

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 30, 2004

3:35 p.m.

TAPE (S) 04-24

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator John Cowdery, Vice Chair
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Gretchen Guess

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 213(FIN)

"An Act relating to a provisional driver's license and to issuance of a driver's license; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED CSHB 213(FIN) OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25(RES)

Relating to Alaska Wild Salmon Week, June 28 - July 4, 2004.

MOVED CSHCR 25(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

Recommending that certain federal funding restrictions be eased so that more villages in Alaska would qualify for assistance relating to flooding and erosion.

MOVED SJR 25 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 356

"An Act relating to qualifications of voters, voter registration, voter residence, precinct boundary modification, recognized political parties, voters unaffiliated with political parties, early voting, absentee voting, ballot counting, voting by mail, initiative, referendum, recall, and definitions; and providing for an effective date."

SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 213

SHORT TITLE: PROVISIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) WEYHRAUCH

03/26/03 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/26/03 (H) TRA, L&C
04/01/03 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
04/01/03 (H) Heard & Held
04/01/03 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
04/03/03 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
04/03/03 (H) Heard & Held
04/03/03 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
04/15/03 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
04/15/03 (H) Heard & Held/Subcommittee assigned
04/15/03 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
01/22/04 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
01/22/04 (H) -- Meeting Postponed to 1/27/04 --
01/27/04 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
01/27/04 (H) Heard & Held
01/27/04 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
02/03/04 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17
02/03/04 (H) Moved CSHB 213(TRA) Out of Committee
02/03/04 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
02/09/04 (H) TRA RPT CS(TRA) 6NR 1AM
02/09/04 (H) NR: KAPSNER, KOOKESH, MASEK, OGG,
02/09/04 (H) STEPOVICH, HOLM; AM: KOHRING
02/09/04 (H) FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER L&C
02/11/04 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM CAPITOL 17
02/11/04 (H) Moved CSHB 213(L&C) Out of Committee
02/11/04 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
02/16/04 (H) L&C RPT CS(L&C) 5DP
02/16/04 (H) DP: CRAWFORD, LYNN, GATTO, DAHLSTROM,
02/16/04 (H) ANDERSON
02/26/04 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
02/26/04 (H) Moved CSHB 213(FIN) Out of Committee
02/26/04 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
03/01/04 (H) FIN RPT CS(FIN) 6DP 1NR
03/01/04 (H) DP: MEYER, HAWKER, JOULE, CROFT,
03/01/04 (H) FOSTER, WILLIAMS; NR: STOLTZE
03/04/04 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/04/04 (H) VERSION: CSHB 213(FIN)
03/05/04 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/05/04 (S) STA, FIN
03/25/04 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211
03/25/04 (S) Scheduled But Not Heard
03/30/04 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

BILL: HCR 25

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA WILD SALMON WEEK
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) WOLF

01/20/04 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/20/04 (H) FSH, RES
02/02/04 (H) FSH AT 9:00 AM CAPITOL 124
02/02/04 (H) Moved Out of Committee
02/02/04 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
02/04/04 (H) FSH RPT 5DP 1AM
02/04/04 (H) DP: GARA, OGG, WILSON, SAMUELS,
02/04/04 (H) SEATON; AM: GUTTENBERG
02/06/04 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124
02/06/04 (H) Moved CSHCR 25(RES) Out of Committee
02/06/04 (H) MINUTE(RES)
02/12/04 (H) RES RPT CS(RES) 7DP
02/12/04 (H) DP: LYNN, STEPOVICH, KERTTULA,
02/12/04 (H) GUTTENBERG, GATTO, MASEK, DAHLSTROM
03/22/04 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/22/04 (H) VERSION: CSHCR 25(RES)
03/24/04 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/24/04 (S) STA, RES
03/30/04 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

BILL: SJR 25

SHORT TITLE: FLOODING AND EROSION CONTROL ASSISTANCE
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) OLSON

02/06/04 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/06/04 (S) CRA, STA
02/25/04 (S) CRA AT 1:30 PM FAHRENKAMP 203
02/25/04 (S) Moved SJR 25 Out of Committee
02/25/04 (S) MINUTE(CRA)
02/27/04 (S) CRA RPT 5DP
02/27/04 (S) DP: STEDMAN, LINCOLN, STEVENS G, ELTON,
02/27/04 (S) WAGONER
03/30/04 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 213

Linda Sylvester
Aide to Representative Bruce Weyhrauch
Alaska State Capitol

Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding HB 213

Duane Bannock, Director
Division of Motor Vehicles
Department of Administration
PO Box 110200
Juneau, AK 99811-0200

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding HB 213

Jeff Jessy
Alaska State PTA representative
P.O. Box 201496
Anchorage, AK 99520

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Martha Moore
OPSS trauma coordinator

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Monique Marteau
Youth in Action
Juneau, AK 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Don Smith
Highway Safety Office
Department of Transportation &
Public Facilities
3132 Channel Dr.
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Sheldon Winters
State Farm Insurance Lobbyist
No address provided

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Cindy Cashen
Executive Director, Juneau MADD
Juneau, AK 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 213

Representative Kelly Wolf
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor HCR 25

Haven Harris
Staff to Senator Donny Olson, sponsor of SJR 25
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SJR 25 for sponsor

Robert Valdadta
Kenai Peninsula and Seward Flood
POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of SJR 25

Julianne Baltar
Kawerak Incorporated
P.O. Box 948
Nome, AK 99762
POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of SJR 25

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 04-24, SIDE A

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. Present were Senators Cowdery, Stedman and Chair Gary Stevens. Senator Guess arrived during the course of the hearing.

CSHB 213(FIN) -PROVISIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced HB 213 to be up for consideration.

REPRESENTATIVE BRUCE WEYHRAUCH, sponsor, introduced the bill using charts to show the committee the number of vehicle accidents involving youths that result in fatalities. The first chart showed that the number of crashes drops dramatically as drivers get older. Chart two showed that youth driving accidents peak after school then again around midnight. Crash statistics also show that youths have significantly more accidents when there are more than two youths in the car.

The data is stark and telling, he said. He introduced the bill during the previous session and the current committee substitute cherry picks the best parts of laws from 40 other states that have enacted this type of driver's license provision.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH described the following system:

3-Tiered System for Driver Licensing under HB 213

Permit License	Provisional License	Unrestricted
Must be 14 years old	Minimum age: 16	Must have had provisional license for 6 months
Must pass written test	Must have had permit for 6 months	Must have clean driving record (no convictions for traffic in past 6 months.)
	Must pass road test	
	Parent certification of 40 hours driving under progressively difficult circumstances	
	Must have clean driving record (no convictions for traffic offenses in past 6 months)	

While driving with a Provisional License:

	No nighttime driving between 1 am and 5 am
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptions: kids can get work permit to drive during restricted times, kids can drive with parent or legal guardian
	Generally no passengers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptions: passengers who are siblings and adults over 21, passengers when accompanied by the driver's parent or legal guardian

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked why provisional licensees would not be permitted to drive between the hours of 1 am and 5 am.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH said those hours are the result of a decision made in the House Transportation Committee.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked if the six month provisional license requirement would impact an 18 year old who recently moved to Alaska?

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH replied it wouldn't impact anyone that moved to Alaska with a valid unrestricted license from another state. Anyone arriving with a provisional license from another state would be subject to the Alaska provisional license requirements.

LINDA SYLVESTER, staff to Representative Weyhrauch, further explained that the bill targets drivers that are 16. "Once you're 18 you're an adult and you're free and clear," she said.

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN questioned whether a 17 year old that moved to Alaska with an unrestricted license from another state would be required to apply for a six month provisional license.

MS. SYLVESTER suggested that a Department of Motor Vehicles representative would be able to answer that question.

SENATOR STEDMAN commented that many youths living in rural Alaska assume adult responsibilities earlier than in other areas. With that in mind, he asked how Alaska youth driving fatality data compares to nationwide data.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH opined that the responsibilities that Alaskan youths assume in rural and fishing communities is similar to those in farm communities in other states. He noted that the bill allows youths to obtain a work permit to drive during restricted times.

MS. SYLVESTER added that Alaska accident statistics for youths mirror those from other states, but there are more youth driving fatalities in Alaska. Consistently, accident rates have gone down in states that have adopted a graduated system, she stated.

SENATOR STEDMAN asked why driver's education courses weren't included as a requirement.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH told him that enrolling in a driver's education course would count toward the parent certification part of the provisional license.

MS. SYLVESTER pointed out that requiring a driver's education course would burden parents with a cost, which might be a hardship. "We also read a study that shows that driver's education does not produce the results that a holding period, the restriction from driving around with your friends does," she added.

SENATOR STEDMAN asked what happens if someone with a provisional license receives a traffic infraction.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH said the youth would have to be convicted of the infraction before it would impact receipt of the unrestricted license.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS referred to the National Transportation Safety Fact Sheet and asked about restricting cell phone use.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH said the cell phone issue is separate and they chose not to muddy the waters.

SENATOR JOHN COWDERY asked what affect this would have on insurance rates.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH told him he wasn't sure, but someone from the insurance industry was available to answer questions.

SENATOR COWDERY asked whether infractions would affect insurance rates.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH replied that is generally the case.

SENATOR COWDERY asked whether the Department of Public Safety favored the bill.

MS. SYLVESTER said, "Law enforcement is wildly in support of this bill."

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH said the bill is very specific about the restrictions and it's only for six months.

SENATOR COWDERY remarked it's a good bill that has his support.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS referred to page 1, line 11 and asked what proof of driving experience would entail.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH said Mr. Bannock would address that question.

DUANE BANNOCK, Division of Motor Vehicles representative, testified via teleconference. He said the bill would be implemented to coincide with the effective date and they do not intend to recall licenses to add the restriction. Implementation would be through a restriction process that would be printed on the license just as it is now for corrective lenses, daylight driving etc.

With regard to Senator Stedman's question regarding grandfathering from other states with dissimilar programs, he said the applicant would be subject to the provisional license if he or she were less than 18 years old.

As to who would certify the 40 hours driving experience, he said it would typically be the parent or guardian simply because young people need parental consent to apply for a driver's license. The parent might not have driven all 40 hours with the youth, but they are signing to certify the hours. "And that is how we intend to implement this portion of this bill," he said.

JEFF JESSY, Alaska State PTA representative, spoke in strong support of HB 213 saying that the association identified a graduated licensing bill as a top legislative priority for this session. Parents are convinced that having this bill in place will help new drivers gain experience with reasonable restrictions imposed under manageable conditions.

MARTHA MOORE, Department of Health and Social Services representative, spoke in support of HB 213. In her work she has specifically studied serious teen crashes as compared to adult crashes. She agreed with Ms. Sylvester that Alaska statistics mirror national statistics and that teens are more likely to be involved in crashes than adults.

She reported that teen driving studies show that although the death rate for crashes declined in the 20 years from 1975 to 1996, for 16 year olds the number doubled. The death rate for 17 to 19 year old drivers is twice that for older drivers and the death rate for 16 year old drivers is three times that of older drivers. "Immaturity alone is the most significant factor in putting these kids at risk," she said, and being surrounded by distractions and peer pressure just adds to the risk.

Since 1996 38 states have adopted a graduated license program, which has contributed to lowering crash and death rates in those states. The legislation will help youths gain driving experience

while under adult supervision and the six months provisional time will allow time for increased maturity.

MONIQUE BARTEAU said she is a 16 year old JDHS student testifying for Youth in Action and MADD in support of HB 213. She believes the bill will help reduce teen accidents in Alaska just as it has in North Carolina where teen crashes have dropped 57 percent since adopting a restricted licensing program.

4:10 pm

Senator Gretchen Guess joined the hearing.

DON SMITH, Alaska Highway Safety Office Administrator, testified in support of HB 213. He agreed with the statistics given regarding the number of teen crashes. The bill will save lives, he asserted.

SHELDON WINTERS, Lobbyist for State Farm Insurance, responded to Senator Cowdery's question about how this program would affect insurance rates saying he had no hard data. However, most agencies already have discounts for youths that meet certain safety criteria and claims certainly affect premiums. It's likely that the program will have a generally positive affect on claims, he said.

In conclusion, he emphasized that the bill isn't about insurance rates; it's about saving lives and that's where the focus should remain.

CINDY CASHEN, Executive Director MAAD Juneau, testified in support of HB 213. Evidence shows that teens that go through a graduated license process tend to support the program, she said.

MAAD examined 2001 Alaska traffic crashes to find out how teens were driving in small villages, and towns, and cities. They found that 34 percent of the crashes in Kodiak involved teen drivers, 28 percent of the crashes in Anchorage involved teens and 26 percent of the crashes in Barrow were teen related. Across Alaska, teens accounted for 28 percent of the crashes, she said.

SENATOR GUESS asked whether they had considered including volunteer supervisor on page 1, line 11.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS restated the previous explanation with help from Ms. Sylvester to Senator Guess's satisfaction.

SENATOR GUESS asked whether they had considered including volunteer situations on page 2, line 26.

TAPE 04-24 SIDE B

4:25 pm

MS. SYLVESTER acknowledged that a graduated license program would be inconvenient for a short period of time. But, she said, "for that small inconvenience you get a lot back."

SENATOR GUESS referred to the top of page 3 and questioned the requirement using the most direct available route because that might not be the safest route.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH told her the House Transportation Committee talked about that for at least three meetings. He assured her that there is no intent by the sponsor to cause someone to drive a dangerous route. The driver should certainly be allowed reasonable discretion for common sense to prevail.

SENATOR GUESS suggested giving more thought to that issue and then asked for a definition for "off the road system."

MS. SYLVESTER said that provision would cover a village situation.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH added that resulted from Bush concerns.

SENATOR STEDMAN returned to the question of dissimilar licenses for teens moving to Alaska from another state and asked how long a driver has before they're required to apply for a new license.

MR. BANNOCK explained that drivers have 30 days to apply for an Alaskan license. With regard to the question about dissimilar licenses, he said that is specifically addressed in AS 28.15.055. If a driver that is at least 16 years old moves to Alaska from a state that does not have a provisional license program, that driver must satisfy the Alaska provisional license requirements if he or she is under 18 years old.

SENATOR STEDMAN disagreed with the provision.

MS. SYLVESTER advised that, at last count, there were just 13 jurisdictions that didn't have a three-tiered license program and she thought that number would be zero in the next five years.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked how the instructional permit meshes with the provisional license.

MR. BANNOCK said they hope that at age 14 young drivers begin logging the instructional hours addressed on page 1, lines 11-14.

REPRESENTATIVE WEYHRAUCH pointed out that the bill amends the provisional license program that is already on the books. There's just never been a provisional license, he said.

SENATOR COWDERY made a motion to move CSHB 213(FIN) from committee with the attached fiscal note and asked for unanimous consent. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

HCR 25-ALASKA WILD SALMON WEEK

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced HCR 25 to be up for consideration and noted that a similar resolution was passed during the previous session.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLY WOLF, bill sponsor, explained that Alaska Wild Salmon Week is a dedicated week between June 28 and July 4 for the purpose of promoting Alaska wild salmon and the various Alaskan fisheries. He indicated that he intended to send Alaska wild salmon promotional materials to all state governors, the U.S. Senate and House members, as well as the President.

SENATOR GRETCHEN GUESS commented that she could see no reason why the Legislature had to pass a resolution commemorating Alaska Wild Salmon Week each year rather than instituting something more permanent.

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF said a House Concurrent Resolution must be passed each year.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS remarked that there was a similar situation with Avalanche Awareness Week and eventually a bill was passed providing more permanence.

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN noted that his district had lots of salmon and they were always looking for additional marketing opportunities.

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF said correctional facilities don't serve very much salmon, which makes them a reasonable target.

SENATOR JOHN COWDERY asked which salmon species were running in the Kenai district during this time.

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF replied they have all five species in various areas throughout the district.

SENATOR COWDERY noted that the average consumption of pink salmon in Korea is .4 grams a year and he is participating in promotional activity to increase that amount.

SENATOR COWDERY made a motion to move CSHCR 25 from committee and asked for unanimous consent. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

SJR 25-FLOODING AND EROSION CONTROL ASSISTANCE

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced SJR 25 to be up for consideration.

HAVEN HARRIS, staff to Senator Donny Olson, sponsor, read the following into the record:

SJR 25 is a resolution requesting the Army Corp of Engineers ease their cost and benefit analysis for projects in rural Alaska.

Senator Olson has proposed this resolution in response to many concerns voiced by his constituents with regards to the erosion and flooding problems that plague western Alaska. Currently many of the villages in western Alaska are not receiving the assistance needed for the protection of life and property.

On November 8, 2003 a winter storm hit western Alaska. This storm caused considerable damage to Unalakleet, Shishmaref, and some of Nome's surrounding areas. While the governor has declared a state of disaster because of this storm, the continued effects of erosion on the villages of Alaska are not going to be solved by emergency disaster declarations. A more comprehensive, coordinated effort is required by the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal and state agencies.

Our Senator's office respectfully urges your support for this resolution to focus attention on this serious problem.

SENATOR JOHN COWDERY asked him to elaborate on easing restrictions.

MR. HARRIS explained that the Army Corps of Engineers uses a cost benefit analysis that looks for a monetary gain or savings before any project can go forward. Unfortunately, there won't be a savings from any of the projects in these villages. But this problem isn't unique to this area; it's the situation in much of rural Alaska because the communities are so small. Nonetheless, even though there is no monetary gain, maintaining the resident's homes in these villages should outweigh the cost benefit analysis, he said.

SENATOR COWDERY asked whether the Denali Commission is doing the same sort of thing.

MR. HARRIS told him this wasn't within the scope of the Denali Commission. Referring to the General Accounting Office (GAO) report on Alaska Native villages, he noted that the Denali Commission was specifically identified as a possible entity to alleviate this problem. However, that isn't the case at this time.

SENATOR COWDERY read the Denali Commission policy or objectives aloud:

The commission is committed to accelerate the building of sustainable infrastructure in rural Alaska and to enhance the health and safety of rural residents and provide economic opportunity.

The Denali Commission should be doing what is being requested, he said.

MR. HARRIS replied they would very much like for them to be pushing in that direction, but that's not what is happening right now. Currently they are focused on making bulk fuel and energy reserves more affordable and to date have assisted a number of rural communities with building hospitals and health clinics.

SENATOR COWDERY suggested that Senator Olson lean on the commission for assistance.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS commented that he didn't believe that the Bering Sea is a part of the Arctic Ocean, but it might be a part of the Pacific Ocean.

MR. HARRIS replied that he grew up in Nome and was always under the impression that the Bering Sea was an extension of the Pacific Ocean. He has always understood that the Chukchi Sea, which is just to the north of Kotzebue Sound, is an extension of the Arctic Ocean.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked if they believe that by including both the Pacific and Arctic Oceans in the resolution that the entire coast of Alaska would be encompassed.

MR. HARRIS told him that was the intent.

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN agreed with Senator Cowdery that the Denali Commission should be encouraged to become involved.

MR. HARRIS said the Bush Caucus has made contact with the commission and specifically asked about their view on Shishmaref. With SJR 25, the effort is to lend immediate protection to these villages in their current location. Many villages in rural Alaska are facing erosion problems that require long term solutions, but this is to address immediate difficulties.

ROBERT VALDATA from Seward wanted to put it on record that the Kenai Peninsula and Seward has an authorized flood control district and he was concerned about that area.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS told him the GAO study identified 184 communities throughout Alaska that have potential flood and erosion problems.

SENATOR GUESS suggested that the "Be It Resolved" portion of the resolution included all communities in the state that are dealing with erosion and flooding and are looking for federal assistance.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS agreed.

JULIANNE BALTAR, Kawerak Incorporated representative, from Nome spoke in support of SJR 25. She explained that her company is a Native non-profit consortium in western Alaska that has been providing assistance to Shishmaref on erosion and relocation issues.

She told members that Kawerak takes issue with the cost benefit analysis requirement and they find the Corps of Engineers' cost-sharing requirement particularly unreasonable. Currently there is a request to do a Section 14 emergency shoreline protection project in front of the school in Shishmaref. The funds are limited to \$1 million for federal share, but require a 35 percent cost share from the local community. If the community is unable to produce the money they won't be able to build the project. The Corps is now asking for \$400,000 to \$420,000 to build about 220 feet of seawall. If the wall isn't built, the school property is in imminent danger. Right now the teacher housing is between 12 and 14 feet from the eroding sand bank. Currently the ground is frozen and that's the only thing that is slowing the erosion.

Another concern is that the Section 14 Corps program is only for public land. Even if the school property were saved, the properties on either side would be offered no help because there is no funding for them.

In working in Shishmaref, they have found that no single federal agency is tasked to address erosion and flood problems in rural Alaska, which is why they support combining agency resources to address these problems. The Denali Commission is a large player, but they aren't currently funded to handle erosion and flooding problems. She suggested that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is also adept at handling such situations.

She reiterated her support of SJR 25.

SENATOR GUESS made a motion to move SJR 25 from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.