



Representative Alan Austerman

House Majority Leader

Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement for House Bill 325: Alaska Coastal Management Program

House Bill 325, an Act Establishing an Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP), closely adheres to the intent of the citizens' initiative of the same purpose, though the legislation has been drafted per the requirements of the Alaska Legislature's *Manual on Legislative Drafting*.

The initiative's sponsors appear to have been successful in collecting adequate signatures for the certification of the initiative petition, and it is therefore nearly certain that a vote on the issue will be scheduled for a statewide election in coming months. The initiative, per Article XI of the Constitution, is to be "placed on the ballot for the first statewide election held more than one hundred twenty days after the adjournment of the legislative session following the filing." The statewide primary on August 28, 2012 is the election that meets this description (assuming an April 22nd adjournment, August 20th would be the 120th day following the adjournment of the legislature).

The constitution also says that "if, before the election, substantially the same measure has been enacted, the petition is void."

Through the success of the signature collection process, Alaskans have sent a strong signal to the legislature that the reestablishment of an Alaska Coastal Management Program is an important policy question. Barring action by the Legislature, however, there will not be an opportunity for members of the public to engage in public debate on the merits of the finer points of the measure. Instead, August's vote will be a simple up/down vote on the existing initiative.

The Alaska Legislature has the opportunity to consider HB 325, and to engage in a public dialogue to determine if there are elements of the initiative that should be corrected or clarified in order that the program, as enacted, best meets the needs and intent of Alaskans. Furthermore, by working HB 325 through the legislative process, the Legislature will bring greater attention to the details of the ballot initiative than has yet been seen with respect to this initiative.

Any questions on HB 325 should be directed to my staff, Erin Harrington, at (907) 465-2487.

~ Representing Alaska State House District 36 ~

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