

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session

State Capitol, Rm. 419
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2435
Fax: (907) 465-6615

Interim

716 W. 4th Ave, Ste. 409
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-0120
Fax: (907) 269-0122



Resources Committee

State Affairs Committee

Joint Armed Services Committee

Judiciary Committee

Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

Sponsor Statement

Senate Joint Resolution 1- Const. AM: Protecting our Permanent Fund

When Alaska's Constitution was adopted, it required management of public resources for the maximum benefit of all Alaskans. The Permanent Fund was created in 1976 after oil on the North Slope began flowing in order to provide future generations of Alaskans a share in the great wealth.

25% of petroleum and resource revenues were to be deposited into the Permanent Fund, and they are constitutionally prohibited from being spent. However, the earnings may be appropriated by the legislature for any purpose.

In 1982, the Alaska State Legislature approved the Dividend, a measure that appropriated to each and every Alaskan a check that reflected some of the earnings in the Permanent Fund. This dividend has become an extremely vital part of our state's economy.

Many Alaskans count on their dividend to make simple ends meet, provide for their family, reduce debt and pay for their education. Making sure each and every Alaskan receives a share of our state's resources creates a vital connection between the people and the government.

Creating a safeguard against legislative spending of the dividend ensures that this valuable economic stimulus money stays in the hands of the people most able to spend it appropriately: individual Alaskans.

There is no language in our state Constitution that protects the funds eligible for distribution from being spent by the legislature for other purposes. As our state faces massive deficits, it is the duty of the legislature to protect future generations' benefits from our oil wealth.

This resolution would put forward a vote to the people and ask them to amend the Constitution to enshrine dividends in our highest law.