

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 5

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/9/26

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Recognizing the importance of preserving agricultural land in the state.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:**

3 **WHEREAS** agricultural land that is currently under or has historically been under
4 agricultural cultivation, including land containing soil of local or statewide importance, is
5 essential for food production, supports rural livelihoods, and contributes to the long-term food
6 security of the state; and

7 **WHEREAS** the state's agricultural land plays a critical role in strengthening local and
8 regional economies by supporting farm businesses, related service industries, and
9 employment, while keeping food dollars circulating within local communities; and

10 **WHEREAS** farmland and agricultural open spaces generate more in public revenue
11 than those lands require in public services, helping local governments maintain fiscal balance
12 and reduce long-term infrastructure and service costs associated with dispersed residential
13 development; and

14 **WHEREAS** the preservation of agricultural land protects irreplaceable soil resources,
15 maintains open spaces, and supports water quality; and

16 **WHEREAS** the state's agricultural heritage and working lands are an important part

1 of the state's cultural identity, reflecting the stewardship, innovation, and self-reliance of the
2 state's farmers and ranchers; and

3 **WHEREAS** access to productive agricultural land is a foundational pillar of food
4 security, particularly in a state that relies heavily on food imports and is vulnerable to supply
5 chain disruptions caused by natural disasters, global market volatility, and the state's harsh
6 climate; and

7 **WHEREAS** recent disruptions to national and global food systems have demonstrated
8 the resilience of local and regional food production, underscoring the importance of
9 maintaining productive farmland near population centers and rural communities; and

10 **WHEREAS** agricultural land continues to be lost in the state to development,
11 fragmentation, and conversion to nonagricultural uses, particularly in regions with rapidly
12 growing populations; and

13 **WHEREAS** a 2024 study commissioned by the Alaska Farmland Trust found that, in
14 the Matanuska-Susitna Borough alone, approximately 3,076 acres of farmland, representing
15 11 percent of farmland in the borough, were lost between 2013 and 2023; and

16 **WHEREAS** the conversion of agricultural land to low-density residential and other
17 nonfarm uses permanently diminishes the state's agricultural production capacity and
18 undermines long-term food security and economic resilience; and

19 **WHEREAS** conservation easements, agricultural land protection programs, and
20 voluntary land stewardship tools, all consistent with private property rights, have proven
21 effective at keeping farmland in active agricultural use nationwide and in the state; and

22 **WHEREAS** maintaining productive agricultural land is in the public interest and
23 supports state objectives relating to economic sustainability, food security, natural resource
24 stewardship, and community resilience;

25 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Senate recognizes agricultural land as a valuable
26 and finite public resource and affirms the importance of preserving state agricultural land for
27 current and future generations; and be it

28 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Senate encourages state agencies, local
29 governments, landowners, community partners, and state residents to support voluntary,
30 incentive-based efforts that conserve agricultural land, strengthen farm viability, and promote
31 continued agricultural use; and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Senate acknowledges the role and
2 importance of preserving agricultural land in enhancing food security, supporting local and
3 regional economies, protecting soil and water resources, and sustaining Alaska's agricultural
4 heritage.