

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 24, 2025

1:06 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ashley Carrick, Co-Chair
Representative Genevieve Mina
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Kevin McCabe

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Ted Eischeid, Co-Chair
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Elexie Moore

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

Supporting the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension; supporting the increase in defensive capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska; encouraging a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to a community-minded approach to future rail expansion; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.

- MOVED CSHJR 14(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 186

"An Act relating to the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects; and relating to a report on the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 14

SHORT TITLE: PORT MACKENZIE & NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MCCABE

03/21/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/25	(H)	TRA
04/10/25	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/10/25	(H)	Heard & Held

04/10/25 (H) MINUTE (TRA)
04/22/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/22/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/22/25 (H) MINUTE (TRA)
04/24/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 186

SHORT TITLE: APPRENTICE LABOR IN PUBLIC PROJECTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CARRICK

04/11/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/11/25 (H) TRA, L&C
04/24/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

GRIFFEN SUKKAEW, Staff
Representative Ashley Carrick
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Carrick, prime sponsor, presented HB 186 via a PowerPoint presentation and answered questions on the proposed legislation.

ANDY MILLS, Legislative Liaison, Special Assistant to the
Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on HB 186.

JAMES WOODS, Chief Contracts Officer
Contracting and Appeals
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on HB 186.

CHRIS DIMOND, Lead Representative of Alaska
Western States Regional Council of Carpenters
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on HB 186.

JEREMY APPLGATE, Program Manager
Wage and Hour
Division of Labor Standards and Safety
Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on HB 186.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:06:18 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ASHLEY CARRICK called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. Representatives McCabe, Mina, Stutes, and Carrick were present at the call to order.

HJR 14-PORT MACKENZIE & NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSIONS

[1:06:44 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CARRICK announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14, Supporting the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension; supporting the increase in defensive capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska; encouraging a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to a community-minded approach to future rail expansion; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HJR 14, labeled 34-LS0776\N.1, Walsh, 4/21/25, which read as follows:

Page 2, following line 4:

Insert new material to read:

"**WHEREAS** a railroad would provide an efficient and safer alternative to industrial hauling operations on public highways that are not designated as industrial use highways; and"

CO-CHAIR CARRICK objected for the purpose of discussion.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK stated that Amendment 1 would add a clause to point out the additional benefit of offsetting the impacts of industrial hauling. She explained that the rail extensions would provide an efficient alternative to highway use.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES questioned the sponsor's opinion of the amendment.

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REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE expressed agreement with the amendment; however, he clarified that if it were not a resolution, the term "industrial" would need to be defined in terms of hauling operations. He expressed the understanding that, in general, the amendment would address the need to relieve traffic on highways.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK withdrew her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 to HJR 14 was adopted.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES moved to report CSHJR 14, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHJR 14(TRA) was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

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The committee took an at-ease from 1:09 p.m. to 1:12 p.m.

HB 186-APPRENTICE LABOR IN PUBLIC PROJECTS

[1:12:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CARRICK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 186, "An Act relating to the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects; and relating to a report on the use of apprentice labor in public construction projects."

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK provided a brief overview of HB 186, which would ensure, when practicable, that state-funded construction projects valued at \$2.5 million, or more, would have at least 15 percent of the labor performed by registered apprentices. She continued that apprenticeship utilization is important in keeping young Alaskans in the trades in Alaska. She maintained that there is historical precedence for this policy in the

state, and the proposed legislation would return to this provision.

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GRIFFEN SUKKAEW, Staff, Representative Ashley Carrick, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Carrick, prime sponsor, presented a PowerPoint on HB 186. He began on slide 2 and addressed why apprenticeships matter. This includes the following: opportunities to learn skills while earning a livable wage, long-term employment opportunities, encouragement for Alaskans to stay in the state, alternatives to college, and local workforce development. He stated that it was reported that 92 percent of those who complete apprenticeships in the state are still employed nine months later, with the average earnings of \$80,000 annually.

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 3, which showed a timeline of administrative orders (AOs) relevant to language in the proposed bill. In 2005, Administrative Order 226 had been created to ensure a workforce for construction projects. In 2015, AO 226 had been replaced with AO 278, which included more job titles. In 2019, AO 309 merely rescinded AO 278.

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 4 and addressed the proposed legislation, which would direct that when a construction contract advertised by the Department of Administration (DOA) and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is worth \$2.5 million or more, not less than 15 percent of the labor hours must be performed by apprentices. The slide listed 23 apprenticeships included in the proposed bill, as follows: boilermakers, bricklayers, carpenters, cement masons, culinary workers, electricians, equipment operators, elevator constructors and mechanics, insulation workers, ironworkers, laborers, mechanics, millwrights, painters, piledriving occupations, plumbers and pipefitters, roofers, sheet metal workers, surveyors, sprinkler fitters, truck drivers, tugboat workers, and welders.

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MR. SUKKAEW, on slide 4 through slide 6, paraphrased the sectional analysis for HB 186, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Subsection B: The commissioner of the Department of Transportation or the commissioner of the Department

of Administration shall provide to the commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development the following information for each construction project:

1. Name of the project
2. Dollar value of the project
3. The name of the prime contractor and contact information for the prime contractor
4. The name of each subcontractor and contact information as provided to the department and prime contractor
5. The percentage of labor hours that will be performed by apprentices
6. The occupation title of each apprentice used

Subsection C: the Commissioner of labor and workforce development shall collect data on the total apprentice hours worked on each construction project that is provided to the commissioner under subsection B.

Subsection D: this section does not apply to a construction project if applying the requirements of this section to the project would cause the state to lose federal funding.

Subsection E: contains three definitions

1. Apprentice means an apprentice enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program under 29 U.S.C. 50
2. "construction" means the process of building, altering, repairing, maintaining, improving, or demolishing a public highway, structure, building, or other public improvement for any kind of real property other than privately owned real property leased for the use of agencies; "construction" does not include professional and other services related to the planning and design required for a construction project, the routine operation of a public improvement to real property, or the construction of public housing
3. "labor hours" means the total hours of work performed by construction workers on a project in job classes subject to minimum wage rates under AS 36.05.070.

Section 2: Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section requiring a report to the legislature. The commissioner of labor and workforce development shall, with the assistance of

the commissioner of administration and the commissioner of transportation and public facilities, submit a report to the legislature identifying the percentage of apprentice labor hours in the occupations listed in AS 36.05.125 that were used in each construction contract subject to AS 36.05.125 for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2026, June 30, 2027, June 30, 2028, June 30, 2029, and June 30, 2030. The commissioner of labor and workforce development shall deliver the report to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives on or before September 1, 2030, and shall notify the legislature that the report is available.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES questioned, if the needed percentage of apprentices were unavailable, whether the project would stop.

MR. SUKKAEW responded that the language in the proposed legislation provides for the "extent practicable"; therefore, projects could continue without the required percentage of apprentices.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed the understanding that most construction companies already use apprentices when available; however, per the proposed legislation, if apprentices were unavailable, companies would not be penalized.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA questioned the enforcement of the proposed legislation.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK responded that there would be no repercussions if the percentage was not met, as HB 186 does not have "teeth." She stated that the purpose of the proposed legislation would be twofold: increase the number of apprentices involved in construction work and, through reporting to the legislature, give a better idea to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) which fields need more investment. She reiterated that the proposed legislation does not have an enforcement mechanism. In response to a follow-up question concerning the percentage of apprentices in the advertisements, she deferred to her staff.

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MR. SUKKAEW clarified the question and deferred the question to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF).

[1:26:04 PM](#)

ANDY MILLS, Legislative Liaison, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, answered that when DOT&PF puts out a request for proposals and an invitation to bid, the contracts already have language involving the percentage of apprentices to journeymen. He stated that the proposed legislation would add a threshold in the language. Per the threshold, the department would update its boilerplate contractual language; however, he expressed the opinion that contractors and union halls would have the responsibility to meet the obligation.

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REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE gave a hypothetical on two companies bidding on the same project, with one of the companies being able to supply a higher percentage of apprentices. He questioned whether this would make a difference who receives the contract.

MR. MILLS deferred the question to James Woods.

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JAMES WOODS, Chief Contracts Officer, Contracting and Appeals, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, expressed uncertainty that language in the proposed legislation would address the question. He stated that currently, the contract would go to the lowest bidder. He stated that the question would require further research.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed agreement that the question has not been addressed by the proposed legislation.

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REPRESENTATIVE MINA directed attention to AO 309 in 2019, stating that it had revoked apprenticeship standards in the state. She questioned whether this has impacted apprenticeship numbers in the state.

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CHRIS DIMOND, Lead Representative of Alaska, Western States Regional Council of Carpenters, expressed the opinion that when the benchmarks and guidelines were removed [in 2019], contractors no longer had to focus on building the workforce infrastructure in the state. He suggested that DOT&PF might have data from this change; however, without the data, he could not answer the question.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed the understanding that if the standards were revoked, DOT&PF would not have these numbers. She questioned whether the department was tracking any changes.

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MR. MILLS deferred to DLWD. He stated that he could also request the information from DOT&PF; however, he expressed the understanding that this data would be under DLWD.

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JEREMY APPELEGATE, Program Manager, Wage and Hour, Division of Labor Standards and Safety, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, responded that the department does not have this information.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK commented that this information would be researched and provided to the committee.

MR. APPELEGATE suggested that Research and Analysis under DLWD may have the information.

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REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE questioned whether the language in the proposed legislation would add more pressure on remote villages that currently cannot find contractors to do work there.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK opined that using the term "practicable" in the proposed bill would prevent this restriction. She acknowledged that certain areas have struggles with certain projects, and she maintained that the proposed legislation does not have a "forcing mechanism." She continued that this is where the distinction lies, and she does not foresee a reduction of construction contracts in the state. She deferred to Mr. Dimond.

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MR. DIMOND advised the committee that the proposed bill would be taking measures to rebuild the state's workforce; furthermore, it is not meant to be punitive and a detriment to contractors. He expressed the opinion that the language "extent practicable" should not be a hindrance to contractors that cannot fill the apprenticeships in villages and other areas.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE, with a follow up, questioned whether apprentices could gain hours to become journeymen while working in nonunion companies or jobs.

MR. DIMOND responded in the affirmative, as there are many apprenticeship programs in the state, union and nonunion, and this should not be an issue.

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CO-CHAIR CARRICK announced that HB 186 was held over.

[1:38:15 PM](#)

[The following off-topic discussion has been retained in the record, per the request from Co-Chair Carrick. It began at 1:36:26 p.m. and resumed at 1:38:15 p.m.]

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES questioned, "What's the name of that little doggie there in the picture?"

CO-CHAIR CARRICK responded that it is her dog, Zephyr, who is "somewhat of a low flying aircraft."

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked whether "Zephyr would be a beagle dog."

CO-CHAIR CARRICK stated Zephyr is a beagle, but he is not an "apprentice."

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES said, "He looks like a senior."

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.