

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 29, 2025

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ashley Carrick, Co-Chair
Representative Ted Eischeid, Co-Chair
Representative Genevieve Mina
Representative Kevin McCabe
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Elexie Moore

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Cathy Tilton

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 12 (TRA)
Urging the United States Congress and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to address outages of National Data Buoy Center stations.

- MOVED CSSJR 12 (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

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SJR 12

SHORT TITLE: NOAA BUOY OUTAGES

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DUNBAR

02/26/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/26/25	(S)	TRA
03/20/25	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/20/25	(S)	Heard & Held
03/20/25	(S)	MINUTE (TRA)
03/25/25	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/25/25	(S)	Moved CSSJR 12 (TRA) Out of Committee

03/25/25 (S) MINUTE (TRA)
 03/26/25 (S) TRA RPT CS 3DP SAME TITLE
 03/26/25 (S) DP: BJORKMAN, KIEHL, TOBIN
 04/04/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 04/04/25 (S) VERSION: CSSJR 12 (TRA)
 04/07/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/07/25 (H) TRA
 04/15/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/15/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/22/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/22/25 (H) Heard & Held
 04/22/25 (H) MINUTE (TRA)
 04/29/25 (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
 04/24/25 (H) Heard & Held
 04/24/25 (H) MINUTE (TRA)
 04/29/25 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, gave an overview of CSSJR 12 (TRA).

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

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Carrick, prime sponsor, answered questions on HB 186.

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.

ALICIA AMBERG, Executive Director
Associated General Contractors of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided public testimony in opposition to
HB 186.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:01:52 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TED EISCHEID called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Representatives Stutes, Mina, Carrick, and Eischeid were present at the call to order. Representatives Moore and McCabe arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SJR 12-NOAA BUOY OUTAGES

[1:02:53 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the first order of business would be CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 12(TRA), Urging the United States Congress and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to address outages of National Data Buoy Center stations.

[1:03:21 PM](#)

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, gave a review of the proposed committee substitute (CS) for SJR 12(TRA). He stated that it would request the federal government to maintain the weather buoys, as pieces of critical infrastructure in the state. He stated that the proposed resolution specifically addresses the Seal Rocks Buoy at the Hinchinbrook Entrance, as this is critical for the oil industry.

[1:04:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID opened public testimony on SJR 12. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:05:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE stated that he would like to propose an amendment; however, he expressed the understanding that the deadline has passed.

[1:06:12 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:06 p.m. to 1:08 p.m.

[1:08:36 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CARRICK moved to report CSSJR 12(TRA) out of committee, with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSSJR 12(TRA) was reported out of the House Transportation Standing Committee.

[1:09:02 PM](#)

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

HB 186-APPRENTICE LABOR IN PUBLIC PROJECTS

[1:12:43 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID 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."

[1:13:03 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CARRICK, as prime sponsor, provided a brief recap of HB 186. She stated that the proposed legislation would ensure, when practicable, construction contracts valued at \$2.5 million or more, administered by the Department of Administration (DOA) and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), must attempt to have at least 15 percent of the labor performed by registered apprentices. She stated that the purpose of the proposed legislation is twofold: increase the number of apprentices used in the state and allow for data gathering on these apprenticeships. She suggested that this would promote apprentices to work and stay in the state for the long term.

[1:13:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE questioned how HB 186 would work with collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).

CO-CHAIR CARRICK deferred the question to her staff. She stated that there are union and nonunion apprenticeships available in

the state, and the proposed legislation would provide an incentive for both.

[1:15:13 PM](#)

GRIFFEN SUKKAEW, Staff, Representative Ashley Carrick, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Carrick, responded that building trades do not specifically participate with the state for collective bargaining purposes.

[1:15:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE, in follow up, commented that the letters of support for the proposed bill are from the building trades; however, there are no supporting documents from contractors or engineers. He asked whether the bill would be an additional 15 percent to what is already required in CBAs for apprenticeship labor.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed the understanding that a baseline requirement would be set, but it would not be on top of what is currently required by CBAs. She added that the proposed legislation would be setting a "ground floor" percentage for trades that do not already have this. She noted that there is a letter of support from operating engineers, and there will be forthcoming letters of support from contractors. She acknowledged that some private contractors have mixed support for the proposed legislation. She emphasized that the proposed bill would be to the "extent practicable". In response to a follow-up question concerning ineffective apprenticeship programs, she stated that the proposed legislation would address the hiring of apprentices, but if they are not capable of doing the job, individuals should be treated as in any other job and let go. She acknowledged that there are gaps in workforce training in the state, and she suggested that this should be addressed; however, the proposed legislation would not do this.

[1:19:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE commented that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough has a similar policy with apprenticeship requirements; however, it is not effective. She questioned how the proposed statewide process would be different.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK replied that HB 186 would set a percentage "floor across the state," and it would not add on top of any existing requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE, in follow-up, questioned where the amount of \$2.5 million for the threshold came from.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK replied that the threshold had been established in Administrative Order (AO) 278 [in 2015]; however, this AO was rescinded. She explained that the proposed legislation would be reinstating AO 278.

[1:21:43 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID expressed the understanding that the 15 percent requirement for apprenticeships would just be a target.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK expressed agreement. In response to a follow-up question on the results of AO 278, she deferred to her staff.

[1:22:29 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW responded that during the previous meeting there had been a similar question concerning any results of the rescension of AO 278. After the meeting, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) reported that no such data on the outcome exists, as the information was not trackable. He indicated that a reporting requirement was added to the proposed legislation.

[1:23:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE questioned the number of state contracts with DOT&PF that are less than \$2.5 million.

[1:24:15 PM](#)

ANDY MILLS, Legislative Liaison, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, replied that after doing the analysis on the proposed legislation, it was found that almost all DOT&PF projects in the state would be over the \$2.5 million threshold.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE, in follow up, expressed the opinion that \$2.5 million is a "dated" figure. He questioned what [the middle-ground cost] would be for department projects, where 50 percent of project cost would be higher than this amount and 50 percent would be lower.

MR. MILLS expressed the understanding that roughly \$10 million to \$20 million would be [the middle-ground cost]. He noted that the Associated General Contractors of Alaska (AGC) has concern that the number of apprentices on job sites could increase the required oversight positions needed for safety. In turn, this would affect the finite dollars available for jobs, resulting in fewer projects. He stated that the department does not have insight on the impact, but AGC has articulated this concern. He suggested that the threshold could alleviate some of its concerns.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE, in clarification, reiterated that if there are too many apprentices because of the size of the project, more supervisors would be needed, and this would negate any savings from hiring the apprentices, as opposed to hiring journeymen.

MR. MILLS expressed the understanding that within current contractual agreements, there is a requirement for a certain ratio of journeymen to apprentices; therefore, as the number of apprentices go up, additional oversight would be needed. He affirmed that the bill could have such an effect. He reasoned that having more apprentices would create a larger workforce in the future. He continued that after DOT&PF's analysis of HB 186, the enforcement mechanism remained in question. He opined that this would happen "downstream" from the contract process.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE commented that he spoke with a contractor representative this week, and he expressed the understanding that currently there are not many apprentices available. He suggested that the issue may not be the underutilization of apprentices, but the need to attract people to the trades.

[1:29:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE commented on issues in the department with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and questioned whether the proposed bill would "affect the overall morale" in the department. She suggested that HB 186 "may be a little bit of an overreach, adding more and more onto this plate." She questioned his perspective on this.

MR. MILLS, [not commenting on the department], expressed the understanding that there would be an opportunity for AGC members to give testimony. Anecdotally, he expressed the understanding that additional requirements perceived or not, might influence a contractor's decision whether to bid.

[1:30:45 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CARRICK acknowledged that there is not an enforcement mechanism in the proposed bill; however, the data gathering mechanism on apprenticeship labor would help the state understand the labor market. She suggested that using the data could allow for an enforcement mechanism at a later time. Per the proposed legislation, she opined that statute language would guide the industries' decisions, and contractors would strive to meet the goals.

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID questioned whether there is a current target percentage number for apprentices on job sites.

CO-CHAIR CARRICK replied that some CBAs, municipalities, and private contractors set goals, but these would not be uniform across the state. She added that the proposed legislation would set a floor for the number of apprenticeships.

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID expressed appreciation for numerical targets.

[1:33:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE questioned whether the department would have apprenticeship targets with the labor unions it deals with.

MR. MILLS expressed uncertainty concerning these targets. He stated that he would follow up to the committee with this information.

[1:34:04 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID opened public testimony on HB 186.

[1:34:56 PM](#)

ALICIA AMBEG, Executive Director, Associated General Contractors of Alaska, on behalf of AGC, testified in opposition to HB 186. She stated that, while AGC strongly supports apprenticeship programs as a means to develop skilled construction workers, it does not believe this mandate would strengthen or solidify Alaska's construction workforce. She stated that for decades contractors and unions have collaborated to train apprentices to meet the market demands. She stated that the utilization of apprentices is driven by business needs, safety considerations, and workforce development goals. She expressed the opinion that

contractors are already "greatly" incentivized to use apprentices, when safe and practicable, as it reduces cost and supports future labor needs. She discussed the efforts contractors and others have made to grow apprenticeship programs.

MS. AMBEG argued that by broadly mandating apprentice utilization, some variables would be disregarded, such as the type and scope of projects, subcontractors, and locations. It could also increase cost, delay schedules, and create safety challenges, especially in remote locations. She maintained that the proposed bill would undermine the collective bargaining process, and with "its one-size-fits-all approach," it could force the use of less experienced workers. She concluded that, given the already complex landscape of labor and construction requirements in Alaska, it is unclear why the state would pursue an "aspirational mandate" without clear evidence of need.

[1:37:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA questioned the percentage of labor hours for apprentices in AGC contracts.

MS. AMBERG expressed uncertainty on the exact number. She stated that many of the contracts with DOT&PF have requirements; however, she pointed out that many subcontractors have less traditional pathways for training its workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE MINA, in follow up, noted the use of the bill's language "when practicable" in AGC's letter of opposition. She asked what would prohibit AGC in the proposed bill from bidding on state contracts.

MS. AMBERG responded with the concern that AGC is already adhering to the policy of using apprentices, when practicable, on job sites. She stated that other states with these mandates have related that contractors are limited when making the decisions for projects, noting that employee safety is an issue. In response to a follow-up question concerning what would limit AGC's flexibility, she stated that the concern is whether the proposed legislation is a necessity, as it would be adding a requirement to an already complex process, and contracts already address the requirement. She expressed concerns about the possibility of changes to HB 186.

[1:40:35 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR EISCHEID closed public testimony.

[HB 186 was held over.]

[1:41:32 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.