

January 30, 2025

Senator Bjorkman  
Labor and Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 105  
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of Support for SB77

Dear Chair Bjorkman and committee members,

As the Vice President and Alaska General Manager for TOTE Maritime Alaska, a Jones Act cargo ship operator delivering critical goods to the State of Alaska since 1975, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 77, which seeks to allow Alaska residents attending a maritime academy outside the state to maintain their eligibility for the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD).

Alaska's maritime industry is vital to the state's economy and communities, providing essential goods, services, and employment opportunities. To ensure the industry remains strong and sustainable, we must encourage young Alaskans to pursue careers in maritime fields. Unfortunately, Alaska does not currently have an in-state maritime academy, requiring aspiring maritime professionals to seek education and training opportunities out of state.

Senate Bill 77 addresses a significant barrier faced by these students: the risk of losing their PFD eligibility while they pursue a career in maritime. By recognizing the unique challenges of our state's geography and the critical importance of the maritime industry, this legislation ensures that students are not penalized for seeking specialized education that is unavailable within Alaska.

By supporting young Alaskans pursuing maritime careers, we are not only helping young Alaskan's achieve their professional goals but also strengthening our communities and ensuring a robust pipeline of talent for one of our state's most essential industries.

I respectfully urge the committee to advance Senate Bill 77, providing much-needed support for the next generation of maritime leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Art Dahlin  
Vice President and Alaska General Manager | TOTE Maritime Alaska, LLC