

March 8th, 2018



PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON THE MARINE HIGHWAY

WHAT: The House Transportation Committee public testimony on the Alaska Marine Highway System

WHEN: Tuesday, March 12th

1:30pm – 3pm and

5:30pm – 6:30pm

WHERE: To testify, please go to your local LIO

Cordova	418 First St., Suite A	Kodiak	305 Center Ave. Suite 1
Dillingham	Kangiiqutaq Building	Petersburg	11B Gjoa Street
Homer	270 West Pioneer Ave. Suite B	Seward	302 Railway Ste. 107
Juneau	Terry Miller Building, Suite 111	Sitka	201 Katlian Street
Kenai	145 Main Street Loop, Suite 217	Valdez	State Office Building, Room 13
Ketchikan	1900 First Avenue, Suite 310	Wrangell	223 Front Street

People in communities and areas without an LIO should call **844-586-9085**. These phone lines are very limited, so if your community has an LIO, please join your neighbors there in person!



Left: Representative Edgmon meets in his office with Cate Gomez, a high school student from Dillingham and a member of Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA).

BUDGET IMPACTS

The Capitol was abuzz this week regarding two presentations given to both the House Finance and Senate Finance committees. You can view the presentation slides and video of the presentations on the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Finance Committee pages.

ED KING – OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)

Since the Governor's amended budget was released 3 weeks ago, questions about what the impact of various cuts would be have consistently been met with two responses: either it is not the administration's job to determine the impact of cuts (on students and school districts, for instance) or the impacts will be explained at a later date in an analysis by Ed King, Chief Economist for OMB. Needless to say, the presentation of this analysis has been much anticipated.

Unfortunately, the presentation did little to analyze the cumulative impact of the cuts on the economy or specific impact of the Governor's proposals to communities or groups like Medicaid recipients and seniors, and instead relied on general theory to contend broadly that state spending simply has little impact on the economy and that the private sector will replace both jobs and programs, aided by the cash infusion from larger PFDs. Committee members pointed out that this suggestion would seem in direct conflict with King's analysis from September (before taking a job with the new administration) where he stated: "I was surprised to find that there is no statistically significant relationship between PFD payments and changes in jobs. Not even if I try to find one by lagging the time periods." You can read the rest of King's previous analysis on the impact of PFDs on the economy [here](#).

MOUHCINE GUETTABI – INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH (ISER)

The other presentation with a great deal of anticipation was an overview of impacts of Governor Dunleavy's budget cuts based on a 2016 analysis conducted by Mr. Guettabi and two other ISER economists considering Governor Walker's budget proposals.

The ISER analysis relied on Alaska-specific data and provided a variety of estimates regarding job losses and a significant extension and deepening of what is already Alaska's longest recession. In particular, they found that while the Governor's proposed doubling of Permanent Fund Dividends and overdraw from the Earnings Reserve to pay back past dividends could create nearly 10,000 mostly short term (~3-month) retail jobs, the proposed cuts would likely cause the Alaska economy to lose nearly 17,000 jobs, for a net loss of approximately 7,000 jobs even in the peak retail season following the distribution of PFD checks, and likely even worse during the rest of the year.

While Mr. Guettabi had previously estimated that Alaska would finally come out of the ongoing recession (39 months and counting) in 2019, if the legislature were to approve Dunleavy's budget, he estimates that we would lose approximately as many jobs as in the worst year of the recession (2016)

TRIBAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE: FIRST HEARING

The House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs held our inaugural meeting on Thursday March 7th, 2019. We were honored to be welcomed by local Southeast Alaska elders Marie Olson and John Morris, from the Auk Kwaan and Taku Kwaan, respectively, whose traditional lands encompass the area around Juneau.

The committee meeting featured testimony from the First Alaskans Institute regarding basic history and frameworks of Alaska Native Governance, presented by Andrea Sanders. Ms. Sanders was followed by presentations from Dr. Rosita Worl with Alaska Federation of Natives and Sealaska Heritage Institute and Richard Peterson, President of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, who both spoke eloquently about the significant cultural, economic, and public service contributions of their respective organizations.

The emotion in the room ran high. We heard repeatedly how the formation of this committee and commitment to innovate and proactively partner with tribes was an excellent step towards building the trust and respect that can bring our state together, heal old wounds, and propel Alaska to new heights. I am more certain than ever that creating this committee was the right move, and incredibly grateful at the circumstances that have allowed me as the first Alaska Native Speaker to play this role in taking this step forward for our state.



Above: Rep. Bryce Edgmon and Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky, vice-Chair and Chair of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs are welcomed by John Morris and Marie Olson.



Left: Students from Dillingham and Unalaska visited me in Juneau this week as they visited the Capitol with Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA). I appreciate their intelligence, enthusiasm, and seriousness about addressing the challenges (environmental and otherwise) facing our state.



Above: Representatives of the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA) visited Senator Hoffman and I this week. From Left: Rep. Bryce Edgmon, Mark Snigaroff, Mark Mercurief, Harvey McGlashan, Justine Gundersen, Luke Fanning, Bill Shaishnikoff, Nikki Hoblet, and Senator Lyman Hoffman.



The Bristol Bay Housing Authority visited my office this week. We talked about some of the weatherization work they do, which prolongs the life of much needed homes by decades and saves families in our region thousands of dollars a year. From left: John Heyano, Brenda Akelkok, Rep. Bryce Edgmon, and Nick Smeaton.

Contact my office by phone at: (907) 465-4451