

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Anchorage, Alaska
September 8, 2009
3:41 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kevin Meyer, Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Linda Menard
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Mark Neuman
Representative Mike Doogan

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Vice Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Bert Stedman
Representative Bill Thomas
Senator Donald Olson
Representative Bill Stoltze
Representative Chris Tuck

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

REVISED PROGRAM - LEGISLATIVE (RPLs)

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

MICHELLE RIZK, Associate Vice President
Budget
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Reviewed the grants for which the university is seeking authority.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR KEVIN MEYER called the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee meeting to order at 3:41 p.m. Senators Meyer, Hoffman, and Menard and Representatives Hawker, Neuman, and Doogan were present at the call to order.

REVISED PROGRAM - LEGISLATIVE (RPLs)

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CHAIR MEYER announced that the only order of business would be to address the RPLs of 27 different University of Alaska projects that total \$7.9 million. He explained that the committee would group the university's RPLs into one large RPL.

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MICHELLE RIZK, Associate Vice President, Budget, University of Alaska Fairbanks, explained that these grants are being brought to the committee prior to the September 28, 2009, meeting because the majority of them are time sensitive. Delay in funding would negatively impact the momentum of the research programs because September is a critical month for research and field work. Furthermore, lack of funding in September would pose a challenge in obtaining critical yearly data that is required to complete the requirements of the proposal.

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SENATOR MENARD asked if it's necessary to have so many programs dealing with climate change. She pointed out that at least two-thirds of the programs address climate change.

MS. RIZK characterized it as a policy question. However, she highlighted that climate change has been identified as a high priority for Alaska. "It seems at this point, ... all research that we're doing in this area could provide valuable information in that area," she said.

SENATOR MENARD related her personal belief that [this many programs addressing climate change] is overkill.

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SENATOR HOFFMAN related his understanding that the vast majority of these RPLs were submitted prior to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Therefore, as a result of ARRA these

RPLs have fallen under the purview of this committee. Prior to ARRA, he surmised, many of these projects would've been accepted by the university without legislative oversight.

MS. RIZK stated that Senator Hoffman is correct. She explained that the majority of the proposals that have been funded [by ARRA] thus far are proposals for which the university requested funding. However, the agency would've run out of federal funding had the stimulus funding not been available.

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REPRESENTATIVE HAWKER said that these are stimulus funds, which has necessitated the unique procedure that won't continue once the federal government stops providing stimulus funds.

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CHAIR MEYER clarified that this package will be referred to as RPL package 45-0-1133 for \$7.9 million.

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SENATOR HOFFMAN moved that the committee approve RPL 45-0-1133. There being no objection, RPL 45-0-1133 was approved.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.