

BLUMER AND ASSOCIATES

City of Unalaska Legislative Report

2/14/22

The legislators continue to move toward close out of the finance sub-committees and combing through the Governor's proposed spending plan. Having the conversation about the future of the State's fiscal position seems to be front and center. The Governor's Office is expected to transmit their budget amendments later this week, which will inform the conversation going forward.

It is anticipated that the Governor's Office will be dropping a bill outlining how they plan to allocate the federal infrastructure dollars soon. It is not clear how restrictive the rules will be or how the process will work at this point. The reality is we are all finding out that the federal infrastructure bill is not quite the windfall that folks thought it would be, however there is still a lot in the bill for Alaska. Specifically, the Alaska Marine Highway System, Rural Alaska water and sanitation projects, in addition to some new money for highways, airports, bridges and wastewater projects. Big portions of the bill are in competitive grants where Alaska will have to compete with other states.

Miles Baker, infrastructure coordinator with the Governor's Office, told the House Finance committee in a briefing last week, "There were a lot of expectations because this bill follows major federal stimulus bills (CARES & ARPA) that were all about getting money out the door quickly, during the pandemic", Baker described this bill as "different," It will roll out over five years and much of it builds on existing federal programs over which states do not have a lot of discretion in choosing projects, the expanded federal highway program being an example. A lot of the funding in the bill would have come anyway as federal programs are reauthorized. However, the one part of federal transportation program does have flexibility, the Surface Transportation Block Grants. But these won't fit big projects.

Baker also stated that a lot of the money that will come to Alaska will not go through the state itself. Much will go to tribal groups, particularly for expanded water and wastewater projects and a new broadband program.

Senate Judiciary Committee held two hearings on SB 23- Initiative Severability last week. The bill requires the lieutenant governor to reject a ballot proposition if part of the initiative is found unconstitutional and stricken by court order. The intent is to ensure that language appearing on the ballot is what citizens approved in signing petitions.

Senate Transportation will be taking public testimony on the Governor's General Obligation Bond package on Tuesday afternoon.

The next week schedule appears to be more of the same, overviews and limited big ticket items.

Weekly Schedule

Time	Description
Tue 2/15/22 10:15 AM	ADAMS 519 -HOUSE ENERGY *+ HB 247 POWER COST EQUALIZATION FUND TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- += HB 299 MICROREACTORS TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED
Tue 2/15/22 1:00 PM	BARNES 124 -HOUSE TRANSPORTATION -- Teleconference -- + Presentation: Alaska Marine Highway Operations TELECONFERENCED Board: Moving Forward by Katherine Keith, Change Management Director + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED **Streamed live on AKL.tv**
Thu 2/17/22 1:30 PM	BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) -SENATE TRANSPORTATION *+ SB 170 MARINE HIGHWAY CORPORATION TELECONFERENCED + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED
Thu 2/17/22 3:30 PM	BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) -SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS *+ SB 177 MICROREACTORS TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- Presentation: An Overview of Microreactor Concepts & Safety by Dr. Ashley Finan, Director National Reactor Innovation Center *+ SB 172 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION TELECONFERENCED Presentation: SB 172 Power Point Presentation by Sen. Bill Wielechowski & Nick Moe, Staff for Sen. Wielechowski + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED **Streamed live on AKL.tv**

Here is the link to more information about the committee hearings, at this time of year it is good to check daily if you are watching a hearing as they change frequently.

<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/index.php?tab2=type%3DAI%26com%3D%26startDate%3D02%2F14%2F2022%26endDate%3D02%2F22%2F2022%26chamber%3D#tab2>

Bills of Interest

Bill	Short Title	Prime Sponsors	Current Status	Status Date
<u>HB 28</u>	Registration Of Boats: Exemption	HOUSE FISHERIES	(S) RES	5/17/21
<u>HB 30</u>	Workers' Comp: Death; Perm Partial Impair	JOSEPHSON	(H) FIN	4/7/21
<u>HB 55</u>	Peace Officer/firefighter Retire Benefits	JOSEPHSON	(S) L&C	1/18/22
<u>HB 56</u>	Power Cost Equalization	FOSTER	(H) CRA	2/18/21
<u>HB 64</u>	Fishery Development Assoc.; Assessments	STUTES	(H) FIN	4/21/21
<u>HB 75</u>	Employer Contributions To Pers	RULES	(H) FIN	5/1/21
<u>HB 88</u>	Equal Pay & Minimum Wage Act	TARR	(H) STA	2/18/21
<u>HB 134</u>	Amhs Operation & Planning Board	RULES	(H) TRA	3/10/21
<u>HB 135</u>	Geothermal Resources	RULES	(H) FIN	1/27/22
<u>HB 225</u>	Municipal Property Tax Senior Exemption	GILLHAM	(H) CRA	1/18/22
<u>HB 227</u>	Muni Energy Improvemnt Assessment Program	SCHRAGE	(H) CRA	1/31/22
<u>HB 247</u>	Power Cost Equalization Fund	THOMPSON	(H) ENE	1/18/22

Bill	Short Title	Prime Sponsors	Current Status	Status Date
<u>HB 322</u>	AK Marine Hwy System Vessel Repl. Fund	HOUSE TRANSPORTATION	(H) TRA	2/14/22
<u>HJR 6</u>	Const. Am: Approp Limit; Budget Reserve	RULES	(H) W&M	3/24/21
<u>SB 6</u>	Rip For Public Employees/teachers	KAWASAKI	(S) FIN	4/19/21
<u>SB 9</u>	Alcoholic Beverage Control; Alcohol Reg	MICCICHE	(H) L&C	2/9/22
<u>SB 11</u>	Community Property Trusts	BEGICH	(H) L&C	5/18/21
<u>SB 15</u>	Open Meetings Act; Penalty	COSTELLO	(S) FIN	4/21/21
<u>SB 17</u>	Energy Efficiency & Policy: Pub. Bldgs	BEGICH	(S) FIN	5/3/21
<u>SB 37</u>	Teachers & Pub Employee Retirement Plans	KIEHL	(S) L&C	1/25/21
<u>SB 41</u>	Health Insurance Info.; Incentive Program	HUGHES	(S) L&C	1/25/21
<u>SB 100</u>	State Income Tax	BEGICH	(S) STA	3/10/21
<u>SB 170</u>	Marine Highway Corporation	SENATE TRANSPORTATION	(S) TRA	1/21/22
<u>SB 172</u>	Property Tax Exemption	WIELECHOWSKI	(S) CRA	1/26/22