

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INTERNATIONAL
TRADE AND TOURISM

April 22, 2005
8:37 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Chair
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Mark Neuman
Representative Jay Ramras
Representative Harry Crawford
Representative Beth Kerttula

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative John Coghill

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6
Relating to the continuation of the Alaska Information
Infrastructure Policy Task Force until the first day of the
First Regular Session of the Twenty-Fifth Alaska State
Legislature in January 2007.

- MOVED HCR 6 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 6

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TASK FORCE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KOTT

04/04/05	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/04/05	(H)	EDT
04/19/05	(H)	EDT AT 5:00 PM CAPITOL 124
04/19/05	(H)	-- Meeting Postponed to 4/22 --
04/22/05	(H)	EDT AT 8:30 AM CAPITOL 124

WITNESS REGISTER

MICHAEL O'HARE, Staff
to Representative Pete Kott
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 6 on behalf of Representative Kott, sponsor.

H. A. RED BOUCHER, Chair
Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 6.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR NANCY DAHLSTROM called the House Special Committee on Economic Development, International Trade and Tourism meeting to order at [8:37:22 AM](#). Representatives Dahlstrom, Crawford, Lynn, Neuman, and Kerttula were present at the call to order. Representative Ramras joined while the meeting was in progress.

HCR 6-EXTEND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY TASK FORCE

CHAIR DAHLSTROM announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6, Relating to the continuation of the Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force until the first day of the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Fifth Alaska State Legislature in January 2007.

MICHAEL O'HARE, Staff to Representative Pete Kott, Alaska State Legislature said HJR 6 continues the Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force through January, 2007. The task force was established in 2004 from House Concurrent Resolution 32. It was charged to review and analyze fiber-optic cable and satellite infrastructure in relation to distance learning, telemedicine, homeland security, access to government, and economic development, he stated. The task force will define the state's role in infrastructure development; act as an advocate to industry and government; and develop a long-term strategic plan.

[8:39:13 AM](#)

MR. O'HARE said due to delays in the selection process, the first meeting of the task force was in November last year, and HCR 6 will give it the time to finish the job it started.

[8:39:44 AM](#)

H. A. RED BOUCHER, Chairman, Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force, said the task force had late appointments, but the general discussions have included providing the proper

infrastructure to aid economic development, education, and health care. He said it was very positive, particularly on the topic of using technology to bring urban and rural Alaska together. "There was a lot of hard staff work put in," he stated. The technology itself is not the answer, but using it to focus on learning is the road to the future, he said. He declared Toksook Bay a real success story, where a school teacher got students telecommuting with kids in Madrid. The Spanish students learned about subsistence culture, and the Alaskans learned Spanish, he noted. He said he managed to bring the public and private sector together. With a \$60,000 Hewlett Packard grant the Native community of Aniak and AT&T Alaska are partnering on developing a learning center. He said federal funding allows e-rate discounts for schools, but that leaves the rest of the village out, so one of the focuses of the task force is to bring affordable, high-speed connections into the villages. The goal is to enhance the quality of life for all Alaskans, he stated.

[8:45:28 AM](#)

MR. BOUCHER said the system needs to be secure, and he said he is part of a national group analyzing cyber security. Hackers could shut down a major utility, he warned, and he spoke of a company brought in to the state deal with hackers.

[8:46:49 AM](#)

CHAIR DAHLSTROM said the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission uses the same company, and she said it was a good company. She said she is pleased with the representation on the task force.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN said knowledge is power, and the internet is one of the best ways to get knowledge. The legislature needs to get information quickly, and he said he frequently goes to the internet. The state needs better internet infrastructure, and he is particularly concerned about homeland security.

[8:49:02 AM](#)

MR. NEUMAN asked how many schools are using the technology.

MR. BOUCHER said e-rate funding is provided by the federal government to allow schools and libraries to have high speed connections. He said The first duty of the task force is to evaluate the connectivity in every community. There is a digital divide within some communities where schools have

internet "and the rest of the community is left out." The Aniak center is a place to develop online businesses and to extend learning while maintaining Native culture, he said. The first thing on the task force agenda will likely be a complete survey of the connectivity of all communities, and then a proposal on how to bring rural Alaska to a 256-K connection, he said.

[8:51:53 AM](#)

CHAIR DAHLSTROM asked him to keep the committee posted with updates.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN moved to report HCR 6, labeled 24-LS0835\G out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HCR 6 passed out of committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Economic Development, International Trade and Tourism meeting was adjourned at [8:53:04 AM](#).