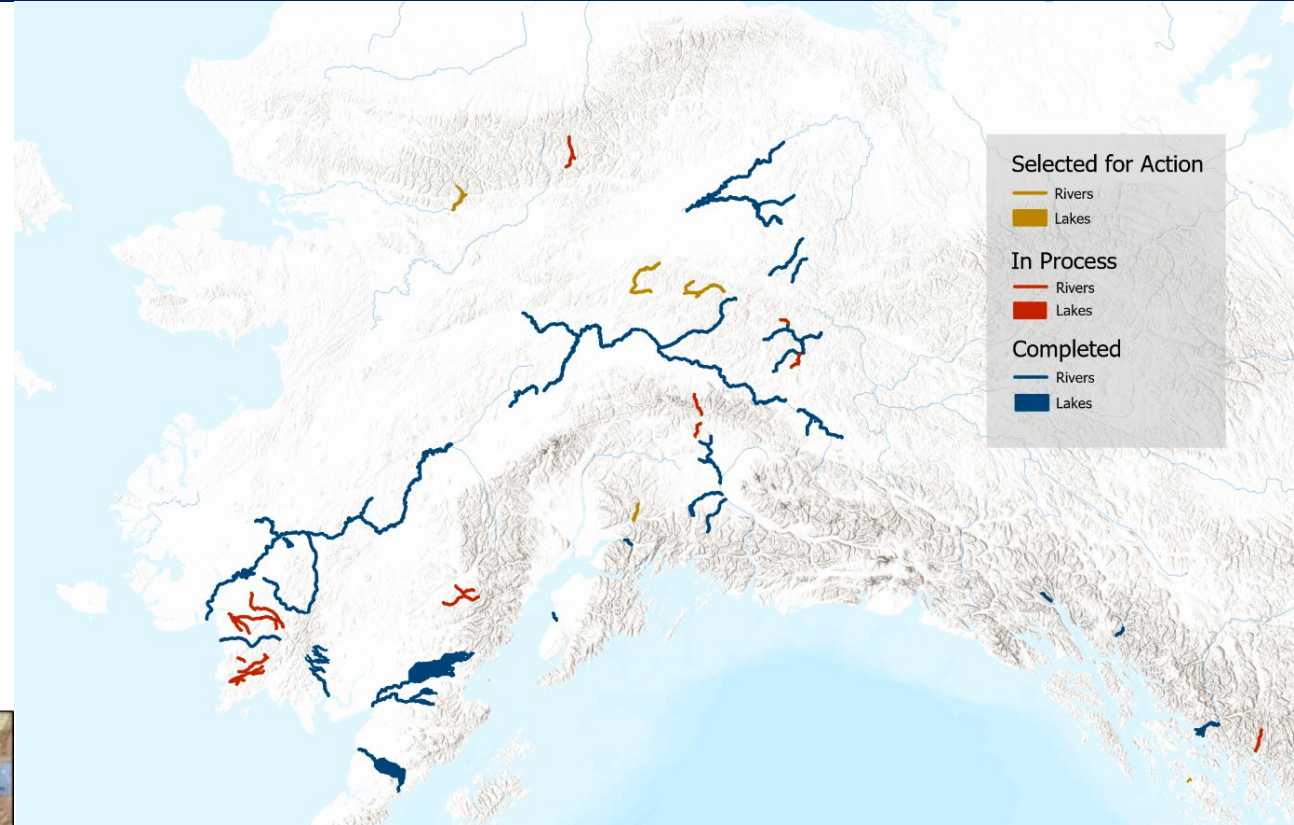
What is the current status?

The Court denied the State's motion to dismiss on December 30, 2025. The case will now proceed to the discovery phase, which could easily last over a year.



Natural Resources / Energy / Environment

- Fulfill Constitutional Mandates of:
 - Maximum Use Consistent with the Public Interest
 - Sustained Yield Subject to Preferences Among Beneficial Uses



- Secure Alaskan Sovereignty over its Lands and Waters
- Safeguarding Public Access and Sustainability



Recent Successes to Unleash Alaska's Resource Potential

Gaining Access for Resource Development, Fish and Game, and Recreation

- **The State won Fortymile!** Feds disclaimed the entire river system
 - Feds put out notice on eight Recordable Disclaimers of Interest that have been sitting for seven years
 - Next steps: Continue pursuing two existing lawsuits (Mulchatna and Koyukuk), while seeking streamlined processing of the riverbeds Alaska already owns
- **The State won access** to the trails around Chicken, Alaska, vital to mining claims
 - Next steps: Continue pursuing recognition of public trails and roads in Alaska

Clearing Up Unnecessary Regulatory Hurdles to Build Our Energy Economy

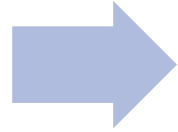
- **Successfully defended** ability for continued oil and gas development on the North Slope
 - Private groups challenged the Polar Bear incidental take regulations; if successful, this would have stopped oil and gas activities
- **Successfully challenged** the expansive critical habitat designation for ice seals which would stall development and economic activity in all waters surrounding western and northern Alaska (now on appeal awaiting a decision)
- **Successfully enjoined** prior definition of Waters of the U.S. that causes incredible delays and unnecessary litigation over any development, whether it be housing, infrastructure, or resource development, in partnership with other states
 - Submitted comments on the recent federal rulemaking
 - Case is stayed while we await the outcome
- **Successfully defeated** new rule that would require Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to create and monitor emission targets on the transportation system (separate and apart from the Clean Air Act), in partnership with other states
- **Successfully defeated** the Liquid Natural Gas Export Ban and Oil & Gas Leasing Moratorium attempted by the last federal administration, in partnership with other states



Building Off of the Successes and Not Losing Ground

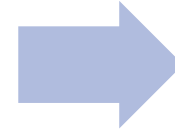
Alaska challenges
federal action

- Waters of the United States
- Roadless Rule
- Polar Bear Incidental Take Regulations
- Critical Habitat
- Endangered Species Act Designations
- Public Land Order 5150



Alaska succeeds

- Alaska succeeds in court or through administrative action
- If the new rule is in Alaska's favor...



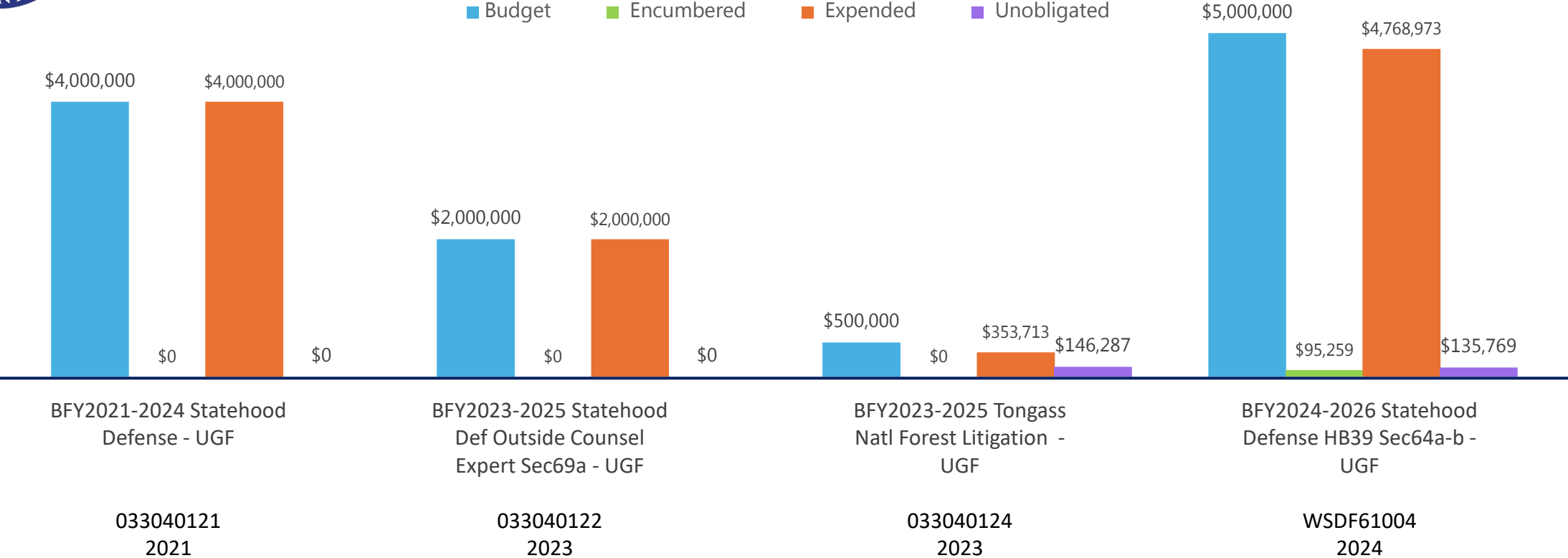
3rd Parties challenge;
does Alaska defend?

- 100% chance 3rd party will sue



Department of Law – Statehood Defense Multi-Year Appropriations (MYA)

Data as of January 28, 2026



BFY	Appr Unit	Appr Name	Budget	Encumbered	Expended	Unobligated
2021	033040121	BFY2021-2024 Statehood Defense - UGF	\$4,000,000		\$4,000,000	
2023	033040122	BFY2023-2025 Statehood Def Outside Counsel Expert Sec69a - UGF	\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000	
2023	033040124	BFY2023-2025 Tongass Natl Forest Litigation - UGF	\$500,000		\$353,713	\$146,287
2024	WSDF61004	BFY2024-2026 Statehood Defense HB39 Sec64a-b MYA UGF	\$5,000,000	\$95,259	\$4,768,973	\$135,769
Grand Total			\$11,500,000	\$95,259	\$11,122,686	\$282,055



QUESTIONS

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