



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

April 24, 2024

Submitted electronically via: Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Re: Support funding for Alaska Resource Education

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Hoffman, Senator Olson, and Senator Stedman Edgmon, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Resource Development Council for Alaska (RDC) writes in support of fully funding Section 31(f) of CSHB 268(FIN)am(brf sup maj fld), the fiscal year 2025 operating budget, which would provide Alaska Resource Education (ARE) with a \$1 million grant for expanding statewide workforce development initiatives for fiscal years ending June 30, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

RDC is a statewide, non-profit trade association founded in 1975. Our membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's fishing, tourism, forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries and includes Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

ARE serves as a critical component for shaping Alaska's future workforce by educating students on industries that are providing quality, in-state career opportunities. In the last five years ARE has provided training to over 40,000 students in Alaska, using a comprehensive curriculum that includes topics on forestry, rocks and minerals, mining, energy and electricity, oil and gas, renewable energy, economics and energy costs, and careers and training. I have personally seen the difference that ARE is making in the lives of Alaska's future workforce through programs like the Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (P.O.W.R) program which provides high school girls across the state exposure to the many careers available in natural resource industries and encourages them to become innovative problem solvers.



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State funding for ARE is crucial for the organization to continue providing the important resource education programs that are shaping Alaska's future workforce. RDC urges you to fully appropriate the funding for ARE in the fiscal year 2025 operating budget. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Leila Kimbrell
Executive Director



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