

# *City of Dillingham*

## House District 37 / Senate District S

~ 12/23/2020 ~

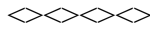
*31<sup>st</sup> Alaska State Legislature ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Interim*

### DECEMBER 2020 – LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*Cliff Stone / City Lobbyist*

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Alaska State Legislature convenes on January 19, 2021

~ *Governor's proposed budget released early* ~



Governor Dunleavy announced the state's Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget on December 11, 2020. He dubbed the budget package as "A Path Forward," with the goal of stabilizing Alaska's economy.

In addition to the Operating, Mental Health, and Capital budgets for consideration, he is proposing to fund the following under the title of an "Express Capital" budget:

- Funding the rest of the 2020 PFD - \$1,916 per eligible Alaskan
- \$4 million to address the sexual assault case backlog
- \$26 million to fisheries, wildlife, and resource projects
- \$24 million in construction and maintenance projects
- \$4 million for statehood defense

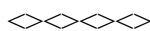
He is also proposing an Infrastructure Bond package in the amount of \$300 – \$350 million. This funding would build roads, bridges, airport runways, **ports and harbors**, along with renewable energy projects.

The FY22 budget totals \$6.2 billion from various general funding streams and other state funds. Additionally, another \$4.1 billion would be forthcoming in federal funding for grants and matching dollars. That's over \$10 billion to fund state government beginning July 1, 2021.

According to the governor's press release, this proposed budget has no change to the current K-12 education formula and restores school construction financing to FY20 levels. I will do a deeper dive into the budget and let you know if indeed this is the case.

Meanwhile, the proposed Permanent Fund (PF) changes that add extra monies for the past PFD and future PFD are not sustainable. I've been involved in the PF debate even before the first checks were cut in 1982. Since 1995, I've spent countless hours studying and working more intimately with the details and inner workings of the PF first as a legislative aide and now as a consultant/lobbyist. I bring up this history to lend credibility to the fact that I believe this kind of draw on the Earnings Reserve Account of the PF will lead to the demise of the Permanent Fund for future generations of Alaskans.

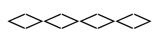
There are certainly more knowledgeable people than me when it comes to the PF. And there is no doubt that the extra money in the hands of Alaskans would assist in stabilizing our economy during these difficult times. All I propose is that we need pay attention to the discussions that will take place during the upcoming legislative session and then give the decision makers in Juneau your fair and honest opinion on how best to structure any short and long term changes to the PF. Those Alaskans yet unborn will look back and either applaud this generation for its vision or they will reflect as to what went so wrong with the leadership during this time in our history. If you have specific questions, let me know.



## LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATION

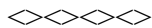
The Alaska House of Representatives is split 20/20. Rep. Louis Stutes, a Republican from Kodiak has publically stated that she will join a coalition of Democrats and Independents for the next session of the Legislature. That leaves 20 Republicans vying to pull at least one more House member in their direction to form a majority. Again, it seems more likely that the Democrats/Independents will form a majority, as they have the last four years. It has been reported and I have to agree that the likely R's that will join are two Fairbanks Rep's – Steve Thompson and Bart LeBon. If that's the case, they will have to offer both of them a significant leadership role in any new organization; possibly even Speaker of the House.

The Republicans in the Alaska Senate have a clear majority, but have some have deep philosophical differences between them rendering an organization of all R's almost impossible. Again, my crystal ball says moderate Republicans and Democrats will form a coalition for the upcoming first session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislature. Bert Stedman of Sitka will undoubtedly be one of the co-chairs of the Senate Finance Committee. Speculation abounds as to who will be the co-chair for the Capital budget side. The new Senate President could be a surprise pick, but I don't want to mention any names as to jinx that selection.



## CARES ACT

Nils Andreassen, the executive director of the Alaska Municipal League (AML) has been steadfast in his reporting of the Cares Act funding as it winds its way through Congress. With its passage, only one more hurdle remains and that is the president's signature. However, from everything I've read today (12/23/20) there is a real possibility that the president may not sign this bill. If he doesn't ink this \$900 billion dollar package by Dec. 29, 2020, a government shutdown will be triggered and the relief promised to millions of people and businesses will be in limbo and possibly delayed for weeks.



## COVID-19 SCAMS

The abridged narrative below was published and distributed by the AK Dept. of Health & Social Services.

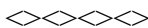
The Senior Medicare Patrol has only seen one COVID-19 vaccine scam at the national level at this point, but we know that this type of fraud will move very quickly, and will take on many forms.

Scammers rapidly alter their tactics and adapt their schemes to the changing landscape, and we anticipate that they will leverage the pending COVID-19 vaccine to prey on unsuspecting beneficiaries. At this point, it is essential that we alert the public of likely schemes and provide them with information on how they can protect themselves:

- You likely will not need to pay anything out of pocket to get the vaccine.
- You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You cannot pay to get early access to the vaccine.
- No one from Medicare or the Health Department will contact you.
- No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer, like a private insurance company, will call you asking for your Social Security number, your credit card, or bank account information.
- Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus.
- Check with your health care provider before paying for any COVID-19 related treatment.
- If you get a call, text, email — or even someone knocking on your door — claiming they can get you early access to the vaccine — **STOP – That's a scam.**

As you receive specific vaccine fraud case information, **please notify the Medicare Information Office at [hss.medicare@alaska.gov](mailto:hss.medicare@alaska.gov) via email or call 1-800-478-6065 immediately!**

We are working closely with our Federal Partners and the OIG. We will provide more information as soon as it becomes available. Please feel free to reach out to the Medicare Information Office with any questions related to COVID-19 vaccine fraud.



## **GOVERNOR'S CORNER**

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

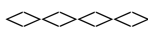
***Handy phone numbers for Governor's offices: Anchorage: 907-269-7450 and Juneau: 907-465-3500***

On Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, Governor Dunleavy issued a Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration effective 12:00am, December 16, 2020, through January 15, 2021, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the State of Alaska. The Disaster Declaration enables the state's ongoing response to the increased outbreak of COVID-19 and is necessary to facilitate and coordinate the receipt and distribution of the vaccine across Alaska. COVID-19 Outbreak Health Orders, issued under the November 15<sup>th</sup> Declaration, have been renewed under the new Disaster Declaration.

New rules for travelers are constantly being updated at the state's Travel Information Page: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/travelers/>

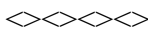
Governor Dunleavy will sign an executive order (EO) to reorganize the Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services into two separate departments. The proposal will include the newly named Dept. of Health and the Dept. of Family and Community Services. The press release states that the reorganization will not reduce programs or services to Alaskans that are currently being served. The legislature will have 60 days to deliberate these changes through the committee process and if they don't disapprove of the governor's EO in that timeframe, it will become law and take effect on July 1, 2021. They have put out a FAQ fact sheet at the following link. <https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/DHSS-EO-FAQ.pdf>

The governor has also announced more boards and commission's appointments ignoring a law passed by the Legislature and signed by him. Basically all of his appointments made this year that have not been approved mainly due to the pandemic will expire on Dec. 16 2020 (a week ago). Normally appointments are confirmed in a joint session of the Legislature, but because of COVID-19, this event has not happened. Under the law, those appointments would be considered rejected, but would be able to be reappointed once the new Legislature convenes in January of 2021. The Legislature has now decided to bring a lawsuit against the governor for ignoring this statute.



## **YOUNG FISHERMEN'S DEVELOPMENT ACT**

U.S. fishermen will soon be eligible to receive training and financial benefits long enjoyed by farmers and ranchers. The program was modeled after the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program established in 1862. This will be the first federal program dedicated to enable future generations of fishermen. The legislation that will be heading for the president's desk directs the National Sea Grant office to establish a program to provide training, education, outreach, and technical assistance. Eligibility includes associations, tribes, universities and other mentors.



## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

**! COVID-19 ~ Information ! / <https://covid19.alaska.gov>**

In Alaska, a COVID-19 Help Line has also been set up at **211** or dial: 1-800-478-2221

\* U.S. REAL ID Compliant license – deadline extended to **October 1, 2021.**

- <http://doa.alaska.gov/dmv/>

**Online Public Notices for Alaska** <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/default.aspx>

**2020 Legislators Contact List** <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/whoswho.pdf>

Representative Bryce Edgmon: 907-465-4451 // Senator Lyman Hoffman: 907-465-4453

**Congressional Delegation websites** (Current DC phone numbers will be listed on these sites)

<http://murkowski.senate.gov/public> [www.sullivan.senate.gov](http://www.sullivan.senate.gov) <http://donyoung.house.gov>

*Note: Your emails to congress may or may not go through as their servers have had issues; likely because of the pandemic and the heavier volume of mail.*

### Anchorage Phone Numbers

Murkowski: 907-271-3735

Sullivan: 907-271-5915

Young: 907-271-5978

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~ End Report ~

*Here's wishing everyone a Merry and Blessed Christmas and Happy Holidays.  
God bless all of you from my family to yours. Stay safe and strong! ~ Cliff*