

**From:** Trent Sutton  
**To:** [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman](#); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman](#); [Sen. Click Bishop](#); [Sen. Click Bishop](#); [Sen. Gary Stevens](#); [Sen. Gary Stevens](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#); [Sen. Natasha Von Imhof](#); [Sen. Natasha Von Imhof](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Juli Lucky](#); [Juli Lucky](#); [Pete Ecklund](#); [Patricia Walker](#); [Patricia Walker](#); [Peter Fellman](#); [Peter Fellman](#); [Katrina Matheny](#); [Katrina Matheny](#); [Konrad Jackson](#); [Konrad Jackson](#); [Jonathan King](#); [Jonathan King](#); [Denise Liccioli](#); [Denise Liccioli](#); [Weston Eiler](#); [weiler@alaska.edu](mailto:weiler@alaska.edu)  
**Subject:** Alaska Education Tax Credit Program/HB233  
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29 April 2018

Senator Anna McKinnon

State Capitol, Room 516

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator McKinnon:

I am writing this letter to provide my full support for the extension of the Alaska Education Tax Credit program as passed by the Alaska House of Representatives (HB 233). As a result, I ask that the Senate Finance Committee reconsider the proposed changes introduced in the substitute bill from this past week. Specifically, removing the extra 50% inducement in the \$100,000 to \$300,000 tier will curtail any incentive from the private sector for educational purposes which will negatively impact the future of Alaska.

As a faculty member in the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, I can attest to importance of the Education Tax Credit program to fisheries research and management in Alaska. One of my former graduate students (Cory Graham, now a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) received funding to cover his stipend, tuition, and health insurance from the Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center. This funding was used so that he could complete his master's degree research on the effects of changing ocean conditions on Chinook salmon in southeastern Alaska. Through his research findings, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game now has a better understanding of Chinook salmon stocks in this region of the state, which is allowing them to better forecast future abundance and survival of this species. This, in turn, will improve their ability to manage this iconic fisheries resource in southeastern Alaska.

I also have two current graduate students, Justin Priest and Duncan Green, that are conducting their master's degree research in Prudhoe Bay in the Beaufort Sea on the impacts of climate change on whitefishes and ciscoes (e.g., broad whitefish, Arctic cisco, least cisco, humpback whitefish) that are a critically important subsistence resource in the villages of Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, and Utqiagvik. This research is funded by Hilcorp Alaska, LLC, and covers not only their stipend, tuition, and insurance, but the field component of their research as well (e.g., sampling gear, travel, lodging, food). Through their studies, we will have a better understanding of climate warming on these important subsistence species which will allow for better management for the long term.

What is in common in both of these examples is that the contributions for graduate education from both

the Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center and Hilcorp Alaska, LLC would not have happened without the Alaska Education Tax Credit. Without those funding contributions, these research projects would not have taken place which would have a negative impact on our understanding of these important fish stocks in Alaska. This, as a consequence, would have dire consequences on the ability of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate, science-based management strategies in these regions of the state.

In conclusion, I strongly support the extension of the existing Alaska Educational Tax Credit program (HB 233) for not only the betterment of the University of Alaska Fairbanks specifically, but for the University of Alaska system as a whole. The Education Tax Credit program is working well as it was intended, which is to encourage private sector investment in education and generate long-term economic benefit for Alaska. Without that program, it is likely that private sector contributions will be reduced or become nonexistent, which will have negative long-term implications for the future of Alaska.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter with me further, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at this email address or at 907-687-2079.

Sincerely,

Trent M. Sutton, Ph.D.

Professor of Fisheries

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