

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

HB 218-STATE VETERINARIAN; ANIMALS; PRODUCTS

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 218-STATE VETERINARIAN; ANIMALS; PRODUCTS will move the State Veterinarian from the Department of Environmental Conservation to the Department of Natural Resources. Alaska is one of the few states where the State Veterinarian is currently housed outside the Division of Agriculture.

The Division of Agriculture is within the Department of Natural Resources and it is natural to move the State Veterinarian to the same department where the Division of Agriculture is located. This is one small step that will help streamline state government and enable the Division of Agriculture to better cater to the growing agriculture industry in the State of Alaska.

Among a few other things, the Alaska State Veterinarian is responsible for the oversight of the dairy industry in the production of milk, cheeses, and frozen desserts and ensuring that the commercial supply of reindeer meat is safe, wholesome and correctly labeled and packaged. The State Veterinarian is responsible for safeguarding the health and food production capacity of the State's livestock, reindeer and poultry and preventing the transmission of animal diseases to humans.

Almost all of the responsibilities of the State Veterinarian are tied directly to the agriculture activities in Alaska. This is a common sense move that will benefit the agricultural industry. During these challenging economic times it is important that the state work to diversify the economy and streamline state government. Moving the State Veterinarian to the Department of Natural Resources will accomplish both of these goals.