

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 13, 2003

8:01 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch, Chair
Representative Jim Holm, Vice Chair
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Ethan Berkowitz

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Max Gruenberg

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: HOMELAND SECURITY

TAPES

03-9, SIDE(S) A & B

CHAIR BRUCE WEYHRAUCH convened the meeting of the House State Affairs Standing Committee at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Weyhrauch and Holm were present at the call to order. Representatives Seaton, Dahlstrom, Lynn, and Berkowitz arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

CHAIR WEYHRAUCH explained that although the public has a right to know what is going on with homeland security, the public also has a right to be protected. Therefore, sensitive areas regarding Homeland Security will be heard by the committee in Executive Session. He specified that the purpose of the hearing is: to know what is going on with homeland security in Alaska so that the House State Affairs Standing Committee can exercise jurisdiction over matters of state affairs and military and veterans affairs; to understand any public policy implications of homeland security and whether the legislature in working with the executive branch needs to address any public policy issues through statute or otherwise; to eventually exercise our duty to

review any budgetary matters that come before the legislature in addressing homeland security.

[Presenters were asked to present only as much as they reasonably can within their own professional ability and discretion to provide information to the committee knowing this is a public meeting. Later on in executive session the presenters will be asked to present information to the committee that is sensitive.]

GENERAL CRAIG CAMPBELL, Commissioner Designee, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, spoke briefly regarding his role with homeland security and the seriousness of the security threat level orange that the United States is under. General Campbell introduced Assistant Commissioner Sam Johnson, the head of the Homeland Security and Emergency Services Division, who will present, from the state's perspective, an informational packet that the department has been using to evaluate how much needs to be done in Alaska to protect the citizens of the state. There is going to be an increased emphasis on the budget in regard to homeland security.

SAM JOHNSON, Assistant Commissioner, Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, presented a thorough briefing regarding homeland security in the State of Alaska. The DMVA is the focal point for all matters regarding homeland security and protecting the citizens and key infrastructure of the State of Alaska. Roles of homeland security, such as deterrence, mitigation, response and recovery, were discussed. Prioritization of the critical infrastructure in the state has been completed, he related. Development of response procedures and checklists and refining the dissemination of information to communities is in the scope of the Emergency Services Division.

CAPTAIN JACK DAVIN, Chief of the Marine Safety Division, 17th Coast Guard District - Juneau, reviewed the responsibilities and duties of the US Coast Guard (USCG) with relation to homeland security. The Homeland Security Division has grown rapidly since [the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001] and now the Homeland Security Division is on the same level as Search and Rescue, which is the number one mission of the US Coast Guard. Goals of the USCG security mission were touched upon. The US Coast Guard is partnered with US Customs, Immigration, and Naturalization. Furthermore, Border Service works very closely with the state, FBI, and many other agencies on a day-to-day basis. Since [the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001] the

US Coast Guard has been participating in Operation Noble Eagle, which is a US military operation, associated with homeland defense and civil support to the federal, state and local agencies in the United States.

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL PATTERSON, Deputy Director, Homeland Security Division, US Coast Guard - Alaska, noted that he is representing Captain Bruce McQueen. Lt. Patterson briefly spoke about his position and stated that he had no additional information to provide.

MAJOR DOUG NORRIS, Deputy Director, Alaska State Troopers, gave a short dissertation regarding the status of the Alaska State Troopers as the first response group in the event of an emergency on a state or national level.

CAMILLE SOLEIL, Executive Director, Alaska Nurses Association, presented to information regarding the development of the Alaska Nurse Alert System. The system is designed to establish a network of nurses; volunteers who could respond to disasters and emergencies here in Alaska including responses to natural and manmade disasters, acts of terror, and acts of war including bio-terrorism. The group is partnered with the American Red Cross, Alaska Chapter, and the section of Public Health Nursing, the Alaska Division of Public Health, and the Anchorage Medical Reserve Board Department of Health and Human Services. The first goal of the association is to set up the Alaska Nurse Alert System database. She mentioned the need for validly licensed volunteers, LPNs, Registered Nurses, and Advanced Nurse Practitioners who are willing to respond in situations of emergencies. The target date for finishing the database is March 31 of this year. Nurses statewide will be contacted and asked for input from their areas of interest, and furthermore the Nurses Association will train other volunteers.

MS. SOLEIL brought up the question of liability; "If a validly licensed volunteer participates in emergency response and participates in the way that they are instructed to do by the organization that is hosting it, such as the Red Cross in shelters or the Department of Public Health for immunizations; and they fulfill their duties as they are asked to, is there a way to get an emergency liability exception for them so that they do not have to worry about that?"

FRANK RICHARDS, State Operations Engineer and Security Manager, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), explained how DOT&PF is involved in homeland security. The

department is responsible for highways, bridges, tunnels, and the Alaska Marine Highway System. Each of these individual modes [of transportation] has a different security matter. Mr. Richards spoke about the 260 airports operated by the state, including two international airports and 20 rural certificated airports of which 16 of these airports require security programs under the Transportation Security Administration Regulations. He related that there are 238 community class airports, rural airports, around the state. On the highway side there about 6,200 centerline miles of highway, 715 bridges, 602 buildings and the Whittier Tunnel. On the Marine Highway side, there are 9 vessels that provide transit for passengers, freight, and vehicles for over 3,000 miles from Bellingham, Washington, to Dutch Harbor. He pointed out that DOT&PF [employees] are first responders, providing front line services for security. He highlighted that the Transportation Security Administration has taken over the functions of regulatory actions from the Federal Aviation Administration as well as the responsibility for passenger and baggage screening.

JACK MEYERS, Operations and Security Manager, Alaska Marine Highway System, added that there are 33 [ferry] terminals, 17 of which are manned. A security study of eight or nine state ferries has been completed and the M/V Bartlett will be surplused October 1. Individual security plans for the vessels as well as the terminals need to be done. In the Bellingham area a security zone of 500 yards from any Alaska State Ferry has been established. However, that same security zone is not yet established in Alaska. The Alaska Marine Highway System in conjunction with the US Coast Guard is providing various training platforms in March and April for the State Troopers and other law enforcement officials throughout the state.

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN asked for information on the number of people who had been excluded from security service due to the fingerprint checks done by TSA.

FRANK RICHARDS provided the additional information regarding the fingerprint checks done by DOT and TSA and informed the committee that only a handful of individuals came up with felonies [and were disqualified].

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN asked if there were a lot of illegal aliens who where excluded because of the TSA background checks.

MR. RICHARDS responded, "No, there wasn't."

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked, "What can be done, or what is being done to enhance the security of our general aviation fleet?"

MR. RICHARDS responded that the FAA has asked them to increase diligence and surveillance.

COMMISSIONER DESIGNEE MARC ANTRIM opted to present his testimony during the executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR WEYHRAUCH adjourned to executive session at 8:55 a.m.

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.