

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senator Mia Costello
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 75

“An Act relating a license to drive a commercial motor vehicle.”

Nationally and in state, there is a commercial driver shortage. Currently, Alaska is looking to court projects of considerable size, like the Alaska LNG pipeline. The demand for interstate freight transportation must be met.

Driving interstate freight and intrastate freight requires separate licenses. To qualify for an interstate Commercial Driver’s License a person must be 21 years of age, while a driver with an intrastate Commercial Driver’s License must be 19 years of age. Presumably, two identically loaded tractor trailer rigs require differing ages to drive them. This arbitrary inconsistency in regulation restricts the available pool of Alaskan commercial drivers.

SB 75 changes the statute regarding the license to drive a commercial motor vehicle to reflect two changes. First, it changes the minimum age requirement from 19 years old to 18 years old when driving intrastate commerce. Second, it adds a new subsection regarding interstate commerce, changing the minimum age requirement for a Commercial Driver’s License to 18, if the federal law regarding interstate commerce is also changed.

In the long run, SB 75 will increase pressure to change the Federal statute. As a more immediate effect, it will also increase the available pool of drivers for intrastate commerce by recruiting graduating high schoolers who wish to immediately enter the work force. This bill will help businesses and create jobs alike.