



Rep. Bryce Edgmon's Legislative Update



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This Week in House Finance

Many of you may have heard about concern over Governor Walker's proposed cut to contracts that the Department of Corrections has with 15 municipalities around the state to keep space reserved at regional jails.

As chairman of the House Finance Subcommittee on Corrections, I've been contending with this issue firsthand. Originally, after the governor submitted a \$10.3 million cut, officials from many of the affected towns were up in arms, some of them saying that without the contracts they'd have to shut down their jails. Consequently, the department and the Walker Administration reconsidered the issue, and this week they offered a budget amendment that restores \$7 million of the proposed cut and outlines where the reductions will take place. I am still consulting with the involved communities to see if they can make this new plan work.

One thing is painfully clear: Although nearly everyone agrees that, given the state's troubling financial circumstances, painful budget cuts must be made, that doesn't make the work any easier. This situation over the jails is only one example of how the need to reduce spending is going to be felt by Alaskans in every corner of the state.



We'll know more about the challenges to come as the Finance Subcommittees for various state departments finalize their work during the next week. I plan to have our budgets for Public Safety and Corrections closed out on Thursday next week. Our recommendations will then be combined with those of the other subcommittees to form a Committee Substitute—a revised bill—for HB 72, the Operating Budget. That version will then come before the entire Finance Committee for consideration.

Close-Up Kids in Juneau: On Thursday Rep. Edgmon met with kids in from the district in town to learn about state government and the courts. L to R: teacher Meghan Redmond from Twin Hills, Sylvia Henry from Twin Hills, Wassillie Gust III and Cameron Andrew from New Stuyahok, and Leland Andrews from Aleknagik.

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After that bill is released there will be opportunities for the public to put their concerns on the record. Tentatively, public testimony will be heard some time during the week of March 2nd. I'll be certain to get the word out once the schedule is confirmed.

Resolutions to Strengthen Tribal Courts Heard in House C&RA

On Thursday morning my pair of resolutions to increase Alaska tribes' authority to fight crime and social strife in their communities were heard in the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

HCR 1, which is addressed to the governor, asks for greater collaboration and partnership between Alaska Native tribes and the state in matters of law and order and the delivery of justice at the local level.

HJR 3, which is addressed to the Alaska Congressional Delegation, asks for federal legislation that would create a pilot project to seat greater law enforcement and tribal court authority in Alaska Native tribal communities.

At the hearing, I delivered a general introduction of both resolutions, followed by some details on HCR 1. Afterward there was time to take public testimony from people both online and in the room.

I'd like to thank Liz Medicine Crow, CEO of the First Alaskans Institute, Greg Razo, AFN board member and CIRI executive, Will Mayo, former president of Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Veronica Slajer, former executive director of the Commission on Rural Governance and Empowerment, for offering testimony. They delivered very well-reasoned—and in Will's case, truly heartfelt—remarks in support of the legislation.

When these resolutions are brought up again by the committee, there will likely be amendments to remove some elements that have prompted the kind of controversy that obscures what we're trying to accomplish. The modified versions of HCR 1 and HJR 3 will be entirely focused on steps the state and our Congressional Delegation can take—and take soon—to make real improvements in Alaska Native Communities.



Apayo Moore, of Dillingham, was in town recently as a member of the Alaska Children's Trust. During her visit, she presented editions of her wonderful print commemorating Alaska Native civil rights leader Elizabeth Peratrovich to several lawmakers.

Coastal Legislators Sit Down with UFA

On Thursday this week the full board of the United Fishermen of Alaska was meeting in Juneau, and I joined a panel with other coastal legislators to discuss what effects the state's fiscal challenges may have on the commercial fishing industry.

The board was well equipped with a summary of the considerable financial contribution the industry makes to the state in the form of taxes and fees. Fish business taxes and landing taxes alone amounted to more than \$50 million last year. Add in local fish taxes, marketing assessments, development taxes, annual permit fees, vessel registration fees, and a host of other levies of one sort or another, and the ComFish industry ponies up more than \$250 million a year to the state and local communities.

But UFA, whose membership includes 35 commercial fishing organizations across the state, is nonetheless concerned about looming budget cuts—reductions that are sure to hit the ADF&G management and research operations that fishermen depend on to keep the resource strong. They are also understandably protective of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's funding, to which the industry contributes millions every year.

The message from me and my fellow legislators was supportive but frank. Commercial fishing is the mainstay industry in many of our rural communities and by far the state's largest employer, but no state agency—including Fish & Game—is off limits when it comes to the Legislature's effort to trim budgets to sustainable levels. We coastal legislators will do all we can to protect funding for fisheries management, every penny of which is an investment in one of the state's most productive economic engines, but cuts are unavoidable. The key is to try as hard as possible to cut smartly, in order to limit impacts on the quality of the work the department does.

OPEN HOUSE: Dillingham LIO

Wednesday, February 25th, 1:00—3:00 p.m.

*Come enjoy homemade snacks and learn how to
get involved in what the Legislature is up to.*

6 Main Street in Dillingham

Marijuana Legislation Makes Progress

As promised, the House and Senate Judiciary Committees have taken up a significantly revised version of HB 30/SB79, their companion bills to address issues related to the legalization of marijuana. The originals created controversy because they kept marijuana on the state's list of controlled substances, leaving users and others involved with the would-be industry in a kind of perpetual legal jeopardy. Critics were quick in pointing out that the successful initiative in November legalized the drug. Keeping it on the controlled substances list made no sense.

The new drafts—known as committee substitutes, or CSs—treat marijuana more like alcohol, with provisions designed to keep it out of the hands of people under 21, enforce licensing requirements, limit the quantity an individual is allowed to possess and transport, and keep people from using unsafe methods to create marijuana concentrates.

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During hearings in both the House and Senate this week, the revised versions were generally received well by various stakeholders. Although apparently there are still a few wrinkles to iron out in order to minimize ambiguities over what will and will not be legal, most people agree the legislation is moving in the right direction.

Meanwhile, people should keep in mind that while, technically, possession of an ounce or less of pot will be legal after next Tuesday, the law will actually be pretty foggy for a while. The board to regulate marijuana won't have to accept applications for growing and/or retail operations until a year from Tuesday—February 24th, 2016—and marijuana industry licenses for growing and retailing aren't expected to be awarded until late May next year.



On Monday Rep. Edgmon sponsored a presentation by members of the Industry Advisory Committee for the Maritime Workforce Development Plan. Check out the plan [here](#) for a detailed strategy on getting Alaskans into rewarding careers in fisheries, seafood, and marine industries.

With the Alaska Municipal League meeting in Juneau this week, many HD37 local leaders were in town.



On Tuesday staffer Adam Berg, far left, and Rep. Edgmon, far right, met with Pilot Point City Clerk Lori Abyo, center left, and City Manager Barbara Chestler, center right.



On Monday Bristol Bay Borough Mayor Karl Anderson and Borough Assembly Member Mary Swain. Also pictured, at right, is municipal lobbyist John Walsh.



Layton Lockett, City Manager of Adak, met
with Rep. Edgmon on Tuesday.



Manokotak Mayor Melvin Andrew and his wife Sally
visited the office on Monday.



Unalaska Mayor Shirley Marquardt was in on Thursday with City Manager Chris Hladick, left, who is soon to take over as commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.



Dillingham resident and ASEA rep Pat Owens dropped in on Wednesday.



Marilyn Casteel, standing left, the director of Dillingham's Safe and Fear-Free Environment, was introduced before a Dept. of Public Safety Finance Subcommittee meeting this week.



Rep. Edgmon chairs a joint meeting of the Department of Corrections and Department of Public Safety Finance Subcommittees to examine the impacts of cuts to community jails.

On Deck Next Week...

MONDAY

(H)RESOURCES

Feb 23 Monday 1:00 PM BARNES 124
ANWR Overview by Dept. of Natural Resources & Dept. of Revenue

(S)HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Feb 23 Monday 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
Medicaid Expansion Presentation given by DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson

(S)RESOURCES

Feb 23 Monday 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
Confirmation of Governor's Appointees: Board of Game - Kip Fanning, Teresa Sager Albaugh

TUESDAY

(H)COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Feb 24 Tuesday 8:00 AM BARNES 124
HB 75 MUNI REGULATION OF MARIJUANA; ADV. BOARDS

(H)FISHERIES Special

Feb 24 Tuesday 10:00 AM CAPITOL 120
Overview & Presentation: Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

(H)ENERGY

Feb 24 Tuesday 10:15 AM CAPITOL 17

Overview Presentation: "Rural Energy Partnerships" by Joe Bovee, Vice President, Ahtna

(H)HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Feb 24 Tuesday 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106
+ Office of Children's Services: "Response to Citizen Review Panel"

HB 27 DHSS DUTIES; CINA; FOSTER CARE; ADOPTION

WEDNESDAY

(H)EDUCATION

Feb 25 Wednesday 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
Presentation: 101 Overview of the Student Formula by Dept. of Education & Early Development

(H)JUDICIARY

Feb 25 Wednesday 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120
HB 79 MARIJUANA REG; CONT. SUBST; CRIMES; DEFENSES

THURSDAY

(H)ENERGY

Feb 26 Thursday 10:15 AM CAPITOL 17
HB 58 ELIGIBILITY FOR AK ENERGY EFFIC LOANS

(S)SPECIAL CMTE ON THE ARCTIC

Feb 26 Thursday 11:15 AM BUTROVICH 205
Presentation: "Managing the Arctic Maritime Domain through Available Technology"
Ed Page, Executive Director of the Marine Exchange of Alaska

(H)HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Feb 26 Thursday 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106
Presentation: Division of Public Assistance - Director Ron Kreher & Other Invited Guests
HB 59 MARIJUANA CONCENTRATES

FRIDAY

(H)RESOURCES

Feb 27 Friday 1:00 PM BARNES 124
HB 115 TRANSFER FEDERAL LAND TO STATE;
HJR 4 OFFSHORE OIL & GAS REVENUE SHARING
HJR 6 FEDERAL CONTAMINATION OF ANCSA LANDS
HJR 7 OPPOSE ALEUTIAN NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

(S)JUDICIARY

Feb 27 Friday 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
SB 51 UNIFORM INTER.CHILD SUPPORT; PARENTAGE

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