HOUSE BILL NO. 166

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES BRICE, Phillips

Introduced: 3/31/99
Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act relating to a mining extension division at the University of Alaska."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*** Section 1.** FINDINGS AND INTENT. (a) The legislature finds that

(1) the mineral industry in the state has grown considerably since 1987, with a corresponding need for vocationally and technically trained personnel;

(2) the University of Alaska needs a suitable vocational, technical, and continuing geoscience education program dedicated to training Alaskans to fill the growing number of mineral industry-related skilled and technical positions currently going to workers from other states;

(3) elementary and secondary school teachers should have access to continuing education classes that will provide background to teach geoscience at their respective grade levels and thereby allow students to become literate in the subject and, as young adults, make informed decisions regarding the development of our mineral resources and also aid in career selection;

(4) the general public has clearly demonstrated a desire to attend courses that

will provide intellectual growth in the geosciences so they may make informed decisions regarding development of Alaska's mineral resources, successfully develop small businesses, and increase outdoor recreational opportunities; and

(5) an extensive study on implementation of a vocational, technical, and continuing geoscience education program that will serve both rural and metropolitan Alaska communities was completed in 1996.

(b) It is the intent of the legislature that

(1) the Board of Regents combine the now dormant applied mining technology program into a downsized mining extension division to form a statewide division of mineral exploration, mining, and mining extension;

(2) the division described in (1) of this subsection be linked to Alaska Cooperative Extension at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where it will

(A) prepare Alaskans for skilled and technical positions in the growing Alaska mineral industry;

(B) provide teachers with appropriate geoscience courses;

(C) provide geoscience courses that meet the needs of the general public;

(D) provide aid to the miner through on-site visitations and a mining information office; and

(E) serve no less than three rural communities annually with 60-hour prospecting and mining short courses;

(3) funding for the mining extension division be based on funding provided to the mining extension program and the applied mining technology program in 1987 with appropriate inflationary increases to correspond to 1999 values; that faculty will include professors as existed in the two programs in 1987: one full professor, one associate professor, and one instructor with one professor serving a multiple role as director and serving other university requirements, teaching, public service, and practical research; and

(4) facilities should include a dedicated classroom and office space currently held by the mining extension program, a dedicated laboratory suitable for safe chemical analysis and assay courses, and access to an existing mineral preparation and crushing laboratory.

*** Sec. 2.** AS 14.40.090 is repealed and reenacted to read:

Sec. 14.40.090. Mining extension division. The Board of Regents shall establish a statewide mining extension division for the purpose of providing information and training to miners and prospectors, to secondary and postsecondary teachers, and to the public. The mining extension division must include

(1) a mining information office that provides information on the mineral industry, prospecting, and earth science education;

(2) training in mining and prospecting, including classroom and correspondence courses

(A) designed to help mineral industry workers to improve skills or gain new skills; and

(B) intended to assist individuals with mining claims and other mineral related issues, including

(i) rock and mineral identification;

(ii) basic prospecting;

(iii) geochemical prospecting; and

(iv) geophysical prospecting;

(C) classroom and correspondence courses intended to assist primary and secondary school teachers and to provide geoscience education to the public.