

March 8th, 2018



EDGMON E-NEWS

NEW STAFF: BARBARA BLAKE

This week I was pleased to welcome Barbara ('Wáahlaal Gidáak) Blake to my office team. Barbara brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. Barbara worked for the Walker administration on fish and game, tribal affairs, and transboundary relations with Canada.

Barbara is of Haida, Tlingit and Ahtna Athabascan descent and belongs to the Káat nay-st/Yahkw 'Jáanaas (Shark House/Middle Town People) Clan. 'Wáahlaal Gidáak formerly served as Government Affairs Liaison for The Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and Assistant Professor for the Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Barbara has also worked as the Technical Assistant Specialist for Intertribal Agriculture Council and Program Assistant in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Office of Tribal Relations.



COMMUNITY MEETINGS ON THE STATE BUDGET

The proposals contained in the governor's budget would fundamentally change life for many Alaskans. Given the historic nature of the decisions before policymakers and the fact that our savings accounts have been spent down, the House Finance Committee is traveling to communities across our state to hear directly from Alaskans. This will be supplemental to not in lieu of public testimony before the full committee in Juneau. We are still working to determine venues for some of the community meetings, but here are the details available so far:

JUNEAU - Friday, March 22 from 5 to 8 p.m. in the Capitol Building, Adams Room 519

KETCHIKAN - Saturday, March 23 from noon to 3 p.m. in a location to be determined

WASILLA - Saturday, March 23 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Mat-Su LIO, 600 E Railroad Avenue

BETHEL - Saturday, March 23 from 2 to 5 p.m. in a location to be determined

KENAI - Saturday, March 23 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Soldotna Sports Center, 538 Arena Avenue

ANCHORAGE - Sunday, March 24 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Anchorage LIO, 1500 W Benson Boulevard

SITKA - Sunday, March 24 from 2 to 5 p.m. at a location to be determined

FAIRBANKS - Sunday, March 24 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Fairbanks LIO, 1292 Sadler Way, Suite 308

SHUTTING DOWN ARCS

One of Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget reduction measures is to cut public broadcasting. This would eliminate the [Alaska Rural Communications Service](#) (ARCS) which provides broadcast television service to 182 communities with ARCS transmitters across Alaska. This sweeping elimination of many Alaskans' primary source of news and weather information would save the state \$800 thousand. While I am not opposed to budget cuts in principal, this is a clear instance where the savings to the state pale in comparison to the lost value to Alaskans.

TRIBAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

It was an enlightening week in Tribal Affairs. Chair Tiffany Zulkosky (D-Bethel) lined up testimony focused on compacting, contracting, indirect costs, consultation, Alaska Native Claims Act Regional and Village Corporations, and housing priorities. We heard from former Lt. Governor Valerie Davidson, Corren Garza, Central Council President Richard Peterson, Hallie Bissett, Anthony Mallott, and Jackie Pata. I continue to be grateful for the level of dedication by the public through testimony and my fellow legislators for their insightful questions and comments.



From left: Former Lt. Governor Val Davidson sits beside Central Council President Richard Peterson in the Tribal Affairs committee hearing, Barbara Blake and Representative Grier Hopkins (D-Fairbanks) sit behind them.

FISHERIES COMMITTEE

This week we continued to review and question Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) leadership concerning the impact of the Governor's budget as it relates to the healthy management of our Fish and Game resources. Concern was raised over the Governor's proposal to send the funding for two positions (Directors of Subsistence and Habitat) to the Office of Management and Budget. Our committee is diligent in asking questions relating to any proposed cuts and we will keep you updated as we receive information.

This week we passed HB 35 out of Fisheries and it is now with the House Resources Committee. HB 35 was written to allow for Board of Game and Board of Fish "members to deliberate on subjects for which they have a declared personal or financial interest according to AS 39.52, the Executive Branch Ethics Act." We also heard testimony relating to the ADF&G salmon enhancement program and these presentations will continue next week.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON THE MARINE HIGHWAY

A record number of Alaskans testified in the House Transportation Committee on the proposed cuts to the Marine Highway this week. Thank you to the many residents of District 37 who called in to support the Alaska Marine Highway System.

On Tuesday alone, 484 Alaskans signed up to testify to the committee, the highest recorded on any topic since the Legislative Information Office began tracking testimony. Another 133 testified on Thursday, bringing the new record up to 617. There were so many people in attendance that an overflow room was needed at times.

“This is irrefutable evidence that Alaskans are unwilling to accept dramatic cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System,” said Rep. Louise Stutes, a Kodiak Republican who co-chairs the Transportation Committee. “For many coastal communities, especially in winter when seaplanes often get weathered out, the blue canoe is the only way to access affordable food, healthcare, and move timber, fish, and other Alaskan products to market.”



Above: Members of the public in the gallery of the House Transportation Committee meeting, awaiting their opportunity to take part in record-setting public testimony in overwhelmingly support of maintaining the Alaska Marine Highway System.