

From: Senator George Rauscher sen.george.rauscher-akleg.gov@shared1.ccsend.com
Subject: The latest news for you
Date: April 24, 2026 at 5:54 PM
To: d29@mtaonline.net



The 34th Alaska State Legislative Session April 2026 Update

**Sutton/ Valdez / Chickaloon / Eureka / Greater Farm Loop / Fishhook/
Sheep Mountain / Glacier View / Kings Lake / Anderson-Clear / Big Lake/
Cantwell/ Denali Park / East Schrock / Healy / Houston / Knik Goose Bay
No. 4 / Trapper Creek / Susitna / Talkeetna / Willow**



Today marks the 95th Day of the legislative session. Earlier this week, the Senate considered and voted on the capital budget reported from the Senate Finance Committee. The Senate added \$247 million to the budget, up \$88 million from the Governor's proposed budget of \$159 million. Numerous projects benefiting District 30 were incorporated into the budget which included allocations for the West Susitna Access Road. On the Senate floor, I offered an amendment for District 29 to include funding for the UAA Prince William Sound College Campus Renewal project in Valdez that would address critical deferred maintenance needs at the campus, including upgrades to fire alarm systems and improvements to the hydronic heating infrastructure. The amendment was not adopted, failing by a vote of 7-12. The capital budget passed the Senate unanimously by a vote of 19-0 and was referred to the House Finance Committee for further consideration where it will continue to be heard next week.

Also on the Senate floor this week was HJR 14, a resolution by Representative McCabe from District 30, which urges the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Spur and the Northern Rail Extension. I spoke in support of this resolution, as it would advance Alaska's strategic infrastructure and reaffirm the state's role in strengthening America's economic resilience, national defense, and Arctic leadership.

This discussion coincided with an announcement from Governor Mike Dunleavy later that day that Alaska had secured over \$115.4 million in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Port Infrastructure Development Program, with seven projects selected across Alaska. The funding will support critical upgrades to port infrastructure, improve freight movement and safety, and strengthen supply chains in communities from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to Southeast Alaska, including \$34 million to expand Port Mackenzie.

Senate Resources

This week, the Legislature continued work on CSSB 280, the Governor's oil and gas property tax bill. Originally, SB 280 was designed as a project-forward proposal to build a long-awaited natural gas pipeline by creating a competitive, workable tax structure. However, the newly adopted committee substitute, now incorporating Senate Resources' SB 275, represents a significant shift in approach and is increasingly being viewed as a non-starter.

Testimony from local officials and industry representatives, including the Alaska Oil and Gas Association (AOGA) and the Resource Development Council (RDC), highlighted serious concerns with the direction of the new bill.

One of the most notable changes is the restructuring of the Alternative Volumetric Tax (AVT). Under the original SB 280, municipalities retained the authority to levy these taxes themselves, ensuring local control and direct community benefit. In contrast, the new CSSB 280 shifts that authority to the state, with the department levying the tax and the legislature appropriating the revenue. This change raises concerns about reduced local input and uncertainty around how funds will ultimately be distributed.

Additionally, the bill introduces new taxpayer disclosure requirements that have drawn significant scrutiny. As currently framed, these provisions could require the sharing of sensitive pricing and financial information among competitors. Depending on implementation, this raises legitimate antitrust concerns and could expose companies to legal and competitive risks, further discouraging participation in an already challenging project.

The updated version also includes a new income tax on the developers with more than \$1 million in taxable income. This will increase the cost by over \$810 million. If the project doesn't pencil out because of these and other added cost, then we will have to go overseas for gas which will cause an increased cost to ratepayers. Stakeholders emphasized that this provision has not undergone sufficient vetting or independent economic modeling, leaving unanswered questions about its structure, its targeted and potentially retroactive nature, and its overall impact on project viability.

While there is general support for encouraging the use of in-state contractors and suppliers, testifiers cautioned that making such provisions mandatory could create additional barriers rather than incentives, ultimately undermining the goal of completing the project.

At its core, the concern is straightforward: Alaska cannot afford to make this project economically unworkable. A more competitive, predictable tax structure is essential to moving a gas line forward. If the project does not pencil out, it will not be built, and the state will lose out on the long-term revenue and energy security benefits it promises.

SB 230 Jonesville PUA was heard in the House Resources Committee earlier this week after passing the Senate. A second hearing is scheduled for next week on Friday, May 1st at 1 pm in the House Resources Committee. The bill would correct statutory boundary language in the Jonesville PUA to add a section of land that was inadvertently left out of the original legislation that passed in 2018.

Read the bill here:

[SB0230A](#)

SB 228 the Opioid Awareness Program bill was heard for a second time and passed out of the Senate Education Committee today. The committee adopted a Committee Substitute (CS), which included an uncodified section of law pertaining to the use of national opioid settlement funds for development and implementation of the proposed opioid abuse awareness and prevention curriculum. The bill would require the Department of Education & Early Development to develop the curriculum for students in grades 6 through 12. School districts would be required to teach the curriculum annually, during or in close proximity to Red Ribbon Week in October.

Read the bill here:

[SB0228A](#)

HB 17 the Disabled Veterans and Retirement Benefits bill was heard in the Senate Finance Committee last week. A second hearing has not yet been scheduled. Veterans who are deemed totally and permanently disabled by the VA may face significant challenges in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment due to their service-connected disabilities. The bill seeks to promote income stability for our veterans by allowing eligible veterans to access their accrued PERS retirement benefits without penalty, regardless of age, upon receiving a 100 percent disability rating from the VA. In doing so, the bill recognizes and supports those who have made profound sacrifices in service to our nation.

Read the bill here:

[HB0017A](#)

Mat-Su Career & Technical High School Students



Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Mat-Su Career & Technical High School students who traveled to Juneau to gain firsthand insight into the legislative process. During their visit, we discussed how decisions made in Juneau directly impact communities across Alaska. I appreciated the opportunity to share perspectives on public service and policymaking.

Valdez High School



Today, I met with students from Valdez High School who traveled to Juneau to participate in the Alaska Association of Student Government Spring Conference. During our meeting, we discussed several pieces of legislation as well as my responsibilities and experiences serving in the Alaska State Senate. I appreciated the opportunity to hear their perspectives, answer their questions, and engage in a thoughtful dialogue about the legislative process. It was a privilege to meet such engaged and motivated young leaders, and I commend them for their active participation in civic affairs.

As always, my door is always open if you have any questions, concerns, or comments. If you want to set up a meeting, please contact my office at 907-465-4859 or send me an email to sen.george.rauscher@akleg.gov.

Community Contacts

Mat-Su Borough
Edna DeVries, Mayor
907-861-8682
Edna.DeVries@matsugov.us

Palmer
Jim Cooper, Mayor
425-736-7175

Wasilla
Glenda Ledford, Mayor
907-373-9055
mayor@cityofwasilla.gov

Valdez
Dennis Fleming, Mayor
907-835-4313
dfleming@valdezak.gov

Denali Borough
Chris Noel, Mayor
907-683-1330

dbgov@denaliborough.com

Big Lake Community Council
Jodi Riddell, President
907-414-3359
jlayne74@hotmail.com

Chase Community Council
Mike Woods, Chair
907-354-5815
mollyhops@mac.com

City of Anderson
Katie Griebel, Mayor
907-582-2500
coaclerk2@mtaonline.net

City of Houston
Carter Cole, Mayor
907-892-6869 .ext 206
ccole@houston-ak.gov

Louise, Susitna, Tyone Community Association
Jake Anders, President
907-727-4276
alaskananders@yahoo.com

North Lakes Community Council
Rod Hanson, President
907-841-8735
president@nlakes.cc

Point MacKenzie Community Council
Jim Mills, President
907-519-4036
ak.jamills@gmail.com

Talkeetna Community Council
Jonathan Korta, Chair
907-203-2532
jon@talkeetnacouncil.org

Trapper Creek Community Council
Jay Kresge, Chair
907-982-4483
jkresge101@gmail.com

Willow Area Community Organization
Tryg Erickson, Chair
waco_chair@waco-ak.org

Sutton Community Council
Earl Houser, Chair
Suttoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Chickaloon Community Council
Jeff Myers, Chair
907-707-6943
info@chickalooncc.com

Glacier View Community Council
Rodney Mays, President

(907) 232-1713
glacierviewakcc@gmail.com

Fishhook Community Council
Joe Irvine, President
907-355-2213
FHCC.AK@gmail.com

Chitina Native Corporation
Jason Hart, President
907-823-2223
info@chitinacorp.com

Copper Valley
Ahtna Intertribal Resource
Anne Thomas, Chair
907-822-4466
connect@ahtnatribal.org

Cheesh'na Tribal Council
Marilynn Beeter, Chair
907-822-3503
www.Cheeshna.com/contact/

District O Legislative Information Office (LIO) Contact Info

Mat-Su LIO
907-376-3704 / 855-376-3704 (toll free)
LIO.Mat-Su@akleg.gov
<http://matsu.akleg.gov>

Glennallen LIO
907-822-5588/ 855-822-5588 (toll free)
LIO.Glennallen@akleg.gov
<http://glennallen.akleg.gov/>

Valdez LIO
907-835-2111/ 855-835-2111 (toll free)
LIO.Valdez@akleg.gov
<http://valdez.akleg.gov/>

Fairbanks LIO
907-452-4448/ 855-552-4448 (toll free)
LIO.Glennallen@akleg.gov
<http://glennallen.akleg.gov/>

Session Contact (January 20th- Mid May)
State Capital, Room 419
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-4859
Toll-free: 888-465-4859



Senator George Rauscher | 120 4th St | Juneau , AK 99801 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)