



## **Overview**

Last week saw nearly 90 new bills filed, coinciding with the personal legislation deadline of February 23. Going forward, any new bills must be sponsored by committees rather than individual legislators.

## **Anticipated House Budget Process**

The upcoming schedule for the House budget process is crucial as the state moves towards finalizing its operating budget. Key dates include:

March 4/5 -Subcommittee close-out presentations to House Finance

March 13- Release of the Department of Revenue Spring Forecast

End of March- Passage of the operating budget from House Finance

First or Second Week of April- Operating budget debate on the House floor

By April 10-Transmission of the operating budget to the Senate

## **Fast-Track Supplemental Budget (HB 289)**

In response to the Governor's veto of critical federal highway matching funds last summer, the House devised a fast-track supplemental budget. On Wednesday, HB 289 was passed, incorporating essential provisions for \$70 million in federal highway matching funds. This funding is vital for securing approximately \$700 million in federal dollars to bolster the state's transportation infrastructure.

HB 289 also addresses pressing funding needs for the current fiscal year, which have arisen from unavoidable events such as Typhoon Halong and the SNAP crisis last November. Some of the key allocations in the fast-track supplemental budget include:

- \$40 million to recapitalize the Disaster Relief Fund
- \$129 million to recapitalize the Higher Education Investment Fund
- \$55 million to recapitalize the Fire Suppression Fund

These recapitalizations are critical for ongoing disaster relief efforts and ensuring that scholarships, like those from the Alaska Performance Scholarship, remain uninterrupted. Additionally, the budget addresses necessary investments for cost overruns in state departmental budgets.

The supplemental budget passed the House with bipartisan support, achieving a vote of 24-16. However, it is currently unfunded due to a tight financial outlook and the need for a three-quarter vote to access the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR). As the main savings account, the CBR access requirement was not met, resulting in the supplemental budget being unfunded. This is particularly concerning for the construction industry.

Negotiations are ongoing, with opportunities remaining for members to reconsider their votes regarding funding for the matching federal highway funds. The Senate Finance Committee, followed by the full Senate, will subsequently review the supplemental budget under increasing time pressures.

### **HJR 32: Oversight of Rural Health Transformation Plan**

The House has also introduced HJR 32, which outlines the legislature's intent regarding its role and oversight of the Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP). The intent is to maximize investments in healthcare, ensuring that rural health needs are adequately addressed. Stakeholders are encouraged to stay engaged as developments unfold, especially concerning critical infrastructure and health care funding initiatives.

As the legislature navigates these complex funding and legislative issues, the following weeks will be crucial for both the success of the supplemental budget and the overall budget process.

This week will see close out of the sub committees for the operational budget, more debate on the budget supplemental bill and hearings on proposed energy legislation.

### **HB 78 – Retirement Systems; Defined Benefit Option**

HB 78 is a pivotal piece of legislation aimed at reinstating a defined benefit pension program for state employees in Alaska. This legislative initiative responds to growing concerns regarding employee retention across critical sectors such as education, public safety, and public transportation.

Alaska is experiencing loss of valuable personnel, including teachers, police officers, marine highway staff, and firefighters. Reports indicate that many new employees are choosing to leave Alaska or are hesitant to remain in state employment due to the lack of competitive retirement benefits. As a result, retaining high-quality employees has emerged as a top priority for the Senate Majority.

Current Status: HB 78 has successfully passed through the House and the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee. It is now under consideration in the Senate Finance Committee.

## **Committee Hearings of Interest**

**March 2, 2026**

### **House FINANCE**

01:30pm — ADAMS 519

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET;AMEND;SUPP; APPROP: CAPITAL/FUNDS/SUPP/REAPPROP; Overview: FY27 Governor s Budget by Department of; of Military and Veterans Affairs; Presentation: Disaster Response and Financing; by Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 263](#)
- [HB 264](#)

### **Senate FINANCE**

01:30pm — SENATE FINANCE 532

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

-- Please Note Time Change --; RETIREMENT SYSTEMS; DEFINED BENEFIT OPT.; -- Invited & Public Testimony --; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled; \*\*Streamed live on [AKL.tv](#)\*\*

Bills:

- [HB 78](#)

**March 3, 2026**

### **House FINANCE**

01:30pm — ADAMS 519

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET;AMEND;SUPP; APPROP: CAPITAL/FUNDS/SUPP/REAPPROP; APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET;

Overview: FY27 Governor s Budget by Department of; Transportation and Public Facilities; Presentations;; -Alaska Marine Highway System by Department of; Transportation and Public Facilities; -- Testimony --; Robert Venables, Executive Director, Southeast; Conference; -Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement; Program by Department of Transportation and; Public Facilities; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 263](#)
- [HB 264](#)
- [HB 265](#)

### **Senate COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS**

01:30pm — BELTZ 105 (TSBIldg)

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

REINSTATEMENT NATIVE CORP/RELIGIOUS CORP; -- Testimony --; TRANSFER OF RAILROAD LAND TO WHITTIER; -- Invited & Public Testimony --; AUTOMATED TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMERAS; -- Testimony --; MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS; -- Testimony --; PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT INCREASES; -- Testimony --; MUNI GRANT LAND; MAT-SU BOROUGH TRANSFER; -- Testimony --;

\*\*Streamed live on [AKL.tv](#)\*\*

Bills:

- [HB 126](#)
- [SB 191](#)
- [SB 235](#)
- [HB 13](#)
- [SB 259](#)
- [SB 255](#)

### **Senate TRANSPORTATION**

01:30pm — BUTROVICH 205

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

Presentation: Use of Advanced Construction; Funds and Federal Funds for State Projects by; Department of Transportation and Public; Facilities; \*\*Streamed live on [AKL.tv](#)\*\*

Bills:

(None)

## **March 4, 2026**

### **House FINANCE**

01:30pm — ADAMS 519

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET;AMEND;SUPP; APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET; Presentation: Budget Amendments and Updated; Fiscal Summary by Legislative Finance Division; APPORTION TAXABLE INCOME;DIGITAL BUSINESS; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 263](#)
- [HB 265](#)
- [HB 280](#)

### **Senate RESOURCES**

03:30pm — BUTROVICH 205

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

SULFUR CONTENT OF MARINE FUEL; -- Testimony --; PROHIBIT BOTTOM TRAWLING; -- Invited & Public Testimony --; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled; \*\*Streamed live on [AKL.tv](#)\*\*

Bills:

- [SB 161](#)

## **March 5, 2026**

### **House COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS**

08:00am — BARNES 124

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

ELECTRIC UTILITY: CERTIFICATE OF FITNESS; -- Testimony --; AUTOMATED TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMERAS; -- Invited & Public Testimony --; ALCOHOL SALES: LOCAL OPTION; -- Invited & Public Testimony --; EASEMENTS & RIGHTS OF WAY IN STATE PARKS; -- Testimony --; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 329](#)
- [HB 282](#)
- [HB 155](#)
- [HB 220](#)

### **House FINANCE**

01:30pm — ADAMS 519

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET;AMEND;SUPP; APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET; Overview: FY27 Governor s Budget by Department; of Corrections; Presentation: H.R.1 SNAP and Medicaid; Implementation by Department of Health; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 263](#)
- [HB 265](#)

### **Senate TRANSPORTATION**

01:30pm — BUTROVICH 205

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

No Meeting Scheduled

Bills:

(None)

**March 6, 2026**

### **House FINANCE**

01:30pm — ADAMS 519

Committee Page: [Committee Page](#)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET;AMEND;SUPP; APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET; Closeout Reports; Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

Bills:

- [HB 263](#)
- [HB 265](#)

### **How to Watch Live Committee Meetings**

1. Go to [AKLEG.GOV](http://AKLEG.GOV) at the time of your desired committee hearing
2. Click on the 5th tab to the right, “Live Now”
3. Scroll down to your meeting and select “Watch Now”

Call-In Numbers

- From Anchorage and Juneau: (907) 586-9085
- From anywhere else around the state (toll free): 1-844-586-9085
- Let the operator know which committee hearing you need to be connected to.

How to Watch Previous Committee Meetings

1. Go to [AKLEG.GOV](http://AKLEG.GOV)
2. Click on 4th tab to the right, “Meetings”
3. Click on “Both Schedule” from the menu on the left
4. Make sure your date range is properly reflected in the date boxes on the right side of the screen.
5. Scroll down, find your meeting and click on the “Audio/Video” option on the right side of the screen.