

BILL WALKER
Governor



P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001
(907) 465-3500
Fax (907) 465-3532

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Commissioners

FROM: Jim Whitaker
Chief of Staff

DATE: January 5, 2016

SUBJECT: Travel and Hire

In light of the State's continued fiscal challenge, effective immediately, Governor Walker is commencing a hiring and travel restriction, applicable to all agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. The purpose of these restrictions is to reduce State spending without compromising efficiency and effectiveness of core service delivery. Restrictions are as follows:

Non-Essential Travel Restriction

All agencies are prohibited from incurring non-essential travel costs, including air travel, ground travel, lodging, parking, tolls and/or any other miscellaneous travel expenses. This prohibition is for both in-state and out-of-state travel. Examples of non-essential travel include:

- Travel to professional development or trade association conferences. Such travel is prohibited until further notice, unless required to obtain continuing education credits necessary to maintain required credentials that cannot be obtained in Alaska or online.
- Multiple employees traveling for the same purpose. Travel of more than one employee from the same operational section for the same purpose will be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

Essential travel not subject to this prohibition includes travel which is mission critical to the agency and inherent to the job (for example: auditors, inspectors, examiners, enforcement and collections agents). In addition, travel completely funded by third-party dollars is not prohibited.

Any travel traditionally paid for by the State for non-State employees who are engaged in the furtherance of the State's official business (for example: contractors and witnesses testifying on behalf of the State, etc.) may continue if it otherwise fits the mission critical criterion.

Reservations made prior to today should be cancelled, unless substantial additional costs would result from the cancellation beyond the standard cancellation fee.

All travel must be approved by employee's Commissioner. This approval may not be delegated. All out-of-state travel will be approved by the Chief of Staff or his designee.

All State Boards and Commissions are asked to comply with the foregoing travel restrictions, including to the extent feasible limiting travel to one meeting per year and conducting other Board Meetings telephonically. If a Board or Commission determines that these restrictions will materially impact their ability to perform their core mission, they may seek a waiver from the Director of Boards and Commissions or his designee.

Hiring Restriction

A general restriction on hiring is effective immediately. This applies to all positions, including part-time, except those that are necessary to protect the life, health and safety of Alaskans. Departments may pursue a waiver due to extraordinary circumstances, as noted below.

A department commissioner may request a waiver to the hiring restriction if the Commissioner believes a position is mission critical and the position function cannot be achieved by reassignment or reprioritizing functions of other employees. Please make note that "mission critical" refers to core service functions, not administrative functions. A waiver may also be requested if a vacancy occurs as a result of poor employee performance. All hiring waivers must be approved by the Chief of Staff or his designee.

The hiring restriction does not apply to:

- Positions that are essential in protecting the life, health or safety of Alaska citizens. This includes Alaska State Troopers, corrections and probation officers, and employees that provide patient and resident services at 24-hour institutions;
- Revenue generating and revenue collections positions, such that the failure to hire would result in a net reduction in revenue.
- Positions fully paid other than by General Funds, such as federally funded programs or program receipts.

Any written offers of employment already made as of today can continue to be honored. Recruitments currently on Workplace Alaska will be open through the stated closing date.

However, a notice to all applicants will be posted on Workplace Alaska advising applicants of the hiring restrictions and stating that only positions necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans and to meet other essential state responsibilities will be filled. A currently posted recruitment will not be extended unless a waiver has been approved.

Agencies are not permitted to use new contractors or upon contract expiry, renew existing contractors unless they fall under one of the exemptions listed above and provide skill-sets not otherwise available by state employees.

Non-Executive State Agencies

The Governor is also requesting the State's quasi-independent organizations to adopt similar travel restriction and hiring restriction policies, including:

- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
- Alaska Energy Authority
- Alaska Gasline Development Corporation
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
- Alaska Mental Health Trust
- Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
- Alaska Public Offices Commission
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
- Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
- Permanent Fund Corporation
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska
- University of Alaska