



2024 Alaska Chamber Priorities and Positions

State Priorities

Support a comprehensive approach to create a sustainable state budget that includes a meaningful state spending cap

The Alaska Chamber recognizes that to attract and sustain investment in Alaska, the State must create a stable state budget over the long term. The Alaska Chamber supports a comprehensive approach to include measured fiscal reforms and utilization of Permanent Fund earnings tied to a rules-based framework. This budgetary planning should:

- First, and foremost, include a meaningful state spending cap
- NOT Exceed the 5% POMV draw
- NOT diminish state services to a point where Alaskans lack access to core government services
- NOT require new taxes.

These actions will support a responsible, balanced, and sustainable state budget.

Federal Priorities

Advocate for a federal regulatory structure that is balanced, predictable and stable.

The Alaska Chamber anticipates that there will be significant federal administrative and legislative actions that will impact Alaska's businesses and overall investment climate. The Chamber stands ready to engage on multiple fronts in support of our existing federal positions. The ability of Alaska to responsibly develop its wealth of natural resources and support a diverse private economy is paramount. Advocating for a stable and predictable federal regulatory and fiscal environment is a priority of the Alaska Chamber.

Support oil and gas exploration and development in Alaska's federal areas

The Alaska Chamber strongly supports oil and gas exploration and production in Alaska's federal areas; including the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, NPRA, Cook Inlet, and the 10-02 area of ANWR. The Chamber encourages Congress to enact revenue sharing for Alaska and local communities. The Chamber also encourages the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Alaska Legislature and Governor to support and strongly advocate for responsible development of these valuable resources, while the Chamber commits to actively support and participate in the education and advocacy efforts to open these areas.

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(S) 1. Oppose new targeted taxes

Oppose new industry-specific targeted taxes, including increases on existing targeted taxes, unless self-imposed by the industry. Increases in industry-specific taxes should not fund general services.

(S) 2. Reserve the authority to levy metal mining severance taxes to the legislature.

Only the legislature should have the authority to consider severance taxes for metal mines. The potential for municipalities to impose a targeted severance tax creates significant fiscal uncertainty for the metal mining industry and can threaten both the longevity of existing operations and the economic feasibility of projects. Benefits from metal mining should accrue to the entire state and should not be compromised by municipal or borough taxation. This does not impact the local authority to levy normal broad-based taxes such as property tax.

(S) 3. Support a reasonable cruise ship passenger fee level and use of those fees consistent with state and federal law

The Alaska Chamber supports reasonable cruise ship passenger fee levels and use of passenger fees which are consistent with state and federal law, the Commerce Clause and Tonnage Clause of the U.S. Constitution, and the comprehensive decision of the federal court in the case of *Cruise Lines International Association vs. The City and Borough of Juneau*, published at 356 F.Supp 3d 831 (D. Alaska 2018).

(S) 4. Support and encourage a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for statewide oil and gas activities; oppose efforts to increase oil and gas taxes

Support and encourage a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for statewide oil and gas activities; oppose efforts to increase oil and gas taxes. The Alaska Chamber opposes any proposal that would add to the cost of doing business in Alaska's oil and gas industry. Constantly changing fiscal policies on the state's largest economic driver stymies development, decreases opportunities for new production, and negatively impacts the state's economy. Any proposal brought forward should provide for a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for Alaska's oil and gas industry. Support and encourage a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for statewide oil and gas activities; oppose efforts to increase oil and gas taxes. The Alaska Chamber opposes any proposal that would add to the cost of doing business in Alaska's oil and gas industry. Constantly changing fiscal policies on the state's largest economic driver stymies development, decreases opportunities for new production, and negatively impacts the state's economy. Any proposal brought forward should provide for a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for Alaska's oil and gas industry. Support and encourage a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for statewide oil and gas activities; oppose efforts to increase oil and gas taxes. The Alaska Chamber opposes any proposal that would add to the cost of doing business in

Alaska's oil and gas industry. Constantly changing fiscal policies on the state's largest economic driver stymies development, decreases opportunities for new production, and negatively impacts the state's economy. Any proposal brought forward should provide for a positive investment climate that provides certainty.

(S) 5. Support royalty oil sales

The Alaska Chamber supports state administrative and legislative approval of royalty oil contracts that use the same net back value as if the oil was sold out of state.

(B) 6. Support smart government investment in statewide destination marketing

Support smart and reasonable investment by the State of Alaska in statewide destination marketing managed by the Alaska Travel Industry Association.

(S) 7. Support Clarifying Vocational Training Absences for purposes of receiving PFD benefits

The Alaska Chamber supports clarifying changes to the Permanent Fund Dividend statute in order to assure Alaskans attending training Outside at U.S. DOL federally registered apprentice programs remain eligible to obtain their PFD dividend provided they have met all other PFD eligibility criteria.

(S) 8. Support decreases of barriers to entry for childcare, to increase availability of and access to childcare in Alaska

Predictable childcare enables a stable workforce. When employers can recruit and retain a qualified workforce that is not struggling with childcare issues, business, families, and the economy are strengthened. The Alaska Chamber encourages the Alaska Legislature, governor, and congressional delegation to work with the business community to identify fiscally responsible reforms to the childcare system.

(F) 9. Support the Bypass Mail Program

Alaska Chamber will help preserve Bypass Mail Program by demonstrating the impact the program has on the Alaska economy and the benefits to rural Alaska.

(F) 10. Support the expansion of the military presence in Alaska

The Alaska Chamber encourages the Alaska Legislature, Governor, and congressional delegation to work with the U.S. military to maintain current military investment and force structure in Alaska and to increase military missions, staffing, activity and investment.

(S) 11. Support military spousal licensure

Alaska's Administration and Legislature need to take action relative to Alaska's professional licensing and laws pertaining to the hire of military spouses, thereby, materially improving the state's competitive position regarding the Department of Defense (DoD) basing, mission allocation and force assignment decisions.

(S) 12. Support the University of Alaska

A vibrant university that addresses Alaska's workforce requirements is vital for the education of our citizenry, the development of a highly trained workforce, and the research and development endeavors necessary to address the state's critical challenges. The Alaska Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the governor to provide strong support for the University of Alaska's efforts.

(S) 13. Support Expedited and Efficient University of Alaska Land Conveyance Process

Now that a federal mechanism to remedy UA's land grant deficit is in place, UA must select 500,000 acres of land from the State's remaining general selections, and work with the Department of the Interior and Alaska Department of Natural Resources to receive up to 360,000 acres in conveyance. The Alaska Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor to support an expedited and efficient process of land selection and conveyance to the University of Alaska by December 31, 2027, so the lands can be monetized to support important work, including growing our workforce pipeline with Alaska-trained professionals, incubation of new businesses, and Arctic research.

(S) 14. Support Education Tax Credits (ETC)

The Alaska Chamber supports Education Tax Credits and request to have the ETC sunset extended or repealed.

(S) 15. Support the Alaska Performance Scholarship

The Alaska Chamber supports adjusting Alaska Performance Scholarships to broaden eligibility, account for inflation, and to give notice in the fall semester, instead of the spring.

(S) 16. Support the installation of shore power infrastructure across the State of Alaska to reduce carbon emissions

The maritime industry continues to reduce carbon emissions through the use of shore power, where available. Shore power capabilities in Alaska would benefit both cruise and community sustainability goals, advance decarbonization efforts across shipping sectors and help to future-proof cross-gulf cruise itineraries that feed Anchorage, Southcentral and Fairbanks regions.

(S) 17. Support for reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband in Alaska

Access to reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband is the backbone of community opportunity and development, and the Alaska Chamber supports federal and private investment in sustainable broadband infrastructure. Furthermore, the Chamber supports strategies to bridge the digital divide in rural, suburban, and tribal communities to make it possible for every Alaskan to access the benefits of broadband with improved quality of service and lower costs.

(S) 18. Support Economic and Financial Learning in Alaska Schools

Allow Alaska educators to use economic and financial education training to fulfill continuing education requirements and encourage the State of Alaska and/or school districts to adopt financial education as a graduation requirement for students. The Alaska Council on Economic Education provides educators with basic economics training and access to an online library of lesson plans and resources for all subjects.

(S) 19. Support a reformed, right-sized and sustainable Alaska Marine Highway System as a critical component of the statewide intermodal transportation system and economy of Alaska

Support the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) mission to provide consistent, reliable marine transportation services to Alaska communities for the benefit of the statewide economy. Support initiatives to reform and right-size the operations with executive governance that will control costs similar to the proposal developed by statewide business and community leaders at www.AMHSreform.com.

(S) 20. Support the Port of Alaska for its economic, military and transportation strategic importance for the State of Alaska

The Alaska Chamber supports the Port of Alaska (PoA) efforts to provide modern, safe and reliable Port operations. PoA is an Anchorage-owned facility that handles half of all Alaska inbound freight; some 4.3 million tons of cargo, fuel and dry bulk goods annually. Freight entering the PoA is distributed to some 600,000 Alaskans in 150 communities across the state. The PoA opened in 1961 and supports statewide prosperity, economic development, resiliency and national defense missions in Alaska, the Arctic and the Pacific Rim. PoA has exceeded its economic and structural design life and is failing due to corrosion and obsolescence. Its dock piles have lost up to three-quarters of their original thickness. Structural failure would impact food security and have up to a \$14B negative economic impact to the state. The Alaska Chamber supports initiatives to ensure modernization plans are sound, cost efficient, have stakeholder alignment, and earn government approval.

(S) 21. Support collaboration between the State and electric utilities in the development of policy relating to electric system upgrades and generation diversification that are feasible and economical

The Alaska Chamber supports collaboration between the State and electric utilities in the development of policy relating to electric system upgrades and generation diversification that are feasible and economical.

(B) 22. Support for overturning the application of the Roadless Rule in Alaska

The Alaska Chamber supports efforts to overturn reapplication of the Roadless Rule to the National Forests in Alaska.

(F) 23. Support for converting 2 million acres of the Tongass National Forest to a state forest

The Alaska Chamber supports efforts to convert 2 million acres of the Tongass National Forest to a state forest.

(B) 24. Oppose National Ocean Policy (NOP) implementation in Alaska, particularly Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP)

The Alaska Chamber opposes implementation of the National Ocean Policy (NOP) and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CSMP) regulations on Alaska.

(F) 25. Oppose any further federal land withdrawals in Alaska, other restrictive land-management designations, and preemptive actions by regulatory agencies

The Alaska Chamber encourages the congressional delegation and the State of Alaska to support and advocate for responsible development of these valuable resources. The Chamber strongly opposes the federal government's continued erosion of Alaska's sovereign rights through federal law or administrative regulations. The Chamber will continue to challenge any unwarranted intrusions and defend Alaska's hard-fought guarantees under ANILCA to ensure our continued right to manage our natural resources.

(F) 26. Support increased responsible natural resource development by improving the efficiencies of the permitting process and gaining access to resources

The Alaska Chamber supports a significant increase in responsible natural resource development and encourages the Alaska Legislature and the administration to uphold Alaska's strong regulatory and permitting laws and policies that will facilitate additional exploration, site development, employment, infrastructure, research and natural resource production in Alaska.

(B) 27. Support development of environmental policies and regulations based on sound scientific basis over the precautionary method

The Alaska Chamber supports protecting public health and the environment through reasonable, carefully considered programs that are developed and implemented based on sound scientific arguments; credible, reproducible studies; and economic analyses. The Chamber opposes efforts to implement the “precautionary principle” in developing or implementing environmental programs and regulations. The precautionary principle presumes that many activities pose a risk to health and the environment, even without the presence of any scientific evidence that such risks are, in fact, present or related to a specific activity, and requires that precautionary measures be adopted or implemented to mitigate those assumed risks.

(F) 28. Advocate for a federal regulatory structure that is balanced, predictable and stable

The Alaska Chamber anticipates that there will be significant federal administrative and legislative actions that will impact Alaska’s businesses and overall investment climate. The Chamber stands ready to engage on multiple fronts in support of our existing federal positions. The ability of Alaska to responsibly develop its wealth of natural resources and support a diverse private economy is paramount. Advocating for a stable and predictable federal regulatory and fiscal environment is a priority of the Alaska Chamber.

(S) 29. Support State resource management authority in the bodies created for those purposes by the legislature

The Alaska Chamber should support the position of maintaining state resource management authority with the boards that were expressly created for that purpose by the legislature. In effect, the Chamber should oppose actions in which the legislature pre-empts management responsibility that is expressly provided to a board created by the legislature. In the case of commercial fisheries, the board process includes an extensive public process and is supported by agency expertise and scientific data. Overriding management actions can have long-lasting and unknown precedents on future management issues, beyond fisheries.

(S) 30. Support Alaska joining multistate Nurse Licensure Compact

The Alaska Chamber supports Alaska formally joining the multistate Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). The NLC is an agreement between states that allows nurses to have a single license to practice in any state that is a member of the compact. There are currently 39 states and jurisdictions in the compact.

(S) 31. Support private sector solutions for delivering cost-effective health benefits

The Alaska Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the governor to examine private sector alternatives for resolving issues associated with rising costs of healthcare before growing state government and mandating further expansion of Alaska’s state healthcare coverage.

(B) 32. Support the protection of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA)

The Alaska Chamber supports the protection of ERISA. Without ERISA, multi-state self-insured plans would find it nearly impossible to operate under conflicting state-based rules. Congress crafted ERISA to supersede or preempt any and all state laws as they relate to any employee benefit plan as defined under the law (subject to certain exceptions for insured health plans). ERISA prohibits states from regulating benefit plans as insurance in an effort to circumvent ERISA preemption.

(S) 33. Support comprehensive workers’ compensation reform

The Alaska Chamber supports the enactment of systemic changes to the Alaska workers’ compensation statutes to reduce the cost to employers while emphasizing effective treatment programs that promote injury recovery and the return to full employment of injured workers.

(F) 34. Support oil and gas exploration and development in Alaska’s federal areas, including the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA), Cook Inlet, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)

The Alaska Chamber strongly supports oil and gas exploration and production in Alaska’s federal areas, including the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, NPRA, Cook Inlet, and the 10-02 area of ANWR. The Chamber encourages Congress to enact revenue sharing for Alaska and local communities. The Alaska Chamber also encourages the Alaska congressional delegation, the Alaska Legislature and governor to support and strongly advocate for responsible development of these valuable resources, while the Alaska Chamber commits to actively support and participate in the education and advocacy efforts to open these areas.

(F) 35. Support the U.S. Congress to secure a viable, long-term solution for the U.S. Federal Highway Trust Fund

The Alaska Chamber urges the US Congress to secure a viable, long-term solution for the Highway Trust Fund’s (HTF) structural revenue deficit and recurrent insolvency. In late 2021, Congress signed off on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included both a five-year reauthorization of the HTF and a one-time transfer of general revenues into the Fund, extending its near-term solvency by five years, through 2027. The bill also authorized higher spending levels that have negatively impacted the program’s long-term financial outlook. If spending levels from the infrastructure bill are maintained, dedicated revenue coming into the Highway Trust Fund over the coming decade will be sufficient to cover only about half of ongoing spending, and the trust fund will face a \$215 billion cumulative shortfall

through 2031. This unsustainable model puts our surface transportation infrastructure system at risk. It's time for Congress to roll up its sleeves and do its long-delayed part and pass a long-term, fully-funded HTF bill, which is needed to restore our deteriorating and seriously outdated network of highways, bridges and transit systems. This must, at a minimum, match current federal funding levels for roads, bridges, public transportation, and highway safety.

(F) 36. Support the U.S. Congress to secure a viable long-term solution for the Federal Airport and Airway Trust Fund (Aviation Trust Fund)

The Alaska Chamber applauds the U.S. Congress for approval of a five-year Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill through 2023 and urges continued focus to avoid future situations in which FAA would again be subject to many short-term extensions. Long-term reauthorization bills are essential to core FAA functions. They should improve aviation safety and capacity of the national airspace system, provide a framework for integrating new technology safely into our airspace, provide a stable funding system, and advance the implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System. Stable funding provides resources for grants to build and improve airports, FAA facilities and equipment, and the Essential Air Service program, which are all vital to Alaska.

(B) 37. Support protecting and advancing Alaska native entity access to federal programs, funding opportunities, and consultation

Through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Congress created Alaska Native Regional Corporations (ANC's) to assure the self-determination of Alaska Native people. Alaska's unique model involves a constellation of state, tribal, regional, village and non-profit entities working together to serve Alaska Natives. When Alaska Native entities are excluded from federal programs, funding opportunities, and consultations our people lose control over decisions related to ancestral lands, federal benefits, cultural, education and business opportunities. The definition of Indian Tribe as defined in the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (ISDEAA) is often used by Congress in federal law to ensure the full participation of Alaska Native entities in federal programs, including critical social programs. ANC's face the threat of the federal government limiting Alaska Native entities inclusion in federal legislation.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) are actively advocating for removal of Alaska Native Corporations right to consultation with Federal agencies in H.R. 3587, the Requirements, Expectations, Standard Procedures for Effective Consultation with Tribes (RESPECT) Act. This could limit Alaska Native voices on critical issues that would significantly impact Alaska Natives, our lands, and communities as well as participation in the Small Business Administration 8(a) Business Development Program.

(S) 38. Support ballot measure reform

Initiative petitions often ask voters to make simple yes or no decisions about complex issues without subjecting them to detailed expert analysis or the opportunity to participate through a public process.

Changes in the initiative process should produce more transparency and better public policy in a comprehensive and balanced manner equally benefiting both voters and the legislative process.

(F) 39. Champion reform of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA should be amended to include a two-year time limit on an EIS, and a maximum length of pages of an EIS. Each phase of the EIS should have time sublimits.

(B) 40. Modernizing Regulatory Frameworks for Advanced Recycling Technologies

The Alaska Chamber supports regulating advanced recycling operations as manufacturing facilities rather than solid waste disposal sites. This policy would encourage new Alaska manufacturing by ensuring that post-use, recoverable plastics that are converted to plastic and chemical feedstocks or other valuable products via advanced recycling are classified as raw materials, not misclassified as solid waste. This action would provide much needed regulatory certainty for companies that may be interested in investing in and siting these types of facilities in Alaska. Advanced recycling refers to several different processes that use existing and emerging technologies that return post-use plastics to their basic chemical building blocks for creating a versatile mix of new plastics, chemicals, and other products of chemistry.

Companies are using advanced recycling technologies to complement ongoing traditional recycling efforts. Growing interest and investments in advanced recycling can reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and help enable a transition to a more circular economy for post-use plastics.

(S) 41. Support Fair Market Access for Alaska Seafood Exports

The Alaska Chamber supports removal of both tariff and non-tariff barriers for Alaska seafood exports and encourages the State to work closely with the Federal Government to advance fair and reciprocal trade in seafood. Alaska seafood is the State's largest value export and a significant economic driver in Alaska. US seafood exports face unfair barriers to entry, compared to foreign competitors in key markets, including Europe, Japan, China and the United Kingdom.

(B) 42. Support for the state's automation of titles, liens, notaries, etc. to an online or digital platform

The state has the opportunity to automate the processing of titles, liens, notary signatures, and others paper-based processes to improve access, delivery turnarounds and lower cost of operations.

(B) 43. Support transfer or sale of land to private entities

The Alaska Chamber supports the sale or transfer of a proportionate percentage of government-owned lands at all levels to privately held taxable entities to provide development opportunities for the citizenry of the state of Alaska.

(S) 44. Support workforce development to increase the number of qualified employees needed to fill positions in resource industries

The Alaska Chamber supports workforce development in the state, particularly as it relates to resource development and exploration.

(F) 45. Support Small Business Administration Native 8(a) contracting program

The Alaska Chamber supports Native 8(a) contracting due to the impact the program has on the Alaska economy and the benefits to Alaska Native corporations and tribal entities across the country.

(S) 46. Support for privatization of construction projects

The Alaska Chamber supports reducing the activities of state government in traditionally private sector industries particularly the construction industry.

(S) 47. Oppose State competition with private business

The Alaska Chamber encourages the State of Alaska to avoid competing with private business.

(B) 48. Support foreign and domestic private sector investments in Alaska's resource and manufacturing industries

The Alaska Chamber encourages the State of Alaska to implement policies, programs, and regulations to encourage, support and protect local, state, domestic and foreign private sector investments in Alaska's natural resource and manufacturing industries.