

Legislative Update



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For immediate release:

Good Morning –

I feel like I'm in an Olympic race called the Legislative Marathon – and we're not even at the ½ way point! That's ok; it is what we are here for. Besides, it will slow down next week as a number of Legislators will be in Washington D.C attending the U.S. Energy Council. Is energy an important issue to Alaskans – absolutely!

This week, the House Finance Subcommittees are closing out their agency budget recommendations, which will now go before the full House Finance Committee. We expect the committee to hold its' public testimony the week of March 8th, complete their work on the budget and pass it to the Senate by mid-March. Then it's our turn.
Lyman

Senate Finance Committee Action

Most of this week, the finance committee has concentrated on the implications of oil taxes established in 2007 on the state's revenue projections once the North Slope gas line is started. Apparently in certain circumstances, a gas line built according to the Alaska Gas Incentive Act (AGIA) would produce less revenue to the state from both oil and gas than if there was no gas line at all. The reduction could be as much as a couple billion, so there is a lot of attention to this complex topic.

However, we did pass three bills out of the committee that had been heard earlier. SB 159 would increase the maximum funeral expenses paid under Worker's Compensation from \$5,000 to \$10,000. SB 163 would increase the cost allowance for injury, disability, and heart attack paid by the Alaska Fisherman's Fund from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

The final bill would correct a limitation for Medicaid recipients that only upper or lower dentures could be provided in any one year. SB 199 authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to provide both sets in the same state fiscal year. These bills now will be scheduled for a full vote of the Senate before passing on the House chamber.

Coastal Programs

On February 5, 2010, Lieutenant Governor Craig E. Campbell filed regulations (993-09-0064) from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development relating to the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (3 AAC 196). The regulations establish procedures for the Community Coastal Impact Assistance Program public solicitation, which is being administered by DCRA. The effective date of the regulations is March 7, 2010, and the regulations will be published in Register 193, April 2010. For further information, contact Sally Cox, Planner at (907) 269-4588.

DCRA planning staff held the first of two public information teleconferences to answer questions regarding a call for proposals on the Community Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CCIAP) public solicitation. The teleconference was well attended.

The second teleconference will be held from 10:00 - 11:30 AM on March 2, 2010. The teleconference number is 1-800-315-6338. The code is 4588#. The CCIAP public solicitation closes at 5:00 PM, Friday, March 12, 2010. For further information, contact Sally Cox, Planner at (907) 269-4588.

BLM Squirrel River planning notice

Attached is the Federal Register notice about BLM efforts to re-open their Kobuk-Seward Resource management plan to address Squirrel River management issues. This gives interested parties another opportunity to publicly comment regarding the transporters in the Squirrel River management area. If you are not in that area but have transporter issues in your area as well you may want to comment.

Permanent Fund Dividend

Application Deadline

March 31, 2010

Apply on-line

<http://www.pfd.state.ak.us/>