

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

April 15, 2004  
1:12 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Nick Stepovich, Chair  
Representative Beverly Masek, Vice Chair  
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom  
Representative Bob Lynn  
Representative Sharon Cissna  
Representative Max Gruenberg

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEW: HOMELAND SECURITY IN ALASKA

**TAPES**

04-5, SIDE(S) A & B

**CHAIR NICK STEPOVICH** convened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs at 1:12 p.m. Representatives Stepovich, Masek, Lynn, and Cissna were present at the call to order. Representatives Dahlstrom and Gruenberg arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION**

CHAIR STEPOVICH reaffirmed how safe Alaska is. He asked the following: what circumstances would prompt military deployment; is there federal money already allocated; how much money in grants were [allocated]; and do most cities have homeland security directors?

REPRESENTATIVE MASEK talked about the recent earthquakes and asked how safe Alaska is. She thanked the members of Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management for all it does.

CRAIG CAMPBELL, Adjutant General/Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, presented an update on homeland

security in Alaska and characterized it as a very secure place to live. However, he mentioned Valdez and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) when noting that Alaska is not exempt from terrorist attacks. Turning to diseases like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Adjutant General Campbell explained that the [division] first establishes if the [disease] is an act of terrorism. If not, the matter is dealt with by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). Adjutant General Campbell related the need to identify what the appropriate purpose for the money being received for homeland security. In response to questions, he specified that the Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management would need a call from the governor to use local army troops for domestic calls. The governor's authority to act would be appointed by the President. Adjutant General Campbell informed the committee that SB 385 is moving through the Senate. This legislation is important because the authority of homeland security needs to be specified, however, the code should not include language specifying that citizens' firearms are taken away.

THOMAS BURGESS, Director, Office of Homeland Security, Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA), informed the committee that Homeland Security is one year old and currently at "Condition Yellow," which is an elevated distress level. He explained that in a situation of domestic terrorism, the governor is responsible for calling on troops for assistance. He echoed earlier comments that SB 385 is an important bill, which will identify the authority of the Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management. Information is gathered when the government changes the condition color to evaluate Alaska's threat level, which has to be approved by the governor. Alaska does not have to follow the national threat color level, he noted. Mr. Burgess explained that the [Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management] was created by Governor Murkowski to develop a centralized department of power to coordinate the following departments: Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Department of Public Safety, Department of Environmental Conservation, and Department of Administration. Mr. Burgess specified that the mission of the Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management is to prevent terrorism, reduce risks, and minimize loss of life. He agreed with earlier comments that the division would work very closely with DHSS on the matter of diseases like SARS, although DHSS would handle a serious disease.

MR. BURGESS remarked that Alaska is safe due to the steps taken by the governor and Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management. The role of the division is planning, hardening security, crisis management, and recovery. He noted that there will be a large exercise in mid 2005 and the division will support local jurisdictions, develop and maintain a five-year plan, [look into] grants and management, develop a defense and emergency plan, develop statewide training and an exercise program, and develop an emergency preparedness strategy.

MR. BURGESS related that the five-year strategic goals are to: reduce vulnerability of life and property; provide security and disaster management; implement a training and exercise program; prioritize state infrastructure; and provide intelligence dissemination outreach to Alaska. He explained the division is currently prioritizing infrastructure, determining and reducing vulnerability, and pre-identifying forces working on many tasks at once, not in a unilateral process. He noted that \$41.5 million in grants went out. The primary points of coordination are the governor's homeland security cabinet and anti-terrorism advisory council, which will have partnerships with various groups all over the world. He mentioned the "Vulnerability and Consulting Team" that would have 16 clients in more than 30 statewide locations. He also mentioned the anti-terrorism procedural and consulting and assistance goal: to put up an "ATACA" in Valdez. Mr. Burgess indicated that the following areas [are under review] with regard to defense: the pipeline, oil and gas refineries, rail transportation, sea port, power production, "COG", and "COOP". He said that the division isn't currently working with the plane situation. He noted that other states have homeland security directors, but they're referred to as emergency services directors.

MR. BURGESS informed the committee that there are some very highly recommended training programs that will be here this summer. The first Homeland Security Conference in Alaska will be March 9-11, 2004, in Juneau. There will be public speaking engagements and brochures for public awareness. A three-year training program is the benchmark for the Lower 48. He related that Unified Defense '04 dealt with cruise ships and was very successful. He mentioned that there are exercise scenarios planned for this summer; Northern Edge '05 will be a "big deal" and is being prepared now. He indicated that there is review of "soft targets" such as malls and other public places that are often overlooked. Funding sources come from infrastructure owners, grants from the government, and other sources yet consolidated.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA inquired as to how diseases would be handled. She expressed concern with regard to quarantine capabilities.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN opined that he doesn't think anyone is "safe," and therefore he didn't want people to have a false illusion of safety. He asked what this committee can do to help the division.

DAVE LEIBERSBACH, Director, Division of Homeland Security/Emergency Management, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, informed the committee that he handles public problems beyond terrorism. He related that Alaska is fairly well prepared for another major earthquake, but noted that it could always be better prepared. With regard to funding, he said that Alaska's funding wouldn't be impacted if it didn't change its "color level" along with the nation.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM commented that she is very impressed with the division.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

The committee took no action.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at an unspecified time.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.