

May 20, 2021

Anna MacKinnon
Acting Director, Permanent Fund Dividend Division
Alaska Department of Revenue
P.O. Box 110460
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0460

Dear Ms. MacKinnon,

The Alaska Chamber (the Chamber) writes in support of the proposed change to the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend **(1) 15 ACC 23**, pertaining to allowable absences for those in the United States merchant marine program; and eligibility requirements for the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) raffle for education purposes.

The Alaska Chamber has served as the voice of Alaska business since 1953. The only statewide membership organization representing all business sector in Alaska, the Chamber serves hundreds of businesses from across the state. Our membership shares a common mission: To promote a healthy business environment in Alaska.

The Chamber has a formal policy position to support for clarifying vocational training absences for purposes of receiving PFD benefits. We support the enactment of clarifying changes to the PFD statute in order to assure Alaskans attending training Outside at United States Department of Labor federally registered apprentice programs remain eligible to obtain their PFD provided they have met all other eligibility criteria.

Since 1997, over 700 Alaskans have been recruited, trained, and placed in deep-sea maritime employment by attending the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. In so doing, future employers can be assured the individuals they hire to crew their vessels are thoroughly trained to USCG standards and uniformly meet their security, safety, and competency standards. Furthermore, by recruiting Alaskans for this apprenticeship opportunity companies in the Alaska maritime trade continue to meet their commitment to local hire. Denying PFD benefits to Alaskans, particularly younger Alaskans, while engaged in this required training discourages them from considering this pathway as a great career opportunity.

In closing, the Chamber supports the proposed changes to **(1) 15 ACC 23**.

Regards,



Kati Capozzi, President & CEO
Alaska Chamber

