

RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-02
RESOLUTION In Support of Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267

WHEREAS, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) is an industry-driven public body comprised of representatives from business and industry, education, organized labor, and government; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to AS 23.15.580, the AWIB serves as the lead state planning and coordinating entity for workforce development programs and provides policy guidance and recommendations regarding employment training and human resource development in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), created under AS 23.15.620–660, is a statute-based competitive grant program that supports industry-aligned occupational training for Alaska residents; and

WHEREAS, STEP operates through a publicly posted Request for Grant Applications process with structured scoring criteria, cost-per-participant caps, indirect cost limitations, performance-based withholding, and wage outcome verification through unemployment insurance wage records; and

WHEREAS, at least fifty percent of awarded STEP funds must directly benefit participants, and awards are adjusted based on evaluation scores and available funding, demonstrating fiscal discipline and competitive integrity; and

WHEREAS, over the past five fiscal years, STEP applications increased from 27 applicants in FY22 to 46 applicants in FY26, while requested funding nearly doubled and the annual funding gap widened from \$0.4 million to \$4.3 million, demonstrating sustained demand and continued competition within available funding; and

WHEREAS, STEP employment outcomes consistently exceed eighty percent one year after exit, with median wages of approximately \$31,000, verified through unemployment insurance wage records; and

WHEREAS, in FY2026, AWIB received approximately \$11.2 million in STEP applications for \$7.0 million in authorized funding, further reflecting demand for industry aligned workforce training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 establish an employer STEP contribution rate of 0.4 percent, with related adjustments to unemployment insurance contribution mechanics; and

WHEREAS, the legislation does not alter the competitive structure, evaluation criteria, statutory reporting requirements, fiscal safeguards, or performance accountability standards governing STEP; and

WHEREAS, strengthening Alaska's workforce pipeline supports employment stability, employer demand for skilled labor, and resident hire in high-demand occupations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Workforce Investment Board supports Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267.

Signed this 24th day of February 2026.



Patrick Rose, Chair

Alaska Workforce Investment Board