

City of Dillingham

House District 37 / Senate District S

~ 4/30/2021 ~

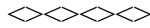
(Day 102)

32nd Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

APRIL 2021 – LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Cliff Stone / City Lobbyist

~ Legislature heading towards a favorable budget for municipalities across Alaska ~



I'm going to mirror some of the report by Nils Andreassen for the Alaska Municipal League he sent out today as that is the business at hand.

The great news is that there is currently full funding for school bond debt reimbursement and Community Assistance, targeted relief for communities who have lost more in revenue than they gain in ARPA funding. Like Nils reported, the Community Assistance; if it stays as proposed by the House, the amount should be similar to that which you received a few years back (based on a full \$30 million); otherwise the FY22 amount should be just a little more than you received last year. The Senate will discuss the budget next week. Once their version is finalized, it will be voted on and the final version will come out of a conference committee made up of both House and Senate members. From today, they only have 19 days in which to complete the people's business. A special session still looms large as this moves forward.

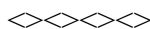
One of the goals of leadership is to roll as much of the ARPA monies into the operating budget from HB 181 and its companion SB 128. Those are the appropriation bills for ARPA.

AML is laser focused on the ARPA monies. In case you missed Nil's comments in an earlier report, it is worth repeating.

"We're making ARPA a priority because it can make the biggest difference, we think, and that's where legislative attention will be focused, in many ways.

- We're building collaboration and identifying needs related to water/sewer, broadband, childcare, and school construction/maintenance.
- Our Shared Service staff is strengthening its capacity to support members in their compliance and reporting.
- We're exploring what role we can play in making sure that you have at least awareness of grant opportunities. We have launched this webpage on our site to share information and will organize a funders' forum in the near future to hear from grantmakers.
- More importantly we want to be sure that AML members can access [these grants](#) competitively. On this front, a grant writing or management service might be helpful, which could function as part of a pooled effort."

On roughly May 10th the U.S. Treasury will provide final allocations for communities and the State, and give clear direction as to their use and implementation. We imagine that will throw something of a wrench in the budget process, but their current planning should be adaptable to what comes out. AML will host a webinar on May 12th, to walk through with members everything that we learn from the Treasury guidance.



BILLS OF INTEREST

The following bills are highlighted as items of interest for your community. I will follow these more closely as the session proceeds. The House has introduced 196 bills to date and various resolutions. The latest count for the Senate is 134 bills and a variety of resolutions. See “Budget Bills” highlighted later in this report. As in the past, if you see a bill that you want tracked, I will be happy to do so and report accordingly.

HB 1 – Audit of CARES Act Funds

HB 4 – COVID-19 related

HB 37 – Income Tax, PF, and ERA

HB 55 – PERS related/Peace officers and Firefighters

HB 56 – Power Cost Equalization (PCE)

HB 73 / SB 53 – PF Advisory Vote

HB 75 / SB 55 – Employer Contributions to PERS

HB 76 – Extending the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

HB 123 – State Recognition of Tribes

HB 188 – Seafood Product Development Tax Credit

SB 6 – PERS/TRS Retirement Incentives

SB 37 – PERS/TRS Retirement Plans

SB 56 – Extending the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

SB 81 – VPSO Program – Grants

SB 93 – Health Insurance: All-Payer Claims Database

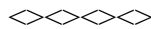
SB 108 – State Recognition of Tribes

SB 130 – Electronic Pull-tab Games

SJR 10 – Constitutional Amendment: In Person Public Education

SR 2 – COVID-19 Emergency Declaration

Be sure to check out the latest Legislative Updates from the Alaska Municipal League (AML). I try not to repeat any information that is presented there. It is an excellent source of the bills and topic matters that are important to towns and villages all across Alaska. If you haven’t registered for Legislative Updates for AML Members meetings, you may be able to [use this link for Zoom](#); or dial in by calling +1 253 215 8782 - Meeting ID: 881 8150 7680 Passcode: 449972.



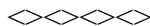
BUDGET BILLS 2021

For a handy reference, below are the budget-type bills that have been introduced so far this year. They will be considered through out this first session. Currently many of these bills are being considered in the respective Finance Committees. Other bills have been assigned to various other committees. The House version of the operating budget will be probably be passed out over this weekend with debate in the Senate following. *Please note that HB 93 and its companion SB 74 as drafted by the governor, does not contain any monies for your breakwater or harbor projects. The only avenue to have these projects inserted into the bills for consideration is up to your representatives – Senator Hoffman and Rep. Edgmon.*

- **HB 68 / SB 48 – Supplemental Appropriations (FY21)**
 - **HB 69 / SB 49 – FY22 Operating Budget**
 - **HB 70 / SB 50 – FY22 Capital Budget with reappropriations and making supplemental appropriations**
 - **HB 71 / SB 51 – FY22 Mental Health Budget**
 - **HB 84 / SB 68 – FY22 Supplemental, Reappropriations, and Appropriations from the CBR**
 - **HB 72 / SB 52 – Appropriation from the ERA for payment of the PFD**
 - **HB 37 – Income Tax, PF Earnings Reserves**
 - **HB 57 – CBR Sweep Provisions**
 - **HB 67 – K-12 Appropriation for Academic Recovery from COVID-19**
 - **HB 92 – Revenue Anticipation, Borrowing and Credit**
 - **HB 93 / SB 74 – G.O. Bonds: State Infrastructure Projects**
 - **HB 141 – Appropriation Limit; Government Budget**
 - **HB 165 – Appropriations: Earnings Reserve to Permanent Fund**
 - **HB 169 – Appropriations: Education and Pupil Transportation**
 - **HB 181 – Appropriations: Special American Rescue Plan Act**
-
- **HJR 1 – Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund, POMV, and Earnings**
 - **HJR 6 / SJR 5 – Constitutional Amendment: Budget Reserve Appropriation Limit**
 - **HJR 7 / SJR 6 – Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund and PFD’s**
 - **HJR 8 / SJR 7 – Constitutional Amendment: State Tax Voter Approval**
 - **HJR 10 – Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund and POMV and Dividend**
 - **HJR 10 – Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund and ERA**
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- **SB 100 – State Income Tax**
 - **SB 102 – Amend Compact for a Balanced Budget**
 - **SB 128 – Appropriations: Special American Rescue Plan Act**

Create Your Own Budget for the State of Alaska

Commonwealth North has created an **online tool** that allows Alaskans to modify most aspects of Alaska’s budget, so revenues match up with expenses. As many of you know, Alaska is at a budget crossroads, and difficult decisions must be made to preserve essential services and ensure Alaska remains a vibrant and successful place to live, work and play. While the tool isn’t perfect, I think users will gain a deeper insight into our state budget and get an idea how budget cuts, taxes and investments in state services impact our bottom line. In case the link above doesn’t work: <https://www.akbudget.com/>



COVID-19

The COVID-19 Disaster Extension legislation (**HB 76**) is awaiting action by the full Senate as I write. The measure prohibits the governor from employing the revised program legislative process (RLP’s) to distribute any federal COVID related funding. The bill would require the governor to call the legislature into special session to appropriate the funds.

Alaska’s vaccination effort continues to be one of the best in the nation. As of earlier this month, nearly one-in-three Alaskans (253,240 people) have received their first shot while more than one-in-five (177,827 people) are fully vaccinated.

Vaccination coverage is highest among Alaska residents age 65 and older – the group most vulnerable to COVID-19. As of today, roughly 72% of Alaskans in that age group have received one dose of the vaccine and 64% are fully vaccinated – a number that includes 90% of residents at Alaska’s Pioneer Homes.

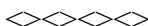
In coordination with Tribal partners and local communities, the State’s vaccination efforts have been successful with some communities in Alaska reaching extremely high vaccination rates.

The following state resources can be helpful for getting the vaccine. Use Alaska’s PrepMod website to book online or use the Vaccine Providers List to call the providers in your community directly. For scheduling or information about COVID-19 vaccine in Alaska: www.covidvax.alaska.gov If you need assistance to book your appointment, call Vaccine Scheduling Call Center at 907-646-3322.

A handy reference tool that everyone can access is the state’s “Vaccine Updates” signup at the following: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/signup/16046>

As I posted in the past few months, if you or anybody in the community suspects they’ve been a target of fraudulent information or requests regarding COVID-19 vaccines, they should **notify the Medicare Information Office at hss.medicare@alaska.gov via email or call 1-800-478-6065 immediately!**

REMEMBER – COVID VACCINES are FREE.



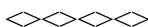
GOVERNOR'S CORNER <http://gov.alaska.gov>

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

On April 16th, the governor released his proposal for use of the \$1.02 billion in federal funds of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that will be directed to the State for discretionary COVID-19 recovery efforts. Go to the following website for the full release: <https://gov.alaska.gov/newsroom/2021/04/16/dunleavy-announces-proposal-for-use-of-federal-american-rescue-plan-act-funds/>

Former state trooper and wildlife trooper Jim Cockrell has been named the new Commissioner of Public Safety. Our paths crossed back in the mid-2000’s as I was a special legislative liaison for the then commissioner under the Murkowski Administration. Mr. Cockrell should serve Alaska well.

The governor has also appointed Ms. Amanda Holland as the acting commissioner of Administration.



TESTIFYING

If you are planning to testify on any particular bill or subject matter, check the committee calendar the day of or the day before the scheduled hearing as sometimes a bill is rescheduled or cancelled at the last minute. You should also be able to ascertain if they are even accepting public testimony on any particular day. If you can’t attend a hearing at your local LIO you can participate by using the following numbers.

The **toll-free number** can only be used if you have had prior approval to call in from the appropriate committee chair. That number will be distributed upon your request and subsequent approval.

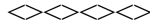
In Juneau the number is: (907) 463-5009.

Go to: <http://www.akleg.gov/basis/start.asp> for a complete description of a bill that is up in committee. Fiscal notes and other documents that the legislative office has posted in regards to that particular bill should also be available. Type in the appropriate bill/resolution number in the space provided.

Remember – Bills that have already been heard or previous scheduled in committee can come back before that body without prior notification.

Live on the Web [www.360north.org]

Most committee hearings can be seen and heard on Gavel Alaska/360 North on the web or look for Cable Channel-18 in Juneau. You can also access schedules, various programs, and online archives from the website above. *Note: With COVID-19 restrictions, Gavel Alaska may not be broadcasting as normal. You might have to go to the following website: www.alaskalegislature.TV*



WEBSITES OF INTEREST

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

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

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Capitol is closed to the public. To reach your legislator, please find Senate contact information [here](#) and House of Representatives contact information [here](#). For the latest COVID-19 information, please visit the [Alaska Department of Health & Social Services](#).

Schools can get more help at: aksmartstart2020@alaska.gov

* 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>

2021 Alaska Legislature Publications List <http://akleg.gov/publications.php>

2021 1st Session Staff Contacts <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/Legislator-Staff-List.pdf>

2021 Legislators by District <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/Legislator-by-District.pdf>

2021 House/Senate Committees <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/commlist.pdf>

2021 Senate Finance Subcommittee <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/SFINSubcmte21.pdf>

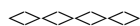
2021 Legislature Photo Sheet <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/Legislator-Photo-Sheet.pdf>

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

Congressional Delegation websites
<http://murkowski.senate.gov/public> www.sullivan.senate.gov <http://donyoung.house.gov>

DC Phone Nr	DC Phone Nr	DC Phone Nr
Murkowski: 202-224-6665	Sullivan: 202-224-3004	Young: 202-225-5765

Anchorage Phone Nr	Anchorage Phone Nr	Anchorage Phone Nr
Murkowski: 907-271-3735	Sullivan: 907-271-5915	Young: 907-271-5978



~ End Report ~

Enjoy your family and friends while staying safe and strong! ~ Cliff