

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

23. Statewide Support / Commissioner's Office
Operating Bill (CCS HB 53(brf sup maj fld H), Sec. 1)

PARTIAL COMPLIANCE

It is the intent of the legislature to direct public safety funds to areas of the state that do not have the tax base to provide needed policing services to their communities. The Department of Public Safety executives are urged to meet with officials from three organized, non-unified boroughs in the state, Kenai Peninsula, Fairbanks North Star and Matanuska-Susitna, who do not currently offer adequate local public safety services and encourage them to take the steps necessary to police their respective boroughs rather than relying on the State to provide those services. The Department shall submit a full response to the Co-chairs of the Finance committees and to the Legislative Finance Division by December 20, 2025, outlining the communication, feedback or actions taken by each borough.

The Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Deputy Commissioner met with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly and spoke about this legislative intent on August 2, 2025. The DPS provided crime density maps, coverage areas, and deployed Trooper numbers and contract policing was discussed at a macro level. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner will be meeting with the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Kenai Peninsula Borough during the first week of December. The DPS will provide a full response to the Co-chairs of the Finance committees and to the Legislative Finance Division by December 20, 2025.

Legislative Fiscal Analyst Comment: The Department of Public Safety submitted a letter on December 19, 2025 (included in this packet as **Attachment 14**) that describes the three meetings the agency attended with the Mat-Su, Kenai Peninsula, and Fairbanks North Star Boroughs. The letter describes communication efforts but does not adequately outline any feedback or actions taken by the boroughs.

Department of Public Safety

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of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

December 19, 2025

The Honorable Andy Josephson
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Calvin Schrage
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Bert Stedman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Neal Foster
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 511
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Donny Olson
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: HB 53 (Chapter 10, SLA 25) Department of Public Safety (DPS) Intent Language Response

Dear Finance Committee Co-Chairs,

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 operating budget, the Legislature requested that the DPS meet with leadership from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Fairbanks North Star Borough. Specifically, the Legislature stated:

“It is the intent of the legislature to direct public safety funds to areas of the state that do not have the tax base to provide needed policing services to their communities. The Department of Public Safety executives are urged to meet with officials from three organized, non-unified boroughs in the state—Kenai Peninsula, Fairbanks North Star, and Matanuska-Susitna—who do not currently offer adequate local public safety services and encourage them to take the steps necessary to police their respective boroughs rather than relying on the State to provide those services. The Department shall submit a full response to the Co-chairs of the Finance Committees and to the Legislative Finance Division by December 20, 2025, outlining the communication, feedback, or actions taken by each borough.”

In response, the DPS engaged with the leadership of each borough and allowed them to identify the appropriate participants. Key outcomes from each meeting are summarized below.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

On August 2, 2025, the DPS’ Deputy Commissioner Leon Morgan, B Detachment Commander Andrew Gorn, and Communications Director Austin McDaniel met with the Borough Assembly,

Mayor, and Borough Manager during a public Assembly work session focused on public safety. Representatives from the Cities of Wasilla and Palmer were also present. The DPS provided Alaska State Trooper (AST) staffing data and five years of crime data mapped to borough boundaries. The data showed that a significant share of AST activity occurs just outside Wasilla and Palmer. Deputy Commissioner Morgan addressed questions related to staffing, response times, and operations. The group also discussed the potential for contract policing and future partnerships for office space in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Kenai Peninsula Borough

On November 17, 2025, Commissioner James Cockrell, A Detachment Commander Michael Zweifel, and Communications Director Austin McDaniel met with Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor Peter Micciche.

The DPS shared AST staffing data for the borough and five years of mapped crime data. The data showed that a significant amount of AST activity occurs in areas adjacent to the City of Soldotna and City of Kenai. The DPS leadership explained that there are no current plans to increase AST staffing within the metropolitan areas of the borough. Any future growth in public safety coverage in these areas would need to be initiated and supported locally.

Fairbanks North Star Borough

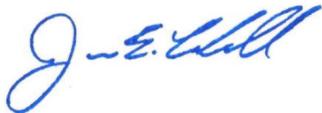
On December 3, 2025, Deputy Commissioner Morgan, D Detachment Deputy Commander Jess Carson, and Communications Director Austin McDaniel met with Borough Mayor Grier Hopkins and Assembly Chair Scot Crass.

The DPS provided staffing and crime data showing high levels of activity outside the Cities of Fairbanks and North Pole. As in the other meetings, the DPS noted that there are no current plans to expand AST staffing in these urban areas unless the borough takes the lead in pursuing additional coverage.

The DPS did not meet with other organized, non-unified boroughs, as the Legislature's request was specific to the three noted above. The department believes these discussions and the summary provided fulfill the intent language included in the FY2026 operating budget.

Please let us know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



James Cockrell

Commissioner

Department of Public Safety

cc: Alexei Painter, Director, Legislative Finance Division

Lacey Sanders, Director, Office of the Governor, Office of Management and Budget

Jordan Shilling, Director, Office of the Governor, Governor's Legislative Office