

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 15, 2007
1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman, Vice Chair
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Vic Kohring
Representative Mike Doogan
Representative Woodie Salmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Kyle Johansen, Chair
Representative Anna Fairclough

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 102

"An Act relating to vacating lanes or slowing down for certain vehicles stopped along the side of a road."

- MOVED HB 102 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Opposing the enactment by the Washington State Legislature of a bill proposing to impose a fee on the processing of shipping containers in the State of Washington because of the negative impact of the fee on the people and the economy of this state.

- MOVED CSHJR 8(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 8

"An Act naming the law enforcement training facility in Fairbanks the J. Kevin Lamm Law Enforcement Training Facility."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

"An Act relating to driver's licenses and permits, commercial driver's licenses, and other motor vehicle laws; relating to the driver's license compact; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 102

SHORT TITLE: PASSING STATIONARY VEHICLES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) COGHILL

01/22/07 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/07 (H) TRA, JUD
02/15/07 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17

BILL: HJR 8

SHORT TITLE: WASHINGTON CONTAINER FEE

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) THOMAS

02/07/07 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/07/07 (H) TRA, L&C
02/15/07 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17

BILL: HB 8

SHORT TITLE: J. KEVIN LAMM TRAINING FACILITY

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAMRAS

01/16/07 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/5/07
01/16/07 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/07 (H) TRA
02/15/07 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM CAPITOL 17

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN COGHILL

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 102.

KAREN LIDSTER, Staff

to Representative John Coghill

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information on HB 102.

RODNEY DIAL, Lieutenant, Deputy Commander

A Attachment

Division of Alaska State Troopers

Alaska Department of Public Safety

Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 102.

VERNON MARSHALL, Lobbyist
for Public Safety Employees Association
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 102.

REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 8.

RANDY RUARO, Staff
to Representative Kyle Johansen
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the committee substitute (CS) for
HJR 8, Version 25-LS0533\C, Bullock, 2/12/07.

EVERETT BILLINGSLEY, Attorney
for Lynden Family of Companies
Seattle, Washington
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 8.

BILL DEAVAR, President and COO
Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE)
Auburn, Washington
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 8.

AVES THOMPSON, Executive Director
Alaska Trucking Association
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 8.

PAUL FUHS, Lobbyist
for Horizon Shipping Lines
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 8.

DON KUBLEY, Lobbyist
for Sampson Tug and Barge
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association
Alaska International Marketing
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 8.

JANE PIERSON, Staff
to Representative Jay Ramras

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented sponsor statement for HB 8.

MATTHEW SODEN

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Drawing upon his experience as a police officer, testified in support of HB 8.

JAMES JANKE

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Based upon his experience as a law enforcement official, testified in support of a new law enforcement training facility for Interior Alaska and naming it after Kevin Lamm.

ACTION NARRATIVE

VICE CHAIR MARK NEUMAN called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at [1:34:31 PM](#). Representatives Neuman, Salmon, Doogan, and Johnson were present at the call to order. Representative Kohring arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 102-PASSING STATIONARY VEHICLES

[1:35:11 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 102, "An Act relating to vacating lanes or slowing down for certain vehicles stopped along the side of a road."

[1:36:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN COGHILL, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor, presented HB 102. He explained that under current law regarding highways with two or more lanes in the same direction, a driver approaching emergency vehicles performing official duties shall pull over or slow to a prudent speed. This language is creating enforcement problems. Also, the current law does not address single lane highways. He said HB 102 cleans up the current statute by describing a two-lane situation in which a driver must pull over if possible and a single-lane situation in which a driver must slow down. This provides a safety zone and a method for making violations of the safety zone punishable in court.

1:37:59 PM

KAREN LIDSTER, Staff to Representative John Coghill, Alaska State Legislature, reiterated that the purpose of HB 102 is to clean up the current law's language and ensure the protection of law enforcement officials and emergency service providers. She directed attention to a written statement of support from the Public Safety Employees Association and a resolution from the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police. She also noted the presence of Lauren Rice, Special Assistant with the Department of Public Safety.

1:39:27 PM

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked who contacted Representative Coghill's office regarding this issue.

MS. LIDSTER responded that Representative Coghill was contacted by an individual who was given a ticket between North Pole and Fairbanks. Her first contact, she said, was with the City of Fairbanks Chief of Police, Daniel Hoffman. She relayed that Chief Hoffman felt the intent of the law is to protect emergency providers and law enforcement personnel by requiring passing drivers to first choose moving into another lane if safe to do so "or" to slow down if changing lanes is not possible. Moving to the farthest lane if possible is the safest first choice for the emergency personnel on the highway. However, the word "or" makes the law unenforceable because it gives drivers no need to first choose the farthest lane when it is safe to do so on a highway with two lanes going in the same direction.

1:41:53 PM

RODNEY DIAL, Lieutenant, Deputy Commander, A Attachment, Division of Alaska State Troopers, Department of Public Safety, stated that the department fully supports HB 102. He pointed out that 30 states have similar laws, referred to as "move over laws", which are intended to protect police, fire, and emergency service personnel. He cited national statistics that show 30 percent of all crashes occur as the result of another crash. Giving emergency responders plenty of room reduces the chance that another collision will occur. This issue, he emphasized, is important for the public, too, because for every minute that a freeway lane is closed or a two lane road is closed, it takes an average of four additional minutes for traffic to recover and this accounts for about 60 percent of urban congestion. Over

the past 10 years, he reported, approximately 471 police officers nationwide have died in traffic-related accidents, including about 146 who were struck by vehicles. He further noted that FBI statistics show traffic crashes now claim the lives of more police personnel than any other cause of death in the line of duty, including shootings, with 13 officers being struck and killed last year while they worked outside of their vehicles.

[1:44:10 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked what procedures are employed by the department to ensure trooper safety when they pull over a vehicle.

LIEUTENANT DIAL explained that officers are trained at the Department of Public Safety Academy to park vehicles in a manner that offsets the vehicle just slightly into the traffic lane. This provides a little bit of a barrier for oncoming cars so that they have to move slightly over to the left with the idea that either the police vehicle or the vehicle in front of it would be hit before the officer. Also, he said, officers are equipped with various warning devices such as lights, flares, and reflective equipment.

[1:45:29 PM](#)

VERNON MARSHALL, Lobbyist for the Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA), Juneau, stated that the PSEA supports the bill and has provided a position paper to the committee. He said the bill corrects a technical error and will promote the protection of public safety officers, as well as the public, when dealing with an accident or conducting an enforcement action.

[1:47:02 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN, after ascertaining that no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony. He then took the opportunity to note that Representative Ramras's amendment last year to [AS 28.35.185(a)] added "tow trucks" to the list of emergency, fire, and law enforcement vehicles for which this law applies. He pointed out that tow truck drivers brought this issue forward, and allowing the public to come to legislators with recommendations is an important part of what the legislature does.

[1:47:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON moved to report HB 102 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 102 was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

HJR 8 - WASHINGTON CONTAINER FEE

[1:48:48 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8, Opposing the enactment by the Washington State Legislature of a bill proposing to impose a fee on the processing of shipping containers in the State of Washington because of the negative impact of the fee on the people and the economy of this state.

[1:49:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor, outlined Alaska's dependence upon goods shipped from ports in the state of Washington. In 2003, Alaska was the fifth largest trading partner out of Washington, accounting for about 103,500 jobs and \$4 billion in income to that state. Currently before the Washington State Senate, he explained, is Senate Bill 5207 which would impose a fee of \$50 per each 20-foot shipping van or its equivalent each time it enters – and again as it exits – any port in that state, regardless of whether the container is full or empty. Port terminal operators in Washington would receive 10 percent of the fees collected and the remaining 90 percent would go to the State of Washington. He said he opposes this tax because he believes it will devastate the residents and the commercial fishermen in Alaska communities by adding as much as 10 percent to the cost of moving goods. Representative Thomas further noted that 97 percent by weight and 60 percent by value of all goods shipped to Alaska are shipped by water. He asked the committee to support the resolution so it could be sent to the Washington State Legislature.

[1:52:57 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked how much of the gross product used or consumed in Alaska is imported.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS estimated that for his home town of Haines, 90-97 percent of the goods arrive by marine van.

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN inquired as to whether truckers driving up via the Alcan Highway would be affected.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS said that he did not know, but that a trucker hauling a [marine] van that had been put onto the truck trailer would be affected.

[1:54:13 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN noted that the tax will increase the costs to every person in the state of Alaska for nearly every item purchased.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS reiterated his statement that 97 percent by weight and 60 percent by value of all goods shipped to Alaska are shipped to Alaska by marine van.

[1:54:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HJR 8, Version 25-LS0533\C, Bullock, 2/12/07, as the work draft. There being no objection, Version C was before the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS advised the committee that he had no objection to the amendments proposed in the CS.

[1:55:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON suggested that Alaska implement a \$100 per container tax for the empty vans returning to Washington.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS responded that he is not ready to retaliate because he is hoping the State of Washington will either kill the bill or sit on it.

[1:56:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON related his assumption that most or all of the containers that come to Alaska go back to Washington.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS answered yes. The fee is \$100 for a 40-foot van or equivalent – both in and out of Washington – for a total tax of \$200, and that's why it is so devastating. He said one of the shippers he is working with predicts the tax will increase the cost of goods to Alaska by as much as 10 percent.

[1:56:57 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN observed that the cost would be even higher for a 53-foot van which is used more often than 40-foot vans for shipments to Alaska.

[1:57:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked whether the tax is only for vans coming to Alaska or for everything that goes out of Washington ports.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS related his understanding that Washington is trying to target vans coming from and going to Japan and China, and that Washington failed to take into consideration the impact the tax would have on Alaska.

[1:57:32 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN read an e-mail he received from a constituent in Prudhoe Bay suggesting that the State of Alaska impose a 25 cent tax per barrel of oil shipped to Washington. The constituent said that this works out to be \$100 for the volume of oil that it would take to fill a standard 40-foot container.

[1:58:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN queried whether Representative Thomas has given any consideration to what Alaska might do if Washington does not come to its senses after receiving HJR 8.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS quipped that he had, but only jokingly, such as a tax on oil shipped to Cherry Point, Washington.

[1:59:49 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN related that Washington State Senator Haugen, sponsor of SB 5207, has purportedly stated that she would not proceed with her bill unless California also passes similar legislation.

[2:00:18 PM](#)

RANDY RUARO, Staff to Representative Kyle Johansen, Alaska State Legislature, reviewed page 2, lines 26-31, of the CS where language was added urging the attorney general to commence

researching some of the issues that are involved with imposing a container tax. He said Legislative Legal and Research Services has advised him that there are numerous potential legal issues with such a tax, including an import/export clause in the United States Constitution. Mr. Ruaro reported that the attorney general has said he does not have any problems with the amendment language or the research request.

[2:02:17 PM](#)

EVERETT BILLINGSLEY, Attorney for the Lynden Family of Companies, testified that Lynden strongly supports HJR 8 and is particularly pleased with the CS because it addresses the questions about the constitutionality of the proposed tax. He pointed out that Lynden is actively working in the Washington State Legislature in opposition to [SB 5207]. He stated that the tax would be \$132.50, each way, on the 53-foot containers used by Lynden. He conveyed that the Washington Legislature is looking for money to pay for freight mobility infrastructure, roads and rail, used for moving containers through Washington and on to the other Lower 48 states. The impact on Alaska was an unintended consequence because most containers return from Alaska empty, he said.

MR. BILLINGSLEY emphasized that because the majority of goods shipped to Alaska move through Washington ports, essentially all of Alaska's goods will be subject to the tax. Alaska has very few alternatives to using Washington ports and this will cause a disproportionate impact. The Washington State Legislature and governor need to hear about this disproportionate impact and HJR 8 accomplishes that goal. He pointed out that last year Lynden Transport and Alaska Marine Lines together moved roughly 124,000 20-foot equivalent units (TEU) between Washington and Alaska. Had the tax been in effect, Lynden customers would have incurred an additional \$6.2 million in costs. This equates to a rate increase of 10 percent or more depending upon the commodity and the destination, he declared.

MR. BILLINGSLEY advised that California is contemplating introduction of a similar tax there. He said if that happens, it will be as devastating to Hawaiian residents as it is for Alaskans. He urged the Alaska State Legislature to contact California officials as well as Washington officials.

[2:05:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON inquired as to whether Alaska currently pays any taxes on containers coming from Washington.

MR. BILLINGSLEY said he is not aware of any. He then addressed a previous question regarding truck traffic, saying that most truck trailers are hauled to Anchorage, Alaska, aboard Roll-on/Roll-off ships and these trailers would be subject to the proposed tax. He said a small amount of truck traffic still goes over the Alcan Highway, about two or three loads a week.

2:06:35 PM

BILL DEAVAR, President and COO, Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE), offered TOTE's strong support for HJR 8. He said that TOTE testified before the Washington State Senate Transportation Committee opposing SB 5207 primarily because of the impact it would have upon the state of Alaska. He reported that TOTE moves about 200,000 TEU annually which would equate to an approximate \$10 million impact on TOTE's customers and to residents of the Alaska Railbelt Region. He estimated that the total tax impact for all of Alaska would be \$40 million. He also commented that the truck traffic moving up the Alcan Highway would not have this tax imposed upon them because it only affects containers and trailers moved across docks in Washington. He noted agreement that the impact to Alaska is an unintended consequence of SB 5207, similar to the impact to Hawaii, which will likely be impacted three-and-a-half times greater than Alaska. He said TOTE is continuing to meet with members of the Washington State Legislature.

2:09:42 PM

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked how close the Washington State Legislature is to passing SB 5207.

MR. DEAVAR recounted that at the hearings the vast majority of people testifying, particularly the international lines, opposed the tax. The ports are very concerned, he reported, because the tax could cause international carriers to divert to either Vancouver or Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and maybe California if that state does not pass a similar tax. He said the sentiment he is hearing is that the Senate side of the Washington State Legislature is intent on pushing some kind of tax and that Senator Haugen is asking opponents of her bill to come up with other suggestions for generating a revenue stream to fund infrastructure projects. The Washington Senate Transportation Committee has agreed to reduce the tax from \$50

to \$30 per TEU. This would reduce the total impact to Alaska from \$40 million to \$24 million, he said, but that would still be an onerous expense to Alaskans.

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN requested Mr. Deavar to relay to Senator Haugen his suggestion, as an alternative to the tax, for her to push harder for opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

[2:12:03 PM](#)

MR. DEAVAR commented that that idea is being heard frequently. He then informed the committee that the trade imbalance for the Alaska Railbelt, the region served by TOTE, is 10 to 1 - for every 10 trailers of merchandise moved north by TOTE there is only one trailer of cargo moved south. That one trailer of southbound cargo is generally household goods, fish, and some military. He said he agrees with a previous statement that the imposition of this tax is on a roundtrip basis, this adds significantly to the cost of merchandise moving to Alaska.

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked who would collect the fee.

MR. DEAVAR reported that, as the bill is currently written, Washington's terminal operators would be responsible for collecting the tax and sending 90 percent of it to the State of Washington. Terminal operators would retain the other 10 percent to pay for their administrative expenses.

[2:13:56 PM](#)

AVES THOMPSON, Executive Director, Alaska Trucking Association (ATA), presented the association's support of HJR 8. He said ATA is concerned about the impact of the proposed tax on Alaska's citizens. The \$30-40 million annual impact is "a huge hit" and will definitely increase the cost of living in Alaska. The majority of ATA's freight to Alaska is through Washington ports, he continued, and this has provided thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue to Washington's ports and citizens. He acknowledged Washington's need for revenue to provide infrastructure improvements, but he said ATA is urging the state to find another way to raise that revenue.

[2:16:31 PM](#)

PAUL FUHS, Lobbyist for Horizon Shipping Lines, agreed that there is no question this is a tax on all Alaskans because there is no place in Alaska that is not served by container. He said

80 percent of Horizon's cargo comes by container through the Port of Anchorage and is then shipped over land. He pointed out that shipping is an extremely competitive trade, partly because of the new structure of marketing and distribution in Alaska through Costco, Wal-Mart, and other big carriers who base their commitments on the cost effectiveness of shipping. There is no margin left because it is so competitive, he asserted, and this tax cost will be passed on directly to every Alaskan. He said Horizon Shipping Lines supports HJR 8 and urges Alaska's administration to also weigh in on the issue.

[2:17:49 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN commented that whenever new taxes are imposed, it offers businesses another opportunity to raise prices.

MR. FUHS agreed and stated that the extreme competition between the big stores has brought the margins down, so they will pass the cost on to the consumer. He further agreed with Vice Chair Neuman that smaller businesses will be hit even harder. He also concurred with previous statements about it being a disproportionate tax on Alaska.

[2:19:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN inquired as to whether Mr. Fuhs agreed with the previously stated total cost estimate to Alaskans of \$30-\$40 million.

MR. FUHS said yes, because a minimum of 200,000 40-foot containers are shipped to Alaska each year. At a roundtrip tax of \$200 that is \$40 million.

[2:19:44 PM](#)

DON KUBLEY, Lobbyist for Sampson Tug and Barge; International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots; Marine Engineers Beneficial Association; and Alaska International Marketing, commended Representative Thomas for writing HJR 8 and said the organizations he is representing strongly support the resolution.

[2:20:59 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN, after ascertaining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony.

2:21:08 PM

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON asked whether lobbyists could be sent to the Washington State Legislature to oppose the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS responded that it could be done, but that it would add a fiscal note which would delay the resolution's passage. He said the issue is getting a lot of press in Washington and that he would send one of his staff members to testify before the Washington State Legislature if necessary.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS then directed the committee's attention to letters of support from the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska and Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Inc. and to Resolution 2007-001 supporting HJR 8 from the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

2:23:13 PM

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN inquired whether the zero fiscal note for the original HJR 8 would remain the same for the CS.

MR. RUARO responded that the Department of Law has advised him that there would not be a fiscal impact.

2:24:03 PM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON moved to report the proposed CS for HJR 8, Version 25-LS0533\C, Bullock, 2/12/07, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHJR 8(TRA) was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.
HB 8 - J. KEVIN LAMM TRAINING FACILITY

2:25:48 PM

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 8, "An Act naming the law enforcement training facility in Fairbanks the J. Kevin Lamm Law Enforcement Training Facility."

2:26:36 PM

JANE PIERSON, Staff to Representative Jay Ramras, Alaska State Legislature, presented the sponsor statement. She explained that Interior Alaska is in desperate need of a new law enforcement training facility. Due to expansion of airport

facilities and runway extensions at the Fairbanks International Airport on which the Don Bennett Firing Range is located, a conflict is being created that will soon slate this range for destruction. She pointed out that over 30 agencies share the antiquated range. Today, she said, when an officer goes for weapons requalification, he or she must tamp stakes into the ground for the target, staple the silhouette to the stake, pace back 15 yards, draw a line in the dirt or snow, and then proceed firing - and that is provided there is not a plane coming in for a landing. If a plane comes in, then all firing must stop until the plane lands, and this is not very conducive to time-shoots. She stressed that it is imperative to take care of the basic training needs of the men and women hired to protect Alaskans.

MS. PIERSON conveyed that HB 8 will name the new proposed law enforcement training facility after fallen Fairbanks Police Department Patrol Officer John "Kevin" Lamm. Kevin was born to be a police officer, she said. He graduated from the Alaska Department of Public Safety Academy in Sitka and went to work for the North Pole Police Department. He next did a short stint with the University Police Department and then joined the Fairbanks Police Department in March 1995. She pointed out that Kevin was known at the Fairbanks Police Department for being an excellent officer both in the field and for the way he dealt with people. She disclosed that Kevin and his wife Holly were married only [twelve] days before his death. Kevin was an officer that other officers wanted to emulate. For these reasons, she said, she is requesting that the committee support naming the proposed new law enforcement training facility in Fairbanks the J. Kevin Lamm Law Enforcement Training Facility.

[2:29:23 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN recognized the importance of citizen support for legislative actions and asked if Ms. Pierson had a list of persons or organizations who had written their support.

MS. PIERSON said she did not have a list per se, but that in the committee's packets were letters from the Farthest North Chapter of the Alaska Peace Officers Association, Fairbanks City Mayor Steve Thompson, Fairbanks Police Department Chief Daniel Hoffman, and the Interior Delegation. On teleconference to speak, she noted, is Matthew Soden from Fairbanks.

[2:30:30 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN inquired whether funds have yet been appropriated for the new facility.

MS. PIERSON responded that currently funds have not been appropriated, but work is being done to obtain funding. She further responded that if a new facility is built, this is the name being proposed.

[2:30:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN noted that the existing facility is named after a former legislator, Don Bennett. He asked why the decision was made to change the name, but he emphasized that his question was not being asked to disparage Kevin Lamm in any manner.

MS. PIERSON replied it is to honor someone who has recently been killed in the line of duty. She further pointed out that this would be a new facility on lands granted for this purpose by the Fairbanks International Airport.

[2:31:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN clarified that he is asking because his understanding is that if the new facility is built, the old facility will be abandoned.

MS. PIERSON confirmed his statement.

[2:32:02 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN pointed out that state troopers and public safety officers in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley train behind the wastewater treatment plant. He commended Representative Ramras because, he said, there is a need for this facility.

[2:32:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON noticed that the letters in the packet were in support of building the range and did not address naming it.

MS. PIERSON acknowledged that this is true.

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN asked if Ms. Pierson had received any opposition to changing the name.

MS. PIERSON stated that Representative Ramras's office has not received any opposition.

[2:33:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DOOGAN wanted the record to reflect his remembrance of when the firing range in Fairbanks was a high bank across the Chena River. He said he is hoping the solution will not include going back to the river banks.

MS. PIERSON laughed and said the river bank is where she sites in her rifle each year before hunting season.

[2:33:43 PM](#)

MATTHEW SODEN, drawing upon his experience as a police officer with the City of Fairbanks and a firearms instructor, stated that the current range is adequate. However, he said, during demolition begun several years ago for airport expansion, power to the range was disconnected and the building has no heat or lights. During winter months, he said, vehicles must be brought to the range in order to have a place to warm up and clean up. There is a borough range for public use, he continued, but the nature of police work requires the ability to have 24 hour access and to have control of all activity on the range. With airport expansion plans again moving forward, he urged the committee to support building a new range so law enforcement officers would have access to good quality training as well as the ability to train with their weapons.

MR. SODEN then addressed the committee in terms of naming a new facility after Kevin Lamm. He noted that the letters of support for building a new facility did not address naming it because, at that time, it was not known there were plans for naming it after Kevin. While he and others recognize the contributions made by Mr. Bennett, there are officers working in the department who served with Kevin and who recognize not only the good he did as a police officer, but the sacrifice he made when he was killed. It was his life that Kevin saved, Mr. Soden disclosed, and this would be a fitting tribute to Kevin and his family.

[2:37:56 PM](#)

JAMES JANKE testified from the standpoint of currently being a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer at the Fairbanks International Airport, a retired police officer, and the current

president of the Farthest North Chapter of the Alaska Police Officers Association. He stressed the need for Fairbanks law enforcement officials to have a place to train and become proficient. He said he was taken aback when he first saw the training "range" in Fairbanks - it is basically three berms of piled up dirt and a building with no running water, electricity, or anything else. He explained that law enforcement officers must qualify three to four times a year, and these qualifications involve a timed shoot. The airport runway is so close to the range that conducting these shoots requires the posting of a person for yelling "cease fire" when airplanes approach for landing. He said this much-needed new facility would serve all Interior law enforcement agencies whether state, federal, or local.

MR. JANKE further stated that the sacrifices given to the community by law enforcement officials go without saying, but the ultimate sacrifice is the sacrifice that Kevin Lamm gave to the Fairbanks community. Naming a new facility after Kevin would be a wonderful way to honor him and to keep this thought in mind when officers go out and practice this very serious business.

[2:41:38 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR NEUMAN closed public testimony and announced that HB 8 would be held for further consideration.

[2:42:09 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:43 PM.