

I had a great afternoon at the Alaska Oil and Gas Association's 2024 Conference. Oil and gas powers Alaska's economy, keeps the lights on, and puts food on the table for thousands of Alaskans. It was a great chance to catch up with the leaders who are working to ensure every family in Anchorage (and Alaska) continues to have access to affordable, reliable power.

October 4, 2024

October is here and I can't believe it! I hope you have had a great week—hopefully not too much raking!

As I discussed last week, in addition to statewide wins like a balanced budget and education funding, the 2024 session ended with some big wins for the Abbott Loop, Huffman/O'Malley, Lower Hillside neighborhoods: 6 of my bills passed and I helped to secure close to \$2 million for some of our district's biggest capital project priorities.

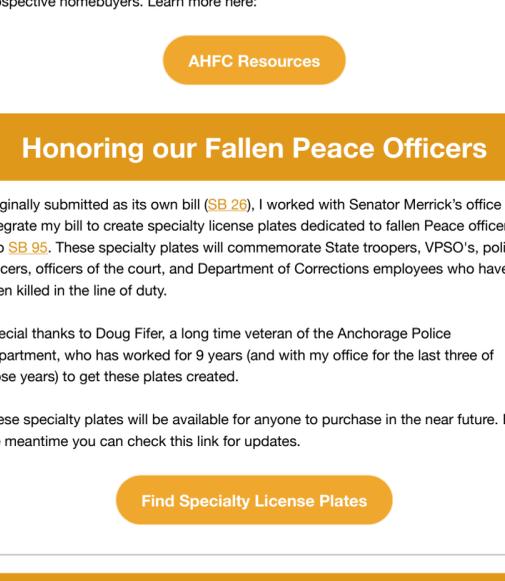
As promised, this is the second installment of my newsletter digging into each of these bills and capital projects. If you missed Part 1, you can [read it here >](#)

As always, if you have any questions just give me a call or send me an email! You can reach me anytime at 907-465-4949 and keep up with day-to-day things on [my Facebook page](#).

Regards,

JK

Welcome to the Team, Maelea!



For the second year, I have the great pleasure of mentoring a talented student through Anchorage School District's Gifted Mentorship Program!

My team and I are excited to have Maelea join us this winter to get a behind-the-scenes look at public service and the legislative process. For the rest of the interim, she'll join us for meetings and at events (as her school schedule permits). Then during session, she will come down to Juneau for a week to see the legislative process up close. We're excited to host her and will be sharing more about what she's up to in the coming months!

It is inspirational to see our young people taking concrete steps toward a future career so young. And a big shout-out to her teachers and mentor coordinator for making the demands of this awesome program work!

[Learn more about ASD Mentorship](#)

Increasing Efficiency to Support Affordable Housing

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation manages over 1600 units of affordable public housing around the state. For many years, AHFC maintenance personnel have relied on shipping containers around Anchorage to meet storage needs for their operations. In the last several years, these containers have become attractive targets for vandalism, break-ins, and theft of equipment and materials. In addition to the safety risks, the burden to maintain these units grows as their units age.

In response to these concerns, I worked with AHFC and my colleagues to enable them to purchase a building (using federal funds) that they can use as a maintenance and training hub. Ownership of a building will enable them to more efficiently plan, stage, and deploy personnel, materials, and equipment to service their properties in Anchorage and statewide (as a containerization hub).

AHFC (as a state-owned corporation) has many resources for renters, landlords, and prospective homebuyers. [Learn more here:](#)

[AHFC Resources](#)

Honoring our Fallen Peace Officers

Originally submitted as its own bill ([SB 26](#)), I worked with Senator Merrick's office to integrate my bill to create specialty license plates dedicated to fallen Peace officers into [SB 95](#). These specialty plates will commemorate State troopers, VPSO's, police officers, officers of the court, and Department of Corrections employees who have been killed in the line of duty.

Special thanks to Doug Fifer, a long time veteran of the Anchorage Police Department, who has worked for 9 years (and with my office for the last three of those years) to get these plates created.

These specialty plates will be available for anyone to purchase in the near future. In the meantime you can check this link for updates.

[Find Specialty License Plates](#)

Helping Alaskans Get Back to Work

There was a growing consensus and recognition that Alaska's reemployment system was not working effectively. Of the hundreds of workers hurt on the job who applied for the reemployment benefits they paid into, less than a dozen few successfully made it through the process and into another meaningful job. Over the last year, I collaborated with the Division of Workers Compensation to craft [SB 147](#) to address the shortcomings of the system and to more effectively reintegrate injured workers back into the workforce.

One of the key aspects of SB 147 is its focus on refining the regulations governing reemployment rights for injured workers. The legislation provides clearer guidelines for employers and better support for their employees—aligning Alaska's system with broader efforts to modernize the reemployment system to meet the needs of our constantly evolving job market.

Through the legislative process and in collaboration with my colleagues in the House, additional provisions were added to the bill, including an extension to [senior benefits funding](#).

SB 147 became law on July 11th and workers should already be able to qualify under the updated program.

[Learn more about Reemployment](#)

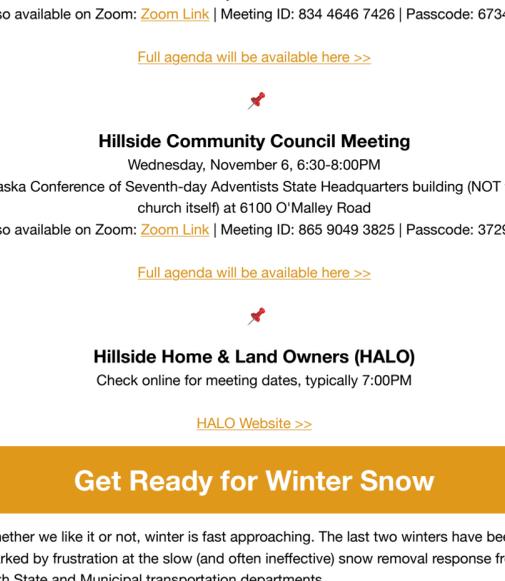
\$1.9 Million for Priority Projects in our District

Purpose	Dollar Amount
Safe Pedestrian Crossing to Service High School and Trailside Elementary School	\$310,837
Safe Pedestrian Crossings for O'Malley Elementary School at Rockridge Drive	\$400,000
Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements for Elmore Intersections at 84th Avenue & Coventry Drive	\$300,000
Hillside LRSA Drainage and Ditching Projects	\$240,000
Disaster Evacuation Routes for the Anchorage Hillside	\$300,000
AK Child and Family Building Improvements	\$389,163
Sum Total	\$1,940,000

The above reflects the final projects and totals after the Governor's vetoes were announced. Please reach out if you have any questions about projects that were vetoed.

For the first time in many years, I worked to secure significant direct funding for our capital project priorities. In total, \$1,940,000 is headed toward various pedestrian safety and road improvement projects that will take place over the course of the next year or two. I talked about two in [Part 1](#) of this newsletter. Today, I will highlight more specifics of the remaining projects so you will know what to expect in the coming months.

Planning for a Safe Pedestrian Crossing for Service High School and Trailside Elementary Schools - \$310,837



Currently, students approaching Service High School and Trailside elementary from the south side of Abbott Road do not have a safe way to access the schools. They have to walk east more than 1/4 mile past the schools to Birch Road, navigate overgrown vegetation and a culvert to access a pedestrian bridge that crosses Abbott Rd, and then walk 1/4 mile back to the school.

This money will go toward planning a safe pedestrian solution to protect students and their families crossing Abbott. The Muni is directed to look to schools with similar issues (Huffman Elementary installed a school zone with lowered speeds, flashing lights and a cross walk) as part of the planning process.

Hillside Community Council and community members have raised concerns about this arrangement for years so I am glad we can start working toward a solution. Reach out if you have questions!

Hillside Draining and Ditching Projects for LRSAs - \$240,000

Limited Road Service Areas (LRSAs) maintain many roads on the Anchorage Hillside that are outside of the Municipality of Anchorage's road service area. While they are able to maintain roads under their jurisdiction, they require funding from the Muni and the state to complete larger needed capital projects.

This session, I worked to secure funding for several LRSA's to complete draining, ditching, and culvert improvement projects that they have needed for years. While there are more LRSA projects in need of funding, this will get a few of the highest priority projects in our district completed.

The last I heard, the final details and amounts to each LRSA are begin finalized. Let me know if you would like any more specific details!

Disaster Evacuation Routes for the Hillside - \$300,000

Maps of current primary and secondary roads (solid red and blue lines) and proposed new primary and secondary roads (dotted red and blue lines) laid out in the Hillside District Plan. As detailed below, this grant directs the municipality to build the highest priority, low-cost evacuation routes identified in the plan.

Many neighborhoods on the Hillside have limited access, steep roads, and unpaved roads making access difficult for emergency vehicles or, for residents to leave in an emergency. Improved connections for emergency access and egress will reduce the impact of limited road access will save lives in the event of a disaster.

This money allows the Municipality of Anchorage to finish prioritization, complete planning, and hopefully begin construction of low cost connections and secondary egress roads that will create disaster evacuation routes in Hillside neighborhoods with limited access. The grant directs the Muni to prioritize areas with high fire risk, areas with potential egress choke points, and isolated neighborhoods.

While this project will not be able to build every evacuation route that is needed on the Hillside, this is a good start. In the future, the state and Muni will be able to pursue future funding with a solid plan for execution.

[Hillside District Plan](#)

Are you concerned about a road or pedestrian safety issue?

The first step to getting funding for a road project is to reach out to your Community Council. Once it is on their priority list, I can work on requesting it in a future state capital budget.

[Find your Community Council](#)

More Student Art in the Capitol!

These talented students from Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School in my district are being featured right now in the halls of the Capitol! It's a joy to have their artwork brighten up the place.

College Students: Intern in the Legislature

Is a friend or relative attending UAA? No matter what the major is, UAA students may serve in a legislative office, earn 12 credits, and gain invaluable work experience that can supercharge their transition to a career after graduation. Encourage your friend or family member attending UAA to apply!

Applications are accepted online and are due at the end of October. Learn more and apply here:

[UAA Internship](#)

I am here to Help!

As always, I want to hear from you! Whether you have an opinion you would like to express or if you need help with anything government-related, please reach out via email or phone call and I will do the best to assist you.

Reach out!

By Phone: **Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm**

By Email: **Anytime!**

P: 907-465-4949 | E: Sen.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov

Find Your Community Council

Huffman/O'Malley Community Council Meeting

Thursday, October 17, begins 7:00PM

In-person at Huffman Elementary School at 12000 Lorraine St

Also available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 941 5287 1929 | Passcode: 320438

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Abbott Loop Community Council Meeting

Thursday, October 17, 6:30-8:30pm

Trailside Elementary School at 5151 Abbott Rd

Also available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 834 4646 7426 | Passcode: 673499

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Hillside Community Council Meeting

Wednesday, November 6, 6:30-8:00PM

Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists State Headquarters building (NOT the church itself) at 6100 O'Malley Road

Also available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 865 9049 3825 | Passcode: 372912

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Hillside Home & Land Owners (HALO)

Check online for meeting dates, typically 7:00PM

[HALO Website >>](#)

Get Ready for Winter Snow

Whether we like it or not, winter is fast approaching. The last two winters have been marked by frustration at the slow (and often ineffective) snow removal response from both State and Municipal transportation departments.

Anchorage Assembly Transportation Committee held a special meeting to get an update from Municipal and State departments on their snow removal plans for this year, and specifically how they are working to improve their response.

[Watch the Full Meeting Here](#)

State Response Plan

Muni Response Plan

ASD Response Plan

[View email in browser](#)

Get ahead of us!

Sen.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov | (907) 465-4949 | [Check out our Website](#)

We still like Snail-Mail:

During Session (January - May): Alaska State Capitol, Room 115, Juneau, AK 99801

During Interim (June-December): 1500 W Benson Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99503

[update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)