



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

# Representative Genevieve Mina

Chair, House Health and Social Services Committee

Member, House Transportation Committee

Member, House Judiciary Committee

*Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack*

### **HB 26 Sponsor Statement**

*"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan."*

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) stewards the state's transportation system as the lead body in developing the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). HB 26 aims to support and secure accessible transportation options for all Alaskans by improving DOT&PF's public engagement process and broadening the study of transportation options across the state.

First, HB 26 seeks to improve DOT&PF's public engagement process in statewide transportation planning. Sufficient collaboration with local and regional entities is federally required to secure funding for transportation and infrastructure projects. HB 26 codifies this federal requirement by specifying that DOT&PF must coordinate with public, Tribal, and community transit programs in their development of Alaska's comprehensive, long-range, intermodal transportation plan (e.g., STIP). In this case, these transit programs refer to programs such as Nome's Tribal Transit Program, Juneau's Capital Transit, Tok's Interior Alaska Bus Line, and Anchorage's People Mover.

Second, HB 26 expands DOT&PF's responsibility to study alternative transportation options by including rural and remote areas. DOT&PF is statutorily responsible for studying alternative means of transportation in Alaska, but they are currently only required to study urban areas. Alternative transportation methods, such as public transportation, are essential for those without a car and who cannot drive. According to a 2022 DOT&PF report on *The Economic Value of Public Transit in Alaska*, Alaskan communities benefit from transit due to increased business sales, reduction of road congestion, less air pollution, and better travel times.

Public transit is often the only transportation option for Alaskans with disabilities, low-income Alaskans, youth, and the elderly. Securing federal funding and improving access to public and community transit is essential to connect all Alaskans to their jobs and communities. HB 26 improves the annual study, reporting, and development of Alaska's multimodal transportation network.

Session: State Capitol Room 416 • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • (907) 465-3424

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