

**HOUSE AND SENATE
JOINT JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT**

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Tuesday

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Address by

The Honorable Nick Begich III

United States Representative

Before a Joint Session

of the

Second Session of the

Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature

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March 10, 2026

Juneau, Alaska

The following was submitted for publication:

A year ago, I stood before you newly sworn in to Congress as a freshman member. And I must admit, I had a lot to learn. I had to learn how the halls of Congress really worked. How legislation actually moves. I learned how politics in Washington can stall progress - or, if you're persistent enough, how we can drive legislation forward. I came ready to work. But I came knowing I needed to learn. And here is something else I have learned: Alaskans expect results, not symbolic victories. Real, durable victories written into law. Alaskans can - and should - expect a different standard. The promise of Statehood was simple: that Alaska would have the right to develop our resources, the right to self-determination, and the right to govern our future and build prosperity for future generations of Alaskans.

Today, I stand before you to report that promise is being delivered. In just over twelve months, we have reopened land, passed laws at a record-breaking pace, accelerated permitting, strengthened aviation safety, strengthened our Coast Guard, and positioned Alaska at the center of America's energy and Arctic strategy.

This is the new standard of delivering results, and I am here today to report back about the hard-fought victories we have secured for Alaska. There is a new benchmark set, and now is the time for this legislature to meet it.

So, to the President of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislature - thank you for the opportunity to be here today. Thank you for the work you do on behalf of our state.

I also want to recognize my peers in the Alaska congressional delegation - Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan. In Washington, we share a common mission: to fight for Alaska and to deliver results for the people we serve.

There are a couple of familiar faces in new seats that I'd like to mention: Senator Cathy Tilton, Senator George Rauscher: Congratulations on your new roles here in the State Senate. You've never been shy about asking the hard questions, and Alaska is better for it. I'm excited to keep working together for the Mat-Su and for the whole state.

And there are a couple of new faces in the chamber: congratulations to our recently appointed members of the House: Representative Garrett Nelson and Representative Steve St. Clair. It's my honor to address you here for the first

time. I'm looking forward to working with you both on the things that matter most to Alaskans.

To my family: my wife Dharna and our son Nicholas - thank you. Your support makes this work possible. I'm also grateful for our Alaska and DC team, often working long into the night and weekends to serve Alaskans with dedication and urgency. And to the people of Alaska - thank you for the trust you have placed in me.

Remembering Craig Johnson

I would like to take a moment to honor someone many of you served alongside - someone who served this state with great conviction: Craig Johnson. Craig knew his district. He knew his values. And he showed up—year after year—because he believed Alaska was worth fighting for. To his family, and to everyone who called him a friend and colleague, know that Alaska is grateful for the legacy he built.

Honoring Our Fallen Service Members/ Iran

Before I go any further, I want to take a moment to honor those American service members who we recently lost in the Middle East. We honor their courage. We honor their families. And we reaffirm a simple truth: their sacrifice will never be forgotten. First and foremost, our priority must always be the safety of American service members and the protection of the United States. The threats our troops face today are real.

For decades, the Iranian regime has fueled aggression across the Middle East, supported terrorist organizations, threatened international shipping lanes, and armed proxy groups that have targeted Americans and our allies. Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities, its support for terrorist networks like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, and its growing alignment with America's adversaries represent one of the most serious national security threats we face.

The United States cannot afford complacency against a regime that has repeatedly demonstrated hostility toward our country and our allies. Targeted military actions against elements of Iran's nuclear and offensive capabilities are designed to confront those threats and protect American lives.

But we must also remain clear-eyed about our responsibilities. Congress has a constitutional role in overseeing military operations and ensuring that any mission is clearly defined, strategically sound, and properly supported. The goal must always be the same: Protect American lives. Fight to win. And ensure that every mission has a clear purpose and a clear path forward. That is

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the responsibility both the President and Congress share. And it is a responsibility I take seriously on behalf of every American wearing the uniform.

Western Alaska and the storms

Turning our attention closer to home, I'd like to speak to the devastating damage caused by Typhoon Halong in Western Alaska. In the aftermath of the storms, I sat down with displaced families at the Alaska Airlines Center in Anchorage and listened to their stories.

In the time I spent with those brave Alaskan families, I recognized something surprising: These were families who lost homes, families who were separated from their communities, families who were staring down a long road to recovery, BUT even in the midst of hardship these families exhibited incredible courage and determination.

To the federal, state, and local teams who stepped up immediately to assist those in need, Thank You. You saved lives and reminded us once again why you are so critical to Alaskans in moments of trouble. We know the recovery for these communities will be long, and the scars will persist, but my team and I will continue to support recovery efforts, either to rebuild or relocate as those communities arrive at those self-determinant decisions.

Where we are now: delivering results

When I stood here last year, I was early in the job. I told you I came to listen, and I told you we had a unique window of opportunity to achieve historic wins for Alaska. Today, I'm back to tell you this: Despite the slimmest majority in the U.S. House history and the longest government shutdown in history, we have delivered for Alaska.

After just over a year, 11 of the bills I have sponsored have passed the House and 5 of those bills have been signed into law. In fact, my office leads all of Congress both in bills signed into law and bills passed out of the House. My team and I are setting a record-breaking pace for the most productive first term ever in United States House.

That said, we're not slowing down. Just last week, the Cape Fox Land Entitlement Finalization Act marked our 6th sponsored bill to pass the Senate. The bill itself will open opportunities for power generation and tourism while completing the final Cape Fox land conveyance under ANCSA.

These wins happen because our team stays focused. We build coalitions. We seek opportunities for support. And we put in the work. Our mission, both

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yours and mine, is to deliver results: results that can be measured in land returned to Alaskans, acreage made available, investment committed, projects developed, and jobs created. This is the reasonable expectation of Alaskans we serve.

We know, that for Alaska to have a prosperous future, we need more development. And right now, the conditions for development are better than they have been in a generation. We've finally opened the federal gates. The question is: will we walk through them?

Keeping promises to Alaska Native communities

One of the most important responsibilities we have as a state and as a nation is to keep our commitments – and that certainly includes commitments made to Alaska's Native people. That's why I fought for - and more importantly delivered - on three key bills during my first year in Congress:

H.R. 42, the Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act. This ended the practice of counting settlement trust payments as income when determining eligibility for federal benefits. For too long, a flaw in federal law forced Alaska Native elders and individuals with disabilities to choose between their trust benefits and programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and Social Security. With this law, we changed that.

H.R. 43, the Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act. This returned more than 11,500 acres to Alaska Native Village Corporations—land that had been locked in bureaucratic limbo for fifty years as a set aside for municipalities that never formed. That land can now be used for housing, infrastructure, and community expansion.

And **H.R. 410, the Vietnam Era Veterans Land Allotment Extension Act.** This extends the native veteran allotment program through 2030 so that no eligible veteran's claim expires before it's processed. If you served your country, you shouldn't lose your rightful claim because of federal delay. H.R. 410 was signed by the President in December, and I am grateful to have gotten this important piece of legislation across the finish line in partnership with Senator Sullivan.

These are policies that have been creating uncertainty for our Alaska Native community for years. And now, after many attempts and work from past delegation members and so many in-state stakeholders, I'm proud to report that we've achieved solutions.

Energy and Resource Development

Now let me turn to the issue that has defined Alaska’s relationship with Washington for nearly half a century: Energy.

For more than forty years, Alaska has lived in a cycle of authorization and obstruction. ANWR has been debated since 1980. The National Petroleum Reserve — land set aside explicitly for energy production — opened, closed, restricted, reopened. The Central Yukon locked away through midnight rulemaking.

Every few years, Washington changed direction. Projects stalled. Investment dwindled. And Jobs disappeared before they could ever be created. Alaska has never lacked resources. What we have lacked is certainty.

That changed during my first year in Congress - and it changed permanently. And it changed because we did not settle for executive promises. We wrote law. Last year, three Congressional Review Act resolutions I sponsored were signed into law:

First, the 1002 Area has been the most contested region in American energy policy for 45 years. Congress authorized development in 2017. The prior administration halted it. We overturned that decision and permanently restored access to 1.16 million acres—with an estimated 7.7 billion barrels of beautiful Alaskan crude.

Second in the Central Yukon, 13 million acres in one of Alaska’s most impoverished regions - locked up through a plan designed to permanently strikethrough Alaska’s right to responsibly develop its resources. Now, reopened for energy, mineral, and infrastructure development.

Third, The National Petroleum Reserve, a region specifically designated for energy production. The Biden plan closed nearly half of it. We restored the 2020 management plan, built with North Slope tribal consultation, locking in certainty so the rules don’t flip every election cycle.

And here is why this matters: Under the Congressional Review Act, agencies are permanently barred from issuing substantially similar rules. No longer will a President be able to simply flip a switch and reinstate these restrictions on Alaska’s resources.

That is the difference between executive action and legislation. Executive action can be reversed, but legislation endures. Within the broader budget reconciliation framework Congress passed last year, we secured statutory

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mandates requiring regular lease sales in our most prospective energy basins. Not optional sales. Not discretionary sales. Mandated.

Through restored access, increased royalty sharing, and durable statutory certainty, we have created pathways for billions in future energy revenue for Alaska. This includes a dramatic increase in Alaska's future royalty share on these leases from 50 percent to 70 percent beginning in 2035.

This is structural, generational reform for Alaska. And now, we are seeing those reforms implemented. Just recently, the Bureau of Land Management announced that it will hold the first oil and gas lease sale in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska since 2019. Consider that for just a moment. The first NPR-A lease sale in 7 years. More than 600 tracts across approximately 5.5 million acres will be offered on March 18, 2026. And this will be the first sale conducted under the new statutory framework established under the Working Families Tax Cuts Act.

That sale is the direct result of legislative action. And it is proof that Alaska's provisions are being implemented. Responsible development in the National Petroleum Reserve is critical to our state's economy and to America's energy security. By holding timely lease sales and following the law, the federal government is honoring Congressional intent to unlock Alaska's extraordinary resource potential.

And for Alaska communities, this matters. Lease revenues strengthen working families. They help fund public services. They improve affordability across our state. When we invest in Alaska's resources, we are by extension, investing in Alaska's people.

The National Petroleum Reserve was created for one purpose: energy production. The federal government set that land aside so that America would have a source of strategic energy security. We are living in such a moment. Energy security is national security. It affects fuel prices, home heating costs, global alliances, and geopolitical leverage. And Alaska is central to that calculus.

Critically, Alaskans understand stewardship better than anyone. We live here. We hunt here. We fish here. We raise our families here. Responsible development is common sense. The restored management plan for NPR-A was built with North Slope consultation. Lease sales are conducted under modern environmental standards. Infrastructure development is subject to rigorous review.

But there is a difference between review and paralysis. For too long, Washington has conflated the two. What we have done over the past year is restore balance — allowing responsible development to proceed under clear, durable rules. And let me speak directly to the broader economic impact. Energy development does not exist in isolation. It supports construction jobs, aviation, marine services, engineering, hospitality, logistics, and small businesses across the state. It supports school funding, public safety, and infrastructure investment. When development moves forward, the economic ripple touches every region.

The March 18 lease sale is the beginning of a new chapter. And it sends a signal to global markets that Alaska is a serious opportunity in a region far more stable than many abroad. For decades, companies hesitated because policy uncertainty made long-term planning impossible. Today, we can say with confidence that Alaska’s federal resource framework is stable. Stable policy attracts capital. Capital creates jobs. Jobs retain and grow our population. And growth strengthens our schools, our healthcare system, and makes a good life in the last frontier more attainable. The door that was closed for years, is now open. And unlike before, it cannot simply be shut again by administrative decree.

This is the work I am most proud of in my first year in Congress - not because it makes headlines, but because it changes the trajectory of this state. For 40 years, Alaska argued about whether we would be allowed to develop. That debate is over.

Alaska LNG: A Generational Decision

Many Alaskans, perhaps many of you in this body, sit here today because of the economic opportunities that the TransAlaska Oil pipeline brought to Alaska in the 1970’s. You, your parents, and, for some even grandparents, accepted the bold challenge to build what was the most ambitious energy project of its time. Many believed it couldn’t be done. Some found reason after reason to say No. But thank God that those who came before us were bold. They provided a resource for us today that we have the privilege of debating, only because they had the courage to say yes!

In this moment, you are faced with the same decision and the same opportunity: to unlock prosperity for the next generation of Alaskan families, by supporting the LNG pipeline. The world’s demand for reliable energy is growing. Our allies want it. Our competitors are trying to lock up markets. And Alaska has something the world needs: a stable supply from a stable country.

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On my visits to Japan, Taiwan, and Korea with the House Natural Resource Committee last year, the message I heard was consistent: they want energy security, they want reliability, and they want partners they can trust.

Alaska checks every box – but only if we build. Markets do not wait. Global LNG capacity is projected to grow dramatically by 2030. Buyers will sign contracts. Competing projects will move. Alaska cannot afford to delay.

And, as we well know, this is not just an export project. Lower in-state energy costs have the chance to dramatically impact every sector - from manufacturing to mining to our household utility bills. Energy affordability is economic competitiveness. The federal path is largely cleared. But investors also need state-level clarity, fiscal predictability, and simplicity. Scrutinize it carefully. Model it thoroughly. But do not become a roadblock.

Alaska LNG is a jobs project. It's a national security project. It's a cost-of-living project. And it is an in-state development project—because when energy costs drop, everything else becomes possible.

This is about making Alaska attractive for investors: that means both Wall Street AND Main Street. Because at the end of the day, families are making an investment decision too: where do they invest their time, their money, and their future.

Permitting reform: the next bottleneck is being cleared

Opening the land is step one. Getting projects permitted and built is step two. That is why I am a proud co-sponsor of the SPEED Act - advanced by the House Natural Resources Committee in November.

The SPEED Act does not weaken environmental protections. It strengthens America's ability to build. It ensures NEPA works the way it was intended: efficient, transparent, and focused - not as a weapon to shut down projects permanently.

According to S&P Global, in the United States the average time from discovery to the first truckload of ore for a U.S. mine is 29 years. Our competitors do not require 29 years to develop a mine.

If Alaska is to lead in critical minerals, LNG infrastructure, transmission, roads, and ports, we must align our permitting timelines with the competitive reality.

In Alaska, we are further ahead than most people realize on permitting. In August, Alaska became the first state in the nation to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Permitting Council under the FAST-41 program.

That agreement connects Alaska's Office of Project Management and Permitting directly with the federal Permitting Council to streamline reviews, coordinate timelines, and reduce federal permitting time by as much as 25%.

The executive director of the Permitting Council said she wants to triple the number of Alaska projects on the federal dashboard. That's already happening.

- Alaska LNG completed its FAST-41 process ahead of schedule in December.
- Graphite One's Graphite Creek project—Alaska's first critical mineral project on the dashboard—is on track for construction approvals by late 2026.
- The Nikolai Nickel project was added in November—nickel, cobalt, platinum, palladium, copper, and chromium in Interior Alaska.
- Red Dog and Greens Creek have transparency status.
- The NANA Regional Broadband Network is on the dashboard.

And...more projects are coming.

For decades, Alaska's problem wasn't a lack of resources. It was unnavigable barriers. And those barriers are coming down, and the permits are getting done. Now, it's your job as the state to do all you can to match that momentum.

Delivering Affordability: Money Back to Americans

If Alaska is going to grow — if we are going to retain families, attract workers, and keep our young people here —people need to be able to keep more of what they earn. That's why we passed historic tax relief focused on working families. No Tax on Tips. No Tax on Overtime. Those two provisions alone are saving tipped and overtime workers thousands per year. For families, that extra means groceries, school supplies, heating fuel for winter, and savings for when life's emergencies inevitably come. And here's what that looks like in real life.

Norann Kriner owns Kriner's Diner in Anchorage. For 15 years, Kriner's has been a community institution in Anchorage. After the unexpected passing of her husband Andy, Norann continued, carrying forward the legacy they built together. As a small business owner in one of the highest-cost states in the country, she understands what affordability means. And this year, one of her

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head servers saved over \$3,000 thanks to the No Tax on Tips provision. Three thousand dollars. That's real relief for a working Alaskan. And it's helping Norann retain valued employees and provide meaningful financial stability for her staff. That's what a pro-worker policy looks like.

But we didn't stop there.

We made the 199A Small Business Deduction permanent, preserving a provision projected to generate \$750 billion in economic growth and create more than one million new Main Street jobs.

We expanded and strengthened Opportunity Zones, unlocking more than \$100 billion in new investment and supporting over one million jobs in rural and distressed communities — including here in Alaska.

We made the paid leave tax credit permanent, supporting working families and expanding childcare access.

We passed a No Tax on Social Security provision, delivering \$63 billion in tax relief to America's seniors. This is, by far, the largest tax cut for American seniors in US history.

And we supported the return of Made in America manufacturing, allowing 100 percent, first year bonus depreciation on outlays for new factories, factory improvements, equipment, and research and development.

That means investment. That means jobs. That means supply chains that are built here — not overseas. That is what delivering for working families looks like.

Fisheries: getting back to abundance

Now let me turn to an issue that defines Alaska not just economically, but culturally: our fisheries.

You know the crisis at the state level. You see it in communities that are hurting. You see it in families who are wondering if the way of life they were raised living, can survive.

Here's what I'm doing at the federal level: I'm pushing for accountability, data, and real tools that get us back to abundance. That's why I'm working with our delegation on Bycatch Reduction. The legislation we have introduced would:

- Prioritize technology that supports research, bycatch reduction, and protection of marine seafloor habitat.
- Advance electronic monitoring and reporting.
- Provide assistance for deploying gear and technology that reduces bycatch and habitat contact from trawl fishing gear.
- And it would support ongoing marine environmental data collection, especially in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska.

We must get back to abundance.

We must combat destructive practices.

We must restore balance and accountability in fisheries management.

And let me say something plainly: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council was created to serve all user groups in Alaska's fishing sector. When any one sector dominates the conversation, the system stops reflecting the people it is meant to represent. Balance at the Council helps fulfill its fiduciary responsibility, restores trust, and delivers better outcomes for our fisheries. My commitment is to Alaska's fisheries and the people who depend on them. And that requires continued, strategic legislative work in Congress.

Connecting and protecting Alaska: infrastructure, aviation, space, and defense

If Alaska is going to deliver, we have to be connected - and we have to be safe. That means ports and roads and broadband. It means aviation safety. It means military readiness and Coast Guard presence. It means being a leader in space and in the Arctic.

Last year, Congress secured major investments to modernize our national air traffic control system - \$12.5 billion to replace aging infrastructure at the FAA, update radar and telecommunications, modernize facilities and towers, and address the controller shortage. This matters in Alaska more than anywhere else. Alaska's aviation accident rate is more than twice the national average. And this legislation includes Alaska-specific safety provisions:

- \$80 million to install at least 50 AWOS sites, 60 VWOS sites, 64 weather camera sites, and weather stations.
- \$40 million for the FAA Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative, beyond the weather systems funding.

This is the kind of practical investment that saves lives. Here in Alaska, we are at the center of America's national security strategy. And after years of deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, and strategic drift in the Arctic, we are finally seeing investments that match Alaska's importance.

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Last year, Congress secured a \$25 billion down payment on the “Golden Dome for America” initiative—a layered missile defense system that positions Alaska as the central pillar of homeland defense. That investment includes nearly \$2 billion for improved missile defense radars, strengthening capabilities at sites like Clear Space Force Station and COBRA DANE on Shemya Island. It includes \$800 million for next-generation interceptors headed to Fort Greely, reinforcing the shield that protects not just Alaska - but the entire United States.

We also secured \$12 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, expanding military exercises and operational readiness across the Indo-Pacific, with Alaska Command playing a critical role. An additional \$9 billion supports air superiority missions that directly benefit Eielson Air Force Base and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. And \$9 billion more improves quality of life for our service members and their families—housing, childcare, and healthcare. Because readiness doesn’t just depend on equipment. It depends on service members and their families.

Shipbuilding saw a \$29 billion investment—strengthening the industrial base that keeps our Navy strong and ensures our Arctic capability keeps pace with growing global competition.

And \$115 million was directed toward exploring and developing existing Arctic infrastructure, including places like the shuttered Adak Naval Air Facility. And for Alaska, nowhere does presence matter more than with the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is woven into the very fabric of Alaska. Our brave men and women of the United States Coast Guard perform search and rescue in some of the most harsh conditions on earth, while projecting American sovereignty in a region where other nations are rapidly expanding their footprint.

That is why these investments are historic. We are seeing the construction of new heavy and medium icebreakers - vessels that will finally give America year-round capability in polar waters. We are adding new cutters—Offshore Patrol Cutters, Fast Response Cutters, and other vessels that will strengthen maritime security and fisheries enforcement across the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. New helicopters and C-130J aircraft are coming online, along with upgraded maritime surveillance equipment—many of these assets destined for Alaska.

We secured \$300 million to support the homeporting of the icebreaker Storis in Juneau, anchoring Arctic operations firmly in our state. And more than \$4 billion is being invested nationwide to repair docks, hangars, and shore

facilities - helping address long-standing infrastructure backlogs in communities like Sitka, Seward, Kodiak, and St. Paul.

America has talked about the Arctic for a long time. Now we are investing in it. And these investments send a clear message: Alaska is the frontline to Arctic defense and our national security strategy. In an era of renewed great power competition, with increased activity from Russia and China in the Arctic, the United States is finally recognizing Alaska for the strategic advantage that we provide.

Securing the Southern Border: America and Alaska Are Safer

Now, I want to address something fundamental to both national and state security. America and Alaska are safer with a strong, secure southern border. For years, we watched chaos unfold at our southern border. Illegal crossings surged. Cartels expanded their influence. Deadly narcotics flowed into American communities. The instability and flow of drugs that originated from a porous southern border reached nearly every state in this country — including ours.

But over the last year, we have seen a seismic turnaround. Under President Trump’s renewed commitment to securing our borders, illegal border crossings have plummeted to their lowest levels since the 1970s. For the first time in over fifty years, the United States experienced negative net migration among illegal aliens — reversing decades of unchecked influx and restoring control over our sovereignty. Nearly three million illegal aliens have left the country.

More than 675,000 deportations have occurred — including over 400,000 individuals charged with or convicted of crimes. An estimated 2.2 million self-deportations followed the restoration of enforcement and deterrence policies. And for 9 straight months, NO illegal aliens were released into the interior of the United States.

That matters for Alaska. Because border security is not just about immigration. It’s about narcotics. It’s about cartels. It’s about fentanyl. In 2025 alone, fentanyl trafficking at the southern border was cut by 56 percent compared to the previous year. We passed the HALT Fentanyl Act, a bill I proudly co-sponsored, permanently classifying fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs. More than 10,000 individuals with narcoterrorist ties were blocked from entering the United States at our ports of entry.

Under this Administration, enforcement became real again. When you enforce the law, chaos recedes. And when you weaken cartels, American communities

are safer. But let's be clear: fentanyl is still killing Americans. It is still reaching Alaska. It is still devastating families. And while border enforcement is critical to stopping supply, we must also confront the demand side — the health and addiction crisis that continues to affect communities across our state.

Health Care

For many Alaskans, healthcare is physically unavailable. Travel times can take hours or even days before a provider can be reached. Workforce shortages are chronic. And facilities are often under-resourced. That's why we secured \$50 billion for rural health care - the single largest investment in rural health care in American history. And Alaska is one of the top recipients nationwide.

That reflects our large rural population, our geographic challenges, and our long-standing health care access needs. Under this program, Alaska will be eligible to receive well over \$1 billion dollars over the next 5 years to support targeted, systemwide investments that improve access to care and strengthen the long-term stability of our health care system. This fund helps us expand access here in Alaska, and it is an investment I believe everyone in this room supports. It is real money and provides real structural support. It allows Alaska to:

- Expand telemedicine and mobile clinic models
- Stabilize rural hospitals and long-term access points
- Recruit and retain providers with multi-year commitments suited for remote communities
- Invest in digital infrastructure that expands specialty access.

This program is designed to drive long-term rural health stability backed by significant federal funding. But I also want to say something clearly. We don't just have a healthcare access problem in America. We have a healthcare cost problem. One clear and obvious example is the cost of prescription drugs. Right now, the United States healthcare consumer is paying the highest global rates for common prescription drugs. Meanwhile other developed nations enjoy the benefits of American innovation at a discount. Drugs developed by American pharmaceutical companies should not cost more for American families than for foreign consumers. It's not right, and in fact it is obviously and fundamentally unfair. If we want to address the cost of health care, we have to address the fundamental structural problems in the system.

Protecting the Permanent Fund Dividend

Before I close, I want to share one more development from Washington that matters to every Alaskan family. Last week, I introduced legislation in

Congress to make the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend federally tax-free. For decades, the Permanent Fund Dividend has represented something unique in American governance. It reflects the promise made at statehood — that Alaska’s resource wealth would be shared with the people who live here. But today, the federal government taxes that dividend. That means a portion of Alaska’s resource revenue — revenue intended for Alaskans — is being sent to Washington instead. My bill, H.R. 7760, aims to remedy that. The legislation amends the Internal Revenue Code to exclude payments to citizens from certain state sovereign wealth funds — including Alaska’s Permanent Fund — from federal taxable income.

In plain terms, it means this: Alaskans would keep the full value of their Permanent Fund Dividend without paying federal income tax on it. That means more money in the pockets of Alaska families. It means stronger household finances in rural communities where the dividend is often a critical part of annual income. And it recognizes Alaska’s unique model of sharing resource wealth directly with its residents. The Permanent Fund is a symbol of the statehood compact. And Alaskans should receive those benefits without Washington taking another cut. This is another step toward ensuring that Alaska’s resource wealth truly benefits Alaska’s people.

Closing: the barriers are down—now Alaska must deliver

And that brings me to my final message this morning. In just over a year, we have moved real legislation. We have reopened access. We have accelerated permitting. We have secured historic Arctic and defense investments. We have opened new doors for rural health. The federal barriers are coming down. The permits are moving. The investment is flowing. But this window of opportunity for Alaska will not remain open forever. I am doing my job at the federal level.

But this requires partnership from you. The pace of the last year was fast - because we made it fast. Now I’m calling on this Legislature to continue the fight and do the job Alaskans deserve and expect.

First: Fisheries accountability. Alaska’s 6 appointed seats on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council are nominated by the Governor with no state-level statutory criteria for who fills which seat. This Council manages 900,000 square miles of federal waters and makes decisions worth billions of dollars. There is nothing in state law ensuring those seats represent the full range of Alaska’s fishing interests. Magnuson-Stevens Reform is one vector that my team and I are exploring, but state legislation: establishing qualifications and sector-representation criteria for each Alaska seat can be done much more quickly.

Second: Workforce development. Energy, mining, timber, fisheries, LNG construction, military support, health care—all of it requires trained Alaskans. When LNG construction begins, we will need welders, pipefitters, heavy equipment operators, marine engineers—all ready to go. That means investment in vocational and technical education, partnerships with the University of Alaska and AVTEC, and industry-aligned programs. The development path only works if Alaskans are ready to do the work.

Third: Alaska LNG enabling legislation. The federal path is clear. But the state side matters. The state's own consultants have said it plainly: enabling legislation is essential. Investors need fiscal stability: clarity on property tax treatment, a stable production tax and royalty structure, and a state permitting process that matches federal speed. Scrutinize it. Model it. Demand independent analysis. But don't let process become delay. Every month of delay is a month that a competing project locks up a buyer that could have been ours. And remember what Alaska LNG does for in-state development: when energy costs drop, everything else becomes possible.

Closing

My closing message to you is this: Alaska is unshackled. The obstacles are coming down. The permits are being approved. And we are ready to deliver. I'm ready. My team is ready. Washington is moving. But opportunity is not self-executing. Seizing this opportunity requires state partners ready to match our speed. It requires workforce preparation. It requires fiscal discipline and strategic clarity.

I am committed to doing my part as Alaska's only representative in the House, being your partner and your ally in Washington. I ask you to make that commitment here in Juneau and deliver. The next generation of Alaskans deserves the opportunities we've had.

Thank you for the honor of addressing you today. God bless you, May God bless Alaska, and May God Bless the United States of America.

Please report corrections to the Chief Clerk's office.