



ALASKANS WEIGH IN ON THE BUDGET

This year, more Alaskans than ever before weighed in on the state budget. I appreciate everyone who came out to provide feedback in person at the community meetings held by the House Finance Committee and those who called in to the full committee as they took public testimony here in Juneau. In an effort to pay \$3,000 Permanent Fund Dividends, the Governor's budget proposes taking hundreds of millions of shared taxes from local governments, while simultaneously slashing spending on Medicaid, Senior Benefits and services, K-12 education, University of Alaska, and the Marine Highway. Faced with drastic changes to basic infrastructure and services, Alaskans are making their voices heard. We will do our best to listen and produce a budget that keeps essential services intact.

- **1,784** Alaskans provided the House Finance committee with feedback on this year's budget
 - In 2018 that number was **213**
- By a **5-1** margin, the feedback was opposed to the budget proposed by the Governor
- **839** specifically identified support for protecting K-12 funding
- **611** brought up support for a smaller PFD or opposition to the Governor's proposed PFD
- **206**, in contrast, expressed support for the Governor's PFD
- More than **300** people expressed specific support for Medicaid, the University, and the Alaska Marine Highway System. (About 50% more for each of those than favored the Governor's PFD)



Left: Rep. Bryce Edgmon is joined by Owen Singley and Ashlynn Young in front of the Speaker's dais on the House Floor. Owen and Ashlynn were the winners of the Naknek Electric Association essay contest.

OPERATING BUDGET CLEARS HOUSE FINANCE

The House Finance Committee has been working long hours on the Operating Budget the past couple of weeks. A brief overview of the Operating Budget process to date:

- Budget subcommittees for each State department, each led by a member of the full Finance Committee, met several times to get testimony from departments, explore the department's activities, and vote on each of the Governor's proposed changes to the department's budget.
- House Finance Committee took public testimony on the Governor's proposed budget (see front page).
- The subcommittees' changes to Department budgets were all rolled together into a Committee Substitute (CS) of the full Operating budget (HB 39) which becomes the starting point of the full House Finance Committee's adjustments to the budget
- The House Finance Committee then met to consider numerous additional proposed amendments to the CS. This gives an opportunity for ideas which were not taken up by subcommittees to be vetted by the full Finance committee as offering new ideas for members to amend the budgets of Departments whose subcommittees they did not sit on.

HOUSE FINANCE OPERATING BUDGET

Some highlights of the budget reported out by the House Finance Committee today:

- \$114 million net cuts from Agency Operations and \$143 million net cuts from Statewide Items for a total of \$257 million total net cuts from the Fiscal Year 2020 Adjusted Base budget (the 'Adjusted Base' is essentially the cost of a status quo state government)
- The budget cuts \$13.5 million from the Department of Corrections, without closing facilities and seeking savings by sending prisoners out of state
- The budget cuts \$72 million from the Department of Health and Human Services, and does so without massive cuts to Pioneer Homes or the elimination of the Senior Benefits program
- Cuts \$13.8 million from Transportation, without eliminating the Alaska Marine Highway System
- Cuts \$10 million from the University of Alaska system, which will be difficult to manage on top of years of consecutive cuts, but far more manageable than the Governor's proposal to cut \$134 million
- Cuts \$2.6 million from the Legislature's own budget, and \$1 million from the office of the Governor
- Preserves full funding for K-12 education, and restores some funding for Pre-K education, and fully funds the FY 2021 BSA formula
- Invests in effective management of Fish and Game (+\$1.9 million) and proven effective therapeutic courts (+\$400 thousand)
- Increases Public Safety funding by \$10 million, and preserves funding for Village Public Safety Officers while encouraging the state to invest in recruitment, retention, and housing of VPSOs

The next step is consideration by the full Alaska House of Representatives. Once on the House floor, there will be a final opportunity for any member of the House to propose amendments, after which the House will pass the Operating Budget on to the Senate. The Senate will consider the operating budget in committee and on the floor, and then (if they make changes) the House will have the opportunity to accept those changes or send the budget to a conference committee made up of members from both the House and Senate to negotiate a compromise budget that can pass both bodies.



Above, from left: Finance Co-Chair Tammie Wilson (R-North Pole), Rules Chair Chuck Kopp (R-Anchorage), Speaker Bryce Edgmon (I-Dillingham), and Finance Co-Chair Neal Foster (D-Nome) hold a press availability.

ALASKA'S HEART THROUGH STUDENT ART AND TECHNOLOGY RECEPTION



Speaker Edgmon announcing the Alaska Arts Education Consortium Champions of Arts in Education awards



Speaker Edgmon with Senate President Cathy Giessel (R-Anchorage)



Speaker Edgmon with Robin Jones, Principal at Chief Ivan Blunka School in New Stuyahok



From left: Dan Schindler, Melanie Brown, Gayla Hoseth, Rep. Bryce Edgmon, Rick Halford, and Norm Van Vactor visited me in the Capitol this week.

BOARD OF FISH AND BOARD OF GAME APPOINTEES

The Governor released his names for the Board of Fish and the Board of Game on April 1st. The House Fisheries and House and Senate Resources committees will be holding confirmation hearings (which will all include opportunities for public testimony) on the nominees next week.

BOARD OF GAME

Friday April 12th at 1:00 PM (House Resources)

Friday April 12th at 3:30 PM (Senate Resources)

- Jerry Burnett (Juneau)
- Al Barrette (Fairbanks)
- Orville Huntington (Fairbanks)

BOARD OF FISH

Wednesday April 10th at 3:30 PM (Senate Resources)

Thursday April 11th at 10:00 AM (House Fisheries)

Saturday April 13th at 9:00 AM (House Resources)

- Israel Payton (Wasilla)
- Marit Carlson-Van Dort (Anchorage)
- Gerad Godfrey (Eagle River)
- Karl Johnstone (Anchorage)

KING COVE ROAD

Last Friday, a Federal judge blocked a land exchange between the US Department of Interior and the King Cove Corporation, ruling the Department of Interior had failed to properly justify its decision.

For decades, residents of King Cove – a 1,000-person community on the edge of the Alaska Peninsula – have been fighting to build a road to nearby Cold Bay. Because there is no road, King Cove residents needing medical evacuations often go without care due to bad weather, or they face treacherous rides on boats or small planes. With the ruling, the residents of King Cove's decades long fight for access to emergency medical care through Cold Bay, which appeared to have been won last year, has been revived.

ON DECK FOR NEXT WEEK

HOUSE FLOOR

Beginning Monday, April 8th at 11:00 AM, the Operating Budget will be on the House floor and will be the center of attention until it passes the full Alaska House of Representatives and goes to the Senate for consideration.

HOUSE COMMITTEES

For a full list of bills with public testimony opportunities, visit <http://akleg.gov/pages/testify.php>. To sign-up for public testimony, contact your [local LIO](#), or call 907-465-4648.

Monday, April 8

1:00 PM	Resources	Presentation on Mining Industry by Alaska Miners Association
1:30 PM	Finance	School Bond Debt Reimbursement

Tuesday, April 9

8:00 AM	Tribal Affairs	HR 6 - National Native American Veterans Memorial An Act Establishing November as Alaska Native Heritage Month
3:00 PM	Health & Social Svcs	HB 96 - Pioneers' Home and Veterans' Home Rates

Wednesday, April 10

1:00 PM	Resources	Fisheries Taxes Presentation by Dept. of Revenue Fishing Industry Update
1:30 PM	Finance	Spring Revenue Forecast by Dept. of Revenue

Thursday, April 11

8:00 AM	Tribal Affairs	Urge Gov. to fully implement the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact
10:00 AM	Fisheries	Governor's Appointees: Board of Fisheries - Public Testimony
3:00 PM	Health & Social Svcs	HB 96 - Pioneers' Home and Veterans' Home Rates - Public Testimony

Friday, April 12

1:00 PM	Resources	Governor's Appointees: Board of Game - Public Testimony
3:15 PM	Labor & Commerce	HB 97 - Telehealth: Physician Assistants; Drugs

Saturday, April 13

9:00 AM	Resources	Governor's Appointees: Board of Fisheries - Public Testimony
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SENATE COMMITTEES

On Thursday and Friday next week the Senate will begin taking public testimony on the Operating Budget, check the [committee schedule](#) for details on when to testify from your community.

Before getting to the budget, on Wednesday the Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to hold hearings on two forthcoming proposals regarding an alternative spending limit to that proposed by the Governor and use of the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve for essential services and dividends.

Monday, April 8th

7:45 AM	Finance and Health	Medicaid and Tribal Reclaiming Senior and Disability Services
1:30 PM	Health & Social Svcs	SB 58 - Repealing Senior Benefit Program - Public Testimony
6:00 PM	Judiciary	SJR 5 - Const. Am. Permanent Fund & Dividend - Public Testimony

Tuesday, April 9th

1:00 PM	Finance & Education	FY 2020 Department of Education Budget
2:00 PM	Finance & University	FY 2020 University Budget

Wednesday, April 10th

9:00 AM	Finance	Two New Senate Proposals Regarding: Appropriation Limit Use of the Earnings Reserve and Permanent Fund Dividends
3:30 PM	Resources	Governor's Appointees: Board of Fisheries - Public Testimony

Thursday, April 11th

1:00	Finance	Operating Budget - Public Testimony
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Friday, April 12th

9:00 AM	Finance	Operating Budget - Public Testimony (including Dillingham)
1:00 PM	Finance	Operating Budget - Public Testimony (including OFFNET (No local LIO))
3:30 PM	Resources	Governor's Appointees: Board of Game - Public Testimony