

FY26 ANNUAL REPORT

June 2025-July 2026



**SOUTHEAST
CONFERENCE**

SEC'S MISSION IS TO UNDERTAKE AND SUPPORT
ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE STRONG
ECONOMIES, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND A
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

OUR MISSION

OUR MEMBERS





FY26 ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

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SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Welcome to Southeast Conference

Southeast Conference is a regional, nonprofit corporation that advances the collective interest of the people, communities and businesses in Southeast Alaska. Our goal is to support projects that promote strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska.

As the State-designated Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR) and the federally-designated Economic Development District (EDD) for the region, Southeast Conference takes an active role in regional resource management and economic development planning. We have the ability (and responsibility) to assist municipalities, Tribes and business leaders with community and economic development, workforce training, transportation planning, public infrastructure, affordable housing, disaster recovery and resilience, rural capacity-building, public health, regional planning, and other services. We also work as regional conveners, helping to connect public and private partners in support of community-based initiatives. We also provide technical assistance and assist as needed with project development.

Southeast Conference began 68 years ago with a group of interested leaders, like you, who wished to see the region develop successfully and the ferry system established in Southeast Alaska. After the creation of AMHS, Southeast Conference stayed together to focus not only on transportation issues but on many other concerns unique to the region. Our membership is over 200 strong and now includes nearly every community in Southeast Alaska.

We are surrounded by a sea of change and face uncertainty in the federal government's future participation in our region and state. Our vision is to facilitate enduring connections that enable dynamic, diverse and thriving economies across Southeast. Our award winning Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy provides the foundation for each economic priority and will guide future investments from the public and private sectors.

Southeast Alaska is surrounded by a wealth of resources, from our forests and minerals to our tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities: but our greatest regional resource is our people who are committed and passionate about our mission of vibrant economies, sustainable communities and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

J. Robert Venables

Executive Director

**MISSION- What We do**

SEC's mission is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska.

VISION- Why We do It

To facilitate enduring connections that enable dynamic, diverse, and thriving economies across SE Alaska.

VALUES- How We do It

- *We position Southeast Alaska as an economic leader in the global economy.*
- *We engage community leaders to develop solutions which will enhance the economic sustainability of our region.*
- *We catalyze change and prosperity for our diverse region.*
- *We facilitate visionary and adaptive solutions to sustain our region in perpetuity.*
- *We build trust among our partners.*
- *We respect and celebrate the diversity of our region.*
- *We develop capacity internally and externally to accomplish our mission.*

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Conference became an organization in 1958 to assist in the creation and development of a regional transportation system that eventually became the Alaska Marine Highway System. After that success, the group continued to advocate for key regional issues. Through our membership network and committee process we support local projects that will benefit the region and regional projects that will benefit local communities. Our work has been focused on regional transportation policy and infrastructure; sustainable affordable energy for all Southeast Communities; growth of our marine supply and support industry; support for our fishing and fish processing industry; sustainable timber industry; sustainable food security; and workforce development. We have a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors and more than 200 member organizations and individuals that populate our many committees. We have members from Alaska Native Tribes and Organizations, Communities, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations and Universities in the region.

In 1989 Southeast Conference became the State of Alaska's Regional Development Organization (ARDOR), and in 2002 Southeast Conference became the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration's Southeast Alaska Economic Development District (EDD). The federal designation benefits our membership with reduced match requirement on federal grants, and access to other programs within many federal agencies. The state designation has allowed us to form partnerships with state departments and many other state regional economic development organizations. Both designations require us to have a five-year regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is updated annually. The current priority objectives identified are housing, childcare, energy, mariculture, tourism, and transportation

WEBSITE

On our website, www.seconference.org, users can find upcoming events, current and past publications, committee minutes, and much more. The Articles of Incorporation and IRS recognition as a 501(c) 6 non-profit organization are available for review upon request.

MEMBERSHIP

Southeast Conference's membership is made up of municipalities, federally-recognized tribes, businesses, government agencies, organizations, and individuals located or doing business in Southeast Alaska.

Municipalities, businesses, government agencies, organizations and individuals that are *not* located in the region may become Associate Members, retaining all the rights of full members except voting and introducing resolutions.

THE BOARD

Southeast Conference is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board manages the affairs of the organization between annual membership meetings and meet at the call of the President. They provide direction to SEC staff on implementation of the work plan, and approve any interim resolutions, communications and recommendations from the various ad hoc committees. The Board is comprised of 13 members, of which five must be municipal representatives elected or employed by their communities, or federally-recognized tribal representatives elected or employed by their organization, a minimum of five (5) members must represent the private sector, and three (3) members are members-at-large, representing any member entity. The Directors are elected for a three-year term by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting. The Nominating Committee (comprised of the Past-President and no less than 3 Southeast Conference members-in-good-standing) accept nominations from the membership and verify the qualifications of each candidate. Candidates must meet bylaws requirements. At each Annual Meeting a Second Vice President is elected from the current Board members, which involves a commitment to serve as Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, and then Past-President. Board members are expected to pay membership dues and attend the two membership meetings as well as support the scholarship program with donations to the annual auction.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board President calls meetings and sets the agenda. Committee work is routinely reviewed and acted upon as part of the meeting. Some issues are raised at the Board level without committee referral, at the call of the President, generally because of urgency in timing or prior process already initiated. The Board considers resolutions throughout the year, if they are consistent with direction from membership provided at the Annual Meeting. Most meetings are via zoom. Some action items are dealt with between meetings electronically.

COMMITTEES

Standing Committees are Bylaws and Nominations, ad hoc committees are formed when needed at the call of the President. Ad hoc committee chairperson must be a Board member. Committee membership is limited to members in good standing. Most meetings are conducted as teleconferences and are scheduled at the call of the Chair. The Chairperson is responsible for the agenda. Members in good standing are allowed to offer agenda items to the chairperson. Committee members are expected to review and deliberate on the issues during the meetings and provide recommendations to the Board of Directors. The chairperson then reports to the Board. The Board of Directors has final approval on all committee actions. Requests for letters of support or resolutions are handled in this manner.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Membership Meeting, as required by State law and the Bylaws, is traditionally held in September, in a community other than Juneau (which hosts the Mid-Session Summit each February). Everyone is encouraged to attend, members and non-members alike. New board members are elected, and the location of the next meeting is voted on. The annual report is made available, and an agenda is created, addressing all the current issues before the Conference. At the Annual Business Meeting, the new board members are announced, the 2nd VP is elected, resolutions are voted on, and membership advises the Board on direction for the following year.

MID-SESSION SUMMIT

During the Legislative Session, a membership meeting is convened in Juneau to assess progress on the work plan(s) and to evaluate specific legislative issues. We invite all of our Southeast Legislators and other elected leaders so members can have direct contact with them.



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**PLEASE NOTE:
NEW ZOOM MEETING ID**

**Teleconference number:
click here to connect by
computer or smartphone:**
<https://zoom.us/j/7065344482>

Or call: 1-669-900-6833
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 17, 2025**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am by President Kirkpatrick. Other members present, Markos Scheer, KC Hostetler, Alec Mesdag, Jason Custer, Michael Ganey, and Lacey Simpson. Staff present: Robert Venables and Adrienne Bunten.

Motion/Second to Approve the Agenda by Scheer/Hostetler, passed unanimously.

Motion/Second to Approve Minutes from May 15, 2025, by Hostetler/Scheer, passed unanimously.

President Kirkpatrick stated that all of the federal grants are receiving funds as expected except for the USDA RD SASS program, but the conversations are finally happening and hopefully funds will be coming our way soon. He said annual meeting is coming up and those interested one of our blocks of rooms should send an email asap.

Treasurer Alec Mesdag reported that a more detailed FY 26 budget was reviewed with the majority of the funds moving through the large federal programs, such as BBB and CPRG (ACES). The finance committee feels that SEC has a good, proposed FY26 budget. FY25 is not yet closed due to lagging subawardee reimbursements.

The Executive Director reported that there has been good progress made with USDA, and he is hoping to receive an update on when to expect SASS funding soon. There is approximately +150K in outstanding reimbursements that SEC has been floating for the federal government and much more outstanding to pay once USDA gets caught up. He shared the staff changes including Sarah Woodruff moving on. Cady Lister has taken the statewide position as Executive Director for REAP, but SEC was able to hire Jessie Huff as Energy Program Manager and Aaron Morrison as the new Natural Resource Director.

Venables said the RLF has been approved with primary lenders Spruce Root, Tongass FCU, and Northrim Bank. Part of the delay was the EDA agreeing to our proposed collateral support participation which is different than other EDA RLF's who generally underwrite all their own loans (SEC will work with our member lending institutions).

Jared is in Iowa as a board member for RPO America, and the Board should review her report on Special Projects. AMHS designs are underway for the High Efficiency Ferry.

The Biomass operator train-the-trainer classes are coming up, and there is an extension on the Pellet Mill grant that is may need to pivot locations due to difficulties at the present proposed site.

[Back to Agenda](#)

**Southeast Conference
Board of Directors**

Zakary Kirkpatrick, President

Katie Koester, 1st VP

Gracia O'Connell, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

Lacey Simpson, Past President

KC Hostetler

Liz Cabrera

Dennis Gray

Chelsea Goucher

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Elizabeth Cornejo

Michael Ganey

Old Business:

Amended Bylaws

The proposed amendment would make administrative changes and add the mission, vision and values recently adopted by the board as well as establishing a board seat for the regional tribal president. Motion/Second by Scheer/Custer, approved. A discussion ensued regarding the amendment wording. The approved language stated, "One public seat is to be held by the president or president designee of CCTHIA or its successor." Motion/Second Simpson/Mesdag, approved. The amendment will require a 2/3 membership vote at annual meeting.

New Business:

a) UAS Scholarship Back-up Plan

The SEC Scholarship committee recommended awarding \$1,600 each to three scholarship applicants, however one backed out resulting in an opportunity to distribute the funds between the two remaining recipients. Scheer stated this is an SEC Foundation responsibility.

Motion/Second to Approve tabling the recommendation and send to the Foundation board by Hostetler/Mesdag, approved unanimously.

b) FY26 Budget Approval

Mesdag stated the board had the full FY26 budget overview and the finance committee had reviewed the more detailed version of the budget, which includes such things as benefits, that is not shared publicly. Motion/Second by Mesdag/Scheer, approved unanimously.

c) True North FCU/SEC/Alaska Heat Smart Heat Pump Loan Program

Motion/second by Scheer/Simpson to authorize the Executive Director to obligate \$15,000 to participate in the heat pump loan guarantee program per MOA. Mesdag recused himself due to being a TNFCU Board member. Member Ganey had technical connectivity issues and gave his proxy vote to Scheer. Discussion ensued, and the motion was approved unanimously, with formatting changes, authorizing the Executive Director to transfer and administer funds to the True North FCU Heat Pump program.

d) Memorandum of Understanding between SEC and the SEC Foundation

The auditors asked for evidence of an operating agreement between the SEC Foundation and SEC and the Executive Director provided a draft MOU for board consideration. Mesdag/Hostetler motion/second to approve. Motion/second by Mesdag/Scheer to amend with added reciprocal hold-harmless language and adding 'Recitals' to replace 'Witnesseth' as it is not an amendment. Both motions were approved unanimously.

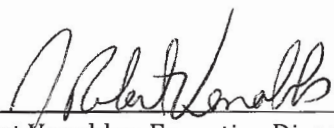
Correspondence:

Provided and shared for the Board's awareness was Governor Dunleavy Executive Orders, IPEC Water Supply LOS, SEC_BC Ferries Proposal, Swan Lake Hydro pre-project from SEAPA, and UA Foundation endowment report for 2024.

Announcements/Board Comments

Custer mentioned funding opportunities coming up in October. Scheer stated he is impressed with the University of Alaska endowment report. Venables thanked Alaska Airlines for their initial \$10,000 that started the scholarship endowment. Kirkpatrick is to inform President Peterson of the approved language. Scheer asked for auction information. The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2025.

Motion/second to adjourn at 12:20pm by Mesdag/Scheer. All approved.


Robert Venables, Executive Director

August 21, 2025
Date

**PLEASE NOTE:
NEW ZOOM MEETING ID**

**Teleconference number:
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computer or smartphone:**
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AUGUST 21, 2025**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 am by President Kirkpatrick. Other members present, Markos Scheer, KC Hostetler, Alec Mesdag, Jason Custer, Liz Cornejo, and Gracia O'Connell. Staff present: Robert Venables.

Motion/Second to Approve the Agenda by Mesdag/Hostetler, passed unanimously. Motion/Second to approve adding Resolution 26-01 and board retreat discussion to the agenda by Mesdag/Kirkpatrick, passed unanimously.

Motion/Second to Approve Minutes from July 18, 2025, by Mesdag/O'Connell, passed unanimously.

President Kirkpatrick stated this is the last time we'll meet virtually before seeing each other in Sitka and looked forward to seeing everyone there. He has been working with the Executive Director on the items that will be discussed later on the agenda.

Finance Report:

Treasurer Alec Mesdag reported May looks good and the June (year-end) financials are being closed out. He said there was going to be a shutdown of the EDA system for BBB which necessitated additional work, along with other year-end adjustments so that the CFO will be able to close the year and prepare for the annual audit in the fall (November-December). Progress is being made on SASS reimbursements. Otherwise, the financials look solid.

Executive Director Report:

The Executive Director gave an overview of his (and staff's) written report including the annual meeting and scholarship auction preparations. Cornejo asked about the status of last year's scholarships. Venables reported that there was \$20,000 transferred to the UA Foundation, with an additional \$16,000 provided to the Southeast Conference Foundation student activities account. Once the new Office Manager hire is in place, they will work with the scholarship committee to create the protocols for distributing those funds.

Venables stated that in the next week or two we should see SASS funds hit the bank account (it's coming from 2 different federal accounts). He said there will be an update in Sitka and gave accolades to the CFO and Keith Perkins for the extra efforts to make this happen.

The Biomass operator train-the-trainer classes are coming up, and there is an extension on the Pellet Mill grant that is may need to pivot locations due to difficulties at the present proposed site.

Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Zakary Kirkpatrick, President

Katie Koester, 1st VP

Gracia O'Connell, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

Lacey Simpson, Past President

KC Hostetler

Liz Cabrera

Dennis Gray

Chelsea Goucher

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Elizabeth Cornejo

Michael Ganey

Since the last meeting, the Executive Director attended PNWER's meeting in Seattle. He reported on efforts to reconnect AMHS with Prince Rupert and shared that he met with USFS Chief, Tom Shultz while he was in town for a roundtable with Senator Murkowski. He saw Senator Sullivan and Congressman Begich who were here for the Storis Commissioning. Venables stated he will be going to DC for the NADO executive committee before Annual Meeting.

Jared is in Iowa as a board member for RPO America, and the Board should review her report on Special Projects. AMHS designs are underway for the High Efficiency Ferry.

Old Business:

The board retreat was discussed, and it was determined that the proposed date of October 9th would not work, and a new date will need to be determined. This will be on the agenda for the new board.

New Business:

The Executive Director introduced Resolution 26-01 updating signers on the First Bank account by adding Dan Lesh and Katie Koester. Motion/second by Cornejo/Scheer, passed unanimously.

Correspondence:

Venables gave an overview of recent correspondence stating that SEC is writing a lot of letters of support for regional projects (included in the board packet).

Announcements/Board Comments

Venables mentioned the next board meeting will be on September 15 at 4pm in Sitka and those who come early should offer to help set up. Hostetler shared about the board's invitation to attend the Alaska Airlines reception at the penthouse on September 15th.

Motion/second to go into Executive Session by Scheer/Custer, passed unanimously at 11:45 am.

The board reconvened at 12:15 and with no further actions to be taken, adjourned.



Robert Venables, Executive Director

Sept. 15, 2025
Date

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 25, 2025**

MINUTES

***Southeast Conference
Board of Directors***

Zakary Kirkpatrick, President

Katie Koester, 1st VP

Gracia O'Connell, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

Lacey Simpson, Past President

KC Hostetler

Liz Cabrera

Dennis Gray

Chelsea Goucher

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Elizabeth Cornejo

Michael Ganey

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by President Kirkpatrick. Other members present, Markos Scheer, KC Hostetler, Alec Mesdag, Chelsea Goucher, Liz Cabrera, Michael Ganey, and Gracia O'Connell. Staff present: Robert Venables.

President Kirkpatrick explained that the meeting was called to determine whether sufficient notice had been provided to the membership to modify the bylaws during the Annual Meeting in Sitka. While notice of a bylaws change was provided in the newsletter, the intent of the bylaws is to have the details of the proposed changes published 30 days in advance.

After much discussion, the general feeling of the board was that these are substantial changes that the membership deserves to have time to consider. It was noted that this could wait until the next Annual Meeting or there could be a special membership meeting called for Mid-Session Summit. Motion/second by Scheer/Goucher to hold a special membership meeting at annual meeting. After prolonged conversation, Cabrera made a motion (2nd by O'Connell) to table until the next SEC board meeting on September 15). Motion to table passed 8-1.

Motion/second by Koester/O'Connell to have the Executive Director discuss the matter with the Tlingit & Haida President and receive his input on the timing of the bylaws amendment and explore the interest of the President (or Designee) assuming the anticipated vacancy that is expected in October. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion/second to adjourn at 5:16pm. All approved.

Robert Venables, Executive Director

Sept. 15, 2025
Date

**PLEASE NOTE:
NEW ZOOM MEETING ID**

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

**Southeast Conference
Board of Directors**

Zakary Kirkpatrick, President

Katie Koester, 1st VP

Gracia O'Connell, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

Lacey Simpson, Past President

KC Hostetler

Liz Cabrera

Dennis Gray

Chelsea Goucher

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Elizabeth Cornejo

Michael Ganey

President Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm. Members present, Kirkpatrick, Koester, O'Connell, Mesdag, Hostetler, Scheer, Cornejo and Ganey. Staff present: Robert Venables

Approval of the Agenda, with the addition of discussion item (addition of Tribal seat), Motion/Second by Hostetler/Mesdag, passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from August 21, 2025, and Special Meeting August 25, 2025; M/S by Mesdag/Hostetler, passed unanimously.

President Kirkpatrick reported that great progress had been made on the reimbursement from the SASS program, with half already received the rest approved. He requested an Executive Session to discuss Executive Director's annual review. M/S by Scheer/Mesdag at 4:20 pm, reconvened at 5 pm with the board authorizing the President to communicate the next year's goals and compensation to the Executive Director. M/S by Scheer/Mesdag, passed unanimously.

The Finance committee did not meet, and their report is deferred.

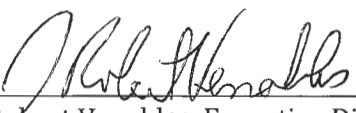
The Executive Director gave an overview of the Annual Meeting agenda, and distributed raffle tickets to the board. He also requested a meeting of the Executive Committee for their role in releasing funds for the BBB Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). An invite will be sent for 9/22/25.

Old Business: The board is committed to work toward the goal of establishing a board seat dedicated to the regional Tribe (T&H), The topic will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

New Business: M/S to approve Resolution 26-03 to open a True North account for the heat pump program and appointing signers by Scheer/Hostetler (with administrative edits to remove double reference for signers). Passed unanimously.

Approval of the Board of Directors ballot. The nominations committee submitted the final ballot for board consideration. M/S by Mesdag/Hostetler, passed unanimously.

Correspondence was discussed with copies to be in the next board packet. With no further business to conduct, motion to adjourn by Hostetler/ Scheer, passed unanimously at 5:32 pm.


Robert Venables, Executive Director


Date

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NEW ZOOM MEETING ID**

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2025**

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 11:07am. Members present: Gracia O'Connell, Michael Ganey, Peter Amylon, Jason Custer, Zak Kirkpatrick, KC Hostetler, Markos Sheer, Liz Cabrera. Staff present: Robert Venables, Sara Shutt

Motion/Second to approve agenda by Hostetler/Ganey, passed unanimously.

Motion/Second to Approve Minutes from September 15, 2025, by Hostetler/Sheer, passed unanimously.

President Koester reviewed expectations for board participation on committees and annual board agreement. Send signed agreements to Sara Shutt in the office and let the executive director know what committees you'd like to participate in or chair.

1st Vice President Gracia O'Connell, on behalf of the treasurer, reported that the annual meeting reflected a net profit and raffle tickets sales increased over last year. FY25 books are now closed, and staff are preparing for the end of year audit. Overall, Southeast Conference's balance sheets are stable.

The Executive Director thanked everyone for their participation and support at the annual meeting and reiterated positive numbers for the annual meeting and fiscal year. He provided an update on the federal government shutdown and its effect on SEC program funding (only EDA BBB impacted, and we have a draw on funds that sustains operations for now). He discussed new staff and program updates, including the High Efficiency Ferry and efforts to reconnect Prince Rupert ferry service back to Ketchikan.

Old Business:

a) SEC/SECF Memorandum of Understanding
Motion/Second by Custer/Cabrera, passed unanimously.

b) North Public board seat
After discussion it was agreed to reach out to an interested party to fill the open seat until the next election.

c) Southern Private board seat
The Executive Director reviewed recommendations to fill the newly vacated seat until the next election.

Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Katie Koester, President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

KC Hostetler

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

d) Board Retreat

It has been recommended to hold the next board retreat during the first week of legislative session around CBJ's Legislative community welcome reception on Jan. 20th. After some discussion it was agreed to finalize the date electronically.

New Business:

a) Board Secretary

Motion/Second to appoint KC Hostetler as Board Secretary by O'Connell/Kirkpatrick, passed unanimously.

b) Board Treasurer

Motion/Second to appoint Alec Mesdag as Board Treasurer by Custer/Hostetler, passed unanimously.

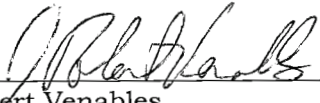
c) Procurement Policy

The current policy was updated to reflect and match federal guidance.

Motion/Second by Sheer/Kirkpatrick, passed unanimously.

President Koester made note of the correspondence that has been received by SEC and letters of support written on behalf of Southeast projects.

With no other matters before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am by unanimous consent.



Robert Venables
Executive Director

November 20, 2025
Date

**Southeast
Conference**

**Board of
Directors**



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 20, 2025**

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 11:00am. Members present: Gracia O'Connell, Peter Amylon, Jason Custer, Zak Kirkpatrick, KC Hostetler, Markos Sheer, Liz Cabrera, Alec Mesdag, Emily Deach, Michael Ganey. Staff: Robert Venables, Kaitlyn Jared, Sara Shutt

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell,
1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag,
Treasurer

KC Hostetler,
Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Motion/Second to approve agenda by Mesdag/O'Connell, passed unanimously.

Motion/Second to Approve Minutes from October 16, 2025, by O'Connell/Cabrera, passed unanimously.

President Koester reminded the board to complete FY26 SEC Board Agreement and to provide an updated headshot to staff.

Treasurer Mesdag provided an update on the state of finances, noting that things look as expected for this time of year and that we are in a good position despite the shutdown. SEC will be issuing its first loan through the RLF program (the Executive Committee just approved SEC requesting funds from EDA for collateral support for a loan issued by Spruce Root) which is an exciting milestone that staff worked hard getting to.

The Executive Director reported on the award of a D.O.E. ETIPP grant, the development of a new staff recognition award program (Yeti) and invited the board to the upcoming holiday party. Kaitlyn Jaren was in attendance and gave a report on transportation and special projects including additional funding awards from USDOT. Robert and Kaitlyn will be facilitating an in-person ARDOR meeting in Anchorage on December 9th during AML's winter conference.

Board Retreat: January 20 & 21st in Juneau, with the annual Legislative Reception the evening of January 20th. More details on the retreat will be announced as available.

Committee participation: Peter Amylon volunteered to chair the Natural Resources committee. All other committee chairs agreed to continue another term.

Open Board Seats: President Koester will have an update at the next board meeting. Scheer was added to the scholarship committee.

Motion/Second to approve the authorization of the Executive Director to receive and administer the ETIPP D.O.E. grant by Mesdag/O'Connell, passed unanimously.

SEC's staff Yeti award needs a board representative to review nominations. Koester volunteered to be primary, and O'Connell would be back-up.

There will be a scholarship committee meeting in the next few weeks to review SECF program outline.

The next board meeting on December 18th may be canceled if not needed.

With no other matters before the board, the meeting was adjourned at Noon by unanimous consent.


Robert Venables, Executive Director

Dec. 18, 2025
Date

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NEW ZOOM MEETING ID**

**Teleconference number:
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 18, 2025**

Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Katie Koester, President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

MINUTES

1st Vice President Gracia O'Connell called the meeting to order at 11:00am. Members present KC Hostetler, Alec Mesdag, Liz Cabrera, Jason Custer, Michael Ganey, Emily Deach, Peter Amylon. Staff: Dan Lesh, Kaitlyn Jared, Jamey Young, Robert Venables, Sara Shutt

M/S by Hostetler/Deach to approve the agenda by unanimous consent, passed unanimously.

M/S by Hostetler/Deach to approve minutes from August 25, 2025, and November 20, 2025, passed unanimously.

Treasurer Mesdag reported SEC is still in a good financial position as an organization. Audit is just about completed, and the report will be available by the next meeting. It was a clean audit with no findings. Great job to CFO and staff. Looking forward we will be looking into membership revenue and there was a discussion on creating a membership committee. O'Connell and Deach volunteered for a membership committee when it is created.

The Executive Director reported that a recent meeting with the City of Klawock regarding the pellet mill project that was very positive. SEC enjoyed the partnership we had with Ketchikan thus far on the project and the changes have been well received by all parties. Watching for funding opportunities on the horizon in the timber industry and military sectors. Even though SE isn't typically thought of as a military region we do have USCG bases and we've been one of the sponsors of a Fairbanks events for the last three years called the Alaska Defense Forum.

There is a lot of interest in mineral exploration and what a regional processing facility would look like (plus opportunity for reclamation work at old mine sites). Pleased with the heat pump program progress and have starting to see momentum on this project. Statewide ARDOR meeting was an excellent opportunity to connect with the other ARDOR in the state.

Kaitlyn Jared gave a verbal program report highlighting progress on regional solid waste study and work with AKDOT on the long-range transportation plan and commuter ferry dock in Skagway. Supporting the AK Fisheries Trust as they compile a needs scoping project and work on the disaster declared communities. Work with the state on a reauthorization of

RTPO/RPO designation and the Thriving Communities program is making excellent progress. We are working to finalize our year-end ARDOR report that recaps the activities we undertook the last fiscal year.

Old Business: Open Board Seats was deferred to next meeting.

New Business: Administrative Updates to BBB RLF Operating Protocols & Administrative Plan. Staff presented the changes and stated that EDA had expressed support for changes in both documents before the board.

Motion/Approval to approve the updated BBB RLF Operating Protocols by Mesdag/Hostetler, passed unanimously.

Motion/Approval to approve the updated BBB RLF Administrative Plan by Hostetler/Mesdag, passed unanimously.

Correspondence: Jared reviewed a request for letter of support from NATO and RPO America on their work on a component of the RPO and RPTO programs to streamline funding designations. The board will be asked to express formal support at a later date.

Announcements: Cabrera highlighted the manufacturing presentation that was given at the Economic Development meeting, and said it would be great to invite them to present at MSS. Mesdag gave updates on AEL&P's pursuit of capital renewable energy credits. Hostetler shared that Alaska Airline announced direct service out of Anchorage to Boston, Boise and Spokane next year. Deach asked about ore handling and transport and if Robert could provide more details on what was alluded to in his report.

Next meeting will take place at the board retreat in Juneau on January 20th.

With no other matters before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:53am by unanimous consent.



Robert Venables, Executive Director

Jan. 20, 2026

Date

Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Katie Koester, President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 20, 2026**

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 11:06am. Other members present: Liz Cabrera, Alec Mesdag, KC Hostetler, Zak Kirkpatrick, Markos Scheer, Michael Ganey, Emily Deach. Staff: Robert Venables, Dan Lesh, Kaitlyn Jaren, Stephanie Cameron, Sara Shutt

M/S by Hostetler/Scheer to approve the agenda by unanimous consent, passed unanimously.

M/S by Hostetler/Scheer to approve the minutes from December 18, 2025, passed unanimously.

President Koester welcomed everyone and asked for a round table check-in from everyone present.

The Fiscal 2025 audit presentation was given by Max Mertz. SEC historically started with a budget of approximately a hundred thousand dollars in expenditures annually to this past year of over ten million dollars annually in pass through federal expenditures (BBB and CPRG) which increased the complexity of the audit. Both SEC's spending and sub-recipient spending was part of the audit. This is the second year SEC had a clean audit with no material problems, no findings, or questions. A detailed review of the balance sheet was discussed with the board. In conclusion, Mertz reported that SEC is an organization that has good liquidity, that is staying on top of its business activities, has good conference attendance, and a membership that is strong, with both liquidity and capitalization that indicates that SEC is healthy financially.

The Executive Director reported the Mid-Session Summit is coming together nicely, and a final agenda will be published soon. We are also excited about the Transportation Symposium and how SEC is excelling in this sector. The AK DOT Commissioner is expected to formally sign an agreement with Southeast Conference during the MSS to recognize SEC as the State's Regional Transportation Organization (RPO).

The State Legislature convened today and is facing difficulties in their efforts to submit a balanced budget with the low price of oil and many competing fiscal needs. Federally things are calm in our relationship with agencies, despite the tumultuous landscape.

Generation Southeast/CCTHITA signed the Memorandum of Agreement for the Klawock Pellet Mill. The agreement was also unanimously supported by the Klawock city council.

Southeast Conference is working support the Coast Guard (and other military) infrastructure and community readiness needs. We currently support the Alaska Defense Forum and are working to identify opportunities for expanded presence in Southeast.

Past President Lacey Simpson steps down from her position as Ketchikan City Manager on March 6th, Robert will attend an event in her honor in person.

The "Economy of the Arts in Southeast Alaska" was originally published by SEC in 2014 and was widely used for quite some time and now is seen as a vibrant part of our economy. Sealaska has requested an update and offered a \$20,000 contribution to update this publication, estimates for the project are slightly higher so staff is requesting a budget amendment of the maximum amount in case it was to exceed that.

M/S by Scheer/Mesdag to authorize a budget amendment of up to \$10K for the partnership with Sealaska Heritage Institute to update the Economy of the Arts publication, motion approved without objection.

Open Board Seat Appointment: President Koester reported that we still have 2 vacancies on the board; north public & south private. Interest has been expressed in the north public seat. She reminded the board of their position to seek membership approval for that seat to be dedicated to the regional Tribe.

M/S by Scheer/Kirkpatrick to affirm the appointment by President Koester to appoint President Richard Peterson to the vacant north public seat for the remainder of its current term through September 2026(FY2027), motion approved unanimously and without objection.

RC&D - NRCS Discussion. In the early 2000s (likely earlier but our records were destroyed in a storage unit fire), SEC was designated a Resource and Development Council, and we were funded, in part, by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a part of USDA. After their agency restructuring (around 2012), SEC's direct involvement with NRCS lessened (formally as they hired their own direct staff), but we have an opportunity to re-engage and are excited about the overlap and consistency, in activities and funding possibilities between SEC and NRCS, especially as it relates to Tongass opportunities.

EDA Disaster Supplemental NOFO. The grant program is called a readiness pathway and could provide a unique opportunity to complement the funding we receive for the CEDS outreach and collaboration, travel and event expenses that we are now using administrative funds and help to set up the framework for larger planning and capital grants. It is important to recognize we've already approved \$10,000 and this would be an additional \$50,000. Koester noted that the understanding is that this is for planning activities we already undertake for the CEDS program implementation.

M/S by Mesdag/Scheer to approve a budget amendment for up to \$50,000 over two years to serve as 20% match in the EDA's FY 2025 Disaster Supplemental funding, motion approved without objection.

EDA Disaster Transformation application: The federal disaster supplemental funding opportunity is limited to the communities that are eligible; within the state. Last year there were 6 eligible disasters and 4 of those were in Southeast. The project stems from the intent and the aim of the economic transformation to catalyze regional transformation within an industry to benefit those disaster communities.

Aging infrastructure is a component that is making the fisheries industry less competitive. Kaitlyn noted that if AFDF isn't ready by March 31st to apply that SEC will try to apply (or pursue other funding sources). Alec clarified that our application would outline our regional needs and note that statewide needs would be addressed by AFDF. Further discussion ensued.

M/S by Cabrera/Mesdag to authorize the Executive Director to apply for an EDA Transformation grant in the absence of any known competing grant for the Southeast fisheries, motion approved without objection.

TFCU partnership, housing grant application – M/S by Hostetler/Scheer to authorize the \$100,000.00 of funds held at TFCU for economic development purposes to be used as matching funds for a housing initiative grant application, motion approved without objection.

Announcements/Board Comments: Hostetler announced Alaska Airlines launched weekend sales on Tuesdays for the upcoming weekend.

Adjourned at 1:16pm.



Robert Venables
Executive Director

March 19, 2026
Date

**Southeast
Conference**

Board of Directors

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell,
1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag,
Treasurer

KC Hostetler,
Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Richard Peterson



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR MARCH 19, 2026**

MINUTES

1st VP Gracia O'Connell called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. Other members present: Liz Cabrera, Alec Mesdag, KC Hostetler, Michael Ganey, Emily Deach, Peter Amylon. Staff: Robert Venables, Dan Lesh, Kaitlyn Jaren, Sara Shutt

M/S by Mesdag/Hostetler to approve the agenda, passed unanimously.

M/S by Hostetler/Custer to approve the minutes from January 20, 2026, passed unanimously.

President's Report: Strategic Plan Update. Board members volunteered to Chair and participated in the newly created ad-hoc committees: **Membership:** Chair **KC Hostetler**, Emily Deach, Peter Amylon, Markos Scheer. **Investments:** Chair **Alec Mesdag**, Jason Custer, Michael Ganey. **Conference Planning & Evaluation:** Chair **Gracia O'Connell/Emily Deach Co-Chair**, KC Hostetler. Over the next month committee meetings for the above groups will be scheduled to review SEC's overall strategic plan and how to take actionable steps forward in these areas. Please take time to review the attached strategic plan and the retreat notes in preparation for formal approval of the Strategic Plan at the next regular board meeting.

Finance Report: Alec Mesdag reported that SEC's current financial position is stable and sitting as expected for this time of year. TFCU's \$100k housing fund match to obtain additional funds was approved and now is at \$350k and will be a joint project with SEC. SEC also has an award from the Denali Commission - both are action items later in the agenda. Both of the mariculture RLF loans have now been funded.

Executive Director Report: Thanks again for successful MSS, with sponsorships, SEC was able to break even on the cost of the event as our low registration costs can't cover the full expense. Robert was in DC last week for NADO's legislative fly in and was able to connect with the Delegation and get updated on the federal issues and opportunities. Wrangell's disaster relief "transformational" funding plans are nothing short of amazing and we are supporting their waterfront development plans. SEC facilitated a "Blue Economy" roundtable for Senator Sullivan and testified to AK House Finance on AMHS issues. More information and other staff reports are in the packet.

SEC Resolution 26-04 Clarify Signatory Names and Authorizations for All Revolving Loan Fund Bank Accounts for Southeast Conference: ***M/S by Hostetler/Mesdag to reaffirm approval of resolution 26-04, passed unanimously.***

SEC Resolution 26-05 To Appoint the Southeast Conference Executive Director as the Corporation's Authorized Representative and Signatory for All Revolving Loan Fund Bank Accounts for Southeast Conference: ***M/S by Amylon/Hostetler to reaffirm approval of resolution 26-05, passed unanimously.***

Fisheries Funding: SEC worked in support of AFDF's statewide application, but time ran out before the submittal deadline. SEC then took the Southeast components and packaged the top priority items into a CDS funding request with Senator Murkowski's office.

SEC Resolution 26-06 Signers on TFCU account: ***M/S by Mesdag/Amylon to adopt resolution 26-06, passed unanimously.***

Tongass FCU SEC Impact Fund – Housing Initiative. ***M/S by Custer/Mesdag to authorize Executive Director to receive and administer the FHLB Des Moines Impact Fund award for the TFCU/SEC Housing Initiative, passed unanimously.***

SEC budget amendment for RC&D program and NRC&D Membership. ***M/S by Mesdag/Amylon to amend FY 2026 budget to add \$10,000 from reserves for the SEC RC&D program, renew membership in NARC&D and authorize the Executive Director to seek and administer additional program funding, passed unanimously.*** The Executive Director gave a history of SEC's involvement as a RC&D Council, provided links to the national program and spoke to some of the opportunities that could arise.

Denali Commission Award No. DC-ECN-26-004. ***M/S by Hostetler/Custer to authorize Executive Director to accept and administer Denali Commission Award No. DC-ECN-26-004, passed unanimously.*** The Executive Director explained the opportunity to support the Denali Commission in managing this statewide program over the next 3 years.

Announcements/Board Comments: Mr. Amylon described the Ketchikan tunnel project application, KPU is one of the 16 finalists, and they expect to know the results by 3/23/26 if their bid was successful. The borough has also formed a group advocating for USGC to expand their presence and perhaps station an ice breaker in Ketchikan.

Adjourned at 11:41 AM.



Robert Venables, Executive Director

April 16, 2026

Date



Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Richard Peterson

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR APRIL 16, 2026**

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 11:00am. Other members present: Gracia O'Connell, Zak Kirkpatrick, Liz Cabrera, Emily Deach, Peter Amylon, Jason Custer, Markos Scheer, Richard Peterson. Staff: Robert Venables, Dan Lesh, Kaitlyn Jaren, Sara Shutt

M/S by Scheer/Kirkpatrick to approve the agenda, passed unanimously.

M/S by Cabrera/Deach to approve the minutes from March 19, 2026, passed unanimously.

President's Report: Strategic Plan Update. Discussion on ad-hoc committees and upcoming meeting schedules. Koester thanked the board members who volunteered for the ad-hoc committees (she will be included as an ex-officio member of all 3); she emphasized that the board's strategic plan is a working, living document and will guide the committee's efforts. A committee report will be added to future board meeting agendas to keep us accountable. Robert reported that Sara is the board's logistical contact for these committees. Robert/Dan/Kaitlyn will be available to support the committee's work, assisting with agendas and research or follow up that needs to happen. Chairs will use the strategic plan to drive the committee's work and at the next regular meeting be able to present a work plan for each of the ad-hoc committees. Sara will send out doodle polls for the event planning and investment ad-hoc committees. The membership ad-hoc committee is scheduled to meet on 4/22/26.

Finance Report: President Koester summarized the discussion that took place at today's finance meeting, highlighting status of the grants, including the BBB project that is its final year and the Pellet Mill Project.

Executive Director Report: Highlights from his written report included working recently with Senator Murkowski while she was in Juneau for a roundtable event on the Tongass. The housing conversation continues as the region's top priority. SEC will be supporting efforts in Juneau and Ketchikan on Coast Guard housing needs. Gave a brief forecast on the NADO wealth creation summit he is presenting at in Oregon, with Colette also attending. The USDA recently created a new Office of Seafood. This first of its kind office will prioritize the needs of American seafood cultivators, producers, and processors to access USDA programs (hopefully includes mariculture). Plans are being made for an upcoming trip to Prince Rupert to assist in ongoing efforts to reconnect AMHS service. SEC has been asked to give a presentation at the upcoming AMHOB meeting which Kaitlyn will be heading up. Dan gave an update on the BBB AMC and some recent exciting subaward projects. Robert noted that the program has been going very well, and we regularly are given very impressive feedback on what has been accomplished. He also noted that Dan had been selected to travel to South Korea on a mariculture fact-finding mission that could lead to opening markets for Alaskan farmers. Kaitlyn reported on the highlights from transportation and special projects, noting a hectic grant season. Kaitlyn reviewed the positives and negatives in participating in the IRS's Opportunity Zones program. A discussion of guidelines and qualifying investments followed. Maritime Prosperity Zones is an upcoming program that will come out of the Opportunity Zones, Cabrera reported, and staff will investigate what it entails.

Strategic Plan: President Koester noted that the board's strategic plan is the culmination of a year's worth of efforts by board and staff and thanks everyone for all the hard work that went into it. The 2026 Strategic Plan is a living working document that will provide guidance and drive the work.

M/S by Scheer/Cabrera to approve the SEC 2026 Strategic Plan, with no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Scholarship Awards: O'Connell reported on the Scholarship Committee's application review process and the resulting recommendations. Scheer noted the actual approval should be made by to the Southeast Conference Foundation Board. President Peterson offered that this board should move to recommend approval to the SECF board.

M/S by Peterson/Deach to recommend approval of the 2026-27 scholarship awardees recommended by the scholarship committee to the Southeast Conference Foundation Board, with no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Celebration 2026 Sponsorship.

M/S by Scheer/O'Connell to approve sponsoring the 2026 Celebration in the amount of \$1,000, with no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Annual Meeting dates: Robert reported that due to a conflict with Tlingit & Haida's 91st Annual Tribal Assembly scheduled for the same dates as our September Annual Meeting. He is recommending we move our annual meeting to a week later to Sept 29-Oct 1. The board noted how important SEC's partnership is with our Tribal partners and concurred with moving the date out a week.

M/S by Cabrera/Scheer to change the SEC Annual Membership Meeting in Ketchikan to Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2026, with no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

M/S by Scheer/O'Connell to move into executive session at 11:40am, no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Executive session at 11:40am.

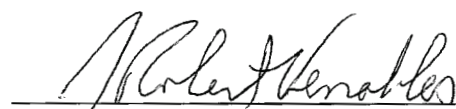
M/S by Scheer/O'Connell to move out of executive session and back into regular session, no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Moved out of executive session and back into regular session at 11:57am.

M/S by Scheer/Deach to authorize the board president to negotiate on behalf of the SEC board of directors a revision of the executive director's employment contract to accommodate changes in benefits due to the unique opportunity for him to participate in the State's retirement health and insurance plans, with no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

M/S by Scheer/O'Connell to adjourn the regular meeting of the SEC board of directors at 12:00 PM, no objections; the motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 12:00pm.



Robert Venables, Executive Director

May 22, 2026

Date



Southeast Conference
Board of Directors

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Richard Peterson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR MAY 22, 2026

MINUTES

Gracia O'Connell called the meeting to order at 11:05am. Other members present: Michael Ganey, Peter Amylon, Liz Cabrera, Zak Kirkpatrick, Markos Scheer, Alec Mesdag. Staff: Robert Venables, Dan Lesh, Kaitlyn Jaren, Sara Shutt

M/S by Scheer/Mesdag to approve the agenda, passed unanimously.

M/S by Scheer/Cabrera to approve the minutes from April 16, 2026, passed unanimously.

President's Report: O'Connell gave an update on ad-hoc committee activities including an upcoming planning meeting with Ketchikan, the host city for the FY27 Annual Meeting. Next Events Planning and Evaluation ad-hoc committee meeting is scheduled for June 17th and the Membership ad-hoc committee is scheduled for June 16th. Mesdag and Venables will work on scheduling an investment ad-hoc committee meeting, hopefully in June. O'Connell reported that the SECF board met today.

Finance Report: Venables reported that the FY27 budget planning process has begun and there will be more discussion on that at the next finance committee next month. This is the final year of the BBB grant so we are finalizing activities and looking at next steps.

Executive Director Report: Venables reported on his recent conference attendance with NADO and the productive conversations had in Washington DC. He outlined several large projects on the horizon for the region including Wrangell's port infrastructure development and energy projects and USCG projects. Scheer asked if the Ketchikan shipyard would be negatively impacted by a shipyard in Wrangell and it was reported that the two yards would have different work. Venables touched on the restructuring going on at the USFS and relocating their headquarters to Utah. The Governor's energy sustainability conference was held last week, and the LNG project was a main topic of conversation. The regular session of the legislature has ended, and we are glad to see the PCE program was protected and the renewable energy fund projects list got expanded with additional funding. Next week Venables will be touring the new Cascadia mariculture processing plant while in Prince Rupert meetings to further efforts to get AMHS facility operating again. The trip also includes a stop in Victoria to the BC government for a meeting with the Transportation Minister.

Staff Report: Lesh reported on the BBB equipment grant awards and the big development of hatchery and processing facilities around the region and how the investment continues to reap benefits around the region, mentioning the Oceans Alaska facility in Sitka, kelp processing and nursery equipment in Juneau, and the containerized handling and shipping facility in Naukat. Venables commented on how the equipment investments have been highly impactful and are the foundation of further development. Venables added that Oceans Alaska floating laboratory has been given the green light and will be added to the University's Sitka campus. Lesh further reported on the AMC succession planning efforts and his recent trip to South Korea on a scholarship invitation from the World Wildlife Fund to see their scaled seaweed industry. Jared added that SEC supported Wrangell's EDA application for almost \$50 million for port infrastructure disaster relief funds and there are two CDS requests being moved forward by Senator Murkowski; one for \$12 million for port development and the other for \$2million on energy development. Jared further reported on plans to go to RPO America at the end of July and is looking forward to learning more about national level collaboration and where the RPOs stand on the federal transportation reauthorization bill. Broadly, Jared's team continues to work on a number of AMHS issues, Prince Rupert, community dock needs, new vessel construction

needs. We recently helped AMHS respond to the rural ferry funding opportunity in the amount of \$160 million for operation funds. Jared also added brief updates on fisheries, childcare, and solid waste.

Cost Sharing Agreement. SECF recommends for approval a cost sharing agreement between SEC and SECF to replace the MOU that the board approved and signed last year. It was recommended by our auditor that a cost-sharing agreement would be a more secure vehicle to share resources, such as staff. Legal counsel was consulted and the updated Agreement was the result.

M/S by Scheer/Mesdag to authorize the Executive Director to execute the SEC/SECF Cost Sharing Agreement, passed unanimously.

UA Scholarship Update: O'Connell reported that three of the committee's approved applicants have become ineligible to receive scholarships, two of these are not eligible due to a lower than required GPA, adding that the SECF Board's recommendation is to award scholarships to the two individuals whose GPA fell below 3.0, and communicate it is a one-time allowance, and to roll over the third award, in the amount of \$2000, to the 2027-28 school year.

Bylaws proposed amendment: Last year's bylaws committee recommended these changes but notice requirements were not met and it was decided to table the amendment until this year. Venables asked if it was still the board's will to amend the bylaws as recommended by the Bylaws committee to provide a seat for the regional Tribe.

M/S by Cabrera/Kirkpatrick to adopt the recommended changes to the Southeast Conference Bylaws and seek ratification by the membership at the FY2027 Annual Business Meeting, all directors present approved the motion, passed unanimously.

Auditor contract: Venables reported this annual audit agreement as is required by the federal dollars we take in and recommended that SEC continues to engage Mertz CPA to conduct our audit.

M/S by Scheer/Mesdag to authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract for auditing services with Mertz CPA & Advisor, passed unanimously.

AM Theme and Swag: Venables and Shutt gave an update on planning efforts for FY27 Annual Meeting.

Nominations Committee: The bylaws indicate that the Past President chairs this committee unless they intend to run for election. Kirkpatrick indicated he would not be qualified to chair the nominations committee this year as he was considering running again for the board. Cabrera, O'Connell, and Amylon volunteered for the nominations committee.

SEC regulatory comments: Mesdag provided an overview on an ongoing hydroelectric issue that involved a regulatory request by Juneau Hydropower (JHI) to extend their FERC license and requested that the SEC submit comments to FERC. He stated that the issue was costly, not to him personally or even to AEL&P's finances (hence no personal conflict), but the costs were totally borne by the ratepayers and approached \$1 million with no credible reason to believe a resolution was in sight. Simply put, the project has not made adequate progress after many years, and the effort has created substantial costs for Juneau's electric customers. A lengthy discussion ensued; staff was asked to draft a comment letter for the full board to review.

Resolution 26-07 Port Infrastructure Development Project Grant Application

M/S by Mesdag/Ganey to authorize the Executive Director's submission of a Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Application to the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration for the Alaska Marine Highway System's Strengthening Terminals in Alaska's Rural Transportation Systems (AMHS STARTS) Project in the amount of \$80,040,906.

Correspondence: Mesdag asked to be included in the landslide meetings held through the SLIP program.

Announcements: none.

Adjourned at 12:28pm M/S by Scheer/Mesdag.



Robert Venables, Executive Director

June 18, 2026

Date

Southeast Conference

Board of Directors

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Richard Peterson



**SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR JUNE 1, 2026**

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 4:03pm. Other members present: Gracia O'Connell, Liz Cabrera, Emily Deach, Peter Amylon, Markos Scheer, and Alec Mesdag. Staff: Robert Venables, Sara Shutt

M/S by Cabrera/O'Connell to approve the agenda, passed unanimously.

SEC FERC Comments regarding JHI license. Koester thanked the board for taking the time to both deliberate on this issue and allow the time for her to catch up because she was unable to attend the previous meeting when this was originally discussed. She had asked staff to "soften" the tone of the original letter which is included in the packet. While SEC's support for renewable energy is resolute, the business case should be made to show projects will lower the cost of energy to Alaskans in a way that respectfully lays out the concerns. The board carefully reviewed the proposed letter and made additional changes. One of the differences between JHI's venture and the similar multi-year quest that failed in the Petersburg area to develop hydros by a "for-profit" entity, is that now the ratepayers, not just the prospective project investors are having to bear ever-increasing costs. While not privy to the internal contracts and finances of JHI, it is not apparent that full project financing has been secured, or any confirmed customers identified beyond the first 1-10 years for the full capacity of the proposed hydro. It was suggested that after 10 years already spent without substantial progress, another 10 years was not likely to change the project's viability, only increasing the costs to local rate payers, and regional consumers.

Adjourned at 4:30pm.

Robert Venables, Executive Director

June 18, 2026

Date

**Southeast Conference
Board of Directors**



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES FOR JUNE 18, 2026**

Katie Koester,
President

Gracia O'Connell, 1st VP

Liz Cabrera, 2nd VP

Alec Mesdag, Treasurer

KC Hostetler, Secretary

Zakary Kirkpatrick,
Past President

Jason Custer

Mark Scheer

Michael Ganey

Emily Deach

Peter Amylon

Richard Peterson

MINUTES

President Koester called the meeting to order at 11:01am. Other members present: Alec Mesdag, Zak Kirkpatrick, Peter Amylon, KC Hostetler, Emily Deach, Jason Custer, Liz Cabrera. Staff: Robert Venables, Sara Shutt. Kaitlyn Jared

M/S by KC /Mesdag to approve the agenda, passed unanimously.

M/S by KC/Deach to approve the May and June Special Meetings Minutes, passed unanimously.

President's Report. President Koester asked for the ad-hoc committee chairs to speak to the work they are doing. Hostetler started off by updating the board with membership ad-hoc committee work to date and plans for upcoming meetings, noting that she hopes to have recommendations to the board soon. Hostetler also spoke about the Conference planning ad-hoc committee progress and the direction of planning efforts for the next annual meeting.

Finance Committee. Mesdag provided a financial update and status of budget planning. He hopes to have a final budget to the board in late July. The BBB mariculture grant program is in the final year, ACES heat pump program continues for another 3-4 years.

Executive Directors Report. Venables updated the board on activities he has participated in the last month, including conversations that look forward into policy and program priorities for the new Administration. He talked briefly about progress with USCG vessel homeporting and the associated infrastructure and housing needs. The transportation team is working on reconnection issues between AMHS and Prince Rupert and continues to make progress on the dock and restoring ferry service. The recent visit to Prince Rupert with AMHS and Ketchikan Mayor was very positive. Kaitlyn Jared shared highlights from her team's work in transportation and economic development.

2026 Annual Meeting Theme. Venables presented the "Architects of Our Future, Woosh haa witseen (together we are strong)" annual meeting theme. A brief discussion ensued regarding adding more indigenous symbolism into the artwork and it was agreed to reach out to President Peterson who was absent from this meeting.

Resolution 26-08

M/S by Hostetler/Amylon To approve Resolution 26-08 authorizing the submission of FY26 USDA Rural Business Development grant application not to exceed \$162,000., passed unanimously.

Juneau Hydropower Inc.: Mr. Duff Mitchell provided comments on SEC's process regarding the FERC comments submitted on June 2, 2026, but did not want to discuss any particulars of the proposed hydro project. Mitchell expressed concerns regarding the process and subsequent approval of the SEC comments provided regarding the public benefit and costs to rate payers and timeline of the JHI project that has been in process since at least 2009. Scheer asked clarifying questions about the length of time the project has been in the works and construction costs and funding. Mitchell said JHI had been making progress on the project which could be found in the public record (which the SEC Board had already been apprised of) and said the approx. \$370 million project was moving forward. He requested that the board rescind their comments to FERC. Mr. Mitchell was offered the opportunity to provide the board with information regarding the business plan and operational path forward of the proposed project.

Correspondence: The Executive Director provided background information and answered questions regarding the six letters of support (LOS) in the packet that were written since the last meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert Venables", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Venables, Executive Director

July 16, 2026

Date



EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

July 2025

Personnel Changes

The wheels of change are constant, and we adjust and move forward. We are thrilled to add Jessie Huff as the SEC Energy Program Manager and Aaron Morrison as our Natural Resources Director. On the flip side, we are advertising for a new Office Manager/Outreach Coordinator as Sarah has accepted an Executive Assistant position at AEL&P. It is a nice professional step up for her but leaves a huge hole to fill here. She has been at SEC for 5 years and been very instrumental in our successes and transformation from a 2 person team to the amazing crew we have today. Alec has very generously allowed her to continue managing the annual meeting this year, so that helps with the transition immensely!

Federal Government Issues

On July 3, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the [*One Big Beautiful Bill Act*](#) (H.R. 1) by a vote of 218–214, adopting the version previously approved by the Senate on July 1 in a 51–50 vote, with Vice President J.D. Vance casting the tie-breaking vote. The House had initially [passed](#) its own version on May 22 by a narrow 215–214 margin. Following Senate approval, the amended bill returned to the House, passed without further changes, and was sent to the President for his signature on July 4.

NADO has a good overview of the Reconciliation Bill here: [U.S. Congress Passes Budget Reconciliation Bill - NADO](#) along with a [FAQ document](#). That helps explain the process and key provisions.

This legislation impacted many announced awards and programs with unobligated funds. It does not appear to have any impact on obligated awards and contracts, including our CPRG Heat Pump grant which is moving forward with our partners at Alaska Heta Smart and the Alaska Municipal League.

EDA Revolving Loan Fund

The SEC BBB RLF program is officially approved by EDA and is moving forward. The next step is for our partner lending institutions (Spruce Root, TCFU and Northrim) are reviewing the participation agreement and then will be able to send our Loan Advisory Board potential loans to provide collateral support for.

SASSi

Our remaining federal program project funding delay with USDA RD (SASSi) will have an update by the board meeting. We are in communication with the DC office who has provided verbal approval – but no funds yet and the program is in its last week of authorization. We are doing our best to not leave any money on the table but it is a reimbursable grant, and SEC can only float the federal government for so long approx. (\$100K to date).

State Legislature

Governor Dunleavy Scheduled a Special Session on Education Reform, Department of Agriculture. Our BBB program has supported the state in many ways, including proposed funding for staff at the Division of Agriculture. The legislature will convene in Juneau, on August 2, 2025, at 10:00 am. The legislature also has opportunity during the first five days to overturn any of the Governor's budget and legislative vetoes.

Misc.

Kaitlyn will be representing Southeast Conference at RPO America (and is on their board) while Colette and I join the State and contractors in Ketchikan for discussions on the new High efficiency ferry.

I have been invited to be on a “Steady Seas: Ensuring Resiliency in Maritime Supply Chains” panel at PNWER's annual meeting in Bellevue on July 23rd.

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

August 2025

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting planning is in high gear, with speakers being confirmed, sponsorships sought, and auction items collected. The board is invited to assist as able. The “invitational draft agenda” is in the packet. The theme is, “Rooted in Resilience” and the panels are focused on the new 2030 CEDS. This promises to be another great event.

Federal Government Issues

Good news. The USDA SASS program which has not reimbursed SEC since last September is now poised to do so in the very near future. Not only will they reimburse us in full, but they will provide full funding for the promised projects that we could not forward fund.

Uncertainty continues as many federal grant programs have been cancelled (Build to Scale, Solar for All) and other priorities funded (manufacturing, critical minerals and natural resource development. A new Executive Order attempts to reorganize, streamline and centralize grant-making, but it is less than clear what that will mean for future applicants. We continue to stay paced and our relationship with NADO (and our own stellar relationship with federal agencies) helps position SEC for the future.

EDA Revolving Loan Fund

The SEC BBB RLF program is officially approved by EDA and we have our first official lending partner with our signed agreement with Spruce Root. TCFU and Northrim have their staff and legal teams reviewing the participation agreement. We have interest for loans now and once a proposal is received, we will convene the Loan Advisory Board for RLF loan approvals.

Ferry Modernization

The SEC team accompanied AMHS, Glosten and DOT to Metlakatla, Saxman, Ketchikan, Haines and Skagway recently to work on next steps for the design and shoreside improvements needed for the proposed High

Efficiency Ferry. Additional community meetings are being scheduled for after the annual meeting.

PNWER and Prince Rupert

I participated in the 2025 PNWER Annual Summit which gathered over 600 delegates from the U.S. and Canada to explore opportunities for the Pacific Northwest states, provinces and territories to work together, address challenges and achieve common goals.

Trade (especially tariffs) and transportation were a key focus. Sessions explored new ways for our region to maximize competitiveness, enhance supply chains and advance shared economic growth. I took advantage of the opportunity during my panel (“Steady Seas: Ensuring Resiliency in Maritime Supply Chains”) to speak on the importance for reconnecting ferry service to Prince Rupert. Very good feedback came from both sides of the border. The Prince Rupert mayor is taking the cause to the BC Provincial Government and there is a possibility for me to participate in those discussions late this month.

Misc.

The 6-member NADO Executive Committee does a strategic legislative fly-in each year to DC. This year’s trip was delayed waiting for many key appointments in the new Administration. The trip is scheduled for September 8-11 and will meet with agency leaders from Agriculture, Commerce, Transportation and others.

USFS Forest Chief Tom Schultz visited Southeast last week, and I was able to be on a panel with him and Senator Murkowski. He now has a copy of our CEDS and related documents and is aware of our readiness to partner with the agency.

The Coast Guard cutter, Storis was commissioned on August 10, and I was invited to be a part of that ceremony which included Senator Sullivan and Congressman Begich. Congress recently approved \$300 million for a new Coast Guard pier and other facilities in Juneau where the Storis will be homeported.

[Back to Agenda](#)

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 2025

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting planning is in high gear, with speakers being confirmed, sponsorships sought, and auction items collected. The board is invited to assist as able. The “invitational draft agenda” is in the packet. The theme is, “Rooted in Resilience” and the panels are focused on the new 2030 CEDS. This promises to be another great event.

Federal Government Visitations

In addition to USFS Forest Chief Tom Schultz’s visit to Southeast last month, there has been a steady stream of agency secretaries and visiting officials, congressional members and staff in the region and state (plus the summit between President Trump and President Putin at JBER earlier in August). The visibility on Southeast (Tongass) and Alaska helps them to better understand our issues – and hopefully help with solutions. Thanks to our Alaska Congressional Delegation for tirelessly crisscrossing the state with so many from DC.

Congressman Nick Begich brought 10 members of the House Committee on Natural Resources to tour Hecla’s Greens Creek mine, while another member (U.S. Rep. Randall from WA) and I went roundtrip to Hoonah on the ferry. She, Rep. Begich and 2 others co-chair the U.S. House Ferry Caucus, so she wanted to see firsthand on the system operated. We were joined by AMHS and Union leadership and given a tour of Hoonah by City Administrator Dennis Grey. Success!

EDA Revolving Loan Fund

The SEC BBB RLF program is officially approved by EDA and we have our first official lending partner with our signed agreement with Spruce Root. SEC anticipates the first loan proposal by the end of the month and have scheduled a Loan Advisory Board for the next step of approval of our first BBB loan!

Ferry Modernization

The SEC team accompanied AMHS, Glosten and DOT to Metlakatla, Saxman, Ketchikan, Haines and

Skagway recently to work on next steps for the design and shoreside improvements needed for the proposed High Efficiency Ferry. Additional community meetings are being scheduled for after the annual meeting.

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Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 2025

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was another great success! Great appreciation to our members, sponsors, board and staff, and especially to everyone in Sitka who was so hospitable and accommodating! The theme of “Rooted in Resilience” was timely and on point. We had 75 speakers and over 250 attendees for our 3-day event and workshops. The scholarship auction raised over \$30,400! Alaska Airlines really came through for us with extra tickets to auction, and Princess Cruises donated an excursion too. Already making plans for next year (Mid-Session planning starts soon).

Federal Government Shutdown

As you know, the United States Government operations have been paused due to the expiration of the appropriations legislation necessary for it to conduct business. Most employees are not available to communicate with or assist anyone until the legislation is passed and signed into that appropriates funding for Government operations. There are some exceptions at the USFS that are working (permitting, etc.), but EDA, USDA RD and EPA staff that we work with are designated as non-excepted employees, and on furlough. During the period of paused operations, they are prohibited from performing any work. For now, our funding is stable, but the heat pump program cannot move to the next stage until EPA staff is back to work. On a much happier note, we just received our final payment for the SASS program.

Admin Update

SEC brought on 3 new staff just before annual meeting (and 1 after) and is now fully staffed. We continue to look at the next areas of CEDS priorities that have funding opportunities opening (fisheries, forestry) and will have details soon about potential initiatives there. Challenges include a 30% hike in insurance premium costs and we are gearing up for our annual audit and year-end reporting – busy times!

And excited that Kaitlyn has new “staff support”. Baby Kinlee Raye was born 5 weeks early, mother and baby are home and doing well.

Ferry Modernization

The SEC team and consultants from KPFF went to Metlakatla, Saxman, Ketchikan, Haines and Skagway recently to work on next steps for the uplands development and utilities work that will be necessary in support of the design and construction needed for the proposed High Efficiency Ferry. The combined efforts with AMHS’ vessel design team will be released this fall then additional community meetings will be scheduled for input and next steps.

Prince Rupert

SEC staff is working with the Prince Rupert mayor and Canadian stakeholders on next steps to reconnect with AMHS. Still a long way to go but progress is being made. The mayor recently briefed the DOT Commissioner on progress.

Misc.

I will attend the **NADO Annual Training Conference (ATC)** in Salt Lake City, October 14-17, 2025 (see the [updated draft agenda here](#)). This year’s conference includes 27 breakout sessions, 5 Learning Labs, 9 mobile tours, 4 plenary sessions, and 2 networking receptions! ATC themes include: disaster recovery and planning for long-term resilience, how workforce development, how best to manage grants and programs in today’s evolving funding landscape, and ways to tackle pressing challenges and opportunities related to housing, childcare, and the impacts of AI and automation

The **Ketchikan Shipyard has a new operator, JAG Ketchikan**, who will manage the state-owned facility. The Ketchikan Shipyard is owned by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. The JAG Marine Group also operates the Seward Shipyard and “...works throughout the United States providing project management services for industrial manufacturing, marine repair and shipbuilding including oceanic vessels, river and Great Lakes-faring vessels,” according to the company’s website. I participated in community meetings with JAG and AIDEA this past week and was pleased to hear their (aggressive) plans for the shipyard

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 2025

Regional Energy Planning

One of our Energy Committee's priorities has been to update the Southeast IRP (Integrated Resource Plan). The original IRP was funded by the State Legislature and completed back around 2012. That document has been our primary energy plan for the SE Alaska region and a very good funding tool, with all 7 of the agreed upon priority infrastructure projects being funded to some (large) degree. SE Conference applied for and just received a \$50,000 DOE Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP) grant for a "Strategic Energy Plan"! We are hoping this plan update will help utilities, policymakers and communities better understand and prioritize the energy projects on the near horizon. Special thanks to board member Jason Custer for his help. This will be a one-year project.

Federal Government Shutdown update

The federal government shutdown finally ended after 43 days. It lasted longer, cost more, and probably accomplished less than any in history and caused ripples throughout agencies and the communities and organizations they serve. Fortunately, SEC funding remained stable for all programs except for the EDA BBB program. We did receive a large funding advance prior to the shutdown for our 8 project components which is now largely expended (and a couple underwater). It also froze the momentum we had generated for our BBB RLF, which we hope to participate in our first loan soon.

We were very pleased to receive final notice and approval for the final approval for the CPRG launch, so the heat pump program is officially open. There is already a backlog of nearly 300 interested homeowners, so the work is underway in earnest.

Admin Update – YETI award

SEC is now fully staffed and the team(s) are functioning well. To create an atmosphere of excellence and appreciation (had to throw an Alaska Air reference in there!). 😊, we are creating an internal employee appreciation award that will recognize someone each quarter. We would like to have one board member

(President or?) to help Dan and I review nominations and choose the winner. We plan to showcase all of our staff "Yeti" winners at the next annual meeting.

Southeast Conference will ring in the holidays with a Christmas party on December 11th. We would love to have any/all of our board members participate. We plan to start at 3 and go until....

Ferry Modernization

The SEC team continues to work with AKDOT and consultants from Glosten and KPFF (see staff report) on the hybrid electric ferry. SEC's work is for the uplands development and utilities work that will be necessary in support of the design and construction of the new ferry that is intended to serve Metlakatla, Saxman, Ketchikan, or Haines and Skagway. Our team is part of the state's planning efforts for the new vessel design, with hopes for community meetings to be scheduled this winter.

Misc.

I attended NADO's Annual Training Conference along with more than 500 Regional Development Organization professionals from across the country for 4 days of learning, collaboration, and information. Topics included sessions focused on housing, disaster recovery, workforce development, aging, AI, wealth creation, CEDS planning, and more. Available presentations from the ATC [can be found online](#) now. Photos from our President's Award Luncheon, Impact Awards Luncheon, and other moments can be found on our [Facebook](#) page.

November 12-13 was the RDC annual meeting and AML's winter conference is next month (both in Anchorage). SEC facilitates an annual gathering of the ARDORs on the 9th before AML.

Planning is beginning for our Mid-Session Summit in Juneau on February 10-12. Please send any input our way for speakers and sponsors.

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

December 2025

Federal Government Shutdown update

The federal government is in the final days before the holiday officially ends the calendar year. While some budget issues were resolved to resolve the last government shutdown, much work remains to prevent another shutdown at the end of next month (9 appropriations bills remain unfinished ahead of January 30 deadline).

Word is that Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and House Appropriations Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) have agreement on approximately 6 bills, with 3 bills still under negotiation: Labor-HHS-Education, Defense, and Energy-Water. No apparent solution and we monitor this as we manage our federal grants.

Energy Program Updates

The Southeast Conference Energy Committee had a kickoff meeting with NREL and REAP to **update the Southeast IRP** (Integrated Resource Plan). The original IRP (2012) was guidance and support to move forward the region's top 7 priority infrastructure projects. SE Conference applied for and received a \$50,000 DOE Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP) grant to fund this "Strategic Energy Plan". This 1-year project will help utilities, policymakers and communities better understand and prioritize the energy projects on the near horizon.

The **SEC heat pump program** is open. There is already a backlog of nearly 300 interested homeowners, so the work is underway in earnest, (see website <https://ak-heatmart.org/aces>). Incentive payment of \$4K, \$6K or \$8,500 is available depending on income levels.

Transportation

Southeast Conference's journey toward being recognized as the State's **Regional Transportation Organization (RPO)** for the region took a step forward this past month with approvals from FHWA. This is formal acknowledgement of functions we already perform with opportunity for closer collaboration with AKDOT&PF. SEC will work closely with communities during the **Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan** as priorities are formed for surface and marine transportation as well as aviation.

The Governor's budget contained provisions to **restructure the DOT&PF** which, if approved by the Legislature, will see more of a statewide management structure instead of regional directors. Southcoast Regional Director, Chris Goins has been tapped to lead the statewide management (he will remain in Juneau).

Misc.

I attended most of **AML's winter conference** in Anchorage and facilitated the annual gathering of the regional economic development organizations (**ARDORs**). Our speakers included many agencies and the 3 State Directors for the Delegation. One topic of interest is the large **military budget** headed for Alaska. I will participate in many of those discussions to see how much of that funding can support our region, especially with the growing **Coast Guard** presence.

Planning is underway for the **SEC Mid-Session Summit** in Juneau on February 10-12. Day 3 is devoted to the annual **Transportation Symposium** with a focus on the SATP.

Thanks to the board members who assisted in evaluating our staff award for excellence. We will announce the winner of the first award next week.

I will be taking significant leave this month, so may be slow to respond to inquiries. Excited about the possibilities ahead.

Happy Holidays to you all

Southeast Conference

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 2026

Federal Government Shutdown update

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Happy Holidays to you all



SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

MARCH 2026

Mid-Session Summit & Transportation Symposium Wrap-Up

Another successful event! We had over 60 speakers and 200 participants during our 3 days. Highlights included the Lifetime Achievement Award to Kirby Day, the \$20,000 UA Scholarship “check”, impactful agenda topics, networking, the Transportation Symposium and the historic moment of Southeast Conference being formally recognized as the Regional Planning Organization by the AK DOT (and FHWA).

Tongass Shared Stewardship Agreement

The State of Alaska (DNR) recently entered into a shared stewardship agreement with the Forest Service. The agreement will support coordinating active forest management and increasing economic opportunities for young growth timber while meeting market demand for old growth timber. The agreement stems from President Trump’s Executive Order 14225, “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production,” which identified timber production as critical to the nation’s well-being.

The agreement will establish an interagency team to identify priority goals and opportunities and will enable the State of Alaska to carry out forest restoration projects on 300,000 acres of the Tongass National Forest over the next 20 years. Southeast Conference is a part of this Agreement through The Tongass Collaborative (TTC) initiative.

Support for Housing Initiatives

It is exciting to announce that our joint project with TFCU for funds to help support housing initiatives has been approved for a FHLB Des Moines matching funds award! SEC (per the board’s directive at the Strategic Planning Retreat) pledged \$100K (that we received from TFCU in the first place) for an opportunity for matching funds of \$250,000 for a total award of \$350,000!!

We need all the help possible to support housing in Southeast Alaska! More details soon on how this program will be implemented.

2026 NADO & DDAA Washington Conference

This year’s program took place March 8-11 and offered sessions focused on regional development, federal policy, and the issues that matter most to Regional Development Organizations and their partners. The conference program with session descriptions is available [on their website](#). I now serve on the Executive Committee as as NADO’s 2nd Vice-President which is proving valuable for the continued access to key agency leaders in DC.

On the Federal Scene:

One of the many benefits of my participation in NADO is to be sure Alaska (and SEC) gets into every funding opportunity possible for our region. The transportation RPO that was signed at MSS has been a part of a 2-year federal-funding strategy that (hopefully) merges with the federal Transportation Reauthorization bill next year. Here is a piece of that effort:

Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition Supported BASICS Act Introduced

On February 9th, Representatives Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI) and Robert Bresnahan (R-PA) introduced the bipartisan *Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act*. This legislation, if passed, would update federal surface transportation programs to strengthen rural and regional planning. Specifically, if passed, the bill would provide \$300,000 annually to each Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) at 100% federal share. Read NADO's statement [HERE](#). Read the [one-pager](#), [section-by-section summary](#), and [full text of the BASICS Act](#).

Other Miscellaneous Notes:

- Please review other staff reports. All programs are functioning well with the Mariculture BBB in its final year and the CPRG (heat pumps) program ramping up in its first year.
- We are supporting Wrangell's "transformation" efforts to develop their waterfront and their application to EDA. If awarded, it will have huge regional impacts.
- I recently testified to the House Finance committee on AMHS issues and defended our fish hatcheries before the Board of Fish who seem to constantly target these vital economic assets.
- SEC has been asked by DOT to help facilitate regional community outreach as part of our new RPO responsibilities. Potential meetings ahead in Haines and Skagway.
- Senator Sullivan was in Juneau last month and asked us to facilitate a "Blue Economy" roundtable. Thanks to President Peterson for hosting.
- Exciting opportunities for Southeast Conference re-engaging as the recognized "Resource Conservation and Development Council" (RC&D). This is related to 2 agenda items. More info on the program: <https://www.narcdc.org/what-are-rcds>
- Military spending is already significant in the region and state – and is one of the few bright spots for continued growth. SEC will be part of those conversations, by participating in early planning and key infrastructure identification of assets in our region – including energy, transportation, housing, communications, workforce development, education, manufacturing, food security, broadband, etc.
- With the high price for minerals, there is increased interest in exploration in the region. We are assisting in preliminary conversations about coordinated efforts to lower costs and increase likelihood of success.
- We have added a new staff member to assist finance with grant compliance and coordination (especially with the new Denali Commission award).
- NADO and EDA will be hosting a "Wealth Creation" Symposium next month. SEC will participate and a few other Alaskans will join us in Bend, OR on April 13-16 (see newsletter for more details).



SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

APRIL 2026

Senator Murkowski in Juneau

Senator Murkowski was in town to give her annual address to the Legislature on Tuesday (3/31/2026). You can [watch it here](#). We also appreciated the opportunity to participate in a roundtable on the Tongass timber economy. Key stakeholders from USFS, Alaska DNR, AFA laid out their current focus. SEC shared the mission of the TTC and the concept of a Forest Campus on POW with a focus on young growth harvests with a 150-year management plan. We also discussed the State's shared stewardship agreement with the Forest Service. They hope to lay out 20-year sales to provide more certainty for business stability (and financing). Southeast Conference is a part of this Agreement through The Tongass Collaborative (TTC) initiative.

On March 31st, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service announced it will move its headquarters to Salt Lake City, Utah, and begin a restructuring of the agency. They are moving to a hierarchy of "State Directors" who will report to the new HQ.

Housing Initiatives

We will be meeting soon with TFCU to develop the program details for the housing initiative grant from FHLB Des Moines (\$350,000). We will be planning a CEDS housing committee meeting soon (let us know if you want to participate). We have also been asked to weigh in on the housing challenges for the Coast Guard (specifically Juneau but could apply to Ketchikan and other communities too).

NADO News and Wealth Creation Summit

Colette and I will be in Bend, Oregon for the [2026 EDD Wealth Creation Summit](#). It is a unique opportunity to connect with peers from across the country for learning, inspiration, and collaboration. The keynote opens with "Keeping Rural Prosperity Local, focused on reducing economic leakage and expanding rural opportunity, especially in value chains to local ownership, natural resource-based economic development, etc. Breakout session descriptions and speakers are on the [draft conference schedule](#).

New Partnership – tool for resources – AK4C

The U.S. Dept. of Energy just held its Designation Kickoff meeting for Alaska Clean Cities and Communities Coalition (AK4C). This partnership organization has been more than three years in the making (and actually started with a conversation I had in DC with NADO). The effort is hosted/led by Launch Alaska ([Alaska Clean Cities and Communities Coalition — Launch Alaska](#)) with 9 members on the steering committee (including SEC).

The mission is to advance clean, efficient, and affordable transportation options across Alaska. There are many ways this can advance our regional energy priorities (we held a meeting with local

stakeholders recently to discuss the shipping of electric vehicles). DOE was very pleased with our presentation and announced that AK4C is now a U.S. Department of Energy *designated* coalition in the Clean Cities and Communities partnership (one of 75 in the country). We will receive a letter memorializing this status in the coming weeks.

Other Miscellaneous Notes:

- SEC is finalizing a 3-year agreement with the Denali Commission to assist with administering project funding for natural resource projects across the state.
- Related to that, SEC continues to reestablish itself in the RC&D program (resource conservation and development). We have re-joined the national organization who wanted to feature us and some of the educational work we have done recently.
- The RC&D report I sent to the National RC&D Council is attached, along with a “RC&D 101” for your review.
- SEC continues to serve on the Alaska Committee. They include sponsorship of the Day 1 breakfast to kick off our events (annual meeting) as part of their regional outreach.
- Our BBB Mariculture Governance Body held its quarterly meeting in Juneau this month (usually it is held in Anchorage). Thanks to President Peterson for hosting.
- SEC is participating in early regional planning and key infrastructure identification of key assets in our region that will support the Coast Guard and/or other branches of the military (including energy, transportation, housing, communications, workforce development, education, manufacturing, food security, broadband). Military spending is one of the few areas of federal spending that is expected to see continued growth.
- We will be reaching out to the Executive Committee to schedule an SEC Foundation Board meeting soon.
- Please review other staff reports. All programs are functioning well with the Mariculture BBB in its final year and the CPRG (heat pumps) program ramping up in its first year.



SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

MAY 2026 – FEDERAL UPDATES OF IMPACT TO SOUTHEAST

Office of Seafood. Washington, D.C., April 15, 2026 – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins announced the creation of the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Seafood. This first of its kind office will prioritize customer service and ease of navigation for American seafood cultivators, producers, and processors to access USDA programs. This should be of benefit to our fisheries and mariculture industries.

Tongass Plan Update: The U.S. Forest Service held virtual meetings this month for residents across Southeast to share feedback for the Tongass National Forest Management Plan revision. This updated plan will establish agency priorities for the forest for the next decade. The plan will influence specifically how the Forest Service balances a range of forest uses including logging, recreation, tourism, subsistence harvest, and ecosystem health. Public comments on preliminary plan content and proposed Species of Conservation Concern closed May 6th. SEC did not provide comment at this time as we lead planning efforts on a longer-range perspective focused on "forest health, habitat health and community economic health" though TTC.

USDA/Forest Service: The Forest Service budget proposes significant structural cuts and program eliminations, including reducing Forest Service operations funding to approximately \$611 million, down from \$1.09 billion in FY2026, and cutting salaries and expenses nearly in half. The proposal eliminates funding for Forest and Rangeland Research and State, Private, and Tribal Forestry programs, while shifting all wildland fire funding and personnel to a new consolidated U.S. Wildland Fire Service within the Department of the Interior. Remaining resources are refocused on timber production, active forest management, and wildfire risk reduction, reflecting a broader shift toward streamlined operations and commercial forest outputs over research and grant-based programs. The proposed restructuring of the Forest Service and agency Forest and Rangeland Research facilities announced March 31st includes continued evaluation of the Juneau Forestry Sciences Lab and closure of the Anchorage Forestry Sciences Lab.

USDA Forest Service Reorganization: On March 31st the United States Department of Agriculture announced a sweeping overhaul of the U.S. Forest Service, including relocating its headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Salt Lake City, Utah, as part of a broader effort to implement "common sense" forest management and move leadership closer to western lands where most national forests are located. The restructuring transitions the agency from a regional model to a state-based system with 15 state directors, eliminates several regional offices, and consolidates research operations into a single hub in Fort Collins, Colorado. USDA stated the changes are intended to reduce bureaucracy, streamline decision-making, and improve on-the-ground management, though critics warn the move could disrupt workforce capacity, scientific research, and federal oversight of public lands.

Mr. Southeast goes to Washington: This month the NADO's Executive Committee went to Washington, D.C. for our annual advocacy fly-in. Throughout the week, the Committee met with a wide range of federal partners including [The White House](#); the [U.S. Department of Commerce's U.S. Economic Development Administration](#); the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#); the [U.S. Department of Labor](#); the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#); the [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#); the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#); the Office of [Senator Mark Kelly](#); and more. Together, we are advocating on behalf of NADO's members for policies and programs that strengthen community and economic development, transportation planning, workforce training, economic mobility, affordable housing, rural development, support for older Americans, and coordinated urban and rural planning across the country.



From L to R: Charlie Baker, NADO First Vice President, Executive Director, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Robert Venables, NADO Second Vice President, Executive Director, [Southeast Conference](#); Matthew Dolge, NADO President, Executive Director, [Piedmont Triad Regional Council](#); Russell Devorsky, NADO Treasurer, Executive Director, [Heart of Texas Council of Governments](#); Melissa Kraemer Badtke, NADO Secretary, Executive Director, [East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission](#); and Rick Hunsaker, NADO Immediate Past President, Executive Director, [Region XII Council of Governments](#).



SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

JUNE 2026

Celebration 2026

Southeast Conference was a proud supporter of Celebration this year. Over 1,800 dancers gathered from across the NW Pacific to celebrate Southeast Alaska Indigenous cultures. Staff participated in welcoming the 100+ people that arrived by traditional canoe and our sponsorship level allowed for the SEC banner to be displayed for the attendees to see our support. The event was also livestreamed and available online.

Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline

This was a major topic at the recent Energy Conference in Anchorage and the sole focus of the Legislature's Special Session. SEC monitors this as it is an important project to the State – and we also look for “crumbs” of benefits for our region (as either part of the construction project and/or future energy benefits that should extend to Southeast).

The Alaska House of Representatives has voted to advance a multibillion-dollar tax break for the proposed trans-Alaska natural gas pipeline project. The House's 34-5 action sends the tax break to the state Senate, which has been holding its own set of hearings and may have a different approach that will have to be reconciled in conference committee.

Coast Guard update

The U.S. Coast Guard will base two new icebreakers in Kodiak and one in Seward, it announced Thursday. The first two ships are expected in Kodiak in 2028, and the third ship is expected in Seward in the early 2030s. We were disappointed to not have Ketchikan chosen, but the Kodiak and Seward locations are well established, closer to the Arctic ice and has a ready shipyard. There may be opportunities for Ketchikan to expand the Navy presence and that will be pursued.

Housing for Coast Guard personnel is very much an issue for Juneau and SEC will support any alternative to support the community's efforts and help however possible with the \$300 million in infrastructure development associated with the new homeport. Ironically, the Coast Guard was not provided with any funds for housing development. SEC is creatively seeking scenarios to address this need.

Chamber Luncheon Recap: Celebrating 50yrs of DIPAC-Katie Harms, Executive Director, DIPAC recently spoke at the Juneau Chambe and shared the history, role, and economic impact of Alaska's salmon hatchery system as DIPAC celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2026. Harms emphasized that hatcheries are designed to enhance—not replace, wild salmon stocks, operating under extensive state oversight and management practices that prioritize wild fish. DIPAC's salmon programs support commercial, sport, and personal-use fisheries while contributing an estimated 552 jobs, \$32.1 million in labor income, and \$73.2

million in annual economic output across Northern Southeast Alaska. Links to review [Kaite's presentation](#) & explore the [DIPAC website](#). SEC has repeatedly sent letters of support recognizing the significance of our regional hatcheries.

Prince Rupert – Restoring AMHS service

SEC has been working with the City of Prince Rupert to identify and form a plan to resolve barriers to restoring ferry service between Ketchikan and Prince Rupert. (Thanks to Jon Bolling for his diligent eye to detail and leading this initiative). Discussions have included both cities, the Port of Prince Rupert, State of Alaska, Transport Canada, PNWER, federal government staff in both countries as well as Tribal leaders.

In May a delegation that included SEC, AMHS. Mayor Sivertson and Prince Rupert's CAO Richard Pucci met in Victoria with the Minister of Transportation and Transit for British

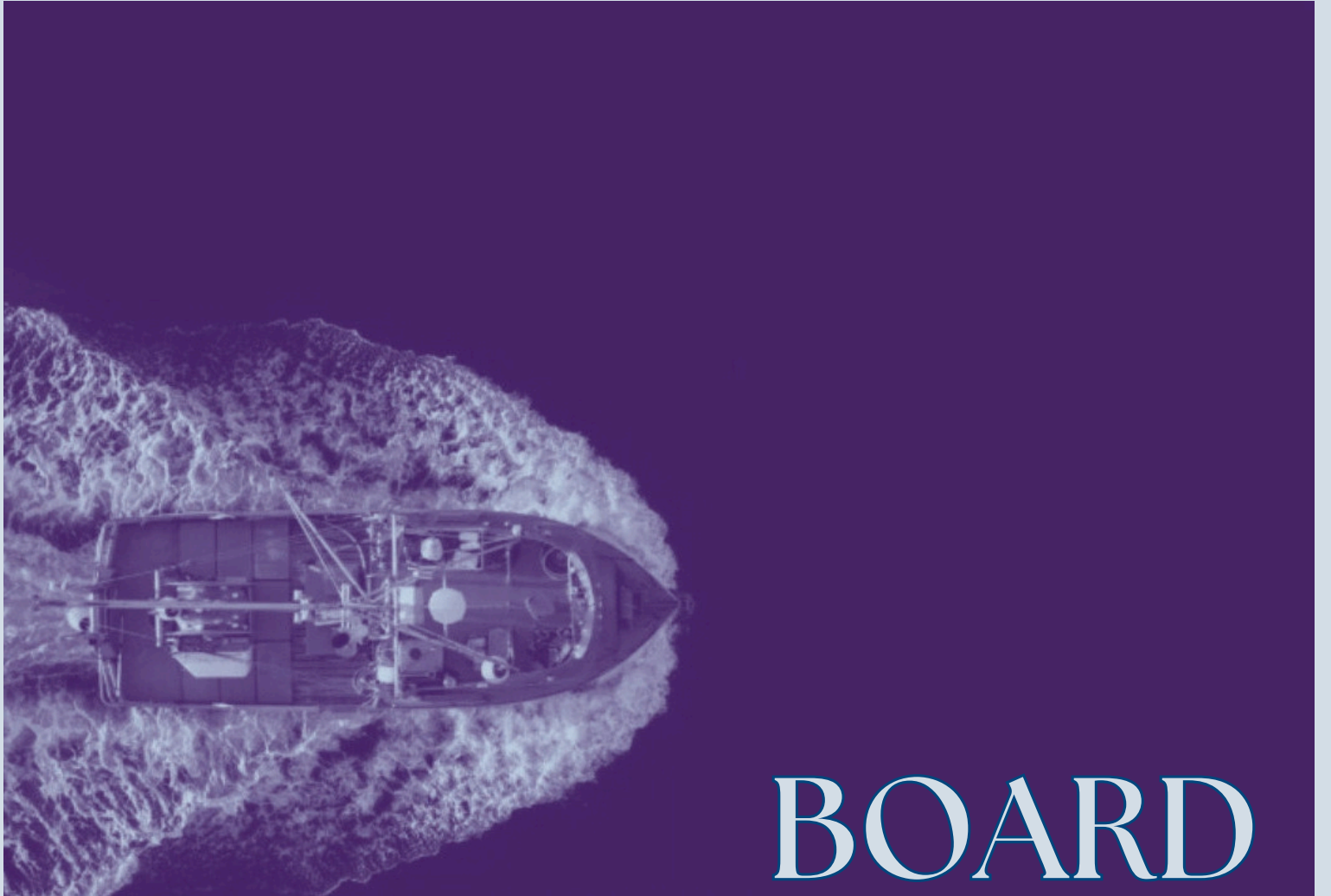


Columbia, Mike Farnworth (see photo below). He oversees the [Ministry of Transportation and Transit](#), which manages highways, public transit networks, regional infrastructure projects, and related crown corporations across the province. He was very interested to provide support for the initiative and was also intrigued to hear about the new

mariculture processing facility in Prince Rupert that is buying Alaska kelp (SEC also gave him a gift basket of kelp products). The visit went very well (and was attended virtually by Jon and staff from PNWER and Sen. Murkowski's office).

The delegation then went to Prince Rupert where we met with business leaders in a meeting hosted by Mayor Pond, visits to the AMHS terminal and Port of Prince Rupert to observe the \$3 Billion of port and rail infrastructure being constructed. A few scenarios were discussed that might help solve the current impasse. There is a goal of August to flesh those out into specific action requests.





RESOLUTIONS

Southeast Conference

Resolution 26-01

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND SIGNATORY NAMES AND AUTHORIZATIONS ON THE BANK ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference is a non-profit corporation in the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors President is Zak Kirkpatrick; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors Treasurer is Alec Mesdag; and

WHEREAS, Additional Director on the Corporation's Board of Directors is Mary Katie Koester; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Executive Director is Robert Venables; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Deputy Director is Dan Lesh; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Chief Finance Officer is Stephanie Cameron; and

WHEREAS, In order to update signatures required for signing all checks & transfers needed and necessary for the purpose of doing business;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference has elected to remove Duncan (Rorie) Watt, and Chelsea Goucher as signers from all SEC banking accounts.

AND, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference authorizes Dan Lesh and Mary Katie Koester as additional signers on the operating checking account #0256, along with Alec Mesdag and Robert Venables..

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON August 21, 2025.

Witness by:

Signed by:

2C63280DBC8A402...
10/23/2025

Zak Kirkpatrick
President
Southeast Conference

Attest:



Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

RESOLUTION NO. 26-02

A RESOLUTION OF SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE URGING IMMEDIATE ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE SEA OTTER MANAGEMENT TO RESTORE SOUTHEAST ALASKA'S SHELLFISH COMMERCIAL FISHERIES AND SUBSISTENCE HARVESTS

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference is the regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, representing municipalities, tribes, businesses, and community partners across the region, and convening the annual Economic Summit and 67th Annual Meeting under the theme "Rooted in Resilience," aligned with Southeast Alaska's new five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); and

WHEREAS, Southeast Alaska's coastal communities—many of which are small, rural, and island-based—depend on sustainably managed marine resources for household nutrition, cultural practices, small-business livelihoods, and regional economic stability; and

WHEREAS, approximately 400 sea otters were reintroduced by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) in cooperation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to six locations in Southeast Alaska in the late 1960s without a comprehensive, long-term ecological management strategy; and

WHEREAS, the sea otter population, left largely unmanaged, has expanded substantially over the last several decades (with commonly cited annual growth rates of roughly 12–14%), and is widely reported to number many tens of thousands region-wide; and

WHEREAS, sea otters consume approximately 25–30% of their body weight in shellfish daily, leading to intensive predation on crab, abalone, urchins, sea cucumbers, and clams and severely diminishing stocks available for subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial harvests; and

WHEREAS, the regional crab and dive sectors—particularly Dungeness crab—have experienced major losses as formerly productive areas have been depleted, compressing fleets into smaller footprints, increasing costs, and threatening long-term business viability and food security; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's sustainably managed fisheries are foundational to coastal economies, and the cumulative economic impact of diminished shellfish resources attributable to unchecked otter predation has resulted in substantial losses to fishermen, processors, support businesses, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous peoples of Southeast Alaska sustainably managed marine ecosystems, including traditional sea otter hunting, for millennia, demonstrating that culturally grounded, local management can support ecological balance and shellfish abundance; and

WHEREAS, provisions of the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), enacted to aid recovery, now impede effective population management in Southeast Alaska and limit the allowable economic use of legally harvested pelts, creating tension with Alaska's constitutional sustained-yield mandate; and

WHEREAS, Section 119 of the MMPA authorizes cooperative agreements among Alaska Native organizations and federal and state agencies, providing a framework for co-management that respects Indigenous leadership while advancing ecological balance and economic resilience; and

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference's CEDS prioritizes resilient communities, sustainable resource development, and regional food security—outcomes which are undermined when shellfish fisheries collapse due to unmanaged predation pressure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Southeast Conference urges federal and state authorities—working in close collaboration with Alaska Native organizations, local governments, industry, and community stakeholders—to establish and expedite a comprehensive, adaptive sea otter co-management program for Southeast Alaska that restores ecological balance and protects critical shellfish populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that federal and state agencies prioritize equitable disaster assistance and financial relief for Southeast Alaska's crab and dive fisheries commensurate with support historically provided to salmon fisheries, recognizing the severe economic and food-security impacts of unmanaged sea otter predation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Alaska evaluate and, as appropriate, implement targeted permit buy-back and related tools to reduce fishing pressure on stressed crab stocks in order to aid recovery and long-term sustainability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress and federal regulators amend or clarify MMPA regulations to expand allowable uses and markets for sea otters legally harvested by Alaska Native subsistence hunters—including the sale of intact pelts and value-added products—to strengthen traditional livelihoods and incentivize effective population management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Southeast Conference supports community-driven shellfish enhancement, habitat restoration, and research projects as essential components of a balanced marine management strategy; and

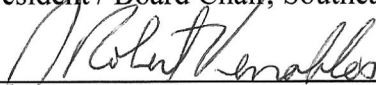
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Southeast Conference affirms strong support for the efforts of the Shellfish Preservation Alliance and similar organizations working toward ecological balance, sustainable resource use, cultural continuity, and regional economic revitalization; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Southeast Conference directs its staff to transmit this resolution to the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Governor of Alaska, USFWS, ADF&G, the Alaska Board of Fisheries, and other relevant agencies and partners, and to advocate for timely implementation of the actions herein.

ADOPTED by the Membership of Southeast Conference at the 67th Annual Meeting in Sitka, Alaska, this 18th day of September, 2025.



President / Board Chair, Southeast Conference



Executive Director, Southeast Conference

Southeast Conference

Resolution 26-03

A RESOLUTION TO OPEN NEW ACCOUNTS AT TRUE NORTH FEDERAL CREDIT UNION AND APPOINT SIGNATORY NAMES AND AUTHORIZATIONS ON BANK ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference is a non-profit corporation in the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors President is Zak Kirkpatrick; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors Treasurer is Alec Mesdag; and

WHEREAS, Additional Director on the Corporation's Board of Directors is Mary Katie Koester; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Executive Director is Robert Venables; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Deputy Director is Dan Lesh; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Chief Finance Officer is Stephanie Cameron; and

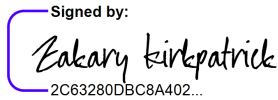
WHEREAS, In order to update signatures required for signing all checks & transfers needed and necessary for the purpose of doing business;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference has elected to open a new account at True North Federal Credit Union

AND, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference authorizes Dan Lesh and Mary Katie Koester as signers on all True North Federal Credit Union accounts along with Alec Mesdag and Robert Venables.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON September 15, 2025.

Witness by:

Signed by:

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10/23/2025

Zak Kirkpatrick
President
Southeast Conference

Attest:



Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

Southeast Conference

Resolution 26-04

A RESOLUTION TO CLARIFY SIGNATORY NAMES AND AUTHORIZATIONS FOR ALL REVOLVING LOAN FUND BANK ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference is a non-profit corporation in the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors President is Katie Koester; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors Treasurer is Alec Mesdag; and

WHEREAS, Additional Directors on the Corporation's Board of Directors are Gracia O'Connell, KC Hostetler, Zak Kirkpatrick, Jason Custer, Michael Ganey, Markos Scheer, and Liz Cabrera; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Executive Director is Robert Venables; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Deputy Director is Dan Lesh; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Chief Finance Officer is Stephanie Cameron; and

WHEREAS, In order to update banking resolutions necessary for the purpose of doing business;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference has elected to permit Southeast Conference Executive Director John Robert Venables, and Southeast Conference Chief Finance Officer Stephanie Cameron to open multiple certificate deposit accounts on behalf of the Southeast Conference Revolving Loan Fund program as necessary until further notice is given by the board of directors.

AND, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference authorizes John Robert Venables and Stephanie L Cameron to initiate similar accounts at all banking and lending institutions where Southeast Conference has established accounts for the duration of the Revolving Loan Fund program.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON FEBRUARY 17, 2026.

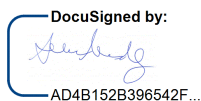
Witness by:

Signed by:

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Mary Katherine Koester
President
Southeast Conference

Witness by:

DocuSigned by:

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Alec Mesdag
Treasurer
Southeast Conference

Attest:



Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

**Southeast Conference
Resolution 26-05**

**A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AS THE CORPORATION'S AUTHORIZED
REPRESENTATIVE AND SIGNATORY FOR ALL REVOLVING LOAN
FUND BANK ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE**

AUTHORIZATION OF SIGNATORY

A meeting of the Board of Directors (the "Board") of The Southeast Conference (the "Corporation"), duly called and held on the 25th day of February, 2026, at which a quorum was present and acting throughout, adopted the following resolutions:

WHEREAS

The Corporation administers and/or participates in the program Alaska Mariculture Cluster, which includes the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Revolving Loan Fund as described in its Administrative Plans, Operating Protocols, agreements, and related documents (the "Program") and;

The Board desires to designate an authorized representative to execute any and all documents, agreements, certifications, instruments, and related materials necessary or appropriate in connection with the Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Appointment of Authorized Signer

J. Robert Venables, aka Robert Venables and John Robert Venables, Executive Director of the Corporation, is hereby designated and appointed as the Corporation's authorized representative and signatory.

2. Scope of Authority

The authorized representative is empowered to execute, deliver, certify, and submit any and all documents, agreements, amendments, certifications, instruments, notices, reports, and related materials necessary or appropriate to participate in, administer, or comply with the Program, including but not limited to:

- Applications and program participation documents
- Loan, collateral, or financial support agreements
- Deposit account control agreements
- Cash collateral agreements
- Certifications, assurances, and compliance documents
- Amendments, renewals, and extensions of any such documents
- Any other documents reasonably required in connection with the Program

3. **Binding Effect**

All actions taken and documents executed by the authorized representative within the scope of this authority shall be deemed the acts of the Corporation and shall be binding upon the Corporation as if executed by the Board.

4. **Ratification**

The Board hereby ratifies and approves all prior actions taken by J. Robert Venables in connection with the Program that are consistent with this resolution.

5. **Duration**

This authorization shall remain in full force and effect until modified or revoked by a subsequent resolution of the Board.

CERTIFICATION

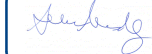
The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of resolutions duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Corporation, that such resolutions have not been amended or rescinded, and that they remain in full force and effect as of the date written below.

**ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON
FEBRUARY 25, 2026.**

Name: Alec Mesdag

Title: Treasurer / Authorized Officer

Date: February 25, 2026

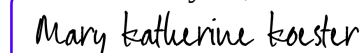


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Name: Mary Katherine Koester

Title: President, Board of Directors

Date: February 25, 2026



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**Southeast Conference
Resolution 26-06**

**A RESOLUTION TO AMEND SIGNATORY NAMES AND AUTHORIZATIONS ON ALL
BANKING RELATED ACCOUNTS AT TONGASS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION FOR
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE**

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference is a non-profit corporation in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, The Corporation's Board of Directors President is Mary Katherine Koester; and

WHEREAS, The Corporations' Board of Directors Treasurer is Alec Mesdag; and

WHEREAS, Additional Directors on the Corporation's Board of Directors are Gracia O'Connel, KC Hostetler, Zakary Kirkpatrick, Jason Custer, Michael Ganey, Markos Scheer, and Liz Cabrera;

WHEREAS, The Corporations Executive Director is John Robert Venables; and

WHEREAS, The Corporations Deputy Director is Daniel D Lesh; and

WHEREAS, The Corporations Chief Financial Officer is Stephanie L Cameron; and

WHEREAS, The Corporations RLF Program officer is James M Yount; and

WHEREAS, In order to update banking resolutions necessary for the purposes of doing business;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference authorizes John Robert Venables, Daniel D Lesh, Alec Mesdag, Mary Katherine Koester, and Stephanie L Cameron as signers on all existing and future accounts opened at Tongass Federal Credit Union.

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; The Board of Directors of Southeast Conference authorizes James M Young for all Revolving Loan Fund and Collateral loan discussion matters only at Tongass Federal Credit Union.

ADOPTED BY SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON March 12, 2026, UPDATED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON March 19, 2026.

Witness by:

Attest:

Signed by:

Mary Katherine Koester

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Mary Katherine Koester
President
Southeast Conference

Signed by:

J Robert Venables

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John Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

Southeast Conference Resolution 26-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S MARITIME ADMINISTRATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$80,040,906 FOR THE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM'S STRENGTHENING TERMINALS IN ALASKA'S RURAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (AMHS STARTS) PROJECT.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) is a discretionary grant program administered by the United States Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD); and

WHEREAS, PIDP funds are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that improve the safety, efficiency or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around or within a port; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this application is to construct a new Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry dock and ancillary infrastructure in Skagway; and

WHEREAS, this project will result in a ferry dock and terminal capable of accommodating all AMHS ferry vessels as well as other vessels of up to 360' in length, including USCG and fishing vessels, and overnight tie-up capability for the vessels; and

WHEREAS, the project's outcomes will enhance the movement of goods and freight between Alaska, Canada, and between Southeast Alaska communities; and

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference (SEC) was contacted by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities requesting SEC submit the PIDP grant application on behalf of the Municipality of Skagway and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Skagway and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities are project partners with the authority to construct, operate and maintain docking infrastructure at the project location; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has committed to serving as a subrecipient and lead in project design, engineering and construction, maintaining the infrastructure with the Municipality of Skagway beyond the grant; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project is located within a designated rural area and is eligible for greater than an 80% Federal cost share;

WHEREAS, though a greater than 80% Federal share is possible, the project will be more competitive if a 20% or greater match can be provided; and

WHEREAS, SEC will require the State of Alaska and Municipality of Skagway to commit the necessary match should less than 100% Federal share be requested;

WHEREAS, SEC will require the State of Alaska and Municipality of Skagway to commit to non-federal funding at or above the match should the actual project costs exceed projected project costs included in the budget of the grant application; and

WHEREAS, SEC will not execute any grant award without the appropriate Memorandums of Agreement in place between SEC, Municipality of Skagway, and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities detailing roles and responsibilities for the administration and non-federal match requirement of the grant award.

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE as follows:

Section 1. Submission of a Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Application. The Board hereby authorizes the Executive Director's submission of a Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Application to the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration for the Alaska Marine Highway System's Strengthening Terminals in Alaska's Rural Transportation Systems (AMHS STARTS) Project in the amount of \$80,040,906.

Section 2. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED BY SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON MAY 22, 2026.

Witness by:


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Mary Katherine Koester
President
Southeast Conference

Attest:

Signed by:


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John Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

**Southeast Conference
Resolution 26-08**

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE- RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$162,000 FOR THE SEAFOOD PROCESSOR BUSINESS SUPPORT PROJECT.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) is a discretionary grant program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development; and

WHEREAS, RBDG funds are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that promote economic development and job creation in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this application is to accelerate business development and growth through technical assistance in planning support, partnership development, and improved operational efficiencies for seafood processors; and

WHEREAS, this project will result in new business plans and process flow audits to support increased market understanding, improved operational processes, and increased business activities for small, rural Southeast Alaska seafood processors; and

WHEREAS, the project's outcomes will result in business growth with the potential for jobs and a growth in economic activities;

WHEREAS, Southeast Conference (SEC) is committed to supporting economic development and job creation in Southeast Alaska with a mission of promoting strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska.; and

WHEREAS, the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy identifies Seafood Modernization, including maximizing economic benefits through value-added seafood production development and evaluating operational costs and looking for ways to generate more efficiencies in operations, as a regional economic priority; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project is located within a designated rural area;

WHEREAS, no non-federal cost share is required by the RBDG program; and

WHEREAS, SEC will request for 100% Federal share;

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE as follows:

Section 1. Submission of a Rural Business Development Grant Application. The Board hereby authorizes the Executive Director's submission of a Rural Business Development Grant Application to the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development for the Seafood Processor Business Support Project in an amount not to exceed \$162,000.

Section 2. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED BY SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JUNE 18, 2026.

Witness by:


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Mary Katherine Koester
President
Southeast Conference

Attest:


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John Robert Venables
Executive Director
Southeast Conference



FY25

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE AND SUBSIDIARY

CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of June 30, 2025

	Southeast Conference	Alaska Pellet Supply and Service	Southeast Conference Foundation	Eliminating Entries	Consolidated Amounts
ASSETS					
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash - unrestricted	\$ 1,186,186	\$ 30,266	\$ 59,406	\$ -	\$ 1,275,858
Cash - restricted for revolving loan fund	100,220	-	-	-	100,220
Grants and accounts receivable	3,400,790	-	-	(1,809)	3,398,981
Prepaid expenses and deposits	1,067,115	-	-	-	1,067,115
Total Current Assets	5,754,311	30,266	59,406	(1,809)	5,842,174
INVESTMENT IN ALASKA PELLET SUPPLY AND SERVICE, LLC	79,084	-	-	(79,084)	-
GRAIN TERMINAL RESTRICTED USE AGREEMENT	6,000,000	-	-	-	6,000,000
OPERATING LEASE ASSET AND EQUIPMENT, net	542,172	50,874	-	-	593,046
Total Assets	\$ 12,375,567	\$ 81,140	\$ 59,406	\$ (80,893)	\$ 12,435,220
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS					
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Deferred revenue	\$ 23,375	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,375
Accrued wages and related benefits	118,456	47	-	-	118,503
Accounts payable	3,555,282	2,009	254	(1,809)	3,555,736
Refundable advances	323,020	-	50,000	-	373,020
Current portion, obligation under operating lease	60,684	-	-	-	60,684
Total Current Liabilities	4,080,817	2,056	50,254	(1,809)	4,131,318
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES					
Obligation under operating lease, net of current portion	459,932	-	-	-	459,932
Total Liabilities	4,540,749	2,056	50,254	(1,809)	4,591,250
NET ASSETS					
Net assets without donor restrictions, undesignated	1,672,758	79,084	-	(79,084)	1,672,758
Net assets without donor restrictions, designated for operating reserve	30,000	-	-	-	30,000
Total Net Assets, without Donor Restrictions	1,702,758	79,084	-	(79,084)	1,702,758
Net assets restricted by donors for:					
Revolving Loan Fund	100,220	-	-	-	100,220
EDA BBB grant program	6,002,322	-	-	-	6,002,322
Scholarships	7,820	-	9,152	-	16,972
Solid Waste Project	21,698	-	-	-	21,698
Total Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	6,132,060	-	9,152	-	6,141,212
Total Net Assets	7,834,818	79,084	9,152	(79,084)	7,843,970
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 12,375,567	\$ 81,140	\$ 59,406	\$ (80,893)	\$ 12,435,220

THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE AND SUBSIDIARY

CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year Ended June 30, 2025

	Southeast Conference	Alaska Pellet Supply and Service	Southeast Conference Foundation	Eliminating Entries	Consolidated Amounts
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS					
SUPPORT AND REVENUE					
SUPPORT					
Grants and Contracts from Government Agencies					
State of Alaska	\$ 504,619	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	504,619
Federal government	10,848,940	-	-	-	10,848,940
Public Support	-	-	10,320	(10,000)	320
Total Support	11,353,559	-	10,320	(10,000)	11,353,879
REVENUE					
Membership	140,670	-	-	-	140,670
Conferences	138,944	-	-	-	138,944
Sponsorships	137,314	-	-	-	137,314
Interest income	14,606	50	-	-	14,656
Pellet Sales	-	29,927	-	-	29,927
Equity in earnings (loss) of Alaska Pellet Supply and Service, LLC	(15,418)	-	-	15,418	-
Miscellaneous	42,792	-	-	(16,766)	26,026
Total Revenue	458,908	29,977	-	(1,348)	487,537
Support Provided by Expiring Purpose Restrictions	20,500	-	1,168	-	21,668
Total Support and Revenue	11,832,967	29,977	11,488	(11,348)	11,863,084
EXPENSES					
Program Services	11,141,608	39,790	-	(26,766)	11,154,632
Supporting Services					
Management and general	313,738	5,605	1,168	-	320,511
Fundraising	52,341	-	-	-	52,341
Total Supporting Services	366,079	5,605	1,168	-	372,852
Total Expenses	11,507,687	45,395	1,168	(26,766)	11,527,484
Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	325,280	(15,418)	10,320	15,418	335,600
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS					
Scholarship donations	38,320	-	-	-	38,320
Interest income	1,247	-	-	-	1,247
Net assets released from donor restrictions - satisfied by expiring purpose restrictions	(20,500)	-	(1,168)	-	(21,668)
Change in Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	19,067	-	(1,168)	-	17,899
Change in net assets	344,347	(15,418)	9,152	15,418	353,499
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	7,490,471	94,502	-	(94,502)	7,490,471
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 7,834,818	\$ 79,084	\$ 9,152	\$ (79,084)	\$ 7,843,970

See Independent Auditor's Report.



SPONSORS

ALASKA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT & EXPORT AUTHORITY (AIDEA)
ALASKA COMMITTEE
ALASKA MARICULTURE CLUSTER
ALASKA MARINE LINES
ALASKA POLLOCK FISHERY ALLIANCE
ALASKA POWER & TELEPHONE
AVISTA CORPORATION
ALASKA ELECTRIC LIGHT & POWER (AEL&P)
CENTRAL COUNCIL TLINGIT & HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA (CCTHITA)
COEUR ALASKA
COMPUTER HQ
DENALI COMMISSION
FIRST BANK
GCI
GOLDBELT
GRIND COFFEE CO.
GROW KETCHIKAN
HANSEN GRESS
HUNA TOTEM CORPORATION
JAG MARINE GROUP
MERRILL LYNCH
NORTHRIM
PND ENGINEERS INC.
PORT COMMUNITIES OF ALASKA
PACIFIC SEAFOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION
RESPEC
SAMSON TUG & BARGE
SEALASKA
SEARHC
SHEE ATIKA
TRAVEL JUNEAU
VIZSLA COPPER
WOSTMANN ASSOCIATES

THANK YOU

OUR MISSION

OUR MEMBERS

