



House Speaker Bryce Edgmon's *Legislative Update*



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House ADF&G Budget Focuses on Management for More Fishing



The budget process during session begins with a host of Finance Subcommittees each taking responsibility for a particular department and Governor Walker’s proposals for their funding. After weeks of combing through the department’s various divisions and their programs and services, the subcommittee can make recommendations of its own, through adoption of amendments to the governor’s funding plan. Once those recommendations are complete, the subcommittee “closes out”—forwarding a summary of its work to the full Finance Committee and then closing down for the year.

This week many Finance Subcommittees closed out, including the one for the Department of Fish & Game. My office follows ADF&G budgeting closely, and I am impressed with this year’s subcommittee’s work.

Under the chairmanship of Rep. Dan Ortiz, Independent of Ketchikan and member of the Alaska House Majority Coalition, the subcommittee showed a keen understanding of the importance of management programs and how they maximize hunting and fishing activities.



The subcommittee’s actions regarding commercial fisheries are a great example of how this works. In consultation with the department, the members looked at many management activities that had been cut in recent years, and how those activities relate to fishing opportunity. What they found were many salmon weir projects, counting towers, and fish stock surveys that all served to better inform fisheries managers.

With such projects out of the picture, fisheries managers have less information on salmon escapements and fish stock

Speaker Edgmon leading the floor session on Wednesday.

biomasses. The less information managers have, the more conservatively they must manage fishery openings. This means lost fishing opportunities for harvesters, less fish processing for processors, less money flowing into Alaska communities, and even less landing-tax revenues collected by the state.

Rep. Ortiz's subcommittee evaluated the situation and decided to add back funding for several of these valuable management projects. Ranging across the state, they include salmon-weir and counting-tower projects, herring and black cod stock assessments, and king salmon and crab population surveys.

Restoring funding for these projects allows the department to maximize opportunities for commercial, subsistence, and sport fishing while also being confident that our fisheries remain sustainable. In turn, there is greater potential for significant increases in fisheries economic activity in multiple regions of Alaska.

More than a dozen Finance Subcommittees will be closed out this week. The full Finance Committee will begin assessing their recommendations next week, with hearings there also to include opportunities for the public to comment on Thursday and Friday. See the "On Deck" section on page five for details on next week's public testimony on the Operating Budget.



Dillingham Head Start parents JJ Larson, left, and Angela Lopez, center, visited the Capitol with Wellness Content Manager Jeanie Timmerman on Wednesday. Here they are being introduced on the floor of the House.

Democrats in House Majority Coalition Approve Tiffany Zulkosky for District 38

On Thursday evening the Democratic members of the Alaska House Majority Coalition confirmed Governor Walker's nomination of former Bethel Mayor Tiffany Zulkosky to fill the House District 38 seat left vacant following Zach Fansler's resignation from the Legislature.

I am confident that Tiffany will do great work for her district. In addition to being elected Bethel's youngest mayor in history in 2008, Tiffany has also served on the city council and worked for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation and the Nuvista Light & Electric Cooperative. In 2009 she was appointed by then U.S. Senator Mark Begich as his Rural Director for Alaska, giving her rich experience with bush issues on a state-wide scale.

On behalf of the House Majority Coalition, I want to thank all the candidates who put their names forward to serve their region. It should be heartening for the district that all those who tossed their hats in the ring were worthy candidates.

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's Annual Visit to the Legislature



Sen. Murkowski taking a question from Rep. Adam Wool (D-Fairbanks) following her address to a Joint Session of the Legislature Thursday.



Rep. John Lincoln (D-Kotzebue), Speaker Edgmon, Sen. Murkowski, and Rep. Geran Tarr (D-Anchorage) with the Senator following their in-person presentation of the recently passed House Resolution 6 on offshore oil & gas leasing priorities.

Advocates for Bristol Bay



A coalition of advocates for the Bristol Bay Watershed were in town on Monday to testify before the House Resources Committee on the threats the proposed Pebble Mine poses to the region.



Rep. Edgmon speaking with the group on Monday morning.

On Deck Next Week...

Monday

(H)EDUCATION

Feb 26 Monday 8:00 AM

HB 212 REAA & SMALL MUNI SCHOOL DISTRICT FUND; HB 233 EDUCATION TAX CREDITS; SUNSET; REPEALS

(H)JOINT SESSION

Feb 26 Monday 11:00 AM

Annual Address by the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator

(H)RESOURCES

Feb 26 Monday 1:00 PM

Confirmation Hearing: Big Game Commercial Services Board Members
HB 367 NATIVE CORP. LIABILITY FOR CONTAMINATION

Tuesday

(H)FISHERIES

Feb 27 Tuesday 10:00 AM

HB 231 CFEC: BD. SALARY;STAFF CLASSIFIED SERVICE; HB 272 TANGLE LAKES STATE GAME REFUGE; HB 260 FISH & GAME LICENSES;ELECTRONIC FORM; HB 386 VESSELS: REGISTRATION/TITLES; DERELICTS; HB 188 COMM. FISH. ENTRY PERMITS; LOANS; TRUSTS

Wednesday

(H)JUDICIARY

Feb 28 Wednesday 1:00 PM

HB 75 GUN VIOLENCE PROTECTIVE ORDERS

(H)FINANCE

Feb 28 Wednesday 1:30 PM

HB 286 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS TELECONFERENCED
HB 285 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET TELECONFERENCED
Adopt New Committee Substitute

(H)RESOURCES

Feb 28 Wednesday 6:00 PM

HB 367 NATIVE CORP. LIABILITY FOR CONTAMINATION

Thursday Public Testimony on Operating and Mental Health Budgets.

(H)FINANCE Mar 01 Thursday

1:00 - 3:00 PM Homer, Kenai, Ketchikan,

Kodiak, Mat-Su, & Seward

3:15 - 4:45 PM Utqiagvik, Dillingham, & Fairbanks

4:15 - 4:45 PM Off Net sites

Public Testimony <Time Limit 2 Minutes>

Please arrive 30 min. prior to end of allotted-time or testimony will close early.

Select a spokesperson if you are part of a group with the same message. All Off Net

callers must hang up immediately after testifying to keep lines open.

Continue to access meeting through akleg.gov. The hearing may be televised on Gavel to Gavel. please check listings.

Please arrive 15 min. early for sign-in process. Send written testimony to house-finance@akleg.gov before 3/3/18 at 1:00 PM. Please call 465-4648 to obtain call-in number.

Friday Public Testimony on Operating and Mental Health Budgets.

(H)FINANCE Mar 02

1:00 - 2:30 PM Juneau

2:45 - 3:45 PM Sitka, Petersburg, Delta Junction, Unalaska, Glennallen, & Tok

4:00 - 5:00 PM Bethel, Cordova, Kotzebue, Nome, Valdez, & Wrangell

5:00 - 6:00 PM Off Net sites

-- Public Testimony <Time Limit 2 Minutes>

Please arrive 30 min. prior to end of allotted-time or testimony will close early. Select a

spokesperson if you are part of a group with the same message. All Off Net callers must

hang up immediately after testifying to keep lines open. Continue to access meeting

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