

SAMPLE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR ALASKA LONG TRAIL PROJECTS

Please add language specific to the project(s) you are requesting support for and/or modify the language below to personalize the letter.

WHO TO SEND YOUR LETTER:

- 1) Alaska Trails - so that we can add your letter when we submit the projects to the legislature
- 2) your district state legislators and any legislators you have a personal relationship with: [find your legislators](#)
- 3) State Finance committee senate.finance@akleg.gov
- 4) House Finance committee house.finance@akleg.gov

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Recommendations have come from a broad group of partners working together.
- Goal is a world-class multi-braid trail system connecting spectacular Alaskan landscapes and communities from Seward to Fairbanks, attracting Alaska residents and people from all over the world.
- The trail system will incorporate a variety of year-round uses (motorized and non-motorized) along different braids.
- Many sections of the proposed trail already exist or are currently planned, and the route is almost entirely on public lands, enormously reducing the complexity and cost.
- Multiple economic, health, and community benefits.

Date _____

Dear _____

We seek your support for the 21 [Alaska Long Trail](#) (AKLT) projects, submitted into CAPSIS for inclusion in the FY2025 state capital budget to fill key shovel-ready and planning-ready gaps along the length of the planned route.

These projects are part of the planned Seward-to-Fairbanks Alaska Long Trail. The Alaska Long Trail, when complete, will become a world-class trail system connecting 500+ miles of Alaska's iconic terrain and diverse communities from Seward to Fairbanks, embracing the many ways (motorized and non-motorized) Alaskans recreate outdoors and bolstering the Alaska economy by attracting visitors from all over the world.

We want to thank the State Legislature for securing funding for [10 Alaska Long Trail projects in FY2023 and FY2024 state capital budgets](#), totaling \$5.6 Million. We hope that this legislative session you will support the new set of the Long Trail projects, including the four that didn't make it through the vetoes last year.

BENEFITS OF THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL

With some of the world's most stunning wild places, Alaska is overdue in creating a world-class, long trail system of its own. Goals and outcomes of building the trail include:

Economic Development: Outdoor recreation infrastructure is *essential* infrastructure, building on Alaska's global competitive advantage, and supporting local jobs, business opportunities, and a stronger, more durable AK economy. Long trails are potent, proven attractions that will increase the time and money travelers spend in Alaska, growing jobs for residents, spawning business opportunities, and invigorating the economies of trail towns and communities along the route and statewide. If a typical year's out-of-state travelers had reasons to spend one more day in Alaska, the result would be an additional \$250M in annual spending in our state.

Access to Public Lands: “On/off-ramps” to the Alaska Long Trail will help Alaska residents access public lands for a variety of uses. Existing access opportunities are insufficient to satisfy the growing demand for outdoor recreation, whether it is motorized, nonmotorized, hunting, trapping, etc.

Reducing the Backlog of Maintenance: Alaska State Parks has a large and growing backlog of maintenance. Funding for Alaska Long Trail projects has focused on improving existing trails first - reducing this backlog, followed by filling small gaps before taking on large construction projects.

USE & USERS: The goal is a network of routes accommodating a variety of uses, including some braids open to motorized use, and others for non-motorized hiking, biking, and skiing. Some segments may include the Alaska Railroad or, like in Nenana Canyon, with a local rafting guide company. The Long Trail will be an Alaska long trail; a braided, four-season trail system designed for hikers, bikers, skiers, ATV’s, snowmachines, for both day and multi-day use.

OUTDOOR RECREATION IN ALASKA

The Alaska Long Trail project is set against the backdrop of the robust Outdoor Recreation economy. In 2022, the Outdoor Recreation industry in Alaska generated \$2.6 billion in economic output, supported more than 20,000 jobs and accounted for 4 percent of the state’s economy.

- Growth in Alaska’s outdoor recreation economy between 2021 and 2022 was second fastest in the U.S. (after Hawaii) and outpaced the rate of growth of both the state and national economies.
- Total visits to some Alaska State Parks increased 50% from 2019 to 2022.
- Hiking is the fastest growing activity for both air and cruise visitors to Alaska.
- Visitors would spend an additional \$250 million in Alaska if they stayed for “One More Day”.
- Three million visitors a year hike a portion of the Appalachian Trail - a huge potential market for Alaska.

We ask that you support the inclusion of the Alaska Long Trail projects, submitted into CAPSIS, in the FY2025 state capital budget.

Please call or write if you have questions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,