

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2025  
1:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Sara Hannan, Chair  
Representative Ashley Carrick  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Chuck Kopp  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Calvin Schrage  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Representative Donna Mears (alternate)  
Senator Matt Claman  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Senator Löki Tobin (alternate)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senator Bert Stedman

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Ky Holland  
Representative Ted Eischeid  
Senator Scott Kawasaki

**AGENDA**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
COMMITTEE BUSINESS  
EXECUTIVE SESSION

**SPEAKER REGISTER**

Jessica Geary, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs  
Agency (LAA)  
JC Kestel, Procurement Officer, LAA  
Emily Nauman, Director, Legal Services, LAA

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

1:06:01 PM

CHAIR HANNAN called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 1:06pm on September 10, 2025, in the Denali Room of the Anchorage Legislative Office Building.

Present at the call were Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Schrage, Stutes, Mears, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin.

Ten members present.

Representative Kopp joined the meeting at 1:08pm and Representative Prax joined the meeting at 1:21pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

1:08:50 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council approve the agenda as presented.

The motion passed without objection.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**a. August 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

1:09:44 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved and asked unanimous consent that Legislative Council approve the minutes dated August 27, 2025, as presented.

The minutes were approved without objection.

**IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**a. Anchorage Legislative Office Building (ALOB) Snow Removal Contract Renewal No. 4**

1:10:32 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal No. 4 of the contract for snow removal services with Kelly Inc., dba A-1 Lawn & Landscaping, in an amount not to exceed \$65,000.00.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Procurement Officer JC Kestel to speak to this item.

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer, Legislative Affairs Agency (LAA), stated that the Agency is requesting approval for Renewal No. 4 of the snow removal contract for the Anchorage Legislative Office Building. The contract has been in place for several years, the Agency has been satisfied with the services provided, and there is no price increase associated with this renewal.

There was no discussion and a roll call vote was taken.

1:12:09 PM

YEAS: Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Kopp, Schrage, Stutes, Mears, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin

NAYS: none

The motion passed 11-0.

**b. Homer Office Space Lease Renewal No. 1**

1:13:40 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal No. 1 of the lease extension for Homer office space in the amount of \$58,119.12.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Procurement Officer JC Kestel to speak to this item.

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer, LAA, stated that the Agency is requesting approval to exercise Renewal No. 1 of the lease extension for the Homer office space and Legislative Information Office. He noted this office serves Senator Stevens and Representative Vance, both of whom have expressed support for the renewal. The lease includes five optional one-year renewals, and this would be the first. Because the lease exceeds \$50,000 in one fiscal year, Legislative Council approval is required.

There was no further discussion, and a roll call vote was taken.

1:15:26 PM

YEAS: Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Kopp, Schrage, Stutes, Mears, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin

NAYS: none

The motion passed 11-0.

**c. Kodiak Office Space Lease Renewal No. 3**

1:16:38 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved that Legislative Council approve Renewal No. 3 of the lease extension for Kodiak office space in the amount of \$71,012.52.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for the purpose of discussion and asked Procurement Officer JC Kestel to speak to this item.

JC KESTEL, Procurement Officer, LAA, stated that included in member packets is a memorandum requesting approval of Renewal No. 3 of the lease extension for the Kodiak office space. He noted that this is the district office for Senator Stevens and Representative Stutes, both of whom have expressed positive feedback and support for the renewal. The lease provides for five optional one-year renewals, two of which have been exercised to date.

SENATOR TOBIN asked why the price precision of fifty-two cents.

MR. KESTEL responded that the amount is calculated annually based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPI-U). He explained that the adjustment varies each year, for example, next year it could be thirteen cents, depending on the CPI-U calculation.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON stated that he was speaking in support of the renewal. He noted that with one-year contracts prices typically increase rather than decrease and asked for an explanation of the reasoning behind the agreement.

MR. KESTEL responded that the one-year renewal options provide the Agency and the legislature flexibility to determine, as time passes and leases age, whether the space and needs of the legislature remain the same. He explained that district needs may shift, for instance due to redistricting. The one-year renewals allow the legislature to evaluate whether to continue with the facility, relocate, or adjust to market conditions. He further noted that leases are generally structured with an initial five-year term, followed by annual one-year renewal options. The initial five-year period is intended to provide building owners with the assurance of a long-term commitment, as

most would not enter into an agreement on a year-to-year basis without that incentive.

CHAIR HANNAN asked Representative Stutes if she had any comments since this is her district office.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES stated that she supported the lease renewal and noted the landlord has generally provided good service, addressing issues as they arise. She added that she had a separate concern regarding why some legislative offices are open only six months of the year, sharing an example when her LIO was closed, and staff were unavailable. She asked who determines why some offices operate only part-time.

CHAIR HANNAN asked that this question be brought up as a separate item of discussion since it does not pertain directly to the lease renewal.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES stated she would be happy to do that, agreeing and adding her appreciation for the good working relationship with the managers of the Kodiak office.

There was no further discussion, and a roll call vote was taken noting that with Representative Prax joining, Representative Mears would no longer be voting as an alternate member.

1:23:15 PM

YEAS: Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Kopp, Prax, Schrage, Stutes, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin

NAYS: none

The motion passed 11-0.

## **V. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **a. Executive Order 137 Legal Briefing**

CHAIR HANNAN stated that Legislative Council would go into Executive Session for a briefing regarding legal issues surrounding Executive Order 137.

1:25:27 PM

SENATOR KIEHL moved that Legislative Council go into Executive Session under Uniform Rule 22(B)(1), discussion of matters, the immediate knowledge of which would adversely affect the finances of a government unit and 22(B)(3), discussion of a matter that may, by law, be

required to be confidential. The following people may remain in the room or on-line for the Executive Session: Jessica Geary, Crystalline Jones, Liz Clark, Emily Nauman, Ian Walsh, Madison Truitt, any legislators not on Legislative Council, and any staff of Legislative Council members.

[1:26:22 PM](#)

Council went into Executive Session.

[3:16:12 PM](#)

Council came out of Executive Session.

[3:16:25 PM](#)

Council took a brief at ease.

[3:17:38 PM](#)

Council returned from brief at ease.

Roll was taken to establish a quorum. Present at the call were: Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Kopp, Prax, Schrage, Stutes, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin.

Eleven members present.

[3:19:03 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved that, under the authority of AS.24.20.0604(f), Legislative Council authorize a contract for legal services, not to exceed \$100,000, to undertake litigation on behalf of the legislature regarding the governor's issuance of an executive order during the first special session of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature. He further moved that Legislative Council authorize the Chair to give direction to Legislative Legal Services and outside legal counsel regarding the litigation.

CHAIR HANNAN objected for the purpose of discussion and asked for Legal Services Director Emily Nauman to speak to the motion.

EMILY NAUMAN, Director, Legal Services, LAA, explained that the genesis of this litigation stems from a disagreement between the legislature and the governor regarding whether the governor has authority, under the Alaska constitution, to introduce an executive order during a special session. She noted that the issue is before the legislature because the governor recently introduced Executive Order 137,

establishing the Department of Agriculture, during the special session. The order was returned by the presiding office to the governor. However, the governor has asserted that he will give effect to it because it was not expressly rejected or disapproved by the legislature. This conflict in the interpretation of the constitution has created a constitutional question between the legislative and executive branches, and the litigation is intended to resolve whether a governor may introduce an executive order during a special session.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP stated that he strongly supports the separation of powers and the legislature's authority, specifically through Legislative Council, to file suit if necessary to resolve questions of law. He noted, however, that the administration appears to have deescalated its efforts to create the department outside of the legislative process. He further stated that two bills are currently before the legislature addressing this matter and expressed his preference not to initiate litigation unless there is clear action by the administration indicating an intent to proceed unilaterally. He clarified that his vote is not against protecting the separation of powers but reflects a desire to preserve legislative authority while also working in a bipartisan and transparent manner that respects constitutional processes without unnecessarily escalating political tensions already present at both national and state levels.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES stated that while it is important to make every effort to work with the governor and the executive branch, it is equally important to protect the rights of the legislature. She said that, as a parent and grandparent, the situation seems simple, this order has already been brought before both bodies and clearly voted down. Framing it as a question of "We said, 'no.' Don't you understand what 'no' means?" She further noted that it is still the Thirty-Fourth Legislature with legislation pending on this issue. If the executive branch wishes to pursue it, the proper avenue is through the legislative process. She expressed concern that introducing a second executive order during a special session with limited time disregards the legislature's decision, reiterating, "What part of 'no' don't you understand?"

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX cautioned against approving the motion. He believes the legislature is too focused on the current disagreement with the governor and not considering the broader implications for future governors who may need to

act urgently. He emphasized that when the governor calls a special session, the legislature is required to convene and retains the authority to reject action if it chooses. He expressed concern that prevailing in this matter would set a precedent that the legislature can act simply by doing nothing, which is not a sound practice for any organization.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE spoke in support of pursuing litigation, stating that while maintaining a productive relationship with the executive branch is important, the legislature must protect its procedural authority. He noted that the legislature has already rejected the executive order, yet it was reintroduced, and with the January 1, 2026, effective date approaching, the administration could create a new department without legislative oversight of costs or resources. He stated that litigation preserves the legislature's role in the process and may be withdrawn if the administration reverses course, but at this time he supports moving forward.

SENATOR KIEHL spoke in support of authorizing litigation, emphasizing the need to defend the constitution and the legislature's role. He noted that while he supports agricultural development in Alaska, the issue before the committee is whether the executive order was introduced in a manner consistent with the constitution. He stated he is convinced it was not and added that authorizing litigation ensures the legislature is prepared to act if the governor proceeds unilaterally. He concluded that he would vote "yes."

There was no further discussion, and a roll call vote was taken.

[3:30:31 PM](#)

YEAS: Representatives Carrick, Edgmon, Schrage, Stutes, Hannan; Senators Claman, Gray-Jackson, Kiehl, Tobin

NAYS: Representatives Kopp, Prax

The motion passed 9-2.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the Legislative Council meeting was adjourned at 3:32pm.

[3:32:09 PM](#)