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HB 298: Alaska Food Strategy Task Force

Sectional Analysis – Version A

Sec. 1: Adds legislative intent language to the uncodified law of the State of Alaska to establish the Food Strategy Task Force

Sec. 2: Adds a new section to the uncodified law of the State of Alaska describing the composition and function of the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force.

(a)-(d) outlines the composition of the Task Force. The Task Force will consist of 9 executive board members, and an additional 26 members, all of whom serve on the advisory committees addressing the six integrated focus areas as described in section 2(j).

- The 9 members of the Executive Board will be:
 - Five members of the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) selected by the governing board
 - Four members of the legislature appointed jointly by the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives
 - Two members will be from the senate and two from the house of representatives
 - At least one member must be a member of the minority of the senate or the house
- The following commissioners or their designees shall serve as members of the task force:
 - The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, or their designee
 - The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game, or their designee
 - The Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services, or their designee
 - The Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, or their designee
 - The Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, or their designee
- 21 members, selected by the executive board, shall include the following:
 - One member from a mariculture development organization
 - One member from an agricultural development organization
 - One member from a fisheries-related organization
 - One member from a local food marketing organization
 - One member from a hunger and nutrition organization
 - One member from an economic development organization
 - One member from the food distribution or transportation industry
 - Two members from Alaska Native or intertribal organizations or Alaska Tribal governments addressing food sovereignty
 - Two members who are Alaska food producers
 - Two members from the food service industry
 - One youth member
 - One member each from the faculty at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Alaska Southeast, and Alaska Pacific University
 - Three members selected to provide additional expertise in food system development

(e)-(i) Provides general guidance for board governance, specifically:

- Instructs the executive board to select members to provide expertise in key areas of food system activity
- Instructs the executive board to select the chair and vice chair annually from members of the executive board.
- Indicates members will serve without compensation.
- Subjects the Task Force to the Open Meetings Act (AS 44.62.310 – 44.62.319) and the Alaska Public Records Act (AS 40.25.100-40.25.295) and instructs them to meet during and between legislative sessions to accomplish its duties
- Allows the executive board to remove a member of the Task Force, if that member misses more than two meetings in a calendar year and has not been previously excused, or if they are not contributing in a meaningful way to the activities of the Task Force

(j)-(m) Directs and provides guidance for the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force to create advisory committees to present state policy, legislation, and implementation strategy recommendations in six areas:

1. sustainably growing the agriculture industry
2. sustainably growing markets for locally grown, locally harvested, and locally processed foods
3. enhancing the climate for food and beverage businesses
4. minimizing food waste and diverting it from the waste stream
5. improving connectivity, efficiencies, and outcomes in state-run programs affecting food availability and access
6. ensuring food security in rural and urban communities.

Each task force member shall serve on one or more of these advisory committees. Recommendations created by the Task Force must address:

- Public, non-profit, and private investment and infrastructure
- Regulatory issues
- Research and development needs
- Environmental changes
- Workforce development needs
- Infrastructure needs
- High food costs and food access
- Food safety
- Varying scales of food system development
- Innovative technologies for the Circumpolar North
- Adaptation of successful food systems policies, models, and programs across the Circumpolar North and other US states
- Alaska Tribal relations as they pertain to food security and food sovereignty
- Emergency preparedness

Task force recommendations must also be:

- Evidence-based
- Stakeholder-informed
- Economically sound
- Environmentally sustainable
- Equitable

(o) Requires the Task Force to present recommendations on half of the integrated focus areas by August 1, 2023 and the other half by August 1, 2024 in a report format. They must also submit the report to the appropriate officials and notify the legislature that the report is available.

Sec. 3: Adds a new section to the uncodified law of the State of Alaska that instructs the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force to begin work as soon as a majority of members have been selected.

Sec. 4: Repeals Sections 1 and 2 of this Act on June 30, 2025

Sec. 5: Adds an immediate effective date under AS 01.10.070(c) Time Statutes Become Law and Take Effect.