



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Alex Jorgensen, Communications Director, Alaska AFL-CIO  
[alexj@akafclcio.org](mailto:alexj@akafclcio.org); 907-830-7097

### For Comment:

Joelle Hall, President of the Alaska AFL-CIO  
907-229-3445

## Alaska AFL-CIO Urges House To Vote No on Senate Budget Concurrence Vote

*The legislature must go to a conference committee and adopt a budget which builds for our future. We cannot afford a fiscally irresponsible and bloated budget which sacrifices education investment, among other things, for a completely unsustainable PFD.*

**Juneau** - Yesterday, the Senate passed a budget bill that naively depends upon \$100/ barrel oil prices. Geopolitical circumstances gave us a windfall and could just as easily cause the price of oil to drop this time next year, leaving Alaskans high and dry. The State of Alaska had the funds to create a budget this year that would pay out a healthy PFD and energy rebate, put money into savings, and fund capital projects that move our state forward— all while not overdrawing from state savings.

### President Joelle Hall issued the following statement on behalf of the Alaska AFL-CIO:

“Just like the old expression says, ‘close but no cigar.’ This operating and capital budget represent rational investments which take into account our windfall and keep our state running and growing. However, elected officials, many of whom proclaim to be fiscally conservative, have tainted an otherwise responsible budget by voting for an unsustainable mega-PFD.

Shame on every legislator who has stood in the way of good policy to save a penny, only to throw it all away on an irresponsible dividend.

With this dividend amount, we are draining our savings and putting ourselves at the whim of circumstances outside of our control. If oil prices drop, future legislatures, including every member seeking re-election this year, will have to deal with the consequences.

More importantly, Alaskans will have to deal with the consequences. Jobs, education, public safety, healthcare— they all suffer. A \$5,500 PFD won’t bring new jobs to our state, won’t fund more state troopers, won’t solve our teacher recruitment and retention crisis, won’t improve education outcomes, and won’t allow our much-needed search and rescue teams to operate at full capacity.

If approved, unsustainable dividends like this will only lead us closer to the broad-based tax each legislature has feared for the better part of our state’s existence. \$5,500 dividends set a completely

unrealistic idea as to what is affordable for future dividends. Electorally popular choices today mean electorally unpopular choices tomorrow. Once again, we continue to kick the can down the road.

We implore members of the House to vote against concurrence on the senate's version of the budget. We need to go to a conference committee and adopt a budget and dividend our state can afford."

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