

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
April 22, 2004
8:39 A.M.

TAPE HFC 04 - 94, Side A

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Williams called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 8:39 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bill Williams, Co-Chair
Representative Kevin Meyer, Vice-Chair
Representative Mike Chenault
Representative Eric Croft
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Richard Foster
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Carl Moses

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative John Harris, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Bill Stoltze

ALSO PRESENT

Ryan Makinster, Staff to Representative McGuire

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Larry Wiget, Executive Director of Public Affairs, Anchorage School District, Anchorage

SUMMARY

HB 512 An Act establishing the Hydrogen Energy Partnership in the Department of Community and Economic Development; requiring the commissioner of community and economic development to seek public and private funding for the partnership; providing for the contingent repeal of an effective date; and providing for an effective date.

CS HB 512(FIN) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with two fiscal impact notes.

HB 338 An Act relating to attendance at public school; and providing for an effective date.

HB 338 was heard and HELD in Committee for further consideration.

#HB512

HOUSE BILL NO. 512

An Act establishing the Hydrogen Energy Partnership in the Department of Community and Economic Development; requiring the commissioner of community and economic development to seek public and private funding for the partnership; providing for the contingent repeal of an effective date; and providing for an effective date.

Representative Foster MOVED to ADOPT Amendment #1. Representative Joule OBJECTED for purposes of discussion.

Amendment #1 reads:

Page 2, line 3, following "energy":
Insert ",hydropower, wind power, and tidal power"

Page 2, following line 21:
Insert a new paragraph to read:
"(6) the electric utility industry;"

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Co-Chair Williams explained the changes in Amendment 1. Representative Joule removed his objection. Amendment #1 was adopted.

Representative Foster MOVED to report CSHB 512(FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CS HB 512(FIN) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with two fiscal impact notes.

#HB338

HOUSE BILL NO. 338

An Act relating to attendance at public school; and providing for an effective date.

RYAN MAKINSTER, STAFF TO REPRESENTATIVE MCGUIRE, commented that the bill accomplishes two small but significant changes to the law. He explained that the minimum standard for early entry is very high and would require most children to be in the genius level to qualify. Under current statute, the school board must hear a request for early entry, which is inefficient when a school administrator could be

designated for the task. A school administrator would have more experience in early education and possess the ability to determine if a child is ready to enter school early. The bill was requested by the Anchorage School District. The date change from August 15 to September 1 would put Alaska in line with 36 other states.

Representative Chenault asked how many children this bill would affect. Mr. Makinster replied it would affect less than one child in each classroom, or one for every three kindergarten classes. It would not negatively affect classroom size. Representative Chenault stated he was more concerned with the cost, noting the indeterminate fiscal note, and he asked the best estimate of the cost. He also asked if it is the local or the state school board that currently makes the decision.

Mr. Makinster replied that the legislation may cost a little more this year but these children would be out of system earlier and the cost of education would be higher later on. Currently the local school board makes the determination and a parent meets with either the school psychologist or a private psychologist. The school districts request appointment of an administrator so that the board would not have to meet on these cases.

Representative Chenault asked whether the Anchorage School District is planning to hire another administrator. Mr. Makinster replied that it is not.

LARRY WIGET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT, spoke in support of the bill. The Anchorage School Board believes that once it has adopted policy standards, it should have the discretion to delegate the responsibility for implementation to the District administration. The District would not hire additional administrators to deal with this task, and the Board would still serve as a body of appeal. Mr. Wiget discussed the provisions of the bill.

Vice-Chair Meyer asked why the date has been set at August 15. Mr. Wiget did not know but he thought it was arbitrary. Vice-Chair Meyer asked if Anchorage makes exceptions for children close to the August 15 date if they pass the tests. Mr. Wiget said that the date is relatively firm but parents assume the extra cost of testing and evaluating the child. The bill would put Alaska more in line with the national average.

In response to a question by Vice-Chair Meyer, Mr. Wiget replied that Anchorage has all-day kindergarten classes.

HB 338 was heard and HELD in Committee for further consideration.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 A.M.