

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT - CSSB 101(FIN)

“An Act relating to the membership of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; extending the termination date of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date.”

SB 101 is an important affirmation by the Alaska Legislature of the compelling need to maintain the vital efforts of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska (CACFA). This bill extends this commission's sunset date from June 30, 2021 to June 30, 2029 and requires that at least three of the governor's appointees to the commission be representatives of ANCSA corporations.

CACFA was first established in 1981, shortly after Congress passed comprehensive legislation governing all federal public lands in the state, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Under the balanced compromise Congress crafted in ANILCA, 104+ million acres were set-aside in permanent federal ownership as conservation system units (e.g., parks, preserves, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas) with many unique provisions enabling Alaskans to maintain their traditions and livelihoods, accommodating the States and ANCSA corporations' social and economic needs, safeguarding opportunities for responsible resource development, and facilitating improvements in transportation and utility infrastructure. Those provisions included opportunities for the state, its communities, and rural populations to access and develop inholdings, allotments, and adjacent lands; construct and maintain transportation and utility systems; access, manage, and use State lands and waterways; retain state management of fish and wildlife; and provide for access and necessary facilities on federal lands. Adding in the Alaska Statehood Act and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, most Alaskans are regulated under an extremely unique and complex legislative web.

CACFA's mission is helping Alaskans navigate these complex rules and regulations and work with federal agencies to ensure Congressional intent is implemented with respect to their interests. As nationwide directives frequently ignore the Alaska context and balanced requirements in ANILCA, CACFA serves as a vigilant and knowledgeable resource for Alaskans to defend the rights and protections they were promised as stakeholders. While the State's ANILCA program and CACFA both monitor federal actions, the State cannot represent individuals/businesses and CACFA cannot defend State agencies' authorities. As institutional memory and expertise is lost, and as agency decisions that revise our history and upend our reasonable expectations are deferred to by the courts, federal managers have little incentive to uphold Congress's promises to Alaskans. The *Sturgeon v Frost*, U.S. Supreme Court case, is an example of a private citizen's \$1.5 million battle against federal laws being enforced on state land. More recently, President Biden issued an Executive Order directing that at least 30% of our lands and waters be placed in permanent protection status by 2030 (30 by 30), placed a moratorium on new oil and gas leases and halted leasing in ANWR's 1002 area. These examples emphasize the need for vigilance to fight against the erosion of ANILCA protections by uninformed federal managers and politicians.

With federal land management policies increasingly at odds with Alaska's desire to access, manage, and sustainably develop its natural resources, CACFA is an essential tool in ensuring Alaskans have a strong and powerful voice. Over the 62 years since statehood, the federal government has consistently failed to keep its promises to honor the Alaska way of life. Now is *not* the time to allow CACFA to sunset. Please allow CACFA to continue its important mission by passing SB 101.