# ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

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STATE OF ALASKA
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Lisi Misa
being first duly sworn on oath deposes and says that she is a representative of the Anchorage Daily News, a daily newspaper. That said newspaper has been approved by the Third Judicial Court, Anchorage, Alaska, and it now and has been published in the English language continually as a daily newspaper in Anchorage, Alaska, and it is now and during all said time was printed in an office maintained at the aforesaid place of publication of said newspaper. That the annexed is a copy of an advertisement as it was published in regular issues (and not in supplemental form) of said newspaper on

Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8/2026

and that such newspaper was regularly distributed to its subscribers during all of said period. That the full amount of the fee charged for the foregoing publication is not in excess of the rate charged private individuals.

Signed Lisi Misa

Subscribed and sworn to before

me this 9th day of February, 2026.

Kristina R. Wladkowski

Notary Public in and for
The State of Alaska.
Third Division
Anchorage, Alaska
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES
01/23/2029

KRISTINA R. WLADKOWSKI
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STATE OF ALASKA
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES JAN. 23, 2029

AMCO Received 2.17.26

ANCHORAGE

# Dozens of Anchorage residents stand with Minnesota against ICE at protest

**Bella Biondini**
Anchorage Daily News

Lining both sides of L Street in downtown Anchorage, demonstrators held signs Friday afternoon bearing phrases including "Immigrants Make America Great" and "Abolish ICE." Drivers passing the protesters in front of the Martin Luther King Jr. Living Memorial at the Delaney Park Strip honked and waved.

The group had gathered for the demonstration "From Alaska to Minnesota: A Day of Truth & Freedom" led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation Anchorage. The event was organized in response to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's "campaign of brutality against Minnesota," the party wrote in a Jan. 15 Facebook post.

Thousands of Minnesotans marched through Minneapolis-St. Paul in subzero temperatures on Friday to protest the large presence of federal immigration agents in their communities. Hundreds of businesses there shut their doors, and some workers and students stayed home after weeks of disputes between residents and federal agents.

Minnesota residents called for a strike in response to an ICE agent shooting and killing U.S. citizen Renee Good. Anchorage Party for Socialism organizer Michael Patterson said the protests were also in response to what he called the "general terror" the Trump administration has created through its stepped-up ICE and border patrol efforts.

"We're holding this rally in support and solidarity with the people of Minnesota," Patterson said.

"This is an extremely relevant situation, not just in Minneapolis or Chicago or LA," he added. "We've seen it happen here in Anchorage."

Amid an immigration crackdown across the United States, ICE detained significantly more people in Alaska between January 2025 and January 2026 than in years prior. Over the past year, 99 people have been taken into custody by ICE and held in Alaska jail facilities, compared to 13 in all of 2024.

"I feel removed here in Alaska, but it's real," said Anchorage resident Gretchen Nelson, 68, who held a hand-painted sign that read "Make ice for hockey again" on Friday.

"U.S. citizens have rights, and they are being trampled," Nelson said. "I'd expect my D.C. reps to be doing something."

BELLA BIONDINI / ADN

Mary Schallert holds a "Taxes 4 Healthcare, NOT ICE" sign as Anchorage residents gathered near the Delaney Park Strip for a "From Alaska to Minnesota: A Day of Truth and Freedom" rally led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation Anchorage on Friday.

Standing down the street, Taylor Borgfeldt, 32, agreed. She wore a cardboard sign that shared the phone numbers of Rep. Nick Begich, Sen. Lisa Murkowski and Sen. Dan Sullivan.

Her friend, Peter Werts, 39, raised his sign as cars sped past.

"I want to make sure that our immigrant community in the city and the state knows that people are going to stand up and have their backs," Werts said.

State lawmakers discuss ICE activity

In Juneau on Friday, two Anchorage lawmakers also weighed in on ICE activity in Minnesota during a House floor session.

Democratic Rep. Andrew Gray, a veteran of the Alaska National Guard, spoke critically of ICE's activities in Minnesota, including reports that ICE officers have detained U.S. citizens.

On Jan. 18, Gray on social media had called for Defense Department officials to appear in Juneau before the Legislature's Joint Armed Services Committee to provide more details after reports that Alaska-based troops from the 11th Airborne Division were told to prepare for possible deployment to Minnesota.

"Who really needs the protection? Is it ICE agents, or is it the people who are terrified to leave their homes to go to work to pick their kids up from school, or to actually show up at their immigration appointments?" Gray said on the House floor Friday.

Republican Rep. Jamie Allard, a U.S. Army veteran, said she had written to Brig. Gen. John P. Cogbill, commanding general of the 11th Airborne Division, to reinforce that "active-duty commanders are not subject to the Legislature's subpoenas."

"I support what we are doing in our country to settle the unrest," Allard said.

The Daily News' Elizabeth Harball contributed to this report.

ENERGY

# Officials report no major injuries as massive drilling rig topples over on North Slope

**Anchorage Daily News**

A massive drilling rig operating on ConocoPhillips' behalf toppled over while traveling along a gravel road on Alaska's North Slope on Friday afternoon, local and company officials said.

No one was seriously injured and all personnel were accounted for in the incident, which occurred around 4:45 p.m. Friday and involved the Doyon 26 rig, ConocoPhillips Alaska and the North Slope Borough said in a joint prepared statement.

ConocoPhillips said Saturday that eight people — two who were on the rig during the incident and six initial responders — had received medical treatment at clinics nearby and were released.

The resulting fire after the rig toppled over was "contained and controlled" as of Friday evening with emergency responders at the scene, according to their statement.

ConocoPhillips and the borough said that "there was no damage to local community infrastructure and no impact to pipelines or fuel transportation."

By Saturday afternoon, the response had shifted to "an environmental impact assessment and mitigation effort," with traffic flow resuming, ConocoPhillips Alaska said.

Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy wrote on social media that he has "been in contact with ConocoPhillips leadership" and that there "appears to be minimal damage to the environment" so far.

JUDY PATRICK / ConocoPhillips Alaska

The Doyon 26 rig in the Fiord West Kuparuk resevoir in February 2019.

ConocoPhillips was "working on plans to recover the rig," he wrote.

The Doyon 26 rig, which is nicknamed "The Beast" and was ordered by ConocoPhillips in 2016, set a long-distance drilling record in Alaska in 2022 and helped the producer unlock oil from a section of western North Slope oil fields.

At 9.5 million pounds, it was hailed as the largest mobile land rig in North America with the ability to develop about three times as much area as conventional rigs.

The rig was built, owned and operated by Doyon Drilling, which is owned by Doyon, an Alaska Native regional corporation.

ConocoPhillips said Saturday that Doyon Drilling "is leading response and recovery efforts under a Unified Command structure including representatives from the State of Alaska, the Federal Government and the North Slope Borough."

Photo by Anchorage Fire Department

Anchorage Fire Department crews respond to a fire at a mobile home in East Anchorage early Friday. One person and several pets were found dead after the fire, the department said.

ANCHORAGE

# Person and dogs found dead after mobile home fire in East Anchorage

**Anchorage Daily News**

Firefighters responding to an early-morning fire Friday at an East Anchorage trailer home found a person and multiple pets dead inside, according to the Anchorage Fire Department.

The department was called to the Malaspina Trailer Court at about 3:15 a.m. Firefighters arrived to find the rear of the mobile home engulfed by the fire, spokeswoman Megan Peters said. Anchorage police also responded, she said.

Firefighters found a deceased person inside after entering the structure, which was filled with thick smoke, according to the department.

The adult victim was taken to a hospital by medics and later pronounced dead, Anchorage Police Department spokesperson Amanda Brimanis said.

"Firefighters did their best to revive the victim after they were located, but efforts were ultimately unsuccessful," Peters said.

Multiple dogs were also found dead inside the home, she said.

Hot embers were still being found hours after the fire was extinguished at about 6:30 a.m., according to the fire department and Peters.

The origin and cause of the fire had not yet been determined, the department said. Peters said an investigator was on the scene as of Friday morning.

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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 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. at jana@sfwcounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

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Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals LLC located at 1220 W. International Airport Rd Anchorage is applying for a no premises transfer of a Package Store AS 04.09.230 liquor license to Circle K Stores Inc.

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.

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ALASKA LEGISLATURE

# Homer Rep. Vance faces ethics probe over official letter pressuring newspaper

**Eric Stone**
Alaska Public Media

The Alaska House of Representatives' ethics committee has launched an investigation into whether Homer Republican Rep. Sarah Vance illegally used state resources when she successfully pushed the local newspaper to remove and revise a story.

Vance objected to a Homer News article about a vigil she helped organize after the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. The article described Kirk's views as "racist and controversial" and said Kirk promoted conspiracy theories.

Vance accused the paper of "hate-baiting" and raised concerns about the impact of what she called the newspaper's "partisan spin" on the paper's financial viability. She listed her objections in a letter on state letterhead that she posted to her official Facebook page.

The newspaper's owner, Alabama-based Carpenter Media Group, then removed, revised and reposted the story without the reporter's byline. Carpenter, now the U.S.'s fourth-largest newspaper operator, told the Columbia Journalism Review that the article did not meet its standards.

State law prohibits legislators from using public resources for "nonlegislative" or partisan political purposes.

The House Subcommittee of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics said it had received "numerous complaints" about Vance's conduct and that the allegations, if true, would violate state ethics laws. It opened an investigation in November and determined the scope of its review on Jan. 15.

"There is credible information to indicate that further investigation and proceeding is warranted," reads a portion of a document outlining the investigation obtained by Alaska Public Media.

Two lawmakers serving on the committee — Republican Rep. Kevin McCabe and independent Rep. Alyse Galvin — declined to comment on the investigation.

The Homer News reporter who wrote the Kirk vigil article, Chloe Plezmac, now works as the communications director for the Alaska House majority coalition.

In an interview, Vance defended the move and said she was asking to have the complaint dismissed.

"I believe that I was acting within my legislative duties," Vance said.

Vance said she was aware of advisory opinions from the ethics committee covering "many examples of similar instances," including one that allowed the use of state letterhead for political endorsements.

In a 1984 opinion, the ethics committee said it was not a violation of ethics laws to use official letterhead to endorse a candidate for office. However, lawmakers have significantly tightened state ethics laws since then, including in 1998, when the Legislature explicitly prohibited lawmakers from using state resources for partisan political purposes.

Ethics committee investigations are typically confidential, but Vance waived that protection in the interest of transparency, she said.

"I consider this a form of lawfare, using the ethics committee against me for something that they disagreed with," she said.

The committee is asking Vance to provide copies of her communications with Carpenter Media, an explanation of the "legislative purpose" of the letter and why it was posted to her official social media account on state letterhead, how the letter was drafted, and what funds were used to draft and distribute it.

Vance's letter and Carpenter's response led to an exodus of editorial staff at the company's three Alaska newspapers, including its top editor in the state, and indirectly to the creation of a new nonprofit online news outlet, the Homer Independent Press.

Vance applauded the new outlet.

"We need local journalism," Vance said. "People in the community have come together and said, 'We want a local paper to talk about local issues,' and I fully support that, because we need that local voice in our small community."

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FROM PAGE A1

## FISCAL PLAN

peak at around $970 million by his own estimate — the state would still be left with annual budget deficits, according to the Legislature's chief financial analyst, Alexei Painter.

Painter told lawmakers this week that Dunleavy's plan would leave the state with a deficit of $200 million to $300 million per year after paying for basic state services and the dividend, even before accounting for a backlog in maintaining state facilities estimated in the billions of dollars.

By the governor's own long-term projection, his plan would leave the state with an annual deficit through most of the coming decade.

Dunleavy's office paid researchers at the University of Alaska Anchorage $90,000 last year to redo a 2016 study that compared the effects of various methods of balancing Alaska's budget, including imposing a sales tax or an income tax, increases taxes on industry, reducing the size of the state workforce or budget, or cutting the dividend.

The 2016 study was itself modeled after a similar 1987 study conducted by researchers at UAA's Institute of Social and Economic Research.

After most lawmakers spent more than an hour Thursday listening to ISER researchers present their recent findings, Dunleavy's plan appeared to have few cheerleaders among them.

"Obviously, I'm not a big fan of doing broad-based taxes to give people larger dividends. It's never been my position," said Rep. Will Stapp, a Fairbanks Republican, after attending the presentation.

The House Finance Committee, of which Stapp is a member, is set to hear an initial presentation on the governor's bill Thursday, followed by public testimony on the bill later in the day.

Already House Finance Co-Chair Andy Josephson, an Anchorage Democrat, said Dunleavy's plan is "going to be a non-starter" because it fails to ensure Alaska's budget can be balanced both in the short and in the long term.

Josephson said that there could be support among lawmakers for specific elements of the governor's plan, like raising the minimum tax rate on oil production. But Dunleavy has made clear to lawmakers that he sees his plan as an all-or-nothing offer.

That is a difficult bargaining position for a governor who is in his final months in office, Josephson said.

"It's like a five-course meal but all I'm going to give you is the salad — you don't get the entree or dessert. Well, maybe it's a really good salad," said Josephson.

Outside the Capitol, the governor's plan was met with a mixture of concern and outright dismissal. The Alaska Municipal League, which represents over 100 jurisdictions in the state that already levy local sales taxes, was quick to point to the disproportionate impacts of a statewide sales tax on residents of cities and boroughs that already fund local services with sales taxes.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Association released a statement two days after the bill was introduced opposing any increases to taxes on the industry and claiming Dunleavy's plan could jeopardize future investment in resource development in Alaska, including the construction of a long-sought natural gas pipeline.

"It's no surprise in this room that there are concerns with the fiscal plan, as we see some pretty targeted taxes on industry," said Kati Capozzi, president of the Alaska Chamber, in an onstage exchange with Dunleavy on Wednesday. "I assume that you're probably not even making yourself happy in this sort of a fiscal plan."

ISER researchers found that increasing taxes on industry, including on oil and gas production, would have the smallest impact on Alaskans' income and jobs when compared with other alternatives, such as a sales tax, income tax or cuts to state services.

Dunleavy said the new revenue he is asking to raise from oil and gas companies is "a small touch" — peaking at less than $200 million annually in new revenue, compared with the sales tax, which he projected would eventually raise more than $800 million annually.

"But nonetheless, for any fiscal plan to pass, the people of Alaska have to believe we're all being part of this attempt," Dunleavy told Alaska Chamber members.

In the same presentation, Dunleavy said eliminating the state's corporate income tax would help Alaska compete with other states. The change was not specifically modeled in the ISER study.

"We are at the top of the world — we can't fool ourselves. We are way up here, detached from markets, detached from infrastructure, tough climate," said Dunleavy. "We have to compete with the world. And if we have a 9.4% on the high end corporate tax — that's a tough one for investors to want to get around."

"So we're proposing an elimination several years out so investors can see this happening and then we can compete with Texas and the rest of those states that are doing well," said Dunleavy.

The elimination of the state corporate income tax is set to cost Alaska more than $500 million annually in 2032 and beyond. Dunleavy said that will be affordable thanks to an increase in oil production and a new natural gas pipeline that will bring new revenue to the state, along with increases in revenue from the state's Permanent Fund.

Lawmakers were broadly skeptical of that assertion, and it is not backed by the latest projections issued by Dunleavy's revenue department.

"There seems to be a built-in notion that there's about to be a lot of revenue from a big gas line," said Sen. Jesse Kiehl, a Juneau Democrat. "It has two problems; one is we've been hearing that for decades, and there isn't any yet, and the other is that without some substantial changes to our structure and some of the tax laws, there's not going to be revenue from the big gas line."

Competing with Texas

Dunleavy's ideas are the latest iteration of efforts going back three decades to stabilize the state's revenue stream, which is seen as the most volatile in the nation due to its dependence on the global oil market.

Alaska had a statewide income tax until it was repealed in 1980, following a massive influx of revenue generated by the completion of the trans-Alaska pipeline. Alaska has since been the only state in the union without a broad-base tax that ties the state's revenue to its population.

"In my tenure of seven years, I've seen $120 (per) barrel oil. I've seen $3 (per) barrel oil, and we chase that in Alaska all the time. That doesn't instill confidence in the investor world, and that's what we're trying to fix with this approach," said Dunleavy.

Explaining his choice to fund government with a sales tax, Dunleavy this week pointed to other Republican-controlled resource-rich states that impose similar revenue measures.

In his 50-minute address to the Alaska Chamber on Wednesday, he mentioned Texas eight times.

"What I found is, Texas does not rely on its oil for its government functions. It relies on the sales tax. When you look at Wyoming, it's a sales tax. When you look at South Dakota, it's a sales tax," said Dunleavy.

Dunleavy is proposing a sales tax that would be set at 2% for half the year and 4% the other half. His proposed tax would sunset in 2034.

In Texas, the statewide sales tax is set at 6.25%, and local jurisdictions can add 2% on top of that. Wyoming and South Dakota have statewide sales taxes set at 4% and 4.2%, respectively, in addition to varying local sales tax rates.

The recent ISER study found that a sales tax would be more regressive than an income tax, meaning it would impact those on the lower end of the income distribution more heavily when compared with an income tax, which would place more of the impacts on high earners.

ISER researchers found that the sales tax would distribute more of the burden onto non-residents, when compared with an income tax, by applying to tourists visiting from Outside. Some lawmakers were quick to question that finding, noting the high share of Alaska workers who live outside the state, which could translate to higher revenue from non-residents through an income tax, rather than a sales tax.

Even as House and Senate leaders commended the governor for putting forward a revenue proposal after years of tight budgets, they said it would be difficult to give the governor's plan the kind of careful consideration needed.

The plan comes with less than a year to go until the election, and the Legislature has yet to commission an independent analysis of its various elements, which include a tight cap on increases to state spending.

Lawmakers were also unsure who within the governor's administration would answer their questions on the legislation. The Department of Revenue, which lawmakers view as the authority on the governor's tax proposals, is without permanent leadership.

Former Revenue Commissioner Adam Crum resigned last year, and has since faced scrutiny for investment decisions he made in office. Crum was temporarily replaced by Janelle Earls, who also serves as director of the department's administrative services. The deputy revenue commissioner and tax division director have also departed in recent months, and have yet to be replaced.

FROM PAGE A1

## SHUTDOWN

at risk in the aftermath of a winter storm that sent temperatures in much of the country plummeting to historic lows. Federally backed scientific research will immediately halt.

Military service members, transportation security agents and air traffic controllers will continue to work — unpaid.

But this shutdown may be brief and have limited effects: The Senate on Friday evening approved a bipartisan agreement backed by Trump to pass five major appropriations bills and a temporary funding extension for the Department of Homeland Security.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) has said his chamber will aim to pass the package when lawmakers return early next week, despite frustrations from conservative members of the Republican caucus and skepticism from House Democrats.

"The House is going to do its job," Johnson said Thursday night.

Congress faced a similar situation less than three months ago, when Republicans and Democrats deadlocked over expiring subsidies that made Affordable Care Act health insurance plans less expensive. Without a deal in place to preserve them, Senate Democrats refused to back new spending bills, leading to the longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

Lawmakers eventually brokered a compromise to reopen federal agencies, funding some for the full fiscal year. For others — including the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Labor, Treasury, Health and Human Services and more — Congress set a Jan. 30 deadline to construct a fresh deal.

But the killings of two people in Minneapolis, Renée Good and Alex Pretti, in recent weeks led Democrats to demand new accountability measures for immigration enforcement efforts. They demanded that Republicans break off the bill to fund DHS — which includes ICE and Border Patrol, as well as agencies such as the Transportation Security Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — from other government spending bills, which have broader bipartisan support.

Most Senate Republicans said they were open to negotiating additional oversight for ICE, but at first resisted splitting up the bills, arguing Democrats' demands could be met through an executive order or separate legislation. Senate Democrats struck a deal with Trump to temporarily extend the DHS funding to buy time for additional policy negotiations.

In a social media post Thursday, Trump urged lawmakers of both parties to give the package "a very much needed Bipartisan 'YES' Vote."

But getting the funding agreement through the House may still prove challenging. Republicans control the House by a razor-thin margin, and several House Republicans have said they will oppose any changes to the DHS bill.

"I will not vote for a DHS bill that does not fully fund and empower ICE. Immigration enforcement operations might offend the sensibilities of some of my colleagues. But perhaps they should also show compassion for the families of Laken Riley, Jocelyn Nungaray, and so many other victims," Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) wrote on X, referencing a woman and a child killed by undocumented immigrants. "Those victims lost their right to due process because of men that should never have been here. And now there are politicians demanding we disarm the only agency that could've stopped these senseless murders."

Meanwhile, House Democrats have not committed to supporting the bipartisan agreement struck in the Senate, though they do plan to support the other five funding bills.

"We have to deal with the issue of reining ICE and the Department of Homeland Security in with the fierce urgency of now," House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-New York) told reporters Friday. "A two-week window — we'll evaluate whether that's sufficient time."

If House lawmakers are able to pass the funding package and end the shutdown early next week, lawmakers will turn to finding an agreement on new accountability measures for immigration enforcement operations.

Senate Democrats demanded a list of changes this week, including tightening warrant rules, implementing a code of conduct for ICE and other federal agents, requiring independent investigations of misconduct, removing masks on agents, and requiring they wear body cameras.

"Understand that what we're asking for are what police departments do. It's what your local cop does. It's what any well-trained law enforcement force does," said Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii.) "We're not asking for some progressive wish-list."

Republicans said they would be pushing their own changes in the negotiations, including a crackdown on so-called "sanctuary cities."

Sen. John Neely Kennedy (R-Louisiana) predicted the immigration debate over the next two weeks would "have all of the substance and efficiency of an eighth-grade car wash."

"I'm not going to vote for a bunch of so-called reforms that are designed to cripple ICE, nor do I think my Republican colleagues will," he said. "And I hope I'm wrong on this prediction, but what I smell coming is a long, long shutdown for DHS."

Senators of both parties acknowledge it will likely be challenging to find a compromise. "It's going to be hard, but let's get to it," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska.)

Federal functions necessary for public safety, national security and protecting government property are exempt from shutdowns. Presidents also have broad latitude to keep other agencies open in the absence of funds.

Despite the funding lapse, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection — the main targets of Democrats' outrage — will remain open.

DHS and its subagencies also have access to a $170 billion pool of money approved in the One Big Beautiful Bill, Trump and the GOP's massive tax and immigration law.

Most big social benefit programs, which drive the vast majority of federal spending, will remain open during a shutdown. Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are funded through separate tax receipts, rather than annual appropriations. Mail delivery will also continue; the U.S. Postal Service is generally funded through the sale of postage.

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Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals LLC located at 1220 W. International Airport Rd Anchorage is applying for a no premises transfer of a Package Store AS 04.09.230 liquor license to Circle K Stores Inc.

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.

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Anchorage Daily News - 02/08/2026

MARC LESTER / ADN

School buses are parked in rows at the Anchorage School District's transportation facility early Dec. 5, 2025.

EDUCATION

# Anchorage School District adds days to calendar after weather-related closures

**Tim Rockey**
Anchorage Daily News

After a handful of school closures due to inclement weather this winter, the Anchorage School District has added two days to the school year.

In an email sent to families Thursday, district staff said students will now attend classes on April 17 and May 21 to help make up for the four days students missed in January and February.

The district had already built two additional days into the calendar before the school year started. After four days of closures in December and January, the district then needed to make up two school days to meet the required 170 "contact days" for the year.

The district had slated Friday, April 17 as an "April Closure Day" on a previous version of the school calendar.

The extra day of class in May extends the school year by one day. The last day of school had been scheduled for Wednesday, May 20. Students' last day of classes will now be Thursday, May 21, and teachers' last day will be May 22.

After the area's first major snow dump in November, icy conditions and freezing rain caused the district to close schools twice in one week in early December. Anchorage schools were also closed twice late last month after record-breaking snowfall and freezing rain that followed.

After record-setting snowfall some dubbed "snowpocalypse" in 2022, district officials added two extra days to the calendar, as well as adding 30 minutes to the end of the school day that spring to make up for the equivalent of five school days missed.

ALASKA NEWS

# Almost 1 in 4 Alaska workers doesn't live in the state, new report concludes

**James Brooks**
Alaska Beacon

The number of out-of-state workers in Alaska is continuing to rise and is near an all-time high, according to a new report published this week by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In 2024, almost 23% of non-federal jobs in Alaska were held by someone who did not live in the state. Nonresidents earned roughly $3.8 billion, or about 17% of every dollar earned from a non-federal job.

In some industries, the proportion of nonresident workers was much higher: In 2024, more than four in five seafood processing workers were nonresidents. Among oil and gas workers, 40.5% were nonresidents. Among miners, nonresidents made up 44.2% of all workers, and nonresidents averaged higher wages than residents did.

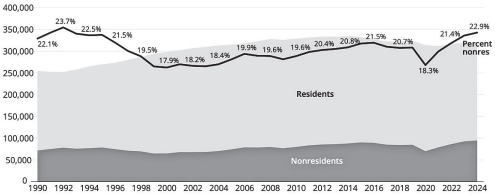
The state has been collecting nonresident worker data since 1990, and the new figures are the second-highest on record, behind only 1992, which used a different job classification system. That year, 23.7% of Alaska workers were nonresidents.

The proportion of nonresident workers has been rising steadily since the COVID-19 pandemic emergency layoffs of 2020.

Rob Krieger, an economist with the Department of Labor, wrote about the new report in an article for this month's Alaska Trends magazine.

He noted that the rise comes amid a decline in the number of Alaskans who are between 18 and 64 years old, what economists call "prime working age."

Nonresident share of workers at highest level since the early 1990s




Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development chart

This chart from the February 2026 edition of Alaska Trends Magazine shows the growth in Alaska's nonresident workforce since the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

From 2013 to 2024, the number of Alaskans in that age range has declined by about 34,000 people, or 7%.

During that stretch, more people have moved out of the state than have moved in, and the state's average age has risen steadily, leading to more deaths and fewer births.

"It's pretty clear that is kind of what's contributing to what we're seeing with employers having to rely heavily on nonresidents," he said.

"Every industry now is starting to lean more heavily on nonresidents, including ones that have historically not. Even things like state government and local government, we're starting to see more nonresidents," Krieger said.

In most industries, nonresidents earned less than residents did because nonresidents tended to hold seasonal jobs.

Across the state, nonresidents averaged $16,302 in wages for any given quarter of the year. Residents averaged $16,531, indicating that nonresidents and residents were generally paid about the same.

Gunnar Schultz, a Department of Labor analyst who compiled this year's report, said the numbers are based on unemployment insurance reports filed by employers with the state. Alaska requires employers and employees to pay into the state's unemployment insurance fund.

Those numbers are then contrasted with Permanent Fund dividend applications.

"Did you apply for a 2024 PFD or 2025 PFD? If you applied for neither, you're a nonresident," he said.

Alaska had almost 15,500 federal workers in 2024; those aren't included in the report, nor are members of the military and self-employed Alaskans.

That last category includes many commercial fishermen.

The report separately analyzed those jobs, and based on permit data and other information, "nonresidents were an estimated 49 percent of the harvesting workforce, which includes permit holders and their crew, and nonresidents took in 57 percent of gross harvesting earnings."

Originally published by the Alaska Beacon, an independent, nonpartisan news organization that covers Alaska state government.

CRIME & COURTS

# Utah man enters guilty plea in long-delayed 2019 Homer kidnapping and murder case

**Michelle Theriault Boots**
Anchorage Daily News

A Utah man accused of the murder of a vulnerable woman who was abducted from the streets of downtown Homer in 2019 has pleaded guilty in her death, more than six years after Anesha "Duffy" Murnane went missing.

Kirby Foleni Calderwood, 36, pleaded guilty to one count of second-degree murder in a Kenai courtroom Thursday, with family and friends of Murnane watching.

Murnane, who family described as quiet, gentle and a talented preschool teacher, went missing Oct. 17, 2019, as she walked to a doctor's appointment along a main road in Homer. Family and friends launched months of searches for the 38-year-old, who struggled with mental illness but had been living a stable life in her hometown. Calderwood had once worked as a direct service provider at the supportive living apartments where Murnane had lived.

"Duffy," as she was known in Homer, was missing for years. It wasn't until May 2022 that the Homer Police Department arrested and charged Calderwood in her murder, after his then-wife sent a tip to police saying he'd shared gruesome details of the crime. By then he'd moved to Ogden, Utah.

Calderwood has been held at Wildwood Correctional Center in Kenai since his arrest in 2022, according to the Alaska Court System. His sentencing is scheduled for July 1.

Photo courtesy family

Anesha Murnane

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Calderwood pleaded guilty to one count of second-degree murder. The other eight charges he faced, including first-degree murder, sexual assault, kidnapping and tampering with evidence, will be dropped. The agreement calls for him to serve 87 years of active prison time, with eligibility for parole two-thirds of the way through.

Murnane's stepfather, Ed Berg, said he was satisfied with the plea agreement in an interview Friday. He and other family members were concerned about a trial that would put a spotlight on the specifics of the crime.

"The details of the crime that would be brought out in full gore in a trial situation — the public doesn't need to know that," Berg said.

Had the case gone to trial, he said, there was always the possibility of Calderwood being acquitted.

"We didn't want that risk," Berg said. "This person is a serious psychopath and just shouldn't be allowed in the public."

According to a version of facts agreed to as part of the plea deal, Calderwood admitted to picking Murnane up and driving her to a vacant home nearby.

"There, Calderwood, intending to cause serious physical injury to Murnane, assaulted Murnane and caused her death. He later disposed of her body," the stipulation of facts says. "A forensic examination of the crawlspace of the residence revealed evidence, including blood and DNA, matching Murnane."

Calderwood "specifically admits and stipulates that intending to cause serious physical injury, or with knowledge that his conduct was substantially certain to cause death or serious physical injury to Murnane, he caused Murnane's death."

Murnane's remains have never been recovered.

The stipulated version of facts didn't address some of the allegations included in the original charges, such as that Calderwood tortured and sexually assaulted Murnane before her death.

Berg said he was satisfied with the terms of Calderwood's plea agreement.

"He's admitted to the substance of the case," Berg said.

Michael Huelsman, Murnane's uncle, wrote in a statement that the Homer community had joined the family on what has been a long path through the criminal justice system.

In recent years, a group of "court watchers" has been attending proceedings on the family's behalf, hoping to maintain pressure and visibility on the case, which was coming up on four years since Calderwood's arrest without a trial or plea agreement.

"The long delay in her case shows a failure of the criminal justice system," Huelsman wrote. "Delayed justice is denied justice — and it also wastes taxpayer money."

Alaska needs a criminal justice system that investigates crimes "more quickly, thoroughly, and professionally, so that more offenders are held accountable without years of delay," his statement said.

Murnane's mother, Sarah Conor Murnane Berg, died of cancer in 2024, without seeing a resolution in the case.

"Cancer or heart disease will be on the death certificate," she wrote in a self-composed obituary. "But we all know that the real cause was the loss of my dear Duffy."

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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.

Sima Enterprises, LLC, doing business as Cannabaska, located at 521 W Tudor Road, Unit 201, Anchorage, AK 99503 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license #10236 to Northernlight055 LLC doing business as Cannabaska.

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 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. at jana@dwcounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

No Limit, LLC, doing business as Cannabaska Concentrates, located at 521 W Tudor Road, Suite 203, Anchorage, AK 99503 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Marijuana Concentrate Manufacturing Facility (3 AAC 306.500(b)(2)), license #25205 to Northernlight101 LLC doing business as No Limit.

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 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. at jana@dwcounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

CbaSim, LLC, doing business as Cannabaska, located at 217 E. 4th Avenue, Suite D, Anchorage, AK 99501 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license #10254 to Northernlight770 LLC doing business as Cookies.

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 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. at jana@dwcounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Crystal Cruises USA, LLC is making application for a new common carrier dispensary AS 04.09.260 liquor license doing business as Crystal Symphony located at Alaska Waters. 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.

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