ALASKA NEWS

Youth plaintiffs plan to appeal dismissal of lawsuit challenging $44B gas pipeline

Sean Maguire
Anchorage Daily News

Eight young Alaskans are planning to appeal a lower court's dismissal of a lawsuit that challenged the environmental impacts of Alaska's planned natural gas pipeline.

The youth plaintiffs filed the lawsuit last year, arguing that the $44 billion project would unconstitutionally exacerbate climate change. The plaintiffs wanted the state to recognize a constitutional right to a life-sustaining climate system.

Anchorage Superior Court Judge Dani Crosby dismissed the legal challenge on Monday as being beyond judicial review. She noted that the Alaska Legislature has passed laws in support of constructing the 800-mile pipeline from the North Slope for export.

"This Court lacks the authority to second guess the legislature's policy choice," Crosby said in her five-page order.

Crosby suggested to the youth plaintiffs that the courts were not the proper venue to challenge the Alaska LNG project

"Rather, direct engagement with their elected officials, participation in public awareness campaigns, or becoming involved with Alaska's political process is the proper means to effectuate change," she said.

Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor welcomed the court's dismissal of the case. He said in a prepared statement that the lawsuit implicated where decisions should be made in Alaska's democratic system.

"In this case, decisions regarding climate change and how to address it lie firmly in the purview of the legislature and the executive branch. They are not decisions to be made by few individuals through the court system," he said.

Our Children's Trust, an Oregon-based public interest law firm, filed the lawsuit last year on behalf of the young Alaskans.

Andrew Welle, lead attorney for the plaintiffs, said in a prepared statement that Crosby's decision was "a clear miscarriage of justice." He argued that Monday's order means all natural resource manage decisions in Alaska were effectively beyond legal review.

"We will move forward, seeking to correct this ruling on appeal to the Alaska Supreme Court," Welle said.

Our Children's Trust, in its 82-page complaint, argued last year that climate change is already being felt in Alaska with falling salmon numbers and changing caribou migratory patterns — among other impacts.

The Alaska Supreme Court in 2022 issued a split decision on a similar legal challenge by the law firm. Two of the justices stated that Alaska law requires a constitutional right to a livable climate, but they were overruled.

Crosby stated in her order that the Alaska Supreme Court's decision was binding on the youth plaintiffs' recent climate change challenge. She said the state's highest court had twice ruled that competing questions of natural resource development and conservation are political questions, and not justiciable.

A spokesperson for the Alaska Gasline Development Corp. — the state agency leading the project — said last year that the Legislature had supported the pipeline because of its environmental, economic and energy benefits.

"Alaska LNG has withstood a rigorous multi-year federal permitting process and court challenges from resource development opponents because of the project's obvious and significant environmental and economic benefits including cleaner air here at home, lower global emissions, and lower energy bills for Alaskans," said Tim Fitzpatrick, an AGDC spokesperson, on Tuesday.

Since returning to the White House, President Donald Trump has supported Alaska LNG, and said his administration is working to construct the "gigantic" pipeline.

Gov. Mike Dunleavy and Alaska's all-Republican congressional delegation have strongly supported the project. But potential financial backers have not announced final investment decisions to complete the pipeline.

FROM PAGE A1

BUDGET

Photos by J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE / Associated Press

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., center, flanked by Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif., left, and Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Mass., the House minority whip, speaks to reporters outside the House chamber as Republicans prepare a spending bill that would keep federal agencies funded through Sept. 30, at the Capitol in Washington on Monday.

begin Saturday if lawmakers failed to act on the continuing resolution, often referred to by lawmakers as a CR.

"We did our job today," Johnson said moments after the vote.

Johnson's strategy had the backing of Trump, who called on Republicans to "remain UNITED — NO DISSENT — Fight for another day when the timing is right."

Lawmakers said the bill would trim $13 billion in non-defense spending from the levels in the 2024 budget year and increase defense spending by $6 billion, which are rather flat changes for both categories when compared with an overall topline of nearly $1.7 trillion in discretionary spending. The bill does not cover the majority of government spending, including Social Security and Medicare. Funding for those two programs is on autopilot and not regularly reviewed by Congress.

Democrats mostly worried about the discretion the bill gives the Trump administration on spending decisions. They are already alarmed by the administration's efforts to make major cuts through the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, run by billionaire Trump adviser Elon Musk. And they say the spending bill would fuel the effort.

Spending bills typically come with specific funding directives for key programs, but hundreds of those directives fall away under the legislation. So the administration will have more leeway to reshape priorities.

For example, a Democratic memo said the bill would allow the administration to steer money away from combating fentanyl and instead use it on mass deportation initiatives.

"It is not a simple stopgap that keeps the lights on and the doors open," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee. "This is Republican leadership handing over the keys of the government, and a blank check to Elon Musk and to President Trump."

Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, acknowledged the continuing resolution was not the outcome he sought but said it was time to end the cycle of short-term funding extensions. This will be the third in recent months. He blamed Democrats for trying to rein in Trump's authority on spending.

"We're not going to have a Republican Senate and a Republican House restrict a Republican president from the legitimate exercise of executive authority," Cole said. "And then, oh, by the way, ask him to sign the bill."

Normally, when it comes to keeping the government fully open for business, Republicans have had to work with Democrats to craft a bipartisan measure that both sides can support. That's because Republicans almost always lack the votes to pass spending extensions on their own.

Vice President JD Vance arrives for a closed-door meeting at the Capitol in Washington on Tuesday.

Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., and chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, the most conservative wing of the Republican conference, said he supported this one because it would cut spending and not lead to a massive, catch-all spending bill, which has become the norm over the years.

"This is not your grandfather's continuing resolution," Harris said.

Massie was still a holdout, though, despite Trump going after him on social media, calling him a "GRANDSTANDER, who's too much trouble."

"HE SHOULD BE PRIMARIED, and I will lead the charge against him," Trump posted online.

Massie responded by saying Trump was "attacking me and Canada today. The difference is: Canada will eventually cave."

House Democratic leaders came out strongly against the legislation. Less clear was how strongly they would push members in competitive battleground districts to follow their lead. In the end, they held the entire caucus together with the exception of Golden.

"This Republican shutdown bill does nothing to enhance the American dream. It undermines it," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., said ahead of the vote.

Democratic leaders in the Senate generally seemed to be emphasizing patience at this stage and were waiting to see if Republicans can muscle the bill through the House before taking a stand.

"We're going to see what the House does first," said top Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York.

Still, several rank-and-file Democrats criticized the measure. Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey said he was stunned that Republicans were "trying to jam through something that is their way or the highway."

Democrats also introduced an alternative bill Monday night funding the government through April 11. The bill could serve as a Plan B if the GOP-led effort falters.

Both parties were prepared to blame the other if the bill failed.

"It looks like they're going to try to shut down the government," Johnson said of Democrats.

"If the government shuts down with a Republican House, Republican Senate and Republican president, it will be solely because the Republicans have moved forward with a terrible, partisan, take-it-or-leave-it bill," said Rep. Dan Goldman, D-N.Y.

The spending bill could also have major ramifications for the District of Columbia's government.

Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, said the proposal would require the district to cut $1.1 billion in spending in the next six months since it has already passed a balanced budget and is midway through its fiscal year. That means, officials said, cuts to critical services such as education and public safety.

Associated Press writers Leah Askarinam, Gary Fields and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

FROM PAGE A1

EDUCATION

Senate. She said it was the department's "final mission" to eliminate bureaucratic bloat and turn over the agency's authority to states.

The department sent an email to employees Tuesday telling them its Washington headquarters and regional offices would be closed Wednesday, with access forbidden, before reopening Thursday. The only reason given for the closures was unspecified "security reasons."

Trump campaigned on a promise to close the department, saying it had been overtaken by "radicals, zealots and Marxists." At McMahon's confirmation hearing, she acknowledged only Congress has the power to abolish the agency but said it might be due for cuts and a reorganization.

Whether the cuts will be felt by America's students — as Democrats and advocates fear — is yet to be seen. Already there are concerns the administration's agenda has pushed aside some of the agency's most fundamental work, including the enforcement of civil rights for students with disabilities and the management of $1.6 trillion in federal student loans.

McMahon told lawmakers at her hearing that her aim is not to defund core programs, but to make them more efficient.

Even before the layoffs, the Education Department was among the smallest Cabinet-level agencies. Its workforce included 3,100 people in Washington and an additional 1,100 at regional offices across the country, according to a department website.

The department's workers had faced increasing pressure to quit their jobs since Trump took office, first through a deferred resignation program and then through a $25,000 buyout offer that expired March 3.

Jeanne Allen of the Center for Education Reform, which advocates for charter school expansion, said the cuts were important and necessary.

"Ending incessant federal interference will free up state and local leaders to foster more opportunities to give schools and educators true flexibility and innovation to address the needs of students, wherever they are educated," Allen said.

Some advocates were skeptical of the department's claim that its functions would not be affected by the layoffs.

"I don't see at all how that can be true," said Roxanne Garza, who was chief of staff in the Office of Postsecondary Education under President Joe Biden.

Much of what the department does, like investigating civil rights complaints and helping families apply for financial aid, is labor intensive, said Garza, who is now director of higher education policy at Education Trust, a research and advocacy organization. "How those things will not be impacted with far fewer staff ... I just don't see it."

TIP TOP, LLC, doing business as TIP TOP, located at 233 E. 5th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license # 3A-14359 to Wolf Town Farm, LLC, doing business as Tip Top.

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Pho & Indian LLC is making application for a new Restaurant or Eating Place AS 04.09.210 alcohol license doing business as Pho & Indian located at 9191 Old Seward Hwy, Suite 1, Anchorage, AK 99515. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave Suite 1600 Anchorage, Alaska 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

FROM PAGE A1

CITY ELECTION

with the clerk's office to vote by fax, email or secure document portal. To do so, you should apply before 5 p.m. March 25. Any applications received after that "may be processed subject to availability of staff and resources," according to the municipal clerk's office.

• If you won't be home during the election, you can apply to vote at a temporary address. The deadline to apply is also 5 p.m. March 25.

• To get ballot tracking alerts by text, email or voicemail, sign up at anchorage.ballottrax.net/voter. The system sends alerts when ballot packages have been sent out, received, counted, or if there is a problem with a ballot.

In some cases, voters will be asked to "cure" problems with their ballots, like if the ballot return envelope is missing a signature or the signature couldn't be verified. When this happens, election officials mail voters a letter with options to fix the issue. Last year, the municipal clerk's office introduced a new way for voters to cure their ballots via text message.

AMCO Received 4.24.25

ALASKA NEWS

State education commissioner on hand as Trump issues order to 'facilitate closure' of federal Education Department

Iris Samuels
Anchorage Daily News

Alaska Commissioner of Education Deena Bishop was in attendance Thursday when President Donald Trump signed an order to "facilitate the closure" of the federal Department of Education.

The order is meant to shrink the number of employees in the department and transfer some of its duties to other arms of the federal government. The dissolution of the department would require an act of Congress.

Bishop

Bishop declined an interview request after attending the signing event in Washington, D.C. A spokesperson for the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development said the order would "return control of public education back to the states."

"With more control, Alaskans can better focus in on how education resources are spent, and on what they deem most beneficial to our students and their future," the spokesperson said in an email.

Alaska receives hundreds of millions of dollars annually to operate K-12 schools. The percentage of total school budgets coming from federal sources is among the highest in the nation when compared with other states. The funding is targeted at disadvantaged students, including those from lower-income households and those with disabilities.

Alaska Republican U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan said during a press availability in Juneau on Thursday that it "could be a good outcome" if "there's more federal dollars with less D.C. strings attached."

"The Department of Education, since it's been enacted, has spent over a trillion dollars, and our secondary school education results have dramatically declined, and I'm not sure federal dictates from Washington that don't understand certain local education imperatives is the best way to approach it," he said.

"So the key question to me is, are they just dismantling everything or is the vision to dismantle and then get the money to the Alaska state Legislature and local communities, who, in my view, have a way, way better sense, especially for Alaska, on how to spend the money and how to prioritize the money because they're closer to the kids, they're closer to the teachers," Sullivan added.

In a statement on Friday, U.S. Rep. Nick Begich III celebrated Trump's efforts to close the department.

"The centralized one-size-fits-all factory model of education has proven to be a poor approach. It's time to end this experiment and restore local leadership in education," Begich wrote.

Meanwhile, Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, also a Republican, questioned the claim — shared by Sullivan and other Republican lawmakers — that the federal Department of Education "dictates" local education decisions.

"There is a strong argument for finding efficiencies within the department and ensuring that student aid is delivered more effectively. However, the assertion that the department has 'control' over our kids' education is incorrect, as federal officials are explicitly prohibited by law from meddling in schools' curricula, state standards, student assessments and more," Murkowski said in a written statement.

"The benefits that the U.S. Department of Education provide for Alaska are almost too numerous to list," she said, pointing to its efforts to ensure Alaska Native students can access culturally relevant curricula, among others.

"The Department of Education was created by statute and it will require approval of the Congress to close it. I will continue to defend the continuation of the laws, programs, and funding that the Department administers that Alaska's educators, students, and parents rely on," she said.

State Rep. Rebecca Himschoot, a Sitka independent who chairs the House Education Committee, said that even though education funding cannot be eliminated without congressional approval, she is concerned about the impacts of Thursday's order.

She said the loss of federal education department staff could mean the elimination of data and oversight — and the Alaska education department does not necessarily have the capacity to take up tasks currently entrusted to federal oversight.

"Everybody loves to get funding with no strings attached," she said. "Having free-flowing funding and never having to report back on how it was spent or follow guidelines on how it should be, to me, is risky if we're interested in waste, fraud and abuse."

In remarks to the state board of education last week, Bishop said that an executive order could not — on its own — eliminate the federal funding that flows to Alaska schools, but she welcomed the elimination of some regulations attached to the funding.

Bishop said she signed on to a letter to Secretary of Education Linda McMahon this month proposing changes to how federal education policy is handled, including by requesting "more flexibility with the federal funding." A department spokesperson did not immediately provide a copy of the letter.

"There are different categories of funding, and the request was more flexibility within the funds to share those funds," Bishop said.

The National Education Association of Alaska, a union representing most public school teachers in the state, opposes the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education, its leader said Thursday.

"The Department of Education provides many things, including vital support for Alaska students with special needs, through the Individuals with Education Disabilities Act. Alaska receives the most Title 1 funding per pupil of any state in the nation. More than 51,000 Alaskan students benefit from that support," wrote Tom Klaameyer, president of NEA-Alaska, in a statement.

"Historically, NEA-Alaska may not have always agreed with decisions or directives coming from the Department of Education," said Klaameyer. "However, whether it's through gutting the department from the inside, or seeking congressional approval for the complete elimination, the most vulnerable students in America and the educators who serve them will ultimately pay the price."

Among its roles, the U.S. Education Department also handles student loans for higher education.

According to an email from University of Alaska President Pat Pitney, officials with the state's public university system "don't expect there to be significant changes to our operations or the ability of students to access federal financial aid, including Pell Grants and loans."

"Advocating for federal student aid funding remains a top priority for the UA system regardless of what changes happen at certain federal departments or agencies," Pitney wrote in a letter to students and faculty. "Federal student aid is a vital component of ensuring access and affordability for students across the State of Alaska."

ALASKA NEWS

Tom Sexton, former state poet laureate, is remembered for his 'unbelievable' influence teaching Alaska writers

Chris Bieri
Anchorage Daily News

It's difficult to overstate the impact Tom Sexton had on generations of Alaska writers.

As an English and creative writing professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage for nearly 25 years, Sexton spurred young writers to chase opportunity and inspiration.

Sexton

"You turn over a rock and somebody took a class from Tom Sexton," said Mike Burwell, a writer, editor and former student. "It's unbelievable, his overall influence on writers in Alaska."

Sexton died this month at age 84, leaving a legacy as a prolific poet, an influential instructor and an initiator of literary platforms in the state.

Sexton grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, and had his first exposure to the state in the U.S. Army. He later returned to the state in summer 1968, the day after he and his wife, Sharyn, were married.

Sexton earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and when the university expanded with a four-year institution in Anchorage, he started teaching at the school.

Alaska author Marybeth Holleman was an MFA student of Sexton's at UAA. For a decade, Holleman said, Sexton handled all of the university's writing courses, from film to fiction, and he even was the chair of the philosophy department for a time.

"He was a wonderful, generous, kind, very calm teacher," Holleman said. "His calm presence was so important when you're a student and you get all those anxieties, but he was just a great teacher."

Sexton was a founding editor of the Alaska Quarterly Review, launched by Ronald Spatz and James Liszka in 1980.

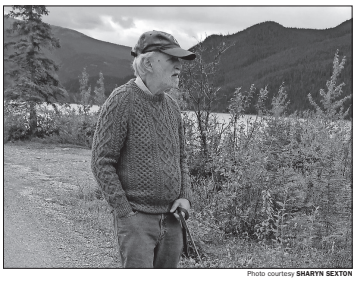
Tom Sexton was a professor at UAA teaching English and creative writing for nearly 25 years.

Photo courtesy **SHARYN SEXTON**

Holleman said Sexton and Spatz, a colleague at UAA, brought a number of notable writers to the state, giving students an opportunity to rub elbows and learn from the likes of Jane Hirshfield, Tobias Wolff and Rosellen Brown.

"They would give a public reading that anyone can go to," Holleman said. "Then they would give a craft talk to the students in the MFA program. And we just got to meet these incredible writers. So even though we only had two professors in the program, it was a much broader — just a lot of nourishment coming in from Outside."

Sexton retired at UAA in 1994 and was named Alaska's Poet Laureate in 1995, a role he held until 2000.

Even when he wasn't actively teaching at the university, Sexton still maintained an inspirational spirit. When circumpolar poetry journal Ice Floe was winding down its publication, he encouraged Burwell to launch Cirque. The Alaska-based literary journal Burwell publishes with Sandra Kleven has now been in existence for more than 15 years.

"Basically he was the spark for Cirque," Burwell said. "You know, we just put out issue No. 28, so we've been around a while. It was that original encouragement that really got me going on Cirque."

Holleman said it was notable that when Sexton was at UAA, he focused almost exclusively on teaching.

"He did give his all as a teacher," Holleman said. "He published very little when he was a teacher. And it was only when he retired in 1994 that he started putting out a book every other year. He's written dozens of books of poetry, but they came after he retired."

While Sexton was known for his Alaska poems of place, he also did a substantial amount of writing about his home and youth in Lowell. In total, he published more than 12 books of poetry in his time in Alaska.

"He turned out two or three books kind of around Lowell and the Lowell experience," Burwell said. "They're pretty hard hitting."

Both Burwell and Holleman later published Sexton's work — Burwell in Cirque, and Holleman in projects like "Crosscurrents North: Alaskans on the Environment," which she co-edited.

"He was my mentor in the program, and then afterwards, a friend and I have also had the great honor of publishing some of his poems in a couple of anthologies that I've edited, too," Holleman said.

Over the years, Sexton had a number of rural Alaska properties that functioned as writing retreats. That included a cabin along the Chulitna River where he would often spend weekends writing.

Holleman said Sexton was a well-known rover, and on his walks he would carry scraps of paper and write notes or lines that would eventually find their way into his poems.

"I don't know, there's just something about that that's so beautiful and so unusual for us now," Holleman said. "But he studied the Chinese poets, who just were wanderers. And so I feel like he kind of continued that lineage, this ancient lineage and brought it to us in contemporary culture."

CORRECTIONS

Anchorage Daily News promptly acknowledges and corrects factual errors. If you see one, please contact editors at corrections@adn.com.

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Anchorage-Lakefront Limited Partnership dba The Lakefront Anchorage – A Millennium Hotel located at 4800 Spenard Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99517 is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary Tourism AS 04.09.350 liquor license. The change in ownership involves the ownership interest transfer from Cincinnati SI Company Limited, 99% and Regal Hotel Management Inc., 1% to Regal Hotel Management Inc. 98% and AIRCOA Equity Interests, Inc. 1%. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

King Street Management Inc, doing business as King Street Cannabis Co, located at 9430 Lavlento Dr. Suite A, Anchorage, AK 99515 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license #20863 to Three Kings Corp, doing business as King St. Cultivation. Under the terms of 3 AAC 306.049, 3 AAC 306.051, and 3 AAC 306.080(d)(2)(B), the transferor/lessor retains a security interest in the marijuana license that is the subject of this conveyance, and may, as a result, be able to obtain a retransfer the license without satisfaction of other creditors.
Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501.

Jack Ventures, LLC, doing business as Quintessence Farms, located at 9430 Lavlento Dr. Suite B, Anchorage, AK 99515 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility (3 AAC 306.400), license # 20884 to AK Sustainable Farms LLC, doing business as King St. Cult. Under the terms of 3 AAC 306.049, 3 AAC 306.051, and 3 AAC 306.080(d)(2)(B), the transferor/lessor retains a security interest in the marijuana license that is the subject of this conveyance, and may, as a result, be able to obtain a retransfer the license without satisfaction of other creditors.
Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501.

Clapper Enterprises, Inc. dba **The Spare Room** located at 3717 Minnesota Drive, Anchorage, AK, is applying for transfer of a **Beverage Dispensary License AS 04.09.200** liquor license to Katharos Living, LLC dba The Spare Room.

Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq at jana@jdwcounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Deenge Anchorage LLC is applying under 3 AAC 306.300 for a new **Retail Marijuana Store license, license #40360,** doing business as Country Cannabis, located at 4471 Laurel Street, Anchorage, AK, 99507, UNITED STATES.

Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and application information will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq at jana@jdwcounsel.com or to 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Ae Kyong Lee dba Holding Company located at No Premises, Anchorage, AK is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary AS 04.09.200 liquor license to Gogi, LLC dba Gogi Korean BBQ located at 7780 Old Seward Hwy, Anchorage, AK. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. at jana@jdwcounsel.com or 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Anchorage Daily News - 03/26/2025

Alaska National Guard via AP

An airplane that crashed Sunday is partially submerged into the ice of Tustumena Lake at the toe of a glacier on Monday near Soldotna. On the wings are the pilot and two children, who were rescued by the crew of an Alaska Army National Guard helicopter.

KENAI PENINSULA

Pilot, 2 children survived the night on airplane's wing after it crashed into icy Tustumena Lake

Mark Thiessen
Associated Press

A pilot and two children survived on the wing of a plane for about 12 hours after it crashed and was partially submerged in an icy Alaska lake, then were rescued after being spotted by a good Samaritan.

Terry Godes said he saw a Facebook post Sunday night calling for people to help search for the missing plane, which did not have a locator beacon. On Monday morning, about a dozen pilots — including Godes in his own airplane — headed out to scour the rugged terrain for the missing plane. Godes headed toward Tustumena Lake near the toe of a glacier and spotted what he thought was wreckage.

"It kind of broke my heart to see that, but as I got closer down and lower, I could see that there's three people on top of the wing," he told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

After saying a little prayer, he continued to get closer and saw a miracle.

"They were alive and responsive and moving around," he said, adding they waved at him as he approached.

The missing Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser, piloted by a man with two immediate juvenile family members aboard, flew Sunday on a recreational sightseeing tour from Soldotna to Skilak Lake on the Kenai Peninsula.

The three were rescued on the eastern edge of Tustumena Lake on Monday by the Alaska Army National Guard after Godes alerted other pilots searching for the plane that he had found it. Another pilot, Dale Eicher, heard Godes' radio call and alerted troopers since he was closer to Skilak Lake and figured he had better cell reception. He was also able to provide the plane's coordinates to authorities.

"I wasn't sure if we would find them, especially because there was a cloud layer over quite a bit of the mountains so they could have very easily been in those clouds that we couldn't get to," Eicher said. But he said that finding the family within an hour of starting the search and finding them alive "was very good news."

The three survivors were taken to a hospital with injuries that were not considered life-threatening, Alaska State Troopers said.

"They spent a long, cold, dark, wet night out on top of a wing of an airplane that they weren't planning on," Godes said.

He said there were many miracles at play, from the plane not sinking, to the survivors being able to stay on the wing, to the three surviving the night in temperatures dipping into the 20s.

"It's a cold dark place out there at night," he said.

The plane was mostly submerged in the lake with only the wing and the top of the rudder exposed above the ice and water, Godes noted.

In Alaska, many communities with limited or no road access rely on small airplanes as a preferred mode of transportation.

Last month, in Western Alaska, 10 people died when a small commuter plane that was overweight by half a ton crashed into sea ice in the Norton Sound, near Nome on the state's western coast.

Five years ago, a deadly midair collision near the Soldotna airport claimed the lives of seven people, including an Alaska state lawmaker.

The Alaska Army National Guard dispatched a helicopter from its base in Anchorage to rescue the three people.

The initial plan was to use a hoist to pull the three up and off the wing, but it proved to be too dangerous as the smallest girl was being buffeted and blown around by the wind created by the helicopter, said Lt. Col. Brendon Holbrook, commander of the guard's 207th Aviation Regiment. So, instead the helicopter hovered to the side of the plane's wing and pulled the three people on board.

He said his personnel reported the two girls were surprisingly dry but the adult male had been in the water at some point. "We don't know to what extent, but he was hypothermic," Holbrook said.

Holbrook said he was told the three people had basic clothing one would wear in Alaska on small planes without very good heating systems, but nothing sufficient to keep a person warm outside in winter-like temperatures with cold winds blowing on the lake.

"It was literally the best possible scenario and outcome," Holbrook said. "Ultimately, the crew of that airplane were lucky because from what my guys told me, that plane was in the ice with the tail refrozen and if that tail hadn't refrozen, it would have sunk."

There is no indication why the plane crashed. The National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday that it is investigating with the Federal Aviation Administration.

The 60,000-acre Tustumena Lake is situated about 80 miles southwest of Anchorage and has been described by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as "notorious for its sudden, dangerous winds."

Conditions around the lake — with nearby mountains, a glacier and gusty winds — can cause havoc for both boats and planes. The body of water is the largest freshwater lake on the Kenai Peninsula.

"Even under what would be considered a benign or relatively weak pressure gradient, the terrain helps turn the winds around, and occasionally they get a little squirrelly," said Michael Kutz, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Anchorage.

Godes agreed that the area is always windy, and fresh water can kick up with the wind and turn into waves.

"Then just the way it's placed right there at the heel of that, or at the toe of that glacier where you've got mountains on both sides, you know, just a few miles to the west, you've got Cook Inlet running back and forth with huge temperature and tidal swings every day. It's just a recipe for chaos and for turbulence," he said.

CRIME & COURTS

State Supreme Court places new limits on pretrial delays

Kyle Hopkins
Anchorage Daily News

Alaska's Supreme Court has placed new limits on how long criminal cases can be postponed, part of an effort to reduce the time many criminal defendants wait to face trial in the state.

The court's order, which takes effect May 12, directs state judges to allow no more than 270 days of new delays for criminal cases filed in 2022 or before. Court system data shows that about 800 active cases fall into that category, making each one more than 800 days old and counting.

The move to reduce delays follows an investigation by ProPublica and the Anchorage Daily News that found some cases have taken as long as a decade to reach juries, potentially violating the rights of victims and defendants alike.

The time to resolve Alaska's most serious felony cases, such as murder and sexual assault, has nearly tripled over the past decade. Victims rights advocates had long complained that judges rubber-stamped delays, particularly in Anchorage, where about half of the cases impacted by the Supreme Court order are pending. Some cases dragged on so long that victims or witnesses had died in the meantime.

In addition to capping the duration of delays, the state Supreme Court's order says judges must explain why they've allowed any request for delay.

"It's a positive step by the court to be able to work with the lawyers to move cases along," said state Sen. Matt Claman, D-Anchorage, chair of the Judiciary Committee, which held a hearing on pretrial delays in February.

Alaska Court System spokesperson Rebecca Koford said the new Supreme Court order, issued on March 12, tackles the "most pressing concern."

The time needed to close out the oldest cases "is exceedingly long," she said, "and we need to get them resolved."

The Supreme Court order said judges in pre-2023 cases are to allow only 90 days of new delays at the request of the defense, 90 days for prosecutors and 90 days for "other periods of delay for good cause."

Koford said that an example of why a case might be delayed for good cause would be when a witness is temporarily unavailable to testify. Additional efforts are in the works to reduce the time it takes cases to get to trial, she said.

"We do not view it as the solution; it is part of the solution," Koford said.

Alaska criminal rules grant defendants the right to a trial within 120 days of being charged with a crime. Crime victims have the right to the "timely disposition" of their case under the state constitution.

The 120-day deadline is rarely met. One sexual assault case highlighted by the Daily News and ProPublica was filed in 2014 and has been delayed more than 70 times. That case has now been set for trial on April 1.

Several high-ranking state officials have spoken of the need to rein in delays since the news organizations highlighted the issue in January.

Chief Justice Susan M. Carney told state lawmakers on Feb. 12 that the court system was working to curb delays, noting recent news coverage of the issue. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing focused on pretrial delays later that month, when court system General Counsel Nancy Meade told legislators that the cases recently highlighted in news stories were unacceptable but were outliers among criminal cases.

"The time it takes to resolve cases now is certainly longer than it was 20 years ago. Nobody is happy about that," Meade testified.

The new order signed by Carney and other Alaska Supreme Court justices said that a 2023 judicial order had led to "some decrease" in what the court characterized as "persistent backlogs." The current order, the court said, "is intended to facilitate the further reduction in the time to disposition of these older criminal cases without undue delay."

The order also addresses delays caused when attorneys fail to provide evidence to the opposing party in a timely manner. It says that judges should consider sanctions, including dismissing the charges, when prosecutors fail to provide evidence or banning the missing evidence from being used at trial.

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CORRECTIONS

Anchorage Daily News promptly acknowledges and corrects factual errors. If you see one, please call our editors at 257-4301.

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TIP TOP, LLC, doing business as TIP TOP, located at 233 E. 5th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license # 3A-14359 to Wolf Town Farm, LLC, doing business as Tip Top.

Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501.

Pho & Indian LLC is making application for a new Restaurant or Eating Place AS 04.09.210 alcohol license doing business as Pho & Indian located at 9191 Old Seward Hwy, Suite 1, Anchorage, AK 99515. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave Suite 1600 Anchorage, Alaska 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

FORECLOSURE SALE

April 8, 2025 at 10:00 A.M.
Inside the Main Entrance of the Boney Courthouse
303 K Street Anchorage, AK 99501

Property Address:
2855 N Brennas Way, Wasilla, AK 99654
Lot 4, Block 7, Ravenview II Sub., Add No 1
4 bd 3 ba 2,288 sq ft

This property is not available for viewing prior to sale
2025 Assessed Value: $420,600.00

OPENING BID AMOUNT: $233,363.20
Cash or Certified Funds Only
Property is sold "as is, where is," no warranties expressed or implied

For more information contact Elias Wilterding Mortgage Assistance Officer, NMLS #1829608 at 907-261-3538, Northrim Bank, NMLS #490464, servicing agent for AHFC

Sale date and bid amount are subject to change

FORECLOSURE SALE
3/25/25 at 10:00 A.M.
Where: 303 K Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

1250W JOSSELIN LN PALMER Alaska 99645:
Third Judicial District of Palmer Recording District,
Third Judicial District:
Lot 3, Block 1, BRITTANY ESTATES, PHASE 1,
according to the official plat thereof,
filed under Plat Number 85-68, in the records of Palmer
3 Bdrm, 2.0 Ba, 1692 Sq. Ft.

This property is not available for reviewing prior to sale
Appraised $360,000.00

Opening Bid Amount: $179,435.26
Cash or Certified Funds Only
Property is sold "as is, where is", no warranties expressed or implied

For more information:
Global Credit Union (907)786-2122, servicing agent for AHFC
Sale date and bid amount are subject to change

March 27, 2025 4:59 pm (GMT -8:00)

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