

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 1, 2008

2:11 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Albert Kookesh, Chair
Senator John Cowdery, Vice Chair
Senator Donald Olson
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Gary Wilken

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 298

"An Act establishing the division of marine transportation; establishing the Alaska Marine Transportation Authority Board and the position of director of the division of marine transportation, and assigning the powers and duties of each; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED CSSB 298(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 298

SHORT TITLE: MARINE TRANSPORTATION: BOARD & DIVISION

SPONSOR(s): TRANSPORTATION

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|----------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 03/04/08 | (S) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 03/04/08 | (S) | TRA, FIN |
| 03/20/08 | (S) | TRA AT 2:00 PM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 03/20/08 | (S) | -- MEETING CANCELED -- |

WITNESS REGISTER

CLIFF STONE
Staff to Representative Peggy Wilson
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Commented on SB 298 for the sponsor of companion legislation, Representative Peggy Wilson.

MAY SIROKEY, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF)
Juneau AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported CSSB 298(TRA).

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR ALBERT KOOKESH called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at [2:11:27 PM](#). Present at the call to order were Senators Cowdery, Wilken, Olson, Wielechowski, and Kookesh.

SB 298-MARINE TRANSPORTATION: BOARD & DIVISION

[2:12:12 PM](#)

CHAIR ALBERT KOOKESH announced consideration of SB 298.

SENATOR COWDERY moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute to CSSB 298 (), labeled 25-LSI556, Version C, for discussion purposes. There being no objection, the motion carried.

CLIFF STONE, staff to Representative Peggy Wilson, said SB 298 is an identical copy of Representative Wilson's HB 294 as it passed out of the House Transportation Committee. He said it puts the Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB) in statute and adopts conforming language.

The first page instructs the DOTPF to consult with the MTAB in preparing its long-range comprehensive plan which is currently in statute. The current MTAB was established by the governor in Administrative Order 233; those orders are typically for one year and the governor will have to reauthorize it again in May of this year.

MR. STONE explained that the board is similar to the current MTAB and subsection (6)(b) says that members have to consist of at least one resident of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and at least two members who are residents of areas not directly served by the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The sponsors felt that was a really good compromise as folks from other areas in Alaska would bring more ideas to the table and that would foster more of an ownership feeling to the system. The members will serve staggered three-year terms and boilerplate language indicates per diem and meetings. The powers, duties and functions elicited much debate and common ground was found in this language. It reads:

After the commissioner of Transportation and Public Facilities has considered one or more candidates for the position of director or deputy director of the Alaska Marine Highway System, the commissioner shall confer with the board regarding that candidate or those candidates before making an appointment to that position.

MR. STONE explained that currently a deputy director is in charge of the AMHS, but in the past it has been a director and further in the past they could have also referred to that person as deputy commissioner. That is why "director or deputy commissioner" was inserted.

[2:18:03 PM](#)

SENATOR COWDERY asked who decides who the head of the commission is.

MR. STONE replied the governor has the right to appoint commissioners and deputy commissioners, but typically below the rank of commissioner, that duty will be delegated to the commissioners. But boilerplate language on page 4 says selection of those candidates shall be without regard to political affiliation. Language was taken from ADF&G statutes and incorporated into this advisory board because they felt the more advocates the AMHS had the better. Under subsection (b), it says the board may establish volunteer regional advisory committees and their purpose is to provide recommendations to the board regarding concerns from the region whose members constitute the advisory committee.

He said the board, in conjunction with the DOTPF, will assist and give its views in preparing a strategic plan that lays out the mission, the core value, the objectives, initiatives and performance goals of the AMHS. Page 4 had the definition of "board" and laid out the initial appointment of its members. This governor could appoint members of the current MTAB to this new board if they met the criteria as laid out in the new board composition.

CHAIR KOOKESH asked if the main purpose of this bill is to address one item - to put the MTAB into statute.

[2:22:18 PM](#)

MR. STONE replied that is correct and he added that this was also done a couple of years ago with the Aviation Advisory Board

under the Murkowski administration. He summarized that some think this doesn't go far enough and would like to see a strong authority outside the auspices of DOTPF, but he said, "I don't think we're there yet." This bill calls for the department to consult with the advisory board on different issues that truly in the administrative order they don't have to.

CHAIR KOOKESH asked if the current MTAB is under an administrative order.

MR. STONE replied that is correct.

[2:23:07 PM](#)

MAY SIROKEY, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF), said this is a much better bill. In particular, it broadens the membership so that there are members from areas outside of those that are traditionally served or have ports that are served by the MHS. She firmly believed that the municipalities of Anchorage and Fairbanks are served by AMHS and she believed CSSB 298(TRA) would allow greater statewide participation in the process. Based on this CS she said the department would have a zero fiscal note.

[2:24:18 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the members have per diem.

MS. SIROKEY replied yes; the department already has the MTAB as it exists now in its budget. They didn't feel the slight increased cost for two more members warranted a fiscal note.

[2:25:05 PM](#)

CHAIR KOOKESH found no more questions.

SENATOR OLSON moved to report CSSB 298(TRA) from committee with individual recommendations and accompanying fiscal notes. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

There being no further business to come before the committee, CHAIR KOOKESH adjourned the meeting at [2:25:47 PM](#).