

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
January 10, 2001
1:39 PM

TAPE HFC 01 - 1, Side A
TAPE HFC 01 - 1, Side B
TAPE HFC 01 - 2, Side A
TAPE HFC 01 - 2, Side B

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Mulder called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:39 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Eldon Mulder, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Williams, Co-Chair
Representative Con Bunde, Vice-Chair
Representative Eric Croft
Representative John Davies
Representative Carl Moses
Representative Richard Foster
Representative John Harris
Representative Bill Hudson
Representative Ken Lancaster
Representative Jim Whitaker

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Gretchen Guess; Ed Flanagan, Commissioner, Department of Labor & Workforce Development; Remond Henderson, Director, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Labor & Workforce Development; Duane French, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor & Workforce Development; Jim Duncan, Commissioner, Department of Administration; Allison Elgee, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Administration; Robert Poe, Executive Director, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), Department of Community & Economic Development.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

None

GENERAL SUBJECT(S):

REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Department of Administration
 Alaska Industrial Development & Export Authority
 (AIDEA)

The following overview was taken in log note format. Tapes and handouts will be on file with the House Finance Committee through the 22nd Legislative Session, contact 465-2156. After the 22nd Legislative Session they will be available through the Legislative Library at 465-3808.

| LOG | SPEAKER | DISCUSSION |
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| | TAPE HFC 00 - 1 SIDE A | |
| 000 | Co-Chair Mulder | Introduced members and staff. |
| 132 | Co-Chair Williams | Voiced appreciation for the expertise of the staff and members. He introduced his staff. |
| 226 | Co-Chair Mulder | Commented that he believed that the minority and majority could work well together. |
| 264 | Co-Chair Mulder | Noted that he had passed out the rules of how the Finance Committee works in a handout. [attachment] The handout explains the number of votes that are required to make a majority and quorum for passing a bill and for amendments. He also pointed out the scheduling of the bills and the requirements associated with that. The notice requirement of the uniform rules will be the same as previous years. Included in the handout is a letter from Tamara Cook, Director of Legal Services. |
| 482 | | There was no objection to using the proposed rules. |
| 518 | Co-Chair Mulder | Spoke to missions and measures and the history associated with that formula. He did not know if this year, the Committee would be able to fully implement those guidelines. He stated that these are a "living document". Some of the past measures have been refined and will continue to be refined. |
| 635 | Co-Chair Mulder | Noted that there would be a brief overview made by each department in the next couple of weeks. He asked that each Department reference how last year's money was spent. |
| | | Department of Labor & Workforce |

| | | Development |
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| 736 | ED FLANAGAN, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | Spoke to the mission of the Department. He itemized the seven points that the Department is most proud of. The Department's mission is to provide for a safe working environment. Enforcement and regulatory status is of prime concern. |
| 826 | Commissioner Flanagan | He noted that the Department's customers are all Alaskans. Last year, the Department did very well in attaining their goals. He listed the significant accomplishments, stressing that the Occupational Safety & Health Administration(OSHA) and Workers' Comp program had been saved. The Workers' Comp program is now on a sound fiscal basis. Last year was a win-win for both the State and employers. |
| 935 | Commissioner Flanagan | Commented that the Department is still in the process of implementing HB 240 . He reiterated that it had been a long process. Specific to the rural employment issues, the task was to deal with the terrible impact of the fishing disaster in Western Alaska. The Department developed a youth employment program and that it is up and running in those areas. That program has been extremely effective. He noted that had been a significant impact with federal funding. |
| 1055 | Commissioner Flanagan | The Department has increased their partnership with local communities who are depending on grants from local agencies and in the process of working with the Dillingham services. The vocational education plan was lead by the Lt. Governor; there was a lot of State involvement. |
| 1177 | Commissioner Flanagan | He added that there has been some dislocation of employees. The rapid response team has been very effective in dealing with those concerns. |
| 1169 | Commissioner Flanagan | Acknowledged that next year that there would be continued challenges for sound fiscal footing in the OSHA program. |
| 1210 | Commissioner Flanagan | There exists programs that recognize the employers and reach to meet established standards that exceed those implemented by the law. The Department hopes to pursue federal funding to help with independent living for the handicapped and seniors, particularly living in rural |

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| | | Alaska. |
| 1275 | Commissioner Flanagan | Spoke about doing a rolling RFP program which the Department experimented with in the Denali Program. |
| 1319 | Commissioner Flanagan | Addressed the possibilities of a gas line. He noted that there is cooperation from labor to do this correctly. |
| 1367 | Representative Davies | Questioned the role of the Department. |
| 1384 | Commissioner Flanagan | Explained that they would be funded through the grant process. He listed the independant agencies. |
| 1417 | Representative Davies | Asked if the measures had been calculated. |
| 1426 | Commissioner Flanagan | Replied that he would address that later in his presentation. |
| 1450 | Representative Lancaster | Asked if there was shortage of qualified labor. |
| 1455 | Commissioner Flanagan | Stated that there is a shortage in the construction and the seafood trades. It is tight. He added that this is not all bad as there is a tight labor market at this time. He noted that progress is being attempted in that area, however, there is a pressing need for skilled workers. This has created a demographic bulge throughout the nation. |
| 1550 | Representative Hudson | Noted that he would be chairing the Department's subcommittee. He asked for the breakdown of the 200 youth who were put to work in the Bristol Bay area. Additionally, information on the coalition with the Bristol Bay Natives. He asked what was happening in SE Alaska with timber, etc. |
| 1610 | Vice-Chair Bunde | Questioned if there had been feedback from employers of how well workers were qualified and literate. Also, he commented on the income tax for the non-resident workers. |
| 1644 | Commissioner Flanagan | Stated that there is feedback from employers that want employees to have the basic "soft skills" such as basic problem solving. They would be willing to train workers. The average wage of the non-resident workers are generally lower because they are residing in State for shorter periods of time. |
| 1702 | Commissioner Flanagan | Employment Security Division mission - to ease the effects of unemployment, through Adult Basic Ed; Job Training; Employment Services; Unemployment |

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| | | Compensation. |
| 1765 | Commissioner Flanagan | He spoke to the Unemployment (UI) Services and how they have been streamlined making it more efficient through direct deposits and increased phone services. |
| 1850 | Commissioner Flanagan | Performance for the UI is to maintain the benchmark of 95% timeliness. Last year, the Department hit 97%. The Employment Service has been tweaked to make it more available for self-referral services, allowing people to undertake their own job search. There are ample services available. Services are still located in same locations. |
| 1935 | Commissioner Flanagan | He spoke to tracking employers with a tax account, which has not yet been done. The Department is pondering whether to propose a measure to increase that service. |
| 1975 | Commissioner Flanagan | Job Training - More services available. The Department is attempting to increase job training to 65%, while keeping 80% working. He admitted the time lag. He indicated that earnings before and after would be investigated. |
| 2027 | Commissioner Flanagan | Adult Basic Education - attempting to increase the education goal maintaining a 25% positive outcome. |
| 2055 | Co-Chair Mulder | Requested that he highlight the remaining divisions. |
| 2066 | Representative Croft | Asked what Commissioner Flanagan had been referring to. |
| 2081 | Commissioner Flanagan | Replied that there is not yet a document. |
| 2091 | Representative Davies | Pointed out that in some agencies, there only exists a program level and that this Department was one of them. |
| 2106 | Commissioner Flanagan | Acknowledged the measures in SB 281. |
| 2123 | Representative Davies | Thought it would be helpful to list the measures and the numbers for members to follow. |
| 2160 | Representative Croft | Asked the timeliness of initial payments. |
| 2172 | Commissioner Flanagan | Replied that it was at 97%. |
| 2185 | Representative Hudson | Stated that he was having a difficult time following the previous input, knowing that it was valuable. He requested written documentation for Subcommittee work. |
| 2207 | Commissioner | Stated that he would provide that info to |

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| | Flanagan | the subcommittee. |
| 2217 | Commissioner Flanagan | Division of Worker's Compensation - guarantee fair benefits. Performance measures need hearing requests. The status of that is not good. The Division is having a problem with the scheduled hearing time which is lagging. It was up to 135 days sometimes in FY00. There has been radical employment turnover. |
| 2261 | Co-Chair Mulder | Stated that if there is a problem, the Department needs to find a solution. |
| 2272 | Commissioner Flanagan | Medical Insurance Program for Fisherman. He commented that the tag lag appears to have been reduced. There are fewer complaints at present time. |
| 2296 | Commissioner Flanagan | Work Place Injuries. That could be the number of uninsured work place injuries and would be an OSHA concern. The Department is trying to reduce it by 35%. |
| 2350 | Representative Croft | Asked the percentage. |
| 2357 | PAUL GROSSI, | 29 less hurt with no recourse. |
| 2374 | Commissioner Flanagan | Noted that the petition for second injury and recovery has been reduced to 38 days. |
| | TAPE HFC 01 - 1, Side B | Department of Labor & Workforce Development (continued) |
| 000 | Commissioner Flanagan | Continued listing services. He noted that no one applied for those services after 12 months. 31 persons were given post services. |
| 105 | DUANE FRENCH, DIRECTOR, STATEWIDE PROGRAMS, DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | The Division of Vocational Services currently has a mechanism in place, which will help the Division to reach those people. |
| 178 | Co-Chair Mulder | Suggested that they continue to work with the subcommittee chair to further clarify that program. |
| 206 | Commissioner Flanagan | Listed the percentage of eligible Alaskans that received services and noted that all had been served. He suggested that measure be eliminated. |
| 352 | Commissioner Flanagan | Monitoring safe and legal. It helps to level the playing field and helps to provide workers safety. The measures previously listed were the numbers of work related industry. The number by industry is not listed. He clarified that there is a different way of doing business with OSHA. |

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| 511 | Commissioner Flanagan | He spoke to the decrease in the number of logging jobs. Construction 5.7% in '97; 4.9% in '99. Employers and insurers are involved in these numbers. |
| 580 | Commissioner Flanagan | Discussed the third mission. Concluded that the department is on track. |
| 669 | Commissioner Flanagan | Discussed the fourth measure. He noted that there have been difficulties in accomplishing the 4th mission. |
| 790 | Commissioner Flanagan | He noted that elevators are inspected every two years at no additional fee for the employer. |
| 828 | Representative Foster | Pointed out that 7 schools have burnt down in Northern Alaska. He stressed the importance of boiler inspectors. |
| 878 | Commissioner Flanagan | Discussed the mission for the Division of Administrative Services. He noted that the general mission is unwieldy. He offered to work with the subcommittee. |
| 936 | Commissioner Flanagan | Discussed the second mission under the Division of Administrative Services. |
| 991 | Commissioner Flanagan | Noted that there is a mission to assure data adequacy. He concluded that the department's estimate was close to number by the census. |
| 1079 | Commissioner Flanagan | Discussed missions of the Commissioner's office. He noted that the Alaska Resource Council is under the Commissioner's Office. |
| 1169 | Commissioner Flanagan | Noted that audit exceptions were solved. |
| 1200 | Co-Chair Mulder | Discussed subcommittee assignments |
| | | Department of Administration |
| 1260 | JIM DUNCAN, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION | Discussed highlights of the department. He referred to the mission statement, customers served by the department and issues before the department. |
| 1399 | Commissioner Duncan | Discussed the first mission of the department to provide centralized management and technology services to state government. He reviewed the mission of the department's individual divisions. |
| 1469 | Commissioner Duncan | Stated that responses to each measure would be provided in written form. |
| 1537 | Commissioner Duncan | Noted that the department serves a wide variety of individuals, businesses and state agencies. |
| 1562 | Commissioner Duncan | Reviewed accomplishments of the department. |
| 1603 | Commissioner Duncan | The department has assumed responsibility for maintenance and oversight of public buildings in Juneau. |

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| 1629 | Commissioner Duncan | Noted Y2K success and other information technology advances. |
| 1673 | Commissioner Duncan | Discussed performance measures for the Division of General Services. He noted the successful use of master contracts. |
| 1724 | Commissioner Duncan | Performance measure of the Division of Personnel was the number of successful grievance contracts. He observed that during the first half of the year the State won 6 of 9 cases, lost 2 and split 1. Early intervention has been successful. |
| 1790 | Co-Chair Mulder | Questioned how the Department's arbitration history compares to previous years. |
| 1834 | Commissioner Duncan | Did not know. |
| 1841 | Commissioner Duncan | In response to a question by Representative Lancaster, Commissioner Duncan discussed arbitrators. |
| 1880 | Co-Chair Mulder | Noted that many of the arbitrators do not reside in Alaska. He questioned why state arbitrators are not used and emphasized the uniqueness of Alaskan issues. |
| 1911 | Commissioner Duncan | Noted that arbitrators are selected from a list provided by the national board. |
| 1925 | Representative Hudson | Noted that the majority of arbitrators come from the Pacific Northwest. |
| 1947 | Commissioner Duncan | Discussed the performance measures for the Division of Finance. He concluded that they were successful in reducing penalties paid by the State. |
| 1991 | ALISON ELGEE, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION | Discussed the Public Building Fund. She noted that the goal was to leverage funds for use to address deferred maintenance. |
| 2037 | Co-Chair Mulder | Noted that without the Public Building Fund. the State could not charge rent in some cases. He added that the goal was to highlight maintenance needs. |
| 2063 | Representative Davies | Questioned how many of the funds have holes in them. |
| 2079 | Commissioner Duncan | Acknowledged that some funds were appropriated from. |
| 2091 | Ms. Elgee | Reviewed the use of the fund. |
| 2141 | Representative Davies | Concluded that the State would need to add money back into that fund. |
| 2152 | Ms. Elgee | Observed that the Governor's budget proposes additional funds. |
| 2168 | Representative Davies | Asked if the fund would be made whole |
| 2185 | Commissioner Duncan | Clarified that funding removed from the previous year had not been replaced. |

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| 2216 | Commissioner Duncan | RFP bids were due in December. Currently, in the process of evaluating the bids for telecommunication services. Also on that fund, the Department has assumed management of that budget. Will shift those positions for Department of Transportation & Public Facilities to Department of Administration. |
| 2275 | Commissioner Duncan | Spoke to workforce planning which needs to be addressed in the future. There is an agency wide committee who is looking at those issues which is a major priority. |
| 2312 | Vice-Chair Bunde | Asked if was a statutory requirement for the emergency networks within the State. |
| 2332 | Commissioner Duncan | Did not know and he offered to check that concern out. |
| | TAPE HFC 01 - 2, Side A | Department of Administration (continued) |
| 000 | Commissioner Duncan | Continued testimony regarding services for indigent Alaskans, etc. Customers served by the Divisions were addressed. He addressed accomplishments achieved by the Department. |
| 100 | Commissioner Duncan | Spoke to the performance measures for each of the Divisions for the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) and the Public Defender. |
| 172 | Co-Chair Mulder | Stated that Representative Lancaster should note that information. The Department needs to provide a better outcome in these two areas. |
| 224 | Representative Davies | Suggested focusing on national benchmarks. |
| 243 | Commissioner Duncan | Spoke to the federal guidelines for the Children in Need of Aid cases. |
| 284 | Co-Chair Mulder | Expected that the Committee would hear from Department of Health and Social Services and Department of Law regarding these concerns. |
| 312 | Commissioner Duncan | Programs for Alaska Seniors. Senior Services, which provides oversight for Senior Grant programs. The Alaskan Longevity Programs which administers that program. The Division has been expanding that program for long term care programs. Today, 1400 Alaskans receive care from Medicaid waivers. Waiver services can be used for 1/4 of the costs. |
| 470 | Commissioner Duncan | Two quality performance measures for the Pioneer Homes. Medication and Health are Finance division. The State is |

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| | | Care Finance division. The State is under the 5% goal set nationally. |
| 523 | Representative Croft | Referenced the benchmark 1 & 2, and asked if that was the intention noting that the vacancy could be filled with higher interest rates. He asked if there currently were vacancies. |
| 582 | Commissioner Duncan | There are 100 vacant beds and the beds are vacant because there is not adequate staffing to fill them. |
| 628 | Representative Davies | Asked if the vacancy referred to beds or staff. |
| 642 | Commissioner Duncan | Replied beds. |
| 654 | Vice-Chair Bunde | Asked how big is the waiting list. |
| 666 | Commissioner Duncan | Replied that the waiting list far exceeds the number of beds. He believed that there were 800 on the wait list. |
| 695 | Vice-Chair Bunde | Spoke to the recommendations of the task force. He asked if there would be an initiative to cover costs. |
| 734 | Ms. Elgee | Stated that the option to expand to active employees is being considered for long term care. There is an option to expand that to long-term employees. The Department has done some educational work to explain long term care. |
| 811 | Vice-Chair Bunde | Recommended that the State needs to strongly encourage the younger employees to buy into that options. |
| 836 | Representative Hudson | Asked if it had been adequately funded to cover the vacant beds. He noted that the Governor had introduced legislation. |
| 908 | Commissioner Duncan | Acknowledged that the Governor had introduced legislation that would change the name of the division and give adequate funding for the beds. He spoke about the women veterans in the State. |
| 965 | Co-Chair Mulder | Asked how the number applied from the past. |
| 980 | Ms. Elgee | Replied that it has been increasing. Last year, in Anchorage, there were 20 beds vacant. Now there are 36. |
| 1011 | Co-Chair Mulder | Questioned the breakdown of funding. |
| 1025 | Ms. Elgee | Replied that 40% is collected from the actual residents. |
| 1042 | Ms. Elgee | In response to Co-Chair Mulder, Ms. Elgee advised that the Department had maximized the revenue available from the residents. Each year the incremental amount gets smaller and smaller. |
| 1133 | Representative Lancaster | Acknowledged that employees to administer these services are difficult to come by. |

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| 1155 | Representative Hudson | Expanded, noting that there is a serious shortage of nurses in the State of Alaska, noting that this is a critical area. |
| 1184 | Representative Croft | Noted that there is concern that the rates are increasing. Not much more money can come out from the fee raising, which is an area of concern. |
| 1232 | Co-Chair Mulder | Mentioned the barrier to the veteran's angle. |
| 1267 | Commissioner Duncan | The # of incidents in Pioneer Homes resulting in injuries is lower than the national percentage. He noted that the State's rate is only 1.8%. |
| 1311 | Commissioner Duncan | Division of Motor Vehicles has accomplished a new voter registration program this past year. Improved customer service. |
| 1380 | Commissioner Duncan | Mentioned that the average waiting time for a customer to receive service has been reduced to less than 15 minutes; only sometimes up to 45 minutes. 60% of the customers waited less than 15 minutes. Last year, there were only 2 written complaints. |
| 1455 | Commissioner Duncan | Mentioned that the Department is considering a review of communities exempt from vehicle insurance and mandatory insurance. Those are basically rural locations. |
| | | ALASKA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT & EXPORT AUTHORITY (AIDEA) |
| 1524 | ROBERT POE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT & EXPORT AUTHORITY (AIDEA), DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | Spoke to the measures for AIDEA. He spoke to the earnings of the authority available to the State as a dividend. AIDEA pays for all its activities. He emphasized that it is a very real return. |
| 1611 | Co-Chair Mulder | Asked the total amount that the State has invested in AIDEA. |
| 1622 | Mr. Poe | Believed that it was approximately \$102 billion dollars. |
| 1649 | Mr. Poe | Continues to aggressively pursue all possible deals. He spoke to the Seafood Center and the target associated with that program. |
| 1675 | Mr. Poe | The second measure is the loan delinquency rate. He added that number of permanent jobs created by that measure. |

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| 1713 | Representative Lancaster | Noted that he would be the subcommittee chair. He asked the number of people employed by AIDEA. |
| 1733 | Mr. Poe | Replied including the number of Alaska Energy employees there are now 60 total employees. |
| 1756 | Representative Hudson | Asked if AIDEA does there own investing. |
| 1765 | Mr. Poe | Stated some is done by AIDEA and some by cash managers. He pointed out that Schudder is one of the investors. AIDEA is on par with their targets. There is no common stock and the returns are relatively low. |
| 1800 | Representative Davies | Asked if the money needed to be available. |
| 1826 | Mr. Poe | The money is there to make investments happen. |
| 1840 | Mr. Poe | The Alaska Energy Authority mission is to tap Alaska's natural resources and new technology to achieve the lowest reasonable consumer power costs. Observed that there was \$64 million more in expenses than revenues for the AEA last year. |
| 1957 | Mr. Poe | Reviewed repairs and upgrades. He discussed some of the repairs to the Four Dam Pool project. |
| 2056 | Mr. Poe | Reviewed projects for the next year. The largest is to complete the sale of the Four Dam Pool. Land transfer and ownership is the largest remaining issue before the sale. |
| 2130 | Co-Chair Williams | Questioned when the sale would be completed. Mr. Poe responded that their intent is to complete the sale in the current year. |
| 2147 | Representative Hudson | Noted that the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) endowment created in the past year is dependent on the sale. |
| 2176 | Mr. Poe | Assured Representative Hudson that the schedule will accommodate the plan. |
| 2202 | Representative Hudson | Questioned if AIDEA would work with the Denali Commission. Mr. Poe assured him that they work with the Commission every day. |
| 2227 | Mr. Poe | Stressed the importance of reducing the cost of power in rural Alaska. He noted that diesel is more cost effective than gas. He stressed the opportunities in increasing diesel efficiency. He observed that wind power is an alternative power |

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| | TAPE HFC 01 - 2, Side B | |
| 20 | Representative Harris | Referred to the land issue. |
| 085 | Representative Whitaker | Healy Clean Coal Project |
| 123 | Mr. Poe | Noted that AIDEA reached an agreement for a full or partial retrofit. He noted that resolving the Healy Clean Coal Project issue is a priority. |
| 318 | Co-Chair Mulder | Noted that measurements are directed toward hydropower and emphasized that there is more. |
| 365 | Mr. Poe | Discussed rural measurements. There are 20 projects on their slate for next year. He emphasized the need to keep control of project accounting. |
| 480 | Mr. Poe | Completed 6 utility upgrades and 5 line extensions. |
| 486 | Mr. Poe | Discussed Circuit Rider. |
| 532 | Representative Hudson | Clarified that most of the rural communities are not able to utilize the internet. |
| 560 | Mr. Poe | Observed that a good internet connection can be like a good transportation system. |
| 594 | Mr. Poe | Discussed the Alaska Seafood Institute. AIDEA owns the plant located in Anchorage. Debt was converted to equity and that a fourth investor had been sought. |
| 888 | Mr. Poe | AIDEA has \$55 million dollars in the ASI deal. He stressed that AIDEA is in the best investor position. He reviewed the other investments. He stressed that the plant will add value to Alaska. The facility can accommodate five fisheries around the State. |
| 1062 | Co-Chair Mulder | Questioned if ASI would open without the fourth investor. |
| 1079 | Mr. Poe | Noted that there would be a new board. They could open without a 4th investor. |
| 1125 | Co-Chair Mulder | Questioned if products are being marketed. |
| 1135 | Mr. Poe | Responded that marketing is occurring. |
| 1154 | Representative Hudson | Noted the significance of ASI to the seafood industry. He stressed the need for the Legislature to be informed regarding the project's needs. Marketing and management should be strong in order to build confidence. |
| 1241 | Mr. Poe | Observed that the State spent \$50 million |

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| | | to build the facility. |
| 1272 | Co-Chair Mulder | Asked if Cominco and Red Dog were still good projects. |
| 1289 | Mr. Poe | Yes. He noted that AIDEA was looking at different scenarios. |
| 1322 | ADJOURNMENT | The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. |
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