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Governor Mike Dunleavy  
STATE OF ALASKA

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Peter Micciche  
Senate President  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 111  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear President Micciche:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance.

This bill is an update of the commercial passenger vessel environmental oversight statutes drafted by the Department of Environmental Conservation in 2001. The changes proposed in the bill will allow them to be more effective in protecting Alaska's environment. It repeals the statutory requirement for on-board ocean ranger observers created by ballot initiative in 2006 in favor of Department inspection staff spending more time on board vessels. It also changes the statutory fees applied to commercial passenger vessels, adjusts wastewater discharge definitions, and aligns the commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance program within the Department of Environmental Conservation's regulatory structure.

The proposal would retain the core structure of the Department's oversight, while repealing detailed provisions that are better managed in regulation for timely updates in response to changing science on contamination and pollutants. It has delayed effective dates, particularly for small commercial vessels, that allow uniform implementation and time for the industry to come into compliance with the new law.

Finally, the bill creates a new wastewater infrastructure grant fund that would be available for municipal port communities to apply and receive partial funding toward establishing, upgrading, or improving wastewater treatment collection systems or facilities that provide services to commercial passenger vessels.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunleavy".

Mike Dunleavy  
Governor

Enclosure