

INSIDE:

2017 YEAR-END WRAP-UP FROM REPRESENTATIVE BRYCE EDGMON



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

It was my great honor in January to be selected as the first Alaska Native Speaker of the House in the history of the state. Since then I have been leading the bi-partisan Alaska House Majority Coalition—a group of legislators who have consistently worked for the best interests of rural and urban Alaskans alike.

We in the House passed a full fiscal plan that included careful budget cuts, elimination of tax credits for oil companies, restructuring the Permanent Fund to pay for services and protect the PFD, and creating an income tax to balance the budget and return the state and its communities to stability and a brighter future. Unfortunately, the Senate did not agree with our plan, so there is still work to be done to put the fiscal crisis behind us once and for all.

Considering the challenging times we're in, it is worth noting that with my position as Speaker and Senator Hoffman once again a co-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, House District 37's legislators are well positioned to defend crucial bush priorities. Our influence helped to protect the Power Cost Equalization Endowment Fund this year, and we made sure there was no discussion whatsoever of closing smaller rural schools.

Look inside to see more about my work for the safety and wellbeing of our towns and villages. And always remember: Feel free to contact my office with your concerns or if you have a problem I can help solve.

Happy Holidays to everyone in House District 37,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryce Edgmon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CONTACT YOUR STATE

REPRESENTATIVE!

HOUSE SPEAKER BRYCE EDGMON

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***WE WANT TO HEAR
FROM YOU.***



Speaker Edgmon conferring with House Majority Leader Chris Tuck (D-Anchorage) and House Minority Leader Charisse Millett (R-Anchorage) during a floor session.

REPRESENTATIVE BRYCE EDGMON'S

FROM THE CAPITOL

YEAR-END REPORT

December 2017

Battling Crime and Drug Abuse

In passing **HB 54** in November, we gave law enforcement the tools they asked for to respond to the current crime-wave, and we sent a clear message that criminal behavior in Alaska will not go unpunished. At the same time, we preserved **important criminal justice reform measures in 2016's SB91** that will also help make our communities safer. Investment in treatment and programs proven to reduce crime and violence will also guide people leaving prison to return home and become productive members of their communities. Evidence-based programs to reduce crime and recidivism include:

- Substance Abuse Treatment, already funded at \$2.5 million for FY17 and FY18.
- Support and Guidance for Re-entering Society, already funded at \$3 million for FY17 and FY18.
- Violence Prevention Programs, already funded a \$3 million for FY17 and FY18.

Going forward, substantial funds have already been earmarked to continue these efforts:

- \$4 million for treatment in Community Residential Centers.
- \$4 million for treatment in prisons.
- \$8 million for community-based treatment and re-entry services.
- \$8 million for community-based violence prevention programs.

This effort is especially important for rural Alaska. These programs treat the underlying drivers of crime. Native villages have seen too many people who enter the criminal justice system return home as hardened criminals. Others never return at all, and end up sleeping on city sidewalks.

2017's SB 91 and HB 159—The On-Going Fight Against Opioids

This year's SB 91 and HB 159 also show the Legislature's continuing determination to fight the heroin and opioids epidemic.

SB 91 extends until 2021 Governor Walker's emergency declaration regarding opioids. This authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to proceed with a statewide, coordinated response to the drug epidemic.

HB 159 complements SB 91 with preventative measures. It limits first-time opioid prescriptions to no more than a seven-day supply (with reasonable exceptions for certain circumstances). It strengthens reporting for pharmacists and healthcare providers, building on our existing controlled substance prescription database, and it beefs up education requirements for doctors and physician assistants, keeping them well informed about the care that should be taken when prescribing such drugs. These measures will help prevent many Alaskans from ever becoming addicted to opioids in the first place.

In the Capital Budget: Tustumena Replacement, Izembek Road, and More

- Nothing could illustrate more clearly that we need a replacement ferry as soon as possible than the Tustumena being out of service until well into July this summer. The \$22 million successfully included in the FY18 Capital Budget will bring in an additional \$222 million in federal funds, guaranteeing that the replacement ferry will be built. The work is already under way.
- This budget supports building the road between King Cove and Cold Bay with \$10 million earmarked for construction. With progress made by our Congressional Delegation in D.C. on this effort, the road through the Izembek Refuge is closer than ever to success.
- The FY18 Capital Budget also includes appropriations for the AHFC Home Weatherization program, the Senior Citizens Housing Development program, and the Supplemental Housing Development program, all of which will help our regional housing authorities to continue to do good work in House District 37.

Strong PCE Endowment Earnings will also Help Fund Communities

The investment earnings of the Power Cost Equalization Fund have been strong enough during the past fiscal year to not only fully fund PCE costs but also to help fund essential local government services in boroughs, towns, and villages. This is through a mechanism set in law two years ago that makes money available to community assistance when the earnings of the fund exceed the approximately \$38 million needed for the PCE Program. FY17's strong earnings mean that \$30 million will also be available for the Community Assistance Program and some millions beyond that can be appropriated for the Renewable Energy Grant Fund, the Bulk Fuel Revolving Loan Fund, or for Rural Power System Upgrades.

Guarding the Integrity of CFEC

I want to assure all of our fishing communities that I will continue to be vigilant in making sure the Commercial Fishing Entry Commission remains effective in protecting our livelihoods. Just as a strong ADF&G is essential for optimum management of our fisheries, a healthy CFEC is crucial for processing licenses and transfers and defending limited entry. I welcome the appointment of Fate Putman to replace out-going Commissioner Ben Brown. I'm confident he will be a conscientious advocate for our fishing economies.

HB 199—Protecting Salmon Habitat

Drafting of HB 199, by Kodiak's Representative Louise Stutes, followed an official request to the Legislature by the Alaska Board of Fisheries to create enforceable standards to better define what constitutes "the proper protection of fish and game." The board also called for improving public notification and opportunities for public comment. A voter initiative with similar goals is also in the works. As HB 199 makes its way through the legislative process, the concerns of all stakeholders, including resource development interests, should be taken into account.



Speaker Edgmon during a House Floor session.

Other Notable Legislation Passed or Pending in 2017:

HB 111—Oil Taxes. This bill revised our tax regime and successfully eliminated expensive, unsustainable tax credits for oil companies.

HJR 14—Calling for an Increase in the FCC Rural Health Care Broadband Budget

HJR 14 supports an increase to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rural Health Care Universal Service Support Budget in order to ensure Alaska can continue to expand access to affordable broadband telehealth services in rural communities. Without the federal subsidy, our community health clinics would suffer extreme financial struggles. The resolution passed the House 33-to-6 and now rests in the Senate Rules Committee.

HB 78—Indigenous Peoples Day

Passed in April, HB 78 establishes the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day. Coinciding with Columbus Day, the October Monday now also recognizes, honors, and celebrates the first people of Alaska and the Americas.

House Concurrent Resolution 13—Establishing the Al Adams Committee Room

HCR 13 names the House Finance Committee room in honor of former representative and senator Al Adams, who passed away just a few years ago. Al Adams was a champion for the people of rural Alaska and one of the most influential lawmakers in our state's history. He was the driving force behind creation of the Power Cost Equalization Program and always fought for balanced funding between rural and urban Alaska. Al was chairman of the Finance Committee in the House, and he understood Alaska's finances better than any lawmaker I have ever met, which makes it fitting that our future budgets will be developed in a room that bears his name.



PEOPLE & PLACES 2017

