



International Union of Operating Engineers LOCAL 302 • Washington and Alaska • AFL-CIO

Daren Konopaski, *Business Manager and General Vice President*
Corey Baxter, *District 8 Representative*

January 22, 2024

House Labor and Commerce
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear House Labor and Commerce Committee,

My Name is Corey Baxter, I am a lifelong Alaskan and Juneau resident.

I have been in the construction industry as a heavy equipment operator and the district representative for the Operating Engineers Local 302 Union for 28 years. I am writing today in SUPPORT of House Bill 186.

As I have watched enforcement and oversight diminish in the construction industry, I have witnessed firsthand the abuse of our labor laws. These are laws designed to protect the State, honest contractors who play by the rules, and most importantly Alaska Workers.

Unfortunately, we are seeing more contractors employ misclassification techniques to avoid payroll taxes, workers compensation premiums and any liability that should be rightfully attributed to them as the employer. I have seen recently local contractors misclassify their employees as "independent contractors." While these employers are providing the equipment to use, as well as the direction of the work they do.

Having watched our budget issues progressively get worse over the past several years, this is a smart pathway to ensure that Alaska workers and contractors alike are being protected at almost NO cost to the State. This also protects Alaska public monies that are invested in the development of this great state.

I sincerely thank you for your efforts to come up with an innovative, cost-effective way to protect the construction industry in Alaska, and I look forward to seeing this bill move out of your committee.

Sincerely,

Corey Baxter
District 8 Representative
Local 302
907-321-4271

Sean Jeffries, *President* • **Jason Alward**, *Vice President*

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