



House Speaker Bryce Edgmon's *Legislative Update*



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April 7th, 2017

Where Things Stand on Day 81



There are nine days between now and Easter Sunday, which will also be the 90th, and last, day of the statutory legislative session. From the perspective of the Alaska House Majority Coalition, which I lead as House Speaker, it is clear that we will need to continue our work beyond that date and enter into the additional 31 days allowed in the state Constitution.

This is certain to rub some people the wrong way, but with the state at such an important cross-roads, and with a set of substantial measures under consideration that are crucial to solving the fiscal crisis, we're more than willing to take the pushback. A fair and truly comprehensive plan to return stability and sustainability to Alaska's economy must be put in place this year. If it takes a little longer than 90 days to accomplish, then so be it.



Here is where things stand on day 81:

Operating Budget

The House passed its versions of the Operating and Mental Health Budgets (HB57 and HB59, respectively) over to the Senate on March 20th. As is usually the case, the Senate then made many significant changes to the Operating Budget—including a cut to K-12 Education funding of almost \$70 million—and brought the bill to their floor for a vote. It passed last night 15 to 5, with only the Senate Democratic Minority voting against it.

Speaker Edgmon in conversation with Senate President Pete Kelly (R-Fairbanks) on Wednesday.

Now those bills will be transmitted back to the House for a vote on whether or not to accept the many changes made in the Senate. It is more or less a given that the House will refuse to concur with the changes. Then the bills are returned to the Senate, where they will vote on whether to back off from their amendments. That outcome is also far from likely. Sooner or later, a Conference Committee comprising three members of the House and three from the Senate will be appointed to begin negotiations on every difference between the two versions of the bill.

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The 24-Hour Rule

Once both the House and the Senate have appointed their Conference Committee members, something known as the 24-Hour Rule comes into effect. During most of the session, all committees must notice hearings on bills at least five days in advance. But once the 24-hour Rule is activated, committees can hear bills with only a day's notice. This can speed up the forward motion of bills dramatically, enabling some legislation that has snoozed quietly for months in committee backlogs to suddenly spring up and sprint toward the finish line. We expect this all to transpire within the next few days.

Capital Budget

Unfortunately, given the state's multi-billion-dollar budget deficit, capital project spending remains at the bare-bones level. The state is using about \$117 million of its own money to leverage as much federal funding as possible. The total comes to approximately \$1.4 billion. Some important expenditures include Village Safe Water projects as well as modest funding for AHFC's Supplemental Housing Development Grant Program and the Senior Housing Development Grant Program.

The Senate has scheduled public testimony on the bill—SB23—next Tuesday, April 11th, at 9:00 a.m.

HB 115 and HB 111; Permanent Fund Restructure and Oil & Gas Tax Credit Reform

These bills, along with the carefully considered cuts to the Operating Budget made in the House, form the core of the Alaska House Majority Coalition's plan to put the fiscal crisis behind us once and for all.

HB 115 restructures the Permanent Fund in a way that spins off some earnings to pay for vital state services and programs. In doing so, it also ensures that PFDs of at least \$1250 will continue long into the future, and it balances both the budget and the fairness of the plan with broad-based revenues.

HB 111 reforms the state's unsustainable oil & gas production tax credit program. The current program is simply unaffordable for Alaska and has to be restructured in a way that establishes the stability industry needs for advantageous future planning. HB 111 accomplishes this at the same time it continues to incentivize exploration and development.

Both bills are in their final stages of appraisal in the House Finance Committee. My expectation is that they will reach the House floor for a full vote in the very near future.

Passing these measures in the House is among the highest priorities for our Coalition. We are hopeful that our colleagues in the Senate will grasp the profound advantages for Alaska in adopting a fiscal plan that erases our deficit and protects jobs, community health and safety, and the economy.

I will be sure to keep you posted on our progress.



Dillingham Public Radio Alums: Former KDLG reporter Molly Dischner was among the Capitol press corps last week. House Majority Coalition Press Secretary Mike Mason, left, also covered Bristol Bay for KDLG for several years.



Longtime Unalaska School Board President Tammy Fowler Pound was at the Capitol for meetings this week. Also pictured, the Speaker's Chief of Staff Adam Berg, left, and Edgmon staffer Tim Clark, right.



On Monday Speaker Edgmon met with the superintendents, school board members, and students from several HD 37 school districts, including Bristol Bay Borough Schools, Southwest Region School District, and the Lake & Peninsula School District.



Former House Representative Ivan Ivan, right, was in from Akiak this week, in his capacity as Board Chairman of the Yupiit School District. With him were board members Noah Andrew, left, and Moses Owen, second from left.



Rite of Spring: In a sign of milder weather on the way, the Capitol's window washer was hard at work on Thursday, suspended from the building's roof. Also pictured, Edgmon staffer Tyra Smith-McKinnon.

A Tale of Three Speakers; Unveiling Commemorative Portraits of Former Speakers John Harris and Mike Chenault



Veiled in cloth, the portraits are hung alongside a photographic chronicle of Speakers of the House.

Former Speaker Harris, left, Speaker Edgmon, and Former Speaker Chenault, right, look on.



The new portraits are revealed.

On Deck Next Week...

(S)LABOR & COMMERCE

Apr 10 **Monday** 9:00 AM

Senate Concurrent Resolution: Alaska Year of Innovation

<Pending Introduction & Referral>

HB 81 AK ENERGY EFFICIENCY LOANS: ELIGIBILITY

HB 157 LIFE & HEALTH INSURANCE GUARANTY ASSN

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee

Apr 10 **Monday** 1:30 PM SENATE

SB 102 INTERNET FOR SCHOOLS;

FUNDING <Pending Referral>

SB 103 ED GRANTS SCHOLA SHIP; INNOVATIVE ED FUND <Pending Referral>

SB 104 EDUCATION CURRICULUM

(H)COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Apr 11 **Tuesday** 8:00 AM

HB 201 MUNICIPAL REGULATION OF TRAPPING

SB 64 ADOPT UNIFORM ENVIRONMENTAL COVENANTS ACT

(H)FISHERIES Special Committee

Apr 11 **Tuesday** 10:00 AM

HB 199 FISH/WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION; PERMITS

(H)ARCTIC POLICY, ECONOMIC DEV., & TOURISM Special Committee

Apr 11 **Tuesday** 11:30 AM

Presentations: Kathleen Rehm, Co-Exec. Dir., Team Alaska, Arctic Winter Games Michael Black, Alaska Native Health Consortium

HJR 19 ARCTIC MARINE SAFETY AGREEMENTS

(S)STATE AFFAIRS Standing Committee

Apr 11 **Tuesday** 3:30 PM

SB 8 PFD CONTRIBUTIONS TO TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

HB 78 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

HB 148 SECOND CLASS BOROUGH SERVICE AREAS

(S)HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES Committee

Apr 12 **Wednesday** 1:30 PM

HJR 14 FCC: INCREASE RURAL HEALTH CARE BUDGET

HB 186 FOOD DONATIONS

(H)FISHERIES Special Committee

Apr 13 **Thursday** 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

HB 188 COMM. FISH. ENTRY PERMITS; LOANS; TRUSTS

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee

Apr 13 **Thursday** 1:30 PM

HB 127 CRIM. CONV. OVERTURNED: RECEIVE PAST PFD

HB 47 MUNICIPAL PERS CONTRIBUTIONS/INTEREST

HB 155 AK MENTAL HEALTH TRUST LAND EXCHANGE

(S)STATE AFFAIRS Standing Committee

Apr 13 **Thursday** 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

SB 106 MUNI TAX EXEMPTION: ECON DEVEL PROPERTY <Pending Referral>

HB 87 CONFLICT OF INTEREST: BD FISHERIES/GAME

(S)JUDICIARY Standing Committee

Apr 14 **Friday** 1:30 PM

HB 8 ENFORCEMENT OF FOREIGN PROTECTIVE ORDERS

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee

Apr 14 **Friday** 1:30 PM

HB 76 MARICULTURE REVOLVING LOAN FUND; HB 128 SHELLFISH ENHANCE. PROJECTS; HATCHERIES

WASTEWATER EXEMPTION

Keep in Contact

Rep. Bryce Edgmon

Address:

Capitol Building, Room 208

Juneau, AK

99801

Phone: 907-465-4451

Toll Free: 1-800-898-4451

Fax: 907-465-3445

Email:

Rep.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov

Adam.Berg@akleg.gov

Tim.Clark@akleg.gov

Amory.Lelake@akleg.gov

Tyra.Smith-MacKinnon@akleg.gov



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