

House Finance Committee

Public Testimony

HB 39 – Operating Budget FY20

Packet 1

Emails received to

HouseFinance@akleg.gov

Feb – March 22, 2019

From: Amy Rowe <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 7:10 AM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>

Subject: Budget

Dear Finance Committee,

The budget proposed by our Governor and his staff is insulting to the people who work and live in this state. We expect government to make responsible decisions to make life in the state they govern the best for its occupants as well as growing a healthy economy. The cuts proposed in this budget would decimated Alaska's economy. None of us deserve to have dividend check each year, but we all need our elderly cared for in the Pioneer Home, health care, people well educated pre-k-12, access to high quality secondary education, and basic services provided. I am the parent of a 10th grader and a college freshman. All students in this state deserve to have access to quality education. The cuts proposed would be devastating.

Sincerely,

Amy Rowe Danielson

-----Original Message-----

From: Susannah Woodruff <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, February 25, 2019 6:10 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: budget cuts Fish and Game

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you about my concern for the proposed budget cuts for the Department of Fish and Game. I am the Wildlife Research Coordinator for Region I (Southeast Alaska) for Fish and Game based in Douglas.

While overall, Fish and Game was more fortunate than other departments, we are subject to budget cuts—a major one being a 50% cut in our travel budget. As you are aware, here in Southeast, we virtually cannot go anywhere without some kind of travel. While for many a cut in travel means they can't travel to conferences or workshops or collaborator meetings, but in Southeast, a 50% reduction in travel means we can do little work outside of Juneau/Douglas since nearly all of our work involves travel. Some current research includes travel to Gustavus to study moose and wolves, to Petersburg to study deer, to Haines to study brown bears, to Baranof to study mountain goats, and many other projects.

Another issue is the source of our funding. Twenty-five percent of our funding comes from Fish and Game Fund and 75% is federal funding from the Pittman-Robertson Act. None of this money can be spent on anything else (i.e., besides Fish and Game) so cutting our funding doesn't save the state any money. We all know that hunting, fishing, and wildlife conservation are some of the top priorities for Alaskans and being able to responsibly manage the wildlife in our state is critical. Please take this into account in any budget discussions.

Thanks,

Susannah Woodruff

Douglas, AK

From: Yasaman Shakeri <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2019 10:00 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: ADFG budget cuts

To whom this may concern:

I am a biologist with Alaska Department of Fish and game in Region 1 (Southeast Alaska) on Douglas. I am writing to you about my concern for the proposed budget cuts for the Department of Fish and Game.

With a 50% budget cut, I am unable to travel to research sites throughout Southeast Alaska to conduct wildlife research because anywhere outside of Juneau and Douglas island is considered travel. It is crucial that time sensitive wildlife work be conducted so that the best management decisions can be made for hunting and conservation. I am involved with moose and mountain goat research that all requires travel to conduct.

I would also like to stress that 75% of our funding is federal funding from the Pittman-Robertson Act, which cannot be used for anything, but fish and game. Cutting our funding does not save the state money, only 25% of our funding comes from the Fish and Game fund. Please reconsider these budget cuts, so that we can continue important research that will ensure sustainable hunting and conservation in our region.

Thank you,
Yasaman Shakeri
Douglas, AK

From: CYNTHIA ANN FRY <[REDACTED]@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 4:14 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget proposal impacts

Cynthia Fry, Petersburg AK

Serious concerns regarding current proposed cuts and how it will impact the quality of education. Furthermore, the loss of teachers, increase in class size, decrease in opportunities and exposure for future employment. Our schools are already operating on a very conservative budget with excellent education for our students. Keep education funded at the current level. It is our kids future and the future of Alaska that is on the cutting block.

Raw Fish Tax is a critical component to our community budget. When it is removed from our local community then the lack of funds will need to come from our local citizens or our lives will be adversely impacted.

Alaska Marine Highway is a highway for our community. Cuts to this will impact our personal and professional lives. It will alter access to commerce for our community. It impacts additional money coming into our community through tourism. All adding to our local financial security. It our highway and access to communities and needs to be funded like any other transportation route in the state.

Please contact for more concerns. 907-[REDACTED]
Cynthia Fry

From: Ashley Lohr <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 4:32 PM

To: Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins <Rep.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov>; House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>; senate.education@aklet.gov; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance <Finance.Calendar@akleg.gov>

Subject: Petersburg, mother of pre-school children

I am a mother, an educator, wife to a fisherman and an artist,

Hello, I'm Ashley Lohr from Petersburg. A 25% reduction to public education funding will damage the education systems. I oppose this \$1.8 million proposal. I deeply respect and admire the Petersburg School district and personally know they have been making conservative choices. The idea of a 25% slashed education budget means positions, courses and activities will be affected. My children's future will be affected. Do not pass a reduction in public education funding.

Thank you.

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Ashley Lohr

From: Anne Wieland <[REDACTED]@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 3:04 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Cc: Rep. Sarah Vance <Rep.Sarah.Vance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Budget

Dear Co-Chair Reps. Neal Foster and Tammie Wilson and members of the House Finance Committee,

My husband and I fell in love with Alaska when we worked for the Territory in the summer of 1957. We returned with the military and after his tour of duty we moved into our new Anchorage house February 1964. Scenic Park was "way out of town" then but we had all amenities. We began to pay State Tax to Alaska just as we had earlier in Pennsylvania. We also paid School Tax for the next 16 years, I from my salary as an Anchorage School District teacher, by then as a single parent. The city grew, schools that my daughters attended were doing well as were UAA and Alaska Methodist University. Churches were increasing in number, libraries were well stocked, streets were plowed, health care was good, police and State Troopers kept the peace. Anchorage Airport grew. Alaska was becoming prosperous. The State Tax helped ensure that most necessities were provided.

Somewhere during that time oil was discovered and and developed. Many more people came to the state, property values increased rapidly. Then in 1980 Governor Hammond and legislation abolished the state income tax instead of zeroing it out. Prosperity and a Permanent Fund payment became our new reality.

Inevitably there were good years and bad, in general depending on the price of oil. We became more and more accustomed to a comfortable life. Then came a recession in the late '80's. Eventually after a lot more years of prosperity we have come again to a period when our demands and population are having to make sacrifices to meet the state's budget.

Several of us long time Alaskans keenly wish we would return to the years when we paid State Income Tax as a routine

and had a comfortable life with plenty of amenities. But since 1980 very many people have come to live here and have no memory at all of how well we lived back in the 60's and 70's while paying a moderate state income tax. Instead there is the PFD that we have come to expect.

Now we have a Governor who has introduced a draconian budget that threatens to destroy the progress we have made since Statehood. With cuts to virtually all essential necessities of our quality of life, this proposed budget will ruin the state starting with Education K through 12 and the University system which are the bases of our present and future. It seems the governor wants to balance a budget on the backs of our children and grandchildren, who are our best hope for the years to come. This proposal is beyond outrageous and must not be imposed on our state and our families.

Class size is a strong predictor of how children will do. The extreme school funding cuts that have been proposed will inevitably lead to much larger class sizes that will fail our students and drive teachers away from Alaska. We are already near or at the bottom of all 50 school systems nationally. These cuts will secure our place as the worst by far.

Cuts to the University to the extent proposed will cause tuitions to rise sharply, more people will not be able to attend, professors will leave, level of education in the state will fall drastically. The lure of Alaska to Outsiders will dim. There will be a brain drain away from here to greener pastures.

Add to just the potential huge damage to the education system here, we will suffer in many other ways if Governor Dunleavy's budget is even partially adopted. Reducing Medicaid services by 40%, about \$271 million, will prevent many from receiving immediate necessary as well as long term care. With less funding, not only will the very significant population of Alaskans who depend on Medicaid be without care, but their would-be caregivers may be let go and/or facilities shuttered. More jobs lost.

Now our Governor wants to seize the local property taxes levied and collected by municipalities that have oil and gas facilities and divert those taxes to the state treasury. Do they think they can manage these funds better than locally elected officials? What will become of these local municipalities, here and in the north Slope? We on the Kenai Peninsula with many of these facilities would lose a great deal of tax money, greatly harming many smaller towns like Anchor Point and Seldovia. State Administration should keep its hands off our locally raised tax money!

The precipitous shutdown of the Alaska Marine Highway System is an extreme mistake. Perhaps the people who are advising the Governor are insufficiently familiar with the ferry system to realize how great is the reliance on the AMHS. For example, service to the South East community of Angoon which has neither an airstrip nor barge service will have no way of accessing food. Angoon and several other small towns will suffer greatly by this ill considered and untimely cut of ferry services!

Retracting the proposed \$21 million to increase for the already insufficient number of State Troopers is a potentially very harmful cut. Without that funding we would lose any chance of attracting new badly needed recruits. Rural communities all across Alaska not just in South East could suffer even more if the proposed \$3 million cut to the Village Public Safety Officer program is allowed to take place. If the property tax money that is pretty slim in the rural areas is redirected to fund state demands, the fate of rural residents is in grave danger. Take away public radio from small communities and close their tiny airstrips and the communities' futures will be closer to complete isolation and abandonment.

There are more proposed cuts on our State Budget. Each cut adds up to help create a mortal wound to Alaska. A domino effect may take place. The people who are laid off will likely leave Alaska. OMB director Donna Arduino predicts that about 625 full time state positions will be cut. The homes they and others leave behind and the services they used will suffer and succumb. This will extend our recession from which we have yet to recover. Alaska will become a mass of Junk paper in the eyes of Standard and Poor and Moody's. This budget if implemented is a ticket for Alaska to lose 60 years of progress leaving a trail of tears and delusion.

I respectfully ask that you very seriously consider reinstating a State Income Tax for all. It is a fair solution better than a sales tax and also captures income from seasonal workers who pay nothing to the state now. It will affect wealthier people more. Some of us would even gladly give up our PFDs!

Bring back the State Tax! The time has come!

Sincerely,
Anne Wieland

[REDACTED] Homer AK 99603

From: Malani O'Toole <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 9:18 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget Concerns from Cordova

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Malani Towle. I am a born and raised Alaskan. I grew up in Cordova, left to attend college at Stanford University, traveled the world, and then returned home to Cordova to raise a family. My husband and I own a drift gillnet operation for the Copper River Flats and Prince William Sound.

I am deeply disturbed by the Governor's proposed budget and cuts to services that are vital to our way of life. We are a small, coastal fishing community without road access. The state ferry system is our highway, our connection to the rest of the state. We rely on the ferry service for the groceries and goods sold in local stores, for affordable transportation to Anchorage and all of the medical and retail opportunities there, for school groups to travel to competitions, for tourists to reach us, the list goes on and on. In isolated, rural towns in Alaska the cost of transporting goods into town or traveling out of town is already high, but without a ferry system it begins to look unfeasible.

The proposed plan for the State to stop splitting the raw fish tax with the communities that harvest those fish would be another devastating blow to Cordova. The funds that the fish tax provides to communities like Cordova are crucial to city budgets. In Cordova 20% of the city's budget comes from fish tax. Cities that are providing services and support to the fishing industry need the fish tax in order to continue supporting the fisheries that bring in that money.

The proposed cuts to education are also deeply troubling to me. In Cordova the proposed budget would cut our School District's budget by \$1,000,000. My daughter is in kindergarten this year. She started the year in a classroom with 1 teacher and 36 children. It was a very stressful beginning for teacher and students alike. Luckily the school district found a way to split the class into two classes for the second half of the year. What happens when they get their budget slashed? Will there be 36 children with 1 teacher in first grade? I have a Masters Degree in Elementary Education and I can assure you that the quality of education our children will receive is going to suffer greatly under such conditions.

I urge you to look for ways to make up the deficit in the budget without making such harmful cuts to education, transportation, and fishing communities. Please do not support the PFD payback. The costs of such a program are too high. It is much more important to me to have the services I have spoken of than

an extra \$1000 in our PFDs for the next 3 years. I think that we need to prioritize the Alaskan lifestyle and future (education, the ferry system, and fishing communities) so that we can continue living in rural Alaska. Maybe that means getting rid of the dividend all together, or implementing a state income tax or sales tax... The current plan is not sustainable. Alaska will suffer. Rural Alaska as we know it will become a vestige of the past. We cannot survive with the proposed cuts to our city budgets, transportation, and education.

Thank you for listening,

Malani Towle

From: The Grimes Family <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 1, 2019 11:17 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Education budget cut proposal

I recently learned that in Dunleavy's proposed budget cuts, the IDEA program budget would be cut by 20%. I was told this would drastically reduce staff available, which is already very limited, clubs, field trips, and events for kids and families, as well as probably some of the student allotments. Any of these cuts in the program would have devastating results for families, like us, who rely heavily on these for our children's educations. I am proud that Alaska is a pioneer in offering government funded education options outside of public school for families to choose. We all are aware that there are some kids that just do not fit and thrive in the cookie cutter public school system and to have these alternative options available is invaluable. For our family, we would not be able to homeschool without the help we get through the IDEA program. I am deeply concerned about the impact these budget cuts will have on our community long term, especially when it comes to cutting education. Please fight for Alaska's future, as well as our current financial situation and think of the long term repercussions! Thank you!!

From: [REDACTED]@gci.net>

Sent: Saturday, March 2, 2019 4:08 PM

To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>; Senate Education <Senate.Education@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance <Finance.Calendar@akleg.gov>

Subject: Opposition to Governor's Proposed Budget

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives,

As a lifelong Alaskan, I oppose Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget. Governor Dunleavy's proposed cut to \$300 million in education is unacceptable. I urge you as the Education and Finance Committees to maintain the forward funded budget that was approved in the last legislative session under Governor Walker.

I support a permanent fund dividend of \$400.00 to maintain a balanced budget without decimating essential programs and services in Alaska like K-12 education, the Alaska Marine Highway, raw fish tax to the communities in which they are paid, health care, and the university system.

I also support a statewide income tax to bring in additional revenue to Alaska to help balance the budget yearly.

Sincerely,

Ginger Evens
Petersburg, AK

From: Gretchen Roffler <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 3, 2019 9:35 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: budget cuts

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing to communicate my dismay for the proposed budget cuts for the Department of Fish and Game. I am a Wildlife Biologist based in Douglas, have been an Alaskan resident for 19 years, and I vote.

The 50% reduction in our travel budget will prevent us from getting our jobs done, including any essential fieldwork, management meetings, or other activities critical to sustainable management of Alaska's wildlife. In Region I, we work throughout Southeast Alaska from Yakutat to Ketchikan. It is simply not possible to do work across this area without some form of travel.

Unlike other agencies we receive the majority (75%) of our funding from Federal sources (the Pittman-Robertson Act) and the remaining 25% comes from the Fish and Game Fund. Cutting our travel by 50% means we won't be able to provide match and capture this large and valuable Federal resource, which can only be spent on wildlife management and research activities.

Please consider in discussions of the budget that management of wildlife is important to Alaskan residents. Pertinent to these discussions is the reality that many Alaskans have already testified that they do not need a full PFD retroactively paid to them, and that they are willing to pay an income tax to receive important state services that they rely on.

Thank you for your consideration,
Gretchen Roffler
Douglas, AK

From: Gretchen Roffler <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 3, 2019 10:24 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: budget cuts

Dear House Finance Committee members,

I am writing to express my support of a reduced PFD and progressive income tax to pay for State services. I also do not believe that retroactive payments to all Alaskans of a "full" PFD is financially responsible or necessary. This is "free" money that we receive annually, and should not be considered a guaranteed source of income that we are entitled to.

Most importantly I question the lack of meaningful discussion regarding credits for oil exploration and development (ACES and SB 21), which is an unnecessary favor to oil companies at the expense of widespread cuts across State services which will effect all Alaskans. It is simply irresponsible not to consider a reduction of these credits to save revenue for services Alaskans rely on.

Among the services most important to my community are public education, the Alaska Marine Highway, health care, and the University system.

Please consider these comments in discussions of the proposed budget. I am an Alaskan resident of 19 years, and I vote.
Thank you,

Gretchen Roffler
Douglas, Alaska

From: Tracey Schaeffer <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 3, 2019 5:52 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: thoughts on the budget cuts

From Tracey Schaeffer, PO box 1082, Willow Ak. I live between Kotzebue and Willow.

Thoughts regarding budget cut proposals:

Early childhood education: there are many children born here with significant needs. Early Childhood education opportunities has statistically shown to decrease teen pregnancy, high school drop-out rates and rates of incarceration, all of which cost our state significantly.

Education: Decreasing teacher to student ratio is the fastest way to increase high school drop outs and increase rates of incarceration, which are expensive. Every district will need to let go of teachers and paraprofessionals, which means more families in villages which will be needing public assistance as there are not very many jobs in villages.

Big PFD's: result in many people leaving their villages just before the direct deposit hits to go to Anchorage to shop. As a result, the childcount day happens and there are fewer children at school, resulting in less funding. Larger PFD's lead to significant social upset in the villages, increased crime, increased domestic violence, increased OCS reports. Very costly, overall.

In the PFD application there should be a bill pay option, similar to "pick click give"

Medicaid expansion: This is allowing parents to work instead of being on welfare so they can get Medicaid for their children and themselves. Rejecting that money would be foolish and would result in people needing to seek very expensive medical care in emergency rooms instead of affordable care at local clinics with mid-level health care providers. I believe I've seen a statistic that thousands of jobs would be lost. Rejecting that money makes no sense.

VPO funding: Losing boots on the ground local law enforcement is not a way to fight crime. Less people present in the village mean more expensive trooper intervention.

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Tracey Schaeffer, Occupational Therapist
Arctic OT Services [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Willow AK

From: Carla Jenness <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2019 11:18 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Schools over PFD's

I vote education funding over a back PFD payment.
Please fully fund schools in Alaska. Shortchanging our kids is a failure of leadership and will result in an economic slowdown that no amount of oil taxes can fix. The PFD is not worth sacrificing kid's futures and eventually, the state as well. There are talented teachers all across Alaska googling, "Teacher salaries in....." anywhere but here. Please take a stand for Alaska's kids.
Thank you for your work.
Carla Jenness
Nikiski, Alaska
99635

From: Gregg Kowalski <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2019 6:17 AM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins <Rep.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget Bungle and Bruises

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

An excellent education of Alaska's youth should be a priority of our great state. These children hold our future, our state's future, and our joint economic future in their hands. Any short sided, draconian cuts to education will hollow out the very substance of our life blood, draining our potential, capabilities and possibilities. We will then become dependent on outsiders, pawns of the privileged and minions of the government. Our proud spirit of independence as citizens of the Last Frontier will seriously be compromised.

I'll limit my permanent fund so quality education can still be done!

Respectfully,

Gregory Kowalski
Petersburg, Alaska

From: Erika [REDACTED]@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2019 10:53 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Comments on Budget Proposal & PFD/Taxes

Dear Representatives on the Finance Committee:

I'm writing to express my deep frustration and dismay with the budget proposal from Governor Dunleavy. To be blunt, it is one of the least well thought out documents I've ever seen. As has become painfully clear during the hearings on the budget thus far, there has been very little in the way of forethought in terms of the overall impact this budget will have on Alaska as a whole as well as local communities. No justification is provided for many of the cuts and it seems that OMB Director Arduin has proposed many cuts just for the sake of cutting. The budget also displays a fundamental misunderstanding of how unique Alaska is in terms of transportation infrastructure, provision of education, and ensuring remote communities have the resources they need to both survive and remain engaged

with the rest of the state. I'm particularly incensed by the revenue shifting that is proposed which will only result in local budgets being dramatically slashed.

I firmly opposed cuts to education, health care, transportation (including the AMHS), the Pioneer Homes and services that help support low income individuals. To quote the governor, these are all "core" services that should be held harmless. I do not believe cuts that require a constitutional amendment or rejection of laws already passed should be considered. I believe that any cuts in these areas will be met with costly lawsuits that will backfire on the state. Look only to what happened in Washington with *McClary v. State* that resulted in the agreement that the State of Washington needed to spend billions more on education – not less. Then there's the fact that shutting down the AMHS will effectively strand many communities with no way to get food or services (if there's an airport a cargo plane can't land there) as well as impacting those who use the ferry system to move to Alaska (like the military). Just to name a few more things - I am also opposed to cuts to the Department of Agriculture (which would close our only dairy and harm small business farmers), the Ocean Ranger program (which pays for itself with money to spare), Public Broadcasting (which is the only media often available in remote communities), fisheries management, Tribal Assistance Programs, and monitoring and management of refuges and trails (which bring substantial tourist dollars and local revenue). The list goes on. The result of these cuts will be the loss of thousands of jobs and will throw Alaska into an even deeper recession than the one we're recovering from. Healthcare was basically THE bright spot over the past few years and cutting so drastically there seems to be extremely short sighted.

I DO NOT believe 37% of the available funds in a budget should be spent on PFDs. In fact, and I know I'm in the minority here, I actually believe the whole PFD should be discontinued. I feel I can say this as one who has received it nearly every year of my life. It's become less of a blessing and more of an entitlement. It causes more division than anything else. But, for now, we **SHOULD NOT** be paying full dividends at the expense of thousands of jobs and a dramatic reduction in services that would harm nearly every single Alaskan. I believe the legislature is on the right track with the agreement passed last year that allows for a draw from PFD funds while still keeping a relatively healthy amount flowing into Alaskan's accounts every October. Those fighting for a \$3,000 PFD forget the many, many years when it was closer to \$900 (or less) and we did just fine.

There are some items that I believe can be cut. I believe the WWAMI program has not proven to be effective at fulfilling vacancies in the healthcare workforce. I work in healthcare and nearly every hire we've made in my department recently has been from out of state. I believe efficiencies can be found that will result in cost savings without the loss of services. (For example, consolidating University of Alaska programs & creating specialty campuses) But, these will take time to flesh out and should be done carefully with the input of a wide variety of stakeholders and subject matter experts. The "slash and burn" approach suggested by this budget will only cause more problems than it solves. The legislature should recognize what's happened in other states where OMB Director Arduin has taken this approach. Kansas hated it so much that this deep red state voted for a Democratic governor.

There is ZERO evidence to support that private industry will come into the state to make up the gap in funding and improve the economy. What company would want to move here with local bond debt ratings crashing, an uneducated and unhealthy workforce, and many of the benefits that employees want missing (quality schools, support for the arts and access to well-maintained parks and trails for example)?

Furthermore, millions in federal dollars are dependent on Alaska paying for part of the cost. The impact of these proposed budget cuts will be extrapolated once the loss of those dollars is included.

We don't have a spending problem. Our budget is already leaner, when accounting for inflation, than it's ever been. We have a revenue problem. We have depended on Oil & Gas for way, way too long and drastically need to diversify. This means making our state attractive to private industry, to tourists etc. We need to look to technology, manufacturing, renewable resources and more. This means investing in the areas that will make Alaska attractive to these businesses - not cutting them. I am also in favor of an income tax that will ensure that those who make their living here but do not live here pay their fair share or a sales tax. I don't really favor one over the other but I am in favor of a tax of some sort. To take an example from my own budget, when cutting expenses further will dramatically impact what I need to live a quality of life I find acceptable then I find ways to increase my revenue. That is the approach I firmly believe Alaska needs to take today.

Sincerely,

Erika Wolter

Home: [REDACTED], Wasilla, AK 99623

Mailing: [REDACTED], Chugiak, AK 99567-2614

From: Amber Cunningham <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2019 2:25 PM
To: Jenny Martin <Jenny.Martin@akleg.gov>
Subject: Re: Early Childhood Education Funding

March 1, 2019

Dear Representative Foster,

I am writing regarding Governor Dunleavy's budget proposal pertaining to the funding of Early Childhood Education. I have two children who have very much benefited from the program and a third one who is currently an ECE student. Early childhood education is a fundamental proponent to our children's education. It is the stepping stool for success in K-12.

My children learned to write their names, how to count, how to play nicely with other children, how to sit still during story time, how to feed themselves, daily structure, etc in ECE. When they reached kindergarten, they were rearing and ready to learn.

We should constantly be uplifting our children and setting them up for success. Early childhood education provides a strong base for lifelong learning. During these early years, children's brains undergo rapid development in which they build cognitive skills: math, science, reading and character skills: social-emotional, gross-motor skills, impulse control, and executive functioning.

Governor Dunleavy's proposal to cut funding for the ECE program in our great state is revolting. We are talking about our future leaders and setting them up for failure. Children develop the love of learning when they are exposed to education while they are young and curious.

Our children are our future. If we want our children to succeed in life, we need to set them up for success rather than drag them down with semi-decent educational programs that do not meet their needs.

My three-year-old daughter, Cassidy, comes home from school with new information each day. She is counting to 10. She is singing colors of the rainbow. I never knew the colors indigo or violet at that young age because I did not have the opportunity to attend ECE in Anchorage. She loves to color and draw pictures. Cassidy has best friends already. I don't recall having best friends until I was in kindergarten. Cassidy is thriving because she has the opportunity to learn at the young age of 3. She loves to learn new things.

My son, Keane, is 12-years-old. He was diagnosed with ADHD in 1st grade. He had very poor impulse control in his younger years. Being exposed to structure and having daily routines in ECE and kindergarten helped him to succeed. He participates in every extracurricular activity that his age allows. He is a skier, a wrestler, basketball player, Spelling Bee participant, as well as Math Counts participant. Right now, he is at ANSEP Middle School Academy. He has a love of learning because he attended 2 years of ECE in Unalakleet. He will be attending the Sitka Fine Arts Camp this summer. My son, Brian, is 11-years-old. He is a brilliant boy who loves math and drawing. He dreams to become a Computer Engineer. Brian got first place in our school Spelling Bee this year. Brian also had 2 years of ECE.

As you can see, I am a strong advocate for education. I have high expectations for my children because I want them to succeed in life. They are all expected to attend a post-secondary school or training when they graduate from high school. I keep tabs on their grades so they know to give their all in their school work. I wish all parents appreciated education and held their kids to high expectations as well.

I hope you are inclined to protect our Early Childhood Education programs all across Alaska, because these programs are well worth every dollar spent on them. Please advocate to keep funding in place to save ECE. Thank you in advance! I appreciate all the work that you do for Alaska and all of our people.

Sincerely,

Amber Cunningham
Unalakleet, Alaska
Parent and BSSD Employee

From: [REDACTED].net>
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2019 8:04 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Oppose the Governor's February 13th Budget Proposal

Dear House Finance Committee,
My name is Bridget Wittstock and I vehemently oppose the Governor's proposed budget. I am a third generation Alaskan. I live in Petersburg, where I was born and raised. My late husband and I raised both of our children here in Petersburg, and both received an excellent education from our school system here on the island. We are a hard working family, and take great pride in being Alaskans. I feel that our state has always had our children, our future, at the heart of decisions made in our local and our state government. I am also a special education teacher and have served the children in our community for the last 26 years.

When the Governor unveiled his proposed budget on February 13th, I was shocked and stunned. This proposal is draconian and will have deleterious effects on our communities' economies, school systems, university system, ferry system, services for early intervention and medicaid, and ultimately and most importantly, our children's futures. This budget is not reasonable or well-thought-out, it is not fair and equitable. It is in the Alaskan Constitution that we provide each child with a viable and appropriate public education, and this budget does just the opposite: it eviscerates our public education system in one fell swoop.

I sincerely ask that you consider rejecting this budget proposal, and fund education to the level it was funded in last year's budget. I would gladly give up my PFD to fund essential services to our communities. Our future depends on this. Thank you for the service you do for our state. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Bridget Dahl Wittstock
Petersburg

From: Thomas Thompson [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 9, 2019 4:03 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Schools/Petersburg

Dear Committee Members:

Born and raised in Alaska, as was my father and as my children were, Alaska means the world to me. Petersburg is my home and the recent budget discussions concern us greatly.

We have looked deeply at the proposed cuts and can see what they will do our schools, our students, staffs, and community. Education is a tough ticket and we are so very lucky in this State and country to have education for all, and we should never take it for granted. We believe we are doing a great job here in Petersburg as our kids graduate with post secondary options that allow them to become contributing citizens. Stanford University, Gonzaga, Williams College are just a few of the top schools our students are attending while other paths have led to AVTEC in Seward and other

career schools down south. Our graduation rates are good, we have teachers who care and a variety of programs that engage students musically, athletically, vocationally, and academically. We hope you fight hard for our schools and inspire your colleagues to remember that in a huge state with a small dispersed population sometimes we have to be different and we have many things to overcome.

Please talk to our incredible superintendent Erica Kludt-Painter about visiting and finding out about how the budget proposals will hurt our students in the short run and our communities in the long run.

Sincerely,

Tommy Thompson

Petersburg

907-[REDACTED]

From: Susan Ohmer [REDACTED].com>

Sent: Monday, March 11, 2019 7:52 AM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Please protect our State and oppose the Governor's proposed budget

Dear Representatives of House Finance ,

I appreciate all you do working for the people of Alaska, but more specifically being a voice for the people of Southeast. I'm writing hoping you will hear my voice and the voice of others about the Governor's proposed budget. I am vehemently opposed the Governor's proposed budget.

I am a third generation Alaskan who has spent the last 25 years working in behavioral health in my home town to care for our most vulnerable populations. Giving back to our community is how my siblings and I were raised. I take great pride in being an Alaskan.

When the Governor unveiled his proposed budget on February 13th, I was stunned and even sickened. This proposal seems designed to destroy our communities' economies, school systems, university system, ferry system, services for early intervention and medicaid, and ultimately and most importantly, Alaska's future. This budget is not reasonable or well-thought-out, it is not fair and equitable.

I sincerely ask that you consider rejecting this budget proposal. My husband and I, and many others, would gladly give up our PFD to fund essential services to our communities. Our future depends on this. Thank you, again, for the service you do for our state. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Susie Ohmer

Petersburg

From: Patricia Phillips <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 12:23 AM
To: Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>; House Transportation <House.Transportation@akleg.gov>
Subject: AMHS Comment - Patricia Phillips

Dear Chairman Stutes,

I have served on various boards and committees over the past many years, I now serve on the Pelican City council, am a tribal member of the Native Village of Afognak, a sixty year resident of Alaska, forty-seven years in Pelican - these comments are my own.

I have observed numerous presentations and reviewed interactive budget tools used to engage Alaskans in ways to reduce the State budget. And I understand the existing budget is not feasible; though I hope there is a willingness to collaborate in the legislature with a less austere budget plan that meets the needs of Alaskans. I support using a portion of the Permanent Fund to help fund the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS), and other essential state programs. I support an education tax and an income tax to bring additional revenue to the State of Alaska.

The Southeast Conference spearheaded the Alaska Marine Highway System Reform Project to come up with a course of action for a more sustainable AMHS. Its process involves stakeholder discussions, with financial support from the State Legislature, and holds a view that a workable plan can be structured that is less severe to communities that rely on this crucial service. I support their endeavors.

Pelican, Alaska is known as "Closest to the Fish", the salmon troll season hits high gear June through end of September, it is especially important to ship custom processed salmon, halibut and sablefish products processed by our local fish processors; they rely on the AMHS to ship frozen product to already established and eagerly awaiting markets. The State of Alaska has invested in seafood marketing and to lose well established markets due to an AMHS that is not operating would be an egregious disservice to Alaskans.

My community counts on the AMHS for essential supplies (salt and coagulant) for its water treatment plant, 12" x 4" x 16' planks for the boardwalk (more this year to match Federal highway funding), and salt for the ice machine for the fishing fleet, and other needed supplies; all of which come on the AMHS.

Many Pelican residents are low to moderate income, they know to get their grocery orders once a month or every other month shipped via AMHS, it's what it takes. Local businesses bring in supplies, at times at only a marginal profit, the severe cutting proposed for the AMHS will undermine efforts to revitalize our economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Patricia Phillips
[REDACTED]

[Pelican, Alaska 99832](#)

From: Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 7:07 PM
To: Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sarah Vance <Rep.Sarah.Vance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Gary Knopp <Rep.Gary.Knopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ben Carpenter <Rep.Ben.Carpenter@akleg.gov>; Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>
Subject: Governors budget

Our names are Nate Crossley and Stephanie Presley, 34009 Orlander Avenue, Seward. We are the proud parents of a 4 year old girl currently attending the Title 1 Pre-Kindergarten class at Seward Elementary School. We are caregivers to my father who was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's. We are active with the Civil Air

Patrol and the Seward Prevention Coalition. We are public sector and oil field employees. We believe in providing excellent services to our community. We moved to Seward ten years ago because of the exceptional people, the wonderful sense of community, and the excellent reputations of the schools and educators. Basically because we felt Alaska, Seward and the Kenai Peninsula would be the best place to raise our children, care for our parents, and provide our family with the education and experiences they will need to be successful, productive members of our community and society.

The governor's proposed budget cuts are despicable. We expect our elected leaders, including our State legislators, to provide the people of our great state and our children the services needed to achieve this goal. Cuts proposed by the governor will shed thousands of jobs and drive families such as ours to leave the state. They would jeopardize the futures of our children and the health and well-being of thousands.

We expect our elected officials to prioritize our children and the future of our communities. We ask the finance committees to **fully fund, to the maximum cap, for K-12 education**. For small communities like Seward, we request a base level of acceptable staffing be included in the formula for funding.

We expect our legislators to **maintain levels of healthcare funding to care for our children and elderly**. We are in support of a reasonable state tax *for all industries* if it means funding for services for our most at needs populations such as our elderly.

We are in support of the new tax base from the cannabis industry being used to **fund education and programs for youth and young adults**. We are in support of smaller PFDs if it means greater support for early childhood, K-12, and college level education.

These are decisions that will impact our children and our future for years to come. As elected officials representing the people of our great state, we expect you to prioritize our children and the educators who guide them through this journey, health care and services for those unable to care for themselves, and not the big business that has dictated policy for so many decades.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

--

Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley

[REDACTED]

From: Bill Tremblay [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 2:57 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Gov. Dunleavy budget DOA

Dear House Finance Members;

While I'm glad you'll be out gathering more information from citizens about responses to Gov. Dunleavy's proposed budget I'm at a loss to think of what more you'll learn?

For most of Gov. Walker's term he and his staff worked tirelessly to bring attention to the State efforts and encouraged everyone to be engaged with offering solutions. He provided a budget tool on his website where everyone could explore options and see actual consequences of budget strategies. Did anyone from the House care enough to try this tool for themselves? He specifically noted that EVERY State employee could be cut and Alaska would still have a deficit because of their obligations for maintaining some services and to pay for our oil development incentives.

Gov. Dunleavy made campaign promises that were unrealistic, and not based on facts. Your committee should not hold yourselves to these promises. If you were to cut funds as proposed by the Governor, I will guarantee you will either be recalled or voted out in your next election.

The legislature, as a whole, has ignored their responsibilities for addressing the budget shortfall over the last five years. Instead of raising revenues you have relied on spending down the Congressional Budget Reserves and praying for higher oil prices. We found out Friday (3/15/19) that oil production will be down 15,000 barrels a day this fiscal year.

BEFORE I'm willing to give up my Permanent Fund dividend check I want to see a State Income Tax. (Really tired of out of state workers returning their income to their states where they pay taxes on incomes they earn in our State.) I don't support a State Sales Tax as many communities already are collecting these for municipal needs. I support education (K-12 and Universities), the Alaska Marine Highway, Public Broadcasting, protecting local government's right to collect taxes (not stealing oil revenues from boroughs), and public safety. I'm not afraid to pay for these things and hope the Legislature finds a veto proof bipartisan compromise.

Bill Tremblay

[REDACTED]

Petersburg, AK 99833

(907) [REDACTED]

From: Jerome A Kristjanson [REDACTED]@gci.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2019 12:32 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget

16 March 2019

House Finance Committee,

My name is Jerome A Kristjanson, I have been a resident for 17 years. My family moved here on the Columbia, on the Alaska Marine Highway. I own a home in Pelican, the AMH has been the chosen mode of transport for all goods that I have brought to and from my https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__home.My&d=DwIFAg&c=Q8iJasR7RZ-J0Fd9RXD9ZA&r=DpJ8HgFH1KOlvlo1ZHvEPtwCbJ2psiRaAQnLEBWbYXA&m=d9AoruSw2eQ_biQAzfLPnAeR6gkVRydkHRW6sCT7Qtc&s=nqxv-cCQqOgK63NclzXX6gbeaZGgdsM2xYF70LlnTTQ&e= family uses the AMH regularly during the year as it is the safe, reliable and consistent transportation available in our State. I own an outboard repair business, without the ferry my services would be cost prohibitive for my customers. There are few ways to move a craft to do repairs that cannot be done in the field unless you use the ferry.

The ferry is the life link for our small communities during winter months as planes do not fly in foul weather. Using a skiff in winter months would be suicide, especially when the person needing transport is elderly.

Our schools rely heavily on AMH as the safe and affordable means for our children to participate in a variety of activities that enrich our communities and their educational experiences. Our Marine Highway system was put in place to serve Central and Southeast citizens directly and all Alaskans and visitors to our State.

Our Marine Highway is the single form of year round transportation for many service companies that have to bring equipment and vehicles to and from outlying communities.

Just to be clear, there is No part of the Alaska State Highway system that costs 2 cents per mile to maintain or use as was put forth by the current administration.

I ask that the legislature fund the Alaska Marine Highway and not privatize any part of it for it is our Highway, the one that connects us year round.

Our students are our future, our schools are their avenue to obtain the knowledge, social skills and personal growth to care for our society and become good stewards of our communities. Schools have taken huge cuts in the last seven years, brain drain is real in Alaska and cutting funding further will be detrimental for our students, the buildings that house our schools and will leave many to leave further adding to the loss for our students education experience.

I ask that the legislature fund our schools, use a realistic BSA and ensure funds set aside in prior legislation are delivered in a timely manner.

Our Senior citizens are the folks that made this state, they have earned their retirement and our respect. It is our duty to care for the them. Does anybody want to see their elders on the street so the current administration can claim victory?

Thank You

Jerome A Kristjanson

[REDACTED]

Juneau AK 99801

[REDACTED]

Pelican AK 99832

907-[REDACTED]

February 26, 2019

Larry N. Carson, President
Pelican Chamber of Commerce

[REDACTED]

Pelican, AK 99832

Rep. Neal Foster Co-Chair
Rep. Tammie Wilson
Committee Members
House Finance

SSHB39

Alaska Marine Highway System Funding

Dear Finance Committee Members:

The Pelican Chamber of Commerce is very concerned with the proposed reduction in funding to the Alaska Marine Highway System. We are a small coastal community without road access to an urban area, no barge service, and no airport. All freight comes to Pelican either on Alaska Seaplanes or the AMHS. Should we lose the service of the AMHS, the loss will be felt by every business in Pelican.

Our economy must have the ability to move freight in and out of Pelican. A local seafood company, Yakobi Fisheries, (YF), has increased production continually for the past 4 years. In 2015 YF shipped out 16,000 lbs. of processed fish, with 5 employees, and in 2018 YF shipped out 98,000 lbs. of value added fish and employed 24 workers. The vast majority of this product left Pelican on the AMHS ferry. YF recently signed a 25 year lease on the former crab cannery building and plans another increase in production in 2019.

Another Chamber member, Jerue & Smith Transport is a family owned business in Juneau. J&S moves approximately 30,000 pounds of freight in up to 4 large trucks on every ferry that sails to Pelican. The freight consists of everything

from groceries to building materials. It is important the trucks are not exposed to open air; this would allow salt water on the trucks and as well on freight on the flat bed truck. Without ferry service J&S trucking will be out of business.

Another business, Breseman's Liquor Store, cannot ship their wet goods to Pelican on Alaska Seaplanes and then sell their products at a price a customer can afford. The same can be said for Lisianski Inlet Café that receives the majority of their food products on the ferry via J&S Transport. Six fishing lodges receive freight and some of their customers via the ferry. Recently I received correspondence from Joe Henri, owner of the Apex El Nido Gold Mine properties across the inlet from Pelican. Joe stated, "While the mine will not begin production in 2019, there is reason to expect that large economic activity will reach that property relatively soon. The availability of Pelican ferry service will be a factor in the economic feasibility of the mine—."

It is also important to note that the City is renovating the former Pelican Cold Storage buildings, two of the three larger ones are done and under lease, the third building is being worked on now. In a lease agreement with Hoonah Cold Storage the former commercial ice plant was replaced with new equipment and approximately 700 tons of ice were sold annually the last three years. All of this equipment and building material came to Pelican on the AMHS.

While we feel good about the economic trend in our community, we also feel threatened by the actions proposed by our Governor. If we lose the AMHS, it is likely the economic gains will be reversed. We need our ferry service far more than two permanent fund distributions; those are in the past, we are more concerned about the future.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Larry N. Carson, President
Pelican Chamber of Commerce
www.pelican.net

CC: Gov. Mike Duleavy
Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Ben Stevens
John Moller
Shirley Marquardt
John Falvey
Southeast Conference

From: [REDACTED]@gci.net>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2019 3:00 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: DOTPF Alaska Marine Highway - Budget & scheduling reliability since addition of fast ferry in SE

Chairman,
I support the ferry system, this information may be helpful from what I heard in committee this afternoon...
Thank you, Steve Winker, Juneau

1. A nice chronology of the Alaska Marine Highway System (2013)
http://www.sitnews.us/0513News/050113/050113_amhs.html

2. 2016 Study of the Alaska Marine Highway System role in SE economy <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/582222e36a49637d2e6e6edb/t/5852fee3b8a79b29988bc861/1481834222473/Economic-Impacts-of-AMHS.pdf>

3. What contributed to the spike in ridership in the 1990's? --- likely articles like this in the new york times – as opposed to the scheduling problems in its recent past.

1997 <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/09/28/travel/frugal-traveler-sailing-on-alaska-s-highway-of-water.html>

4. A chronological sampling of problems experienced.

2004, the M/V Fairweather, a fast ferry catamaran in the Alaska Marine Highway System, began service on June 8 of the latter year. It was powered by four diesel engines and water jets for a service speed of 36.5 knots which is only matched in the ferry system by its younger sister ship, the M/V Chenega. The Fairweather's highly anticipated entry into the ferry system, however, was plagued with problems. First a log was sucked into a water jet disabling one of four waterjets until the log was removed by divers during the evening maintenance period. Several months later, in December 2004, the Fairweather was then hit by a rogue wave while in route to Juneau from Haines in Lynn Canal during a winter storm.

2011 <https://www.ktoo.org/2011/10/13/fast-ferry-builders-owner-trade-shots-in-dispute-over-engine-problems/>

2012 - December 4, 2012, Alaska Governor Sean Parnell announced in Ketchikan that the Alaska Marine Highway System will pursue plans to build two smaller, less costly Alaska Class Ferries, rather than one large Alaska Class Ferry. The governor announced the new direction after it became apparent during the design phase that building a 350-foot ferry on budget, in Alaska, could not be accomplished.

2013 <https://www.kcaw.org/2013/05/31/ferrys-driver-discount-gone-after-winter-2014/>

2015 <https://khns.org/summer-schedule-keeps-alaskas-fast-ferries-sidelined>

2015 <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2015/10/07/southeast-feels-the-sting-of-curtailed-ferry-service/>

2016 <https://www.krbd.org/2016/05/23/ferry-sailings-down-7-percent-next-fiscal-year/>

2017 <https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/Management-labor-issues-complicate-Alaska-Marine-Highway-System-458497453.html>

From: John Stack [REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 15, 2019 9:11 AM

To: Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>; House Transportation <House.Transportation@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Carol Merritt <finance2@cityofcordova.net>; Committee@akleg.gov

Subject: SB20, SB39

Committee Member,

My name is John Stack, resident of Cordova, homeowner and commercial fisherman, speaking on behalf of myself and my family.

I have been following the testimony regarding the AMHS. I am in full support continuing the ferry system in Alaska with some much needed reform. I know you have heard many valid reasons for support via testimony so I won't repeat them all here.

My most important concern is that the AMHS should be considered a highway like all other highways that provides an important function for commerce, seafood out of coastal communities and supplies transported from mainland Alaska to coastal areas. It also connects all Alaskans through family visits, vacations and tourism.

The AMHS should be preserved with necessary reforms so that it can operate most efficiently and other form of revenue including PFD's and state income tax should be used to support all of our important highway systems. These are all essential to our state.

Thank you for reading this,

John Stack
Cordova, AK

From: roger imhoff [REDACTED] >

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 3:47 PM

To: LIO Homer <Lio.Homer@akleg.gov>

Subject: State budget

Dear Senators and Representatives

Along with most Alaskans, I am more than "concerned" about the budget issue and the extremely negligent analysis by the administration of the effects on our state economy and the welfare of our citizens. All this is supposedly to "save" the PFD check. And avoid a tax of some sort.

Personally, I support a strong education system, healthcare for all Alaskans, care for seniors, and a good, if not great, transportation system including the ferry system. Contrary to what I hear some state elected folks say...private enterprise does not always do a better, more efficient, less expensive job than our government. Another issue that deserves the circle file is the administration proposing to "take" the oil/gas taxes that goes to the municipalities. That is not a new source of revenue. By my calculations...I don't have all the numbers....it's a guesstimate....governors' proposals will cost the average household in the neighborhood of 3000\$ in increased taxes and fees. Please consider a few options: lower the PFD, set an income tax, restructure credits to oil and gas companies, increase severance taxes on resources. Thank you, Roger Imhoff, Homer, Res

From: Executive Director <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 2:05 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support funding for Alaska Marine Highway

Dear House Transportation Committee,

I am the Executive Director of the Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau (VCVB), and I am asking you to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway from the State's Budget. Valdez is an isolated small town and the VCVB, including our members and the entire community depends heavily on the marine highway. We simply cannot successfully nurture or grow our tourism industry without the Alaska Marine Highway completely operational.

The state of Alaska, including Valdez relies heavily on the tourism industry, and I would point out that tourism is the second largest private sector employer in the state according to the state's Resource Development Center. The loss or reduced access to the Alaska Marine Highway would have a devastating financial impact on this industry for entire state of Alaska.

Valdez presently has a very fragile transportation system for not only visitors to our town but also our permanent residents. Our options are the Richardson Highway (oldest road in Alaska), very unreliable air service (due to weather) and the Alaska Marine Highway. In the past there have been situations, although unusual, when the Richardson Highway was closed for days due to avalanches and/or flooding. The Alaska Marine Highway was the only option for many to leave the city.

On behalf of the Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau, its members, businesses and the community we urge you to do what is in the best interest of all Alaskans and keep the marine highway open for business.

Don Edwards

Executive Director

Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau

(907) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Valdez, AK 99686

From: Patricia Relay [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 12:37 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support for the Alaska Marine Highway

Dear House Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Valdez Museum and the Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau VCVB, which I am the Board President I urge you not to cut the Alaska Marine Highway from the State's Budget. As the Museum is part of the travel and tourism industry and the VCVB is destination marketing organization, our members and community rely on the marine highway. By lessening the transportation system, we are unable to grow our industry.

Alaska's Tourism industry is a renewable resource. As the oil industry is declining we have to look at diversifying our economy. Economic diversification is, for many communities, an insurance policy against hard times. By offering an additional means of income, tourism can support a community when a traditional industry is under financial pressure, particularly where that community relies heavily on a single industry.

Strong reinvestment in tourism works for Alaska, resulting in:

More than 2.25 Million Visitors coming to Alaska, spending money on tours as well as public land permits, campgrounds, hotel stays, rental cars, food, laundry services, airline tickets, gifts, equipment and more.

More than \$126 Million in State Revenues & \$88 Million in Municipal Revenues generated by Alaska's visitor industry through a variety of taxes and other fees, helping to fund services benefitting residents and communities.

1 in 10 Jobs within the visitor industry, creating an important part of Alaska's employment picture.

According to the Alaska Visitor Volume Report Summer 2017 and Alaska Visitor Volume Report Fall/Winter 2015/16 to 2017/18, by the McDowell Group

Visitors spent \$2.2 Billion In-State supporting large and small tourism businesses. And More than \$1.4 Billion in Labor Income was created by tourism business employment, for an economic impact of \$4.5 billion.

There are many different ways to visit Alaska, land air and sea. To continue to grow the travel and tourism industry it is essential that all forms of transportation are available. Here in Prince William Sound the natural environment is a wonderful sell to potential visitors, we have glaciers, wildlife and wonderful communities rich with culture and heritage. The Marine highway is a National Scenic Byway and an All-American Road. It connects visitors to the oldest road in the State, the Richardson Highway.

The Valdez Museum and the Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau, its members, businesses and the community urge you to keep the marine highway open for business to help grow the travel and tourism industry in the great state of Alaska.

Respectfully,
Patricia Relay
VCVB Board President

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Relay
Executive Director
Valdez Museum & Historical Archive

Valdez, Alaska 99686

Phone:

www.valdezmuseum.org

From: Richard Stokes <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 11:34 AM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Governor's Proposed Budget

After arriving in Juneau in the spring of 1971. I worked for the Alaska Department of Environment Conservation until retirement in 1994. I have chosen to live for the rest of my life in Alaska. I am married, Jane, and we have two grown children and two growing grandchildren in Juneau.

I agree with others that Alaska has a priority crises, not a financial one. The State and the cities cannot cut services as deep as the Governor's proposed budget requires. Please retain the Permanent Fund Dividend program as an institution, but we can do with a lesser payout this fiscal year. I support the PFD program as a progressive one. I support reestablishment of a state income tax. I am willing to pay a tax to preserve the PFD even if the decision costs us personally. Lots of people work in the state, use the services and leave without paying an income tax. They should be taxed.

The ferry system is vital for SE. We need to improve education, all of it, preschool, K-12, University of Alaska. We need to support health services, and we need to help people survive in the work market.

Please vote for fair balance. The PFD program is important, but is not as important as necessary services. I am a good citizen. I want to spend my remaining years here. I want my children and grandchildren to remain in the state.

Richard Stokes, Juneau

From: [REDACTED]@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, March 11, 2019 4:11 PM

To: Rep. Adam Wool <Rep.Adam.Wool@akleg.gov>; Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Alaska Marine Highway System, a necessity

Our Alaska Marine Highway System is a much needed service. It should not be expected to be a money maker. There isn't a bus system anywhere that makes a profit!

I live in Juneau. But, I also have family and property in the lower 48. I need the Alaska Marine Highway year around to get me and my car affordably where I need to be.

My daughter goes to the University of Alaska Anchorage and works in Juneau during the summer and winter break. She needs the Alaska Marine Highway ferries to get her and her car where she needs to be.

During the school year, all high school students need the Alaska Marine Highway ferries to travel to events and competitions.

Coastal and island communities need the ferries to transport goods affordably, weekly - its not just t-shirts and souvenirs its the basics such as diapers, toilet paper, and food. Its a pleasant way to travel but it is **not a frivolous or optional choice for most**.

If an Alaskan is traveling on the ferry it is not uncommon to carry or bring something for a neighbor. **The ferries connect communities** and make community.

A **key value** the ferry service provides the citizen and visitor in Alaska is confidence in competent consistent basic transportation.

The **costly consequences** of shutting down and reopening the ferry service would prove to be a dis-service in terms of the availability and even quality of personnel and to the integrity of the vessels, which raises safety concerns.

You can't just park a ferry. You still need to maintain and staff them. - might as well run them.

There is value in peace of mind knowing you can transport yourself, your family, your belongings and your car when you need to, where you need to.

There is **peace of mind** in the availability of the ferries. Closing down the Alaska Marine Highway for any length of time would be a **localized government shutdown** that would lead to the loss of population statewide. People cannot live and a community cannot thrive with something as basic as transportation being held in constant peril.

There is nothing small about Alaska, so small thinking is unworthy in the service of Alaskans.

Carol Kell,
Alaska Marine Highway System User

From: Becky Chapek <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 7:29 PM

To: House Transportation <House.Transportation@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>

Subject: Comments on SB20 and HB 39

I've got some pretty concerned clients as their reservations have been cancelled for their September departure out of here.

I run two businesses here that both won't operate like they need to without a ferry.

Set up the income tax, take my permanent fund and quit wasting time. Take away the line item veto power of the Governor before he drives anymore jobs and people out of this State.

Thanks for the hearings - I'm sure you found the one minute wonders as tedious as we did, but it was clear that your political terrorism is taking a toll. Quit treating a critical transportation link like a political hot potato and run it like a business.

Thank You, Becky Chapek

--

[Chinook Auto Rentals](#)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cordova, AK 99574

907-[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@gmail.com

www.chinookautorentals.com

From: Nathan Ord <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 9:28 AM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: WWAMI Support

Hello,

My name is Nathan Ord. I'm from Juneau and I'm currently a 4th year medical student with UW. I've attached a letter I wrote asking for your support of WWAMI, please include this in the public record. Thank you very much for your time.

Nathan Ord

Dear House Finance:

My name is Nathan Ord. I am a WWAMI medical student graduating in 2020 and I am writing to ask you to lend your voice, energy, and vote to supporting WWAMI.

You will receive a pile of letters asking for your support of WWAMI, so I will try to avoid covering the same ground and instead, tell you my story.

I grew up between Juneau and a remote cabin near Swanson Harbor at the Southernmost tip of the Chilkat peninsula. While my father was crabbing during the summer, my mother, sisters and I lived at the cabin and headed to town in the winter. And when I could lift crab pots, I joined my father – earning much of my way through college on the back deck of his boat, the Williwaw.

I graduated from Juneau Douglas High School and Whitman College. Since then, I've coached soccer with the Thunder Mountain High School, skiing with the Juneau Ski Club, and Cross Country with the Lynn Canal Cross Country Camp. I've crabbed and caught halibut. I've worked as a medical assistant with Valley Medical Care and the Juneau Pain Clinic. I've worked as a research technician with the NOAA Ted Stevens Lab. I've worked as a laborer with Ed Vantor Construction. And I started a business with friends making maps using a home-built CNC router.

Now, I'm in medical school, pursuing a profession that combines what I love: science and helping others. WWAMI has allowed me to pursue these passions in Alaska. Currently, I'm finishing a six-month rotation at Valley Medical Care. The opportunity to stay in Juneau for part of my education has let me learn from longtime mentors while also coaching skiing and working on research to support and improve Juneau's Housing First Project – a program that provides housing to our most vulnerable residents while reducing overall public expenditures. Without WWAMI, I would still be working my butt off, but I would be working somewhere else.

Without WWAMI, I would be twice as deep in debt. Without WWAMI I would not be exploring medicine in Alaska and our unique opportunities. Without WWAMI, I would be learning to live somewhere else. Without WWAMI, I would be much less likely to come home to the city and state where I grew up.

Thank you for your time.

Nathan Ord

From: [REDACTED] > On Behalf Of Gary Newman

Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2019 2:26 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Revenue suggestions

Alaska House Finance members,

I'm sorry that I am unable to testify before House Finance this weekend due to prior commitments. I submit this in lieu of that opportunity.

Likely for different reasons, Governor Dunleavy has shown Alaskans that revenue options are necessary to maintain the health of our state. Unfortunately for some in-state executive and legislative government who chose to re-assure us otherwise during the 2018 campaign, it is coming to putting our state ahead of unrealistic and ill-advised promises regarding those revenue options.

Some might think that cutting is always needed, but ask them what program they rely on that they want to cut. How about the PFD? In the past few years, both capital and operating budgets have been substantially reduced. Would the

Governor consider cutting \$27 million from the Executive Budget and additional from OMB? Line Item Veto doesn't include Line Item Add.

In 2015, Ken Alper and his team at the Dept. of Revenue developed a macro-based spreadsheet that provided the ability to model revenue options along with cost of government by department/function. Update it and use it.

As I see it, there needs to be a blend of revenue options that share the wealth and contribution for living in our state. The free ride is over. Some decry contributing to their society and state as much as they decry socialism. We aren't certainly modeling the Scandinavian method as they pay their way through taxation. Recommendations:

1. **A statewide income tax**, with the advantage of collecting from non-residents who work and earn a living in Alaska. Somewhere between 10-15% of federal tax owed, keep it simple, not like the last go around. Those on lower incomes would be impacted less if at all from the progressive nature.
2. **Either return to ACES for oil tax revenue or a 20% production tax.** The oil industry makes more profit on Alaska fossil fuels than other investments, including those with challenging conditions in developing companies. We have been going backwards since SB21. Protect the value of the state's resources. And eliminate the oil tax credits.
3. **Natural Gas Reserves Tax** – if we want to monetize our stranded natural gas, this could be an incentive.
4. Our **gas tax** is still by far the lowest in the nation, needing to be raised. For goodness sake, have that income help maintain our roads and ferries. And do it when gas prices are low, like now.
5. **Mining tax** is extremely low. Even a minor increase would help that industry contribute a fairer share.
6. **Education Tax**, proposed by Sen. Bishop, I think makes some sense, in that providing for education is baked into our constitution.
7. **Rebalance the Permanent Fund Dividend**, along with a heavy educational campaign to remind those who don't know or forgot that the intent behind the program was itself an educational effort to make sure that Alaskans knew there was a principle/corpus that we would be motivated to protect. It was also originally pro-rated by residency up to 20 years, but the U.S. Supreme Court (Zobel v. State of Alaska) ruled only one year of residency under the Interstate Commerce Clause could be required for a full dividend. The income can be shared with inflation-proofing, dividends, and general government. That's what it's there for. It is unfortunate that recent Legislatures have drawn so heavily on the Earnings Reserve and CBR that it can no longer endow a full dividend.

It is known that those on subsistence and fixed incomes rely heavily on the PFD. We also know to recognize that those with higher incomes would pay more tax on their dividend to IRS, which seems to moderate the real impact of an income tax. I don't know many companies who pay large dividends when the company is not doing well financially.

What is happening in the current budget discussion is an outcry of dissatisfaction against Dunleavy's budget and many are weighing in with the impacts in their spheres. I think pitting one program against another is not where we need to be. Let's recognize that this dissatisfaction is more fundamental.

It is well established that, if one wants to make a difficult change in politics, it is not during an election year, so the Legislature has to take the bull by the horns this year and not next. Be bold, be honest, and exercise some statesmanship.

Thank you.

--

Gary Newman
Fairbanks, Alaska



From: Genevieve McLaughlin <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2019 8:37 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget

I would prefer to have a lower PFD, and have early childhood funded. We need to teach love and nurture our children, without that they will not be well rounded individuals. They become drug addicts and not assets to our society. I would also prefer the Alaska marine highways to be funded as our smaller rural communities need this for quality of life. And the state needs this for travelers to boost our economy.

Genevieve McLaughlin
Juneau, Alaska

From: Steve Bradford <[REDACTED]gci.net>
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2019 6:22 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget hearing

44 yr Alaska resident here. The budget has been cut and cut in recent years. To me it makes no sense to receive a PFD, pay Federal income tax on it and live in a state that cannot afford basic services. If the budget demands more funds than the earnings of the Permanent Fund, then I prefer to see the income tax be implemented.

I do not agree with the Governor's method of cutting fish tax, decimating the ferry system, dismantling the university system, drastically cutting education funding and medicaid.

Thank you.

Steve Bradford
[REDACTED]
Juneau 99801

From: Peggy and Alex <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 8:46 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: 2020 Budget

The budget proposed by Governor Dunleavy is a travesty. It is an attack on education for Alaska's children, our University system, our health care infrastructure, and our Marine Highway system. It would send Alaska in general, and Southeast Alaska in particular, into economic decline. It would transfer the burden of supporting essential services to local governments while at the same time devastating the local economic base. It also includes blatantly unconstitutional provisions to grant the OMB power to redirect appropriations of the legislature. These draconian cuts were NOT part of the Dunleavy campaign rhetoric, and thus do not represent the will of the Alaska people. Please work with your colleagues in the House and Senate to build a sustainable budget that will pay for and provide the essential services Alaskans need and depend on. This budget should include revenue from the Permanent Fund earnings, as the Legislature has done the past two years.

Alex and Peggy Wertheimer
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

From: Isabel Felstead <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 7:47 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support for Parents as Teachers and funding of early childhood programs

Dear Committee,

This email is to support the reinstatement and sustainable funding for all programs that support early childhood education.

My husband and I moved to Juneau six years ago. We are both professionals that work full time; he works for the City & Borough of Juneau and I work for a small, private company. We have a 3 year old and a newborn.

There are many ways in which the Parents as Teachers program have been important to me personally and our family generally. The monthly home visits provided me with one to one support which was invaluable as a first time mother struggling with the isolation and demands of a newborn. The Circle of Security training series they run has given us confidence to positively parent and protect our relationship, ultimately strengthening our family unit.

There is no doubt that there are multiple demands on the budget and that reconciling the needs of the State is a complex task. The benefits and knock on effects of early childhood programs may not be quantifiable but that does not mean they aren't implicitly valuable or important! There is a wealth of research available that proves that these services and programs are essential in setting a strong foundation for a community.

The decision to set a budget eliminating programs that support early childhood development and education indicates that investment in the next generation of Alaskans is not a priority for the State, a sad forecast for all that live here. I have high hopes that the budget for all early childhood programs will be reevaluated and reinstated so that the State continues to support the parent community and future generations of Alaska.

Thank you for your time,

Izzie Felstead
Resident of Juneau

From: C. S. [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 2:25 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support Early Childhood programs

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am a Juneau, Alaska resident, married to an active duty military person, and a parent of two children under five years old. I have a background in self-sufficiency services as well as early childhood education, and I currently work in the early childhood education field as an Administrator at a daycare program that serves 34 children aged 6 months to 5 years old.

I am incredibly concerned at the state budget cuts to early childhood programs such as Head Start, Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-Kindergarten Grants as well as the closure of the Nome Youth Facility. I have personally received services from Parents as Teachers for my family, and have seen my husband's parenting skills blossom when another expert in the early childhood field that is not me comes to our house to educate and enrich our parenting skills.

Both of my children look forward to their monthly Dolly Parton Imagination Library books- my 4 year old is nearly reading thanks to her excitement about reading each new age appropriate book that arrives!

Please see below a short list of many programs for which I am gravely concerned with damage Alaskans irreparably by eliminating, and for which I am asking your support:

YOUTH and EARLY INTERVENTION

ASK: Please support YOUTH and EARLY INTERVENTION efforts that promote healthy development, early recognition and intervention for disabilities and behavioral health disorders, and prevention of serious problems later in life

- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Head Start Grants (DEED) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$6.7 million (GF).
- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Early Childhood Grants (DEED) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$1.2 million (GF).
- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Best Beginnings (DEED) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$320,000 (GF).
- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Parents As Teachers Grants (DEED) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$475,000 (GF).
- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Pre-Kindergarten Grants (DEED) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$8 million (GF).
- ***Reverse elimination of:*** Nome Youth Facility (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$2 million (GF). This cut will close the regional facility serving youth in the northwest region of the state. Youth will be moved to other youth facilities in the state. Probation services will remain in Nome.

The budget bills include the Operating Budget (HB 39/SB 20), Mental Health Budget (HB 40/SB 21), and Capital Budget (SB 19/HB 38). The Alaska Mental Health Trust and partner advisory boards are tracking budget items that impact Trust beneficiaries—people with mental illness, substance use disorders, intellectual/developmental disorders, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. The current budget proposals contain several changes to existing funding levels that will negatively impact Trust beneficiaries. Alaska’s continuum of community-based services help individuals and families afford basic needs. They also include behavioral health, senior, and disabilities services that help individuals live meaningful and productive lives in their communities. When community-based services are reduced or eliminated, beneficiaries are more likely to end up in more restrictive and more expensive settings—such as emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, or jail—most often at state expense.

MEDICAID

ASK: Support adequate funding for Alaska’s MEDICAID program that provides healthcare insurance to eligible low-income, disabled, and senior Alaskans. Also, support funding for Medicaid Adult Preventative Dental services.

Medicaid provides medical services to eligible Alaskans, including children, pregnant mothers, elderly, or people with a disabling condition. Medicaid reimburses local community providers and supports the work of hospitals, behavioral health clinics, assisted living, and other direct care service agencies in providing physical and mental health care to Alaskans in need. Any reductions to Medicaid funding can restrict beneficiary access to necessary primary and behavioral healthcare.

- ***Reverse reductions to:*** Medicaid (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20) -\$225 million (GF) and -\$450 million (Federal). DHSS is in the process of determining final proposed reductions to the Medicaid program

and how they will be implemented. While measures have not yet been determined, rate reductions to providers and cost containment measures are anticipated.

- **Reverse elimination of: Medicaid Adult Preventative Dental (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$8.3 million (GF) and -\$18.7 million (Federal). These funds support Medicaid reimbursement for preventative dental services for low-income and indigent Alaskans. These services reduce the need for more expensive emergency dental services later, usually at state cost.

SAFETY NET SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE ALASKANS

ASK: Protect funding for programs that provide “safety net” services to low-income, disabled, and senior Alaskans—including Adult Public Assistance, Permanent Fund Hold Harmless, Tribal Assistance, and Assistive Technology for people with disabilities.

- **Reverse reductions to: Adult Public Assistance (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$14.7 million (GF). This program provides financial assistance to elderly, blind, disabled Alaskans to cover basic living expenses, food, rent, transportation, and basic needs.
- **Reverse elimination of: Permanent Fund Dividend Hold Harmless (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$15,000 (GF). This provision allows Medicaid recipients to remain qualified for public assistance if they receive a permanent fund dividend check.
- **Reverse reductions to: Tribal Assistance Programs (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)**-\$17.2 million (GF and IA receipts). These funds provide financial support to tribal citizens in temporary and emergency need, through the tribal government system.
- **Reverse elimination of: Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities (DHSS) (HB 40/SB 21)** - \$500,000 (GF). Funds support daily living assistive devices that help seniors and Alaskans with disabilities live independently.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

ASK: Support community programs that provide TEMPORARY, SUPPORTIVE and/or PERMANENT HOUSING to low-income, disabled, and senior Alaskans. Please REVERSE recommendations that reduce resources to homeless and housing programs, shelters, and food banks statewide.

Homeless and housing programs provide services for low-income and vulnerable Alaskans, including people with serious mental and physical hardships in both urban and rural areas across the state. Reductions impact special needs housing, homeless assistance, homeless shelters and food banks, and accessibility modifications.

- **Reverse reduction to: Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG) (DOR) (HB 40/SB 21)** -\$3.5 million (GF and AHFC funds), or 90%. SNHG operating dollars and vouchers provide long-term rental assistance for seventeen successful Alaska housing programs targeting the most vulnerable homeless population. Also pays for permanent supportive housing.
- **Reverse reduction to: Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) (DOR) (HB 40/SB 21)** -\$7.2 million (GF), or 88%. This program supports access to homeless prevention supports, rental/utility emergency assistance, emergency shelter options, and rapid rehousing options in communities across the state.
- **Reverse elimination of: Human Services Community Matching Grant (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$1.4 million (GF). These grants represent one of the only funding sources for community providers who offer “safety net” services, such as food, shelter, and domestic violence services in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su.

- **Reverse elimination of:** **Community Initiative Grants (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$862,000 (GF). These grants support homeless shelters and food banks in communities outside of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su, and represent one of the only funding sources for these community providers.
- **Reverse reduction to:** **Home Modification and Upgrades to Retain Housing (DHSS) (HB 40/SB 21)** - \$750,000 (GF). Funds support home accessibility improvements for Alaskans with disabilities.
- **Reverse reduction to:** **Accessibility Improvements/Deferred Maintenance (DHSS) (HB 40/SB 21)** - \$250,000 (GF). Funds support non-profit organizations in serving Trust beneficiaries for accessibility improvements, renovations, repairs, and upgrades.

SENIOR and DISABILITIES SERVICES

ASK: Please protect funding for SENIOR and DISABILITIES SERVICES that support Alaskan seniors and people with disabilities with limited-incomes in living with independence their communities.

- **Reverse elimination of:** **Senior Benefits Program (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$20 million (GF). This program provides financial assistance to seniors and elders to help meet basic needs, such as food, shelter, fuel, prescription medications, and transportation.
- **Reverse reductions to:** **Pioneer Homes (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$33.2 million (GF). This action would implement a Pioneer Home resident rate increase that could impact a senior or family's ability to pay. An additional \$15 million (GF) is proposed to support a newly-created Alaska Pioneer Homes Payment Assistance program, but it is unclear if that amount will meet the need of residents who experience a significant rate increase.
- **Maintain support for:** **Senior and Disabilities Community-Based Grants and Medicaid optional services (except Adult Preventative Dental), and AHFC Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund.**

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

ASK: Please maintain support funding for BEHAVIORAL HEALTH programs that serve Alaskans with mental illness, substance use disorders, intellectual/developmental, and cognitive impairments.

- **Reverse reductions to:** **Designated Evaluation and Treatment (DET) (DHSS) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$7 million (GF and ACHI). Funds support transportation for patients experiencing a psychiatric emergency to an appropriate hospital, under Title 47. This reduction lowers the reimbursement rate for these transfers and would affect people in both urban and rural areas experiencing behavioral health emergencies, their providers and protective escorts, community advocates, and institutional care providers.
- **Maintain support for:** **Behavioral Health Grants for Treatment and Recovery, Prevention and Early Intervention, Public Guardians, and Court Appointed Special Advocates for children and youth affected by opioid addiction.**

DISABILITY JUSTICE

ASK: Please support funding that serves JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS, including people with mental illness, substance use disorders, and cognitive impairments due to aging, traumatic brain injury, trauma, prenatal drug or alcohol exposure, and people at risk of victimization.

- **Reverse reduction to:** **Alaska Civil Legal Services Fund (DCCED) (HB 39/SB 20)** -\$450,000 (GF). Funds support a grant to provide civil legal services to low-income and indigent Alaskans—including children

and families, veterans, seniors, individuals who are ill or who experience a disability, and victims of domestic violence, and are managed by the non-profit law firm Alaska Civil Legal Services Corporation. Other contributors include federal and local funds, tribal organizations, foundations, and private donations.

- *Maintain support for: Pretrial Services, Substance Abuse Programs (in prisons and in communities), Reentry Transition Services, Therapeutic Courts, Training for Mental Health Staff, and renovation of the mental health unit at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center.*

TRANSPORTATION

ASK: Support funding for TRANSPORTATION efforts that assist seniors and people with disabilities in getting to medical appointments, jobs, shopping, social engagements, and other components of stability and normalcy in the community.

- *Reverse reduction of: Coordinated Transportation and Vehicles (DOT) (HB 40/SB 21) -*\$1 million (GF). Funds support vehicles and other transportation support for seniors and people with disabilities. Transportation is consistently identified as a top priority in senior surveys and listening sessions.
- *Reverse elimination of: Public and Community Transportation State Match (DOT) (SB 19/HB 38) -*\$1 million (GF). Funding supports community public transportation that serves as a life-line for seniors and people with disabilities by ensuring access to medical care, jobs or volunteer placements, and participation in community life.

Thank you,
Catherine Stabnau
Juneau, AK resident

From: Debbie Sherfick [REDACTED]@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 11:27 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: PFD and State Budget

I am tired of the state legislature always having to borrow from savings to pay for the budget! PLEASE BALANCE THE BUDGET! If you can't pay for it, don't spend the money! I agree with Governor Dunleavy that the budget will have to take some drastic hits, because you have been spending too much for a long time. NO WE DO NOT WANT MORE TAXES TO PAY FOR YOUR EXTRA SPENDING. JUST PAY FOR WHAT THE STATE CONSTITUTION SAYS THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AND NO MORE!

As for the Permanent Fund Dividend ... This has nothing to do with the budget and already provides money to pay for state spending. PLEASE DO NOT REDUCE THE PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND TO COVER YOUR OVERSPENDING! Governor Walker and previous legislatures should never have done that and neither should any future state legislature!

We deserve our full PFDs! That is how Governor Hammond set it up and it should not be changed just so you can spend more money!

Once again... PLEASE BALANCE THE BUDGET WITH THE MONEY PROVIDED (NO EXTRA TAXES) AND GIVE US OUR FULL PFDs!

Debbie Sherfick
Willow, AK

From: margie beedle <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 6:18 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget

Dear Representatives,
I do not support a Permanent Fund Dividend this year. Instead, I suggest the state hold off on paying out any dividends until a progressive income tax can be instituted.

The care of our most vulnerable (our elderly, our children, and those Alaskans living in remote areas of our state) is in jeopardy with the proposed reduction in services.

The decisions to not fund services that our vulnerable members need is immoral and is only the result of greed by many of our most powerful citizens.

Sincerely,
Margie Beedle

From: Lisa Kramer [REDACTED]@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 9:07 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Ferries and education

Please keep our ferries running! They are a lifeline to us! The loss would cripple southeast's economy.

Also, please support our educational programs and schools. They create our future. The universities create so many jobs and attract the best kind of people to our state.

Thank you,
Lisa Kramer

From: Emily Coate Thompson [REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2019 7:59 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support Early Childhood

Dear members of the committee-

I'm writing to thank you for the increase in Parents as Teachers funds and to encourage your support to reinstate early childhood funding. I'm a mother to a 5 year old and a 2 year old and I work directly with families in Juneau. I see first

hand the importance of supporting families and giving opportunities for the youngest children to have loving and safe relationships. We know from the ACES research that what happens to us as children sets the stage for not only our future interactions, but our health as well. With so many families far away from their own support networks in the forms of grandparents, cousins, friends, etc. our state is particularly ripe for trauma to occur. Programs like Head Start and Parents as Teachers work with families to increase their understanding of how development directly impacts behavior, an awareness that DRASTICALLY changes how parents respond to their children's needs.

I know these are tough times for many programs in our state and personally, I find it deeply unsettling that a majority of Alaskans were willing to put their own personal financial gain of a bigger PFD check to the detriment of all the citizens of our state, especially when you consider that this budget is less than 2% smaller than the budget from last year. I urge you to put funding for Early Childhood back in the budget and use the foresight to see that if we don't care for our children now, they will be your criminals of tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Emily Thompson

P.S. For the record, I strongly support an income tax to generate income in our state to pay for the services that make living and working here meaningful.

From: Donna Rae Faulkner <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 10:59 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ben Carpenter <Rep.Ben.Carpenter@akleg.gov>; Rep. Matt Claman <Rep.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>; Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Eastman <Rep.David.Eastman@akleg.gov>; Rep. Bryce Edgmon <Rep.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov>; Rep. Zack Fields <Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>; Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sara Hannan <Rep.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov>; Rep. Grier Hopkins <Rep.Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sharon Jackson <Rep.Sharon.Jackson@akleg.gov>; Rep. DeLena Johnson <Rep.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jennifer Johnston <Rep.Jennifer.Johnston@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Gary Knopp <Rep.Gary.Knopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Chuck Kopp <Rep.Chuck.Kopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins <Rep.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov>; Rep. Bart LeBon <Rep.Bart.Lebon@akleg.gov>; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux <Rep.Gabrielle.LeDoux@akleg.gov>; Rep. John Lincoln <Rep.John.Lincoln@akleg.gov>; Rep. Kelly Merrick <Rep.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mark Neuman <Rep.Mark.Neuman@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Lance Pruitt <Rep.Lance.Pruitt@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sara Rasmussen <Rep.Sara.Rasmussen@akleg.gov>; Rep. George Rauscher <Rep.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov>; Rep. Joshua Revak <Rep.Joshua.Revak@akleg.gov>; Rep. Laddie Shaw <Rep.Laddie.Shaw@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz <Rep.Ivy.Spohnholz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andi Story <Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov>; Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard <Rep.Colleen.Sullivan-Leonard@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Talerico <Rep.David.Talerico@akleg.gov>; Rep. Geran Tarr <Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov>; Rep. Steve Thompson <Rep.Steve.Thompson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Cathy Tilton <Rep.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Chris Tuck <Rep.Chris.Tuck@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sarah Vance <Rep.Sarah.Vance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tammie Wilson <Rep.Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Adam Wool <Rep.Adam.Wool@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky <Rep.Tiffany.Zulkosky@akleg.gov>

Cc: david.w.schade@alaska.gov; dnr.alaskagrown@alaska.gov; dan.saddler@alaska.gov

Subject: Written Testimony for the Budget (HB39 and discussions) - Petition Supporting the AK Division of Agriculture from Homer

Dear Honorable Alaska State Representatives,

Attached is a letter signed by 26 members of the Homer Garden Club and community, urging full-funding for the Alaska Division of Agriculture. We recognize that Alaska Grown and all the Division of Ag staff who support farmers and agriculture have made a positive difference in the economy, lives and health of our community. Alaska Grown's fantastic awareness, education and marketing campaign has clearly gained recognition and helped Alaskan agriculture make great strides. We see the logo on young and old across the state and wraps on fresh veggies from Alaskan farmers. Restaurants are proud to display the logo and consumers are looking to buy Alaskan grown vegetables. Alaskans across the state are enjoying the growing small agricultural movement! Alaskans are participating in Farmers Markets, Food Hubs, CSA's and on farm events and finding great local produce in their stores! Value added products are coming to market! It is really exciting! Check out some of the data in reports like the January 2018 SPORK report *Southcentral Alaska Agriculture and Food Hub Market Analysis* (created with Division of Ag support.)

The federal grants that are administered by the Division of Ag (including the Specialty Crop Block Grants - SCBGs) have been a big boost in educational opportunities for farmers and studies/equipment to develop profitable varieties and products that support our communities and the state's economy. We have more small market farms, peony farms, and high tunnels on the Kenai Peninsula than ever before! Our little farm, Oceanside Farms, is the recipient of a Specialty Crop Block Grant and we are working to inspire and promote increased knowledge, enthusiasm, and greater use of Alaska grown rhubarb in 2019. The money for our work comes from the Feds, but is administered by the Alaska Division of Ag. If you cut the Division's budget and 21 positions (?!?), it is unclear who will continue to monitor the awarded grants (like ours) and it seems that the state's growers and ag researchers would not even be eligible to apply for SCBGs in the future! That could mean a loss of millions of dollars in Alaska! Some of us farmers don't even realize all the times we've benefited from these grants! Others including the Alaska Division of Ag have been awarded grants that they then pass on as educational and networking opportunities for farmers! That happened to us when we applied for a (partial) scholarship to attend the Great Lakes Expo last year where we learned a great deal and have been inspired to hopefully scale up our vegetable sales on our farm. We just presented a sort of "GLE expo trip report" to the Homer Garden Club, as well as work we are doing to support farmers in Kodiak and our "Rhubarb-palooza" planning for our SCBG that the Homer Garden Club members as well as those attending farmers markets on the Kenai Peninsula will have an opportunity to participate in. We are all connected. The Farm to School (or Farm to Institution) support - including an outstanding newsletter - have helped numerous teachers and cafeteria personnel and others to be aware of a variety of governmental and non-governmental grants, curricula and workshops that they would never have even been aware of. We are growing lots of asparagus and cauliflower, and the Alaskan variety studies and research paid for by SCBGs by others in years past have guided our decisions and set us up for success! Our vegetable growing supports the health and local economy (including the sales taxes we collect.)

Please don't slow or stop the momentum that the Division of Ag has been nurturing so very well!

We ask that the attached letter please be submitted as part of the public record re: HB39.

We hope that we have submitted this letter/petition to you properly - it is important to us.
Please feel free to call or e-mail us if you have any questions for us or anything that we might help you with in supporting our Alaska Division of Ag.

Respectfully counting on you,
Donna Rae and Don

Donna Rae Faulkner and Don "Iceman" McNamara
Oceanside Farms

[REDACTED]

Homer, AK 99603

[REDACTED]

<https://oceansidefarms.weebly.com/>

March 17, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter in response to the proposed cuts to the Division of Agriculture budget as outlined in the Governor's budget, released 2/13/19.

Agriculture is one of the only renewable resources in the State and our industry is growing! We are one of the only States' in the Nation whose number of farmers is growing! The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Census data in 2012 showed the largest percentage of growth in direct to consumer (farmers market!) sales per capita in the Nation was right here in Alaska! USDA Ag Census data for 2017 will be released in the next month and we anticipate more positive growth.

Programs slated for reduction or elimination from the State Division of Agriculture include: the Alaska Grown program, the Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund, the Farm to Institution program (including the Farm to School program), and nearly all of the services of the Plant Materials Center. In addition to providing marketing and promotion, access to lending, development of new markets, and research on varieties and diseases, these programs also bring in millions of dollars in Federal funds. **Without the Division team to provide support, these dollars will be turned away and growers will not have access to essential programs.**

In fact, the local speakers at our Homer Garden Club meeting today are valued market farmers in our community and grateful recipients of a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant that is promoted and administered by our Alaska Division of Ag.

Alaska is getting world-wide recognition for its peony production. Alaska's growing peony industry has been supported by at least 8 marketing and research Federal USDA grants and expertise from UAF staff. The Alaska peony industry is still developing and contributing to tourism, jobs and the economy of our great state. We are proud of our local peony growers and the Alaska Beauty Peony Co-op that is made up of at least 10 member farms based in Homer (some as new enterprises on homesteads and some as family farms run as a second career). Without the research, marketing and development funded largely by Federal grants administered by the Division of Ag, it is doubtful that this blooming industry would not have come this far.

Services provided by the Alaska Division of Agriculture should be considered "core" services. Not only are the dedicated staff incredibly knowledgeable about Alaska agriculture issues, they are highly efficient, budget conscious and committed to supporting the industry as a whole. Alaskans' have benefited from a Department or Division of Agriculture since Territorial Days; farmers, ranchers and other industry members are dependent on the knowledge, expertise and unbiased support that Division staff provide.

Alaskans' import 95% of the food they purchase, but have demonstrated their support of Alaska Grown products through their commitment to shopping at Farmers Markets, participating in the \$5 a week Alaska Grown Challenge at retail grocery stores, and encouraging growers of all products to increase production. To cut off the valuable services provided by the Division of Agriculture now, during this time of incredible momentum, would be devastating to our immature but thriving industry.

We encourage you to take the time to read "Southcentral Alaska Agriculture and Food Hub Market Analysis" report that was researched and written by SPORK Consulting. It is available thru the AK DNR website at <http://buyalaskagrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Southcentral-AK-Agriculture-and-Food-Hub-Analysis.pdf> . It provides data and helpful insights into the agricultural movement in our area of the state. Ironically if the Governor's proposed cuts to the Division of Ag are approved, there would be no one to administer the USDA SCBG that provided funds for that kind of informative research and analysis.

As members of the Homer Garden Club and community, we urge you to support full-funding for the Division of Agriculture. Everybody eats and therefore we are all "involved" in Agriculture. Support the industry that can both help strengthen our food security, health, and grow our economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Printed Name	Signature	Address (Homer, 99603 unless otherwise noted)
Donna Rae Faulkner	Donna Rae Faulkner	[REDACTED]
Janice Peyton	Janice Peyton	[REDACTED] Homer
LORRAINE Haas	Lorraine Haas	[REDACTED] Homer,

Gloria Mumm	Gloria Mumm	[REDACTED] Homer, AK 99603
Robbie Coffey	Robbie Coffey	[REDACTED] Homer, AK 99603
RENEE PATTON	Renee Patton	[REDACTED] HOMER, AK 99603
Francie Roberts	Francie Roberts	[REDACTED] HOMER, AK 99603
Margaret P Craig	Margaret P Craig	[REDACTED]
Marguerite Pittman	Marguerite Pittman	[REDACTED] Homer AK 99603

As members of the Homer Garden Club and community, we urge you to support full-funding for the Division of Agriculture. Everybody eats and therefore we are all "involved" in Agriculture. Support the industry that can both help strengthen our food security, health, and grow our economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Printed Name	Signature	Address (Homer, 99603 unless otherwise noted)
Don McNamara	Don McNamara	[REDACTED]
Dorothy Fry	[REDACTED]	Homer, AK 99603
Tim Alzheimer	Tim Alzheimer	Homer, AK 99603

Barbara Kennedy	Barbara Kennedy	[REDACTED]
Shirley Forquer	Shirley Forquer	Homer
Jeanne Walker	Jeanne Walker	Homer
Jane Wiebe	Jane Wiebe	Homer AK 99603
Linda Rowe	Linda Rowe	Homer, AK 99603
Sharon Frosche	Sharon Frosche	Homer AK 99603
Barbara Haynes	Barbara Haynes	Homer AK 99603
Lori Murray	Lori Murray	Homer, AK 99603



Alaska Head Start Association

PO Box 202449 | Anchorage AK 99520-2449

www.akheadstart.org | akheadstart@gmail.com

March 13, 2019

House Finance Committee:

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair; Representative Tammy Wilson, Co-Chair,

The Alaska Head Start Association would like to both inform you and clearly articulate the impacts of the Governor's proposal to eliminate all funding (\$6.8 million) for Head Start Grants from DEED/Early Learning Coordination.

The 17 grantees who are providing statewide Head Start and Early Head Start services around our state estimate that there will be an immediate (school year 2019-2020) statewide loss of services to over 534 children (of 3,315 total) and a loss of over 138 jobs. These numbers are likely to change as some grantees have not yet provided estimates and some continue to plan and adjust what their response to the proposal will be. Additionally, in rural Alaska, we estimate that approximately 8-12 communities would lose all early childhood educational services.

The secondary impact to federal funds received (statewide currently over \$46 million), nor the timeline of this impact is known. Each of the 17 grantees operate on different funding cycles with the Federal Office of Head Start (OHS). Each of the grantees will need to negotiate directly with OHS at the proper time to determine what the impact of losing a significant amount of match will be on their individual federal grants.

We encourage your committee to avoid the negative impacts outlined above by restoring full funding to the Early Learning Coordination line item, and request that you clearly communicate its importance and high priority for Alaskan investment to the Governor and administration.

Thank you,

Deborah Trowbridge, President
Alaska Head Start Association

Alaska Head Start Association

Represented by Grantee Agency Directors, Staff, Parents, and Friends of Head Start in communities throughout Alaska

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association ~ Association of Village Council Presidents ~ Bristol Bay Native Association
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes ~ Chugachmiut ~ CCS Early Learning ~ Cook Inlet Native Head Start
Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments ~ Fairbanks Native Association ~ Kawerak ~ Kawerak EHS/CCP
Kenaitze Indian Tribe ~ Kids' Corps Inc. ~ Metlakatla Indian Community ~ Thivalaska ~ Rural CAP ~ Tanana Chiefs Conference

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Neal Foster, Co-Chair
The Honorable Tammie Wison, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representatives Foster and Wilson,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) budget. The Juneau School District strongly opposes proposed cuts to funding for AMHS by Governor Dunleavy. This State Highway is a vital link for the Juneau School District to our neighboring districts, providing important connections for students and staff. We rely on AMHS for collaboration on professional development for teachers and administrators as well as participation and competition for student activities.

Extracurricular activities enrich the educational and social development and experiences of our students. Schools offer activities such as music, academic clubs, and sports for students to learn the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, character, physical strength and endurance, competition, diversity, and a sense of culture and community. This fall I spent time at a STEM Robotics competition at the Centennial Hall where students from elementary, middle and high schools throughout Southeast engaged in amazing learning. This event, as an example, would not be possible without access to the AMHS.

Extracurricular activities strengthen student engagement leading to consistent attendance, academic achievement, and increased graduation rate. Since the Juneau School District grew from one to three high schools, we have seen the expansion of extracurricular activities. During the same time, district graduation rate went from 70% to 83%. High school participation in activities increased from 50% to 67%. Attendance rate in our district has reached 95%.

Student activities programs offered as an adjunct to the regular instructional program fulfill educational objectives that are not adequately served through formal courses of study. Our district cannot offer these opportunities to our students without AMHS.

Flat funding for education has led to cuts in financial support for student activities from our district. Teams now fundraise millions of dollars for travel thanks to generous support from our community. The City and Borough of Juneau increased funding outside the CAP to help with expenses, including funding for coaches and officials.

The AMHS has helped as well, offering school discounts on student travel. During the 2017-18 school year, student activities purchased 706 tickets on the AMHS. So far this school year, schools have purchased 671 tickets and have booked an additional 265 tickets so far for spring activities. Without this mode of transportation, our students could not afford this level of travel.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting the AMHS and keeping opportunities for our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bridget Weiss
Superintendent
Juneau School District

GLENNALLEN LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: lio.glennallen@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-822-5588 / Fax: 907-822-5591

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Randy M. Loker Copper Center

REPRESENTING:

BILL # or SUBJECT:

School Budget cut Ferry Service

COMMITTEE:

DATE: 3-15-2019

NOTE: This testimony is considered part of the official record and will be posted online with the hearing documents

I think its crazy to cut so much of the education budget both K-12 and University System.

I also think that the Ferry Service budget should not be cut.

So much money has been wasted on ridiculous projects. And now when times are tight you want to cut massive amounts out of budgets.

I also think its time for a state income tax!

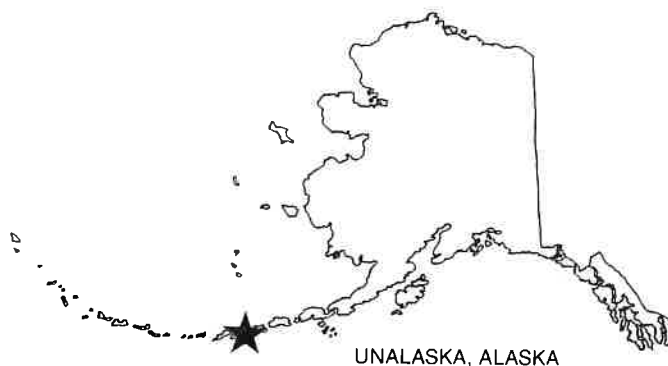
Also-Cuts to Homelessness
Cuts to mental Health

Sincerely Yours

Randy Loker

CITY OF UNALASKA

P.O. BOX 610
UNALASKA, ALASKA 99685-0610
(907) 581-1251 FAX (907) 581-1417



February 25, 2019

President of the Senate Honorable Cathy Giessel
State Capital Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Speaker of the House Honorable Bryce Edgmon
State Capital Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senate President Giessel and Speaker of House Edgmon:

I'm writing to you today on behalf of the City of Unalaska, where I serve as the community's Mayor; I also serve as President of the Unalaska City School Board. I have three areas of Governor Dunleavy's budget that I would like to address today; I have other areas in his budget that I have concerns; I will address them at a later date.

State Shared Fishery Taxes

The City of Unalaska is this nation's number one commercial fishing port which is highly dependent on fishery shared and local landing taxes. The fishing industry of the Bering Sea is our only industry and if the fish tax revenues are impacted, it will be felt in all sectors of the community. Unalaska's shared fish taxes make up 26% of Unalaska's 31 million GF revenues a little over 8.0 million dollars annually. Unalaska provides services to help support the nation's largest commercial fishing port that supports harvesters, onshore, and offshore processors. We use the fish and sales tax revenues to pay our own way; we fund port and harbor upgrades, utilities improvements, roads, the school district at the cap amount annually, City facilities, local non- profits. If we lose the shared fish tax revenues the community as a whole will suffer, employment with City and the community as a whole will be reduced, City planned projects will be shelved and school funding will be impacted. It should also be pointed out that the majority of the City's projects are done with City dollars, from bonding or the use of our reserves a case in point is the just completed 40 million City Dock extension that was totally bonded by the City.

It has been years since the State of Alaska had capital project monies that weren't pass through dollars from the federal government. If the State of Alaska takes all of the state shared fish taxes, who step up to assist fishery dependent communities on projects that will be needed to support the seafood industry that is the economic engine of all fishery communities. With the lack of State of Alaska capital project funds, many communities have taken over formerly funded state services, maintenance of roads, harbors, and many health and human services issues. Most fishery dependent communities have local sales taxes, high mill rates, and local fishery landing taxes. I bet if you ask the seafood industry who they would want the other 50% of their fish tax dollars to go to, it would be to the communities they work with and not the State of Alaska. The legislature must remember that fishery dependent communities across Alaska produce 56% of this nation's seafood, over 5 billion pounds and a value of close to 2 billion dollars! We need to keep Alaska fishery dependent communities strong not hurt them by taking away the State Shared Fish Tax Dollars.

The Proposed Reduction in K-12 Basic School Allocation

The projected change in the BSA by \$1,100 would be devastating to the Unalaska School District's two schools. We are facing a projected \$1.3 million cut from state and City dollars to the districts 7.7 million dollar, a 17% reduction in our FY 20 budget which can't be made up. The City of Unalaska has funded the Unalaska City School District at the cap amount for over 30 years. Unless the cap is changed, the City can't assist with additional general fund monies. With the state shared fish taxes on the chopping block that would make it less likely for us to assist the district in other areas such capital purchase and maintenance issues. In addition, the City pays the majority of the School District's food service and preschool costs, as well as the capital projects and maintenance costs to the district's facilities. A cut of this size can't be made up from reserves; the School District under law is allowed only 10% of its budget for reserves of \$770,000 for Unalaska and the reserves are already lower than that since we used part of that funding to balance the budget.

These types of cuts can't be made up by just cutting supplies and travel. These types of funding reductions will lead to cuts in staff, teachers, aides, district and school office personnel, and counselors. Very soon we will be facing larger class sizes and split grade classes which will impact the quality of the education the district provides. Unalaska High School has a 95% graduation rate and 4 years ago was awarded Blue Ribbons School designation, which means Unalaska High School was one of the most outstanding high schools in the nation. I would hope that the legislature would do what is mandated in the Alaska Constitution that the state must provide quality education I don't believe that mandate can be met, with this size of a reduction in the BSA funding.

Marine Highway Reductions

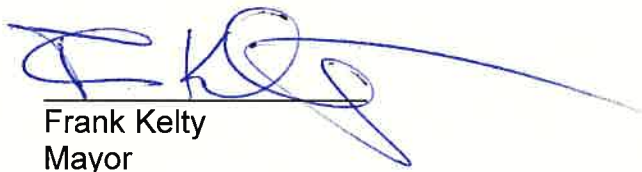
Unalaska is at the end of the Marine Highway System; we receive service from the communities of Homer and Kodiak. At this time Unalaska only receives partial yearly service from May through September with two trips a month from the M/V Tustumena, when she isn't broken down, for hopefully 10 trips a year. This partial year service is important to Unalaska but is critical to the other smaller communities in Southwest Alaska such as the Akutan, Sand Point, King Cove, Falls Pass, Cold Bay and the Chignik communities. I would hope that the legislators realize that the air service costs are outrageous in Southwest Alaska R/T Unalaska to Anchorage is \$1,100 and it's higher than that for the much smaller communities in Southwest Alaska.

The limited ferry service we receive from the Marine Highway Service is important for the movement of vehicles and household goods purchased in Anchorage or Kodiak. Teachers moving into Southwest communities use the ferry to get their belongings and vehicles into these communities at a price that they can afford. Alaska Construction firms use the ferry to get their equipment in and out of various communities in Southwest Alaska where they have projects. The ferry service is also used for student travel during the August and September runs. The ferry has brought cross country and swim teams to Unalaska from King Cove and Sand Point. They arrive early in the morning, have a meet late in the morning and get back on the ferry at 5:00 PM departure heading east. As we understand the Governor's budget has totally eliminated the Aleutian run. I believe that is a total disservice to Southwest Alaska residents and should not be allowed to happen.

In closing, I believe we must reevaluate dividends program and look at raising new revenues before putting more burden on the backs of fishery dependent communities to balance the Governor's budget.

Sincerely

CITY OF UNALASKA



Frank Kelty
Mayor

CC: Unalaska City Council,
Thomas Thomas, City Manager

CC: Senate Finance Committee
Co- Chair Bert Steadman,

Co-Chair Senator Natasha von Imhof,
Sen. Click Bishop Member
Sen. Lyman Hoffman, Member
Sen. Peter Micciche, Member
Sen. Mike Shower, Member
Sen. David Wilson, Member
Sen. Donald Olson, Member
Sen. Bill Wielechowski, Member

CC: House Finance Committee
Co-Chair Rep. Neil Foster,
Co-Chair Rep. Tammie Wilson,
Rep. Jennifer Johnson, Member
Rep. Andy Josephson, Member
Rep. Garry Knopp, Member
Rep. Barton Lebon, Member
Rep. Dan Ortiz, Member
Rep. Cathy Tilton, Member

CC: House Fisheries Special Communities
Rep. Louise Stutes, Chair
Rep. Bryce Edgmon, Member Speaker of the House
Rep. Chuck Kopp, Member
Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Member
Rep. Geran Tarr, Member
Rep. Sarah Vance, Member
Rep. Lance Pruitt, Member
Rep. Kelly Merrick, Member
Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard, Member
Rep. Ben Carpenter, Member

March 12, 2019

Rep. Tammie Wilson
Rep. Neal Foster
Co-Chairs, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Senior Benefits Program – Oppose Repeal – HB 60, support full funding

Dear Representatives Wilson and Foster,

Since the release of Gov. Dunleavy's budget proposal, discussion of the various cuts and impacts have dominated opinion columns and even the hallways of every workplace and stakeholder in Alaska. The cuts will have a very significant impact on the kind of state Alaska will be in the near and protracted future. These discussions are necessary and will help form the priorities that the majority of Alaska's people, and by extension, their legislators can support.

Of great concern to AARP Alaska and to the 11,283 older Alaskan beneficiaries are the discussions about the budget proposal to zero out the Senior Benefits Program, as well as the administration's submission of both a House and a Senate bill to repeal the Senior Benefits Program altogether. Such action suggests that this administration either doesn't understand the Senior Benefits Program, or it doesn't care. And while other major cuts in the budget have loud and well-organized constituencies to make the arguments, poor older Alaskans have few to speak for them. For this reason, AARP Alaska strongly opposes HB 60, a bill to repeal the program, as well as urges full funding of the program.

The Senior Benefits Program was created in 2007 as something of a reiteration of the old Longevity Bonus Program that was completely phased out under Gov. Murkowski. The old program paid a monthly cash benefit to Alaskans 65 and older regardless of their need for it. Senior Benefits came into being with the recognition that though not all older Alaskans needed this money, there are some who desperately do. These are often older women who may have lost their economic security caring for a dependent spouse or child. Or it might have been a low wage worker who never had a chance to save and whose Social Security amount is very small. It also includes many who lived and worked by subsistence, not building a cash retirement savings or substantial Social Security.

In any case, these are older Alaskans who are economically poor. How poor? Those who qualify for the largest Senior Benefit amount (\$250/mo) can have no more (often less) than \$949/month income. The middle benefit amount is \$175/mo for persons who have incomes below the 100% Federal Poverty Level (\$1265/mo), and for the current lowest benefit (\$76/mo) the income limit is 175% FPL at no more than \$2214/mo. It is difficult to imagine living on such an income in Alaska, especially when the average Senior Beneficiary is 75 years old, likely has chronic health problems and must regard every expense as a choice between a necessity and a necessity.

When older Alaskans who qualify lose this income supplement from the Senior Benefits program, it will be gone and irreplaceable. They are not going to go out and get a job or ask for a raise. They are not going to ask for help from mom and dad. They will simply have permanently lost a significant amount of their monthly income, and therefore their financial security. Unquestionably the loss of this income will increase the risk of losing their independence and hasten their move to a much costlier track of dependent care.

The Senior Benefits Program is not a bricks and mortar program for the state. In fact, it functions in much the same way as the Permanent Fund Dividend, though on a smaller scale. The monthly allowance from the state goes directly to the senior beneficiary who then spends it on necessary expenditures in this state. They certainly are not

going to Best Buy or taking a trip to Hawaii. It is a modest financial stimulus to Alaska's economy and could rightly be regarded as a state investment rather than an expense.

The argument we hear from the Administration and some legislators is that the loss of the Senior Benefit income is offset by getting a larger Permanent Fund Dividend. How is this so? Why should an older Alaskan, long past working age, be asked to give up a significant portion of their needed income in order to get a dividend when most other Alaskans are not? It is not fair. Moreover, to offset with a PFD, the Senior Beneficiary would have to divide the PFD amount by 12, and dole it out carefully each month to make ends meet. Does anyone do this, or have to?

When the Senior Benefits Program was reauthorized in the most recent legislative session, the associated fiscal note increased the amount of the lowest benefit amount from its current, previously reduced \$76/mo., to its original \$125/mo., effective FY2020. Those beneficiaries have been waiting since last spring for July 1, 2019, to again receive what had been taken from them over the past several years. If the program is zeroed out for FY2020, beneficiaries will have to wait it out from July 1 until the PFD comes out in October with severely reduced incomes for monthly expenses, and will even then receive a PFD with a cost, unlike other Alaskans.

There is no sense of security in a PFD that comes once a year that could make up for the loss of the monthly allowance of the Senior Benefit Program. The PFD will likely vary from year to year, and does not provide a sense of long term security. Being old and poor in Alaska is not a circumstance for more insecurity. Rather, as Alaskans of all ages (knowing we'll all be older Alaskans one day) we must advocate for the preservation of this very important lifeline for some of our most vulnerable neighbors and family members.

The Senior Benefits Program was reauthorized in the last legislative session through bills sponsored by then Sen. Pete Kelly (R-Fairbanks) and then Rep. Scott Kawasaki (D-Fairbanks) with a unanimous vote in the Senate and only one no vote (Eastman R-Wasilla) in the House. Let us hope this legislature recognizes the same value of the Senior Benefits Program for our Alaskan elders. SB 58 and HB 60 (to repeal the Senior Benefits Program altogether) must be defeated, and the budget must include adequate funding to treat senior beneficiaries the same as other Alaskans with regard to their PFD. AARP Alaska is proud to speak on behalf of the 11,000 older Alaskans whose lives are made more secure and independent by the Senior Benefits Program. Failure to preserve the Senior Benefits Program for low income older Alaskans will mean we are all the poorer for it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Ken Helander
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska
762-3314

Cc:

Rep. Johnston
Rep. Ortiz
Rep. Josephson
Rep. Knopp
Rep. LeBon
Rep. Tilton
Rep. Merrick
Rep. Sullivan-Leonard
Rep. Carpenter



Hello my name is Michele Stevens and I am President of Petersville Community Non-Profit At Petersville Alaska in south denali.

I would first like to introduce a little history of the SnowTRAC program.

The Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC) was established under Title 41 in 1997 through the offices of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) with the mission to fairly represent all Alaskans by advising DPOR on snowmobile issues including funding, safety, registration, education, access, trail grooming, marking, development and maintenance.

A.S. 28.39.020 authorizes the Division of Motor Vehicles to collect snowmobile and off-highway vehicle registration fees.

The Statute does not state what the fees will go toward, however, since inception, the promise and understanding was that DMV would transfer all fees generated to the Department of Natural Resources/Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Thus creating the snowTRAC program.

I would like to clarify the SnowTRAC program is funded through a self-imposed user tax, or snowmobile registration fee. The program is self-sustaining due to the recurring registration fees collected from DMV. It is a revenue neutral program that users asked for and fund out of their own registration dollars.

12% of the funds cover the costs of State employees administering the program and administrative cost. *We are not asking for a handout, or any funds from the State of*



Alaska budget.

At the time the SnowTRAC program was put into play, snowmachiners were proliferating for recreation, transportation and subsistence use, there were very few marked and maintained trails.

The consequences were.....high accident rates, lost snowmachiners... which is a cost to the State of Alaska... winter conflicts among trail users, and conflicts with private property owners.

The SnowTRAC program has been a success! It took many years of brushing and cutting trails. Surveying and mapping out trails. The communities who have received SnowTRAC program funding have succeeded in achieving all the goals the SnowTRAC program intended it to be.

People are getting to their businesses and remote cabins safe, they are buying and hauling fuel and supplies. More land is being purchased and cabins are being built because of the ease and safety of the trail systems being marked and groomed.

Snowmobilers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in our winter economy which otherwise would be slow. Winter tourism is on the rise because of the groomed trails, which provide responsible riding and safety. On average a single snowmobiler spends between 20k and 50K in a season. For example we had the Ladies Ride for Cancer at our community this weekend and there were 90 Women riding \$900,000.00 dollars worth of snow machines in just one event!



A study done by Earth Economics in 2015 found that for every \$1.00 spent on public open space in the Mat-Su Borough there is a \$5.31 return on that investment.

The groomed trails have helped considerably in the keeping the cost to the State of Alaska Search and Rescue to a minimum. With signs, maps and groomed trails, Riders are less likely to get lost. This means the Troopers are called out less so the cost to the State of Alaska is less. In fact the trail system has helped first responders get to the back country in an expedient manner thus helping the victims sooner and less likely to suffer loss of life or limb. I have been involved in SAR since 1989 and since the groomed trails have been introduced, Petersville Search and Rescue has had less rescues to respond to

I represent 16 clubs, 20 businesses, 39 lodges, 15 dealers, 10 dog mushing races, 24 snow machine events and more than 66K registered snow machine owners and the Petersville Community Non Profit Corporation which has maintains one of the largest trail systems in the State of Alaska, 150 square miles. We have 380 Property/cabin owners who use this trail system for hauling fuel, supplies, and any other necessities.

The trails are multi use so they benefit the following user groups: Dog Teams, Snowmobiles, Hikers, Fat Tire Bikers and Skiers.

The SnowTRAC program benefits all Alaskans and anyone who wants to enjoy all that Alaska has to offer in the winter. SnowTRAC saves lives, promotes safety, stimulates the economy, and creates jobs.



Without the SnowTRAC program Alaska will be “closed for business” in the winter.



LIST OF BUSINESSES, CLUBS, AND LODGES THAT WILL BE DIRECTLY AFFECTED OR MAY CLOSE THEIR DOORS IF THE SNOWTRAC PROGRAM IS DISCONTINUED:

CLUBS

Petersville Community NPC
Curry Ridge Riders
Homer Snomads
Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers
Willow Trail Committee
Alaska Motor Mushers
Mid Valley Trails
Kachemack Nordic Ski Club
Denali Trails Club

Big Lake Trails
Mat Su Vintage Club
Anchorage Snowmobile Club
Lake Louise Snowmachine Club
(Wolfpack)
Valdez Snowmachine Club
Homer Cycling clubs
Kachemack Ski Club (Homer Rope Tow)

BUSINESSES

Three Bears Big Lake & Healy
Triple J Restaurant
Big Lake Family Restaurant
The Moonshine Shop
Aardvark Restaurant
Tesoro Big Lake and Talkeetna Y
Brewed Oasis Coffee Shop
Newmans Hilltop
Cubby's
Willow Trading Post

Cycle Logical
The Alaska Market Place
Totem Restaurant and Inn
Chevron Cantwell
Tesu Cantwell
A2D Sledworks
Alaska Snowmobile Salvage
Alaskan Off-Road Adventures LLC
Boreal Back-country Inc
Off the Grid Rentals

LODGES

Skwenta Roadhouse
Fireweed Lodge
Forks Roadhouse
Yentna Station
Alpine Creek Lodge
Gate Creek Cabins
MacLaren River Lodge
McDougal lodge
Eagle Quest Cabins and Lodge
Rebels Roost
Sheep Creek Lodge
Shell Lake Lodge
Eureka Lodge
Telvista Lodge

Sheep Mountain Lodge
Bentalit Lodge
Lake Louise Lodge
C C L Lodge
Northwood's Lodge
Freddie's Roadhouse

Alaska Heritage Lodge
Deshka Wilderness Lodge
Driftwood Inn
Kachemack Bay Wilderness Lodge
Baycrest Lodge
Alaska Adventure Cabins
Beluga Lake Lodge

LODGES CONTINUED



Alaska Winter Park Cabins
Pioneer Lodge
Willow Island Resort
Alaska Host B&B
Otter Beach Lodges
Otter Cove Resort
Soaring Eagle Lodge (Ninilchick)

Lands End Resort
Kenai Peninsula Suites
Bear Creek Bend LLC
The Point Lodge
North Country Inn

DEALERS

Hatcher Pass Polaris
Anchorage Yamaha/Polaris
McKinley Polaris
Team CC Anchorage/Wasilla
Eagle River Polaris/Arctic Cat
Alaska Mining and Diving
Anchorage Suzuki Arctic Cat

Alaska Cycle Center
Big Lake Power Sports
House of Yamaha
Wasilla Arctic Cat & Marine
Peninsula Ski Doo
Homer Saw and Cycle
Lower Peninsula Power Sports

All Seasons Honda

DOG MUSHING EVENTS

Iditarod
Susitna 50
Jr. Iditarod
Susitna 100
Klondike 300
Willow 300

Tustumena 200
Denali Doubles
Freddie's Midnight Run Sled dog Race
Copper Basin 300

EVENTS

Irondog Race
Freddie's Drag Racing
Skwenta 200
Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers Family
Fun Day
Caroling with Kathy
Numerous fundraisers between lodges
Bird Homestead Golf Tournament
Big Lake Family Fun Run
Snomads Kick - Off Party
Meet and Greet with Iron Dog Racers
Cory Davis & Team Event (stunt snowmachine rider)



Caribou Hills Kickoff Party
Military Appreciation Day's
Way out Women for Cancer
Petersville Community Fun Run and
Easter Egg Hunt
Ladies Ride for Cancer

Sponsor Trail rides for locals and tourist
Sled for Hope (Fundraiser ride for Pacific
Northwest Adult and Teen Challenge
programs)
Alaska SnowX
Homer Epic
Iditasport Alaska

FAT TIRE BIKES

Fat tires bikes Alaska
Fat Freddie's bike race
Big Fat Bike Festival

WHOLE COMMUNITIES THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED

Big Lake
Petersville
Ninilchik
Trapper Creek
Cantwell

Willow
Homer
Skwentna

Dear Alaska Legislature,

I am writing in concerns to the recent budget discussion and proposal from the Governor. I understand that you are receiving letters regarding this issue and other issues of our State on a regular basis, but I ask that you permit me the honor of reading my letter to you.

I am an Alaskan. Yes, I am a legal resident of the state and currently residing in the great place we all call home. However, being an Alaskan to me means more to that as I'm sure it does to you. It is the trappers, the bush pilots, the fishermen, those that gather to watch the Yukon Quest and Iditarod cheering their hometown hero, the families that pick fireweed in the fall, the hunters that provide for their families, and the Native Alaskans that have had the honor of living in this Great Land long before it was even considered a State. When I say I am an Alaskan, I am proud to say I am a member of the community mentioned.

I understand that our State is seeking to repair the budget problems that have plagued us for years. This has affected everyone across our State. With this, I do understand that a cut in expenditures must be made somewhere. To this I argue that the education, healthcare, and state service systems are not worth taking the brunt of this cut. Education across our great nation already suffers from low pay, not enough resources, and the pressure to perform to a high standard. This is uniform from kindergarten to graduate level students. Alaska suffers no differently but faces the existing problem that graduating high school and college students are leaving the State in search for better opportunities. Alaska's academic programs have worked diligently to mitigate the damage but cutting the education program hinders our ability to foster growth and development in this State. No one knows Alaska like Alaskans. Cutting the education makes it harder for Alaskans in the most diverse high school district in the nation, leading Arctic research universities, and developing rural villages to teach our future generation about this great state.

This cut is not worth having our future generation leave Alaska for a pursuit in better opportunities out of state. We rely on our future generations to build upon the legacy we have left them. This legacy has been built on from the Klondike days, to the Rush to Nome to save a community, from defending our land from Japanese Invasion in WWII, to gaining statehood, and building an engineering marvel of a pipeline. It is up to us as Alaskans to continue building this legacy and cutting the education, healthcare, and other state systems is not the answer to continuing to better our future.

Respectfully,

Stephen Newman
Fairbanks, AK

Dear Legislators,

I am currently a freshman attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The current education cuts are too severe for many to be able to continue attending university. The idea that the price of education could double is too much, many of the people I know attending this school could no longer afford to attend university, or the alternative was massive cuts to faculty in which the credibility and function of the university could be removed. Removing the deficit should not be accomplished in a single year, but instead be spread out of multiple years to lessen the burden everyone must feel. Additionally, funding for early education should never be cut, that is the most important time to fund teachers who want to be able to teach kids and be passionate about their jobs, losing those teachers takes away from the educational experience many have. Without passionate teachers, many students would have no passion of there own to pursue further education and receive meaningful degrees.

I am currently attending UAF because I wanted to experience Alaska. This is likely to become my permanent residence someday. It is beautiful up here and I love the weather, but with education prices estimated to rise I would not be able to afford to go here. I would have to return to the lower 48 to pursue my education and I feel that I would no longer have the motivation to return here, I also know of my friends' situations. Some of them are only barely able to go here on a small amount of student loans and scholarships, but again these prices increasing would cause many of them to longer be able to attend this university or any university in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Jared DesMarais

Dear Alaska State Representative,

My name is Isabella Knott. I am 16 years old, and I attend both the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Austin E. Lathrop High School. I am able to do this because I am enrolled in the Fairbanks BEST homeschool program, which allows me to have many opportunities exploring my academic future. I have lived in Alaska all of my life, and have gone mushing under the Alaskan stars, played in the snow, and skied under the Aurora Borealis. I tutor high school students in English, math, and sometimes science, and I do everything I can to help other students succeed. So, when I heard that you plan to withhold significant funding from both the University of Alaska and the K-12 school's funding, I felt obliged to write to you.

Although I am not an adult, I have many qualifications to have concern over the plan to hack into the budget for our schools. I am a 16-year-old studying at the University, pursuing a Psychology major, and hoping to go into forensics when I am an adult. I am a research assistant for Nature Lab, a group of psychologists pursuing the answers to some of Alaska's strangest mysteries, and I am currently assisting with a project to discover the cognitive bias within people when considering dog breeds to adopt. I am a varsity athlete at Lathrop High School, and a proud captain of the track and field team. These experiences in public education have allowed me to grow as an individual.

Right now, I am in a very unique position. Because the University has allowed me to pursue my academic goals and be dually enrolled in both high school and college, your bill is threatening to shut down everything I have worked hard to obtain. I clawed my way through college and am now almost a sophomore at the University at the age of sixteen because of my hard work. If your budget is approved, I will no longer be able to attend many of the classes that are helping me succeed and make a difference in the world. I will no longer be able to be a research assistant at Nature Lab, and the questions I am helping to investigate will never be

answered. The University would become a mere husk of what it is today, and the opportunities I have been generously offered would slip away from my hands like water.

Because of the coursework and experiences I have undergone at the University of Alaska, I have been able to expand my academic dreams to levels I did not know I could reach. I am allowed to study topics in my future career, and this training has strengthened me to meet the challenges of the world head on. The journey I have been on has been long and winding, a solitary climber facing a mighty mountain, and I have enjoyed every step of the way. I ask you to please allow me to continue that journey.

Sincerely,

Isabella Knott

Isabella Knott

Fairbanks, AK 99712

Dear Alaska State Legislature,

I am a freshman majoring in mechanical engineering at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

I am writing to you about the recent proposed budget cuts on the University of Alaska. I am an immigrant from South Korea but now a resident of this state. I've attended public schools since kindergarten and have personally witnessed the effects of budget cuts on education. I am aware that if this proposal is approved, a substantial amount of money will be cut from the UA system. I believe that this is a short-term solution to the long-term problem that the state can no longer solely rely on oil to fund it. A big reason that I am still in the state of Alaska is because of the scholarship programs in place. If this budget cut of 41% effects tuition or scholarship programs, I believe many students attending University of Alaska schools will begin to make other plans. I personally have had plans to complete undergrad and potentially more at UAF but if it comes to the point of having to burden my family due to financial reasons, I will have to reevaluate my current plans.

Respectfully, HyunSoo Lim