

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
April 6, 2009
9:03 a.m.

9:03:08 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stedman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins, Vice-Chair
Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Donny Olson
Senator Joe Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Denise Doniello, Executive Director, Alaska Commission on Aging; Nancy DeCherney, Executive Director, Juneau Arts & Humanities Council; Peggy Brown, Executive Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual; Joy Lyon, Chair, Alaska Association for Education of Young Children.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Mike Huelsman, VSA Arts of Alaska, Anchorage; Kevin Gadsey, SILK, Ketchikan; Jamie Stacks, Superintendent, Pribilof School District; Charlotte Fox, Executive Director, Alaska State Council for the Arts; Nancy Nolan, Senior Policy Director for Acting Mayor Matt Claman, Anchorage; Karla Jutzi, Executive Director, Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired; Andi Nations, Executive Director, Statewide Independent Living Council, Anchorage; Susan Sullivan, Executive Director, Victims for Justice, Anchorage; Jim Beck, Access Alaska & Independent Living, Palmer; Sarah Scanlan, Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP), Anchorage; Mitzi Barker, RurAL CAP, Chugiak; Roger Purcell, Mayor, Houston; Dane Crowley, Superior Pellet Fuels, Wasilla; Melinda Myers, Senior Manager, Best Beginnings Alaska, Anchorage; Judy Cordell, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Anchorage; Luke Hopkins, Assembly Member, Fairbanks North Star Borough; Cheryl Keepers, Early Childhood Commission, Fairbanks; Candice Winkler, Alaska Child Care Resource and Referral Network; Johanna Darrough,

Director, Alaska Primary Care; Carol Comeau, Superintendant, Anchorage School District; Karen Parr, Chairman, Senior Project, Fairbanks; Sarah Finnell, Homeless Youth Advocate, Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption, Fairbanks; Paul Sherry, President, Alaska E-Health Network, Fairbanks; Tom Morgan, Director, Community Schools of Alaska.

GENERAL SUBJECT(S):

The following overview was taken in log note format. Handouts will be on file with the House Finance Committee through the 26th Legislative Session, contact 465-6814. After the 26th Legislative Session they will be available through the Legislative Library at 465-3808.

#sb161

SENATE BILL NO. 161

"An Act making supplemental appropriations and capital appropriations; amending appropriations; and providing for an effective date."

TIME	SPEAKER	DISCUSSION
9:03:13 AM	Co-Chair Stedman	Opened statewide public testimony.
9:04:27 AM	MIKE HUELSMAN, VSA ARTS OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE	Encouraged acceptance of all federal stimulus funds for the arts. He stressed that there are over 1,168 jobs and \$45 million worth of economic activity created by arts in Anchorage. He described the extent of the loss of funding for arts. He referenced a petition with over 100 signatures supporting acceptance of stimulus funds for the arts.
9:08:30 AM	KEVIN GADSEY, STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, KETCHIKAN	Spoke in support for stimulus funds for one-time projects benefiting citizens with disabilities.
9:10:54 AM	JAMIE STACKS, SUPERINTENDENT , PRIBILOF SCHOOL DISTRICT	Urged acceptance of federal stimulus funding for education. She stressed the importance of using the funds for students and to keep people employed.
9:12:23 AM	CHARLOTTE FOX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA STATE COUNCIL FOR	Encouraged acceptance of all federal stimulus funds for the arts. She detailed how funding would be used. Many arts organizations have already experienced extensive funding cuts. She

	THE ARTS	emphasized the importance of the bridge funds.
9:14:27 AM	NANCY NOLAN, SENIOR POLICY DIRECTOR FOR ACTING MAYOR MATT CLAMAN, ANCHORAGE	Urged acceptance of all stimulus funds, especially for education. She pointed out that Anchorage has one of the largest school systems in the state. She asked for support for energy development. She did not think the building code issues applied. She also asked for support for COBRA, unemployment, the arts, and public safety.
9:17:41 AM	KARLA JUTZI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA CENTER FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED	Described the functions of the center. She urged acceptance of funds for people with disabilities, especially for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and for the council on independent living. The majority of people with visual disabilities are unemployed.
9:20:02 AM	ANDI NATIONS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, ANCHORAGE	Asked the committee to accept all stimulus funds, especially funds for independent living and citizens with disabilities. She described the services offered by the council of independent living, which often helps people live at home and keep their jobs.
9:22:16 AM	AT EASE	
9:23:15 AM	RECONVENED	
	SUSAN SULLIVAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VICTIMS FOR JUSTICE, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of accepting all ARRA funds for public safety programs, especially those connected with violent crimes. She explained the increase in crime in times of economic difficulty. Severe decline in corporate support has impaired the ability of the organization to do its job.
9:25:44 AM	JIM BECK, ACCESS ALASKA & INDEPENDENT LIVING, PALMER	Urged acceptance of all stimulus funding, especially funds for vocational education and for independent living programs. The community has worked nationally to get the funding in the ARRA legislation, and they are ready to use it well. He described plans for the funds.
9:29:52 AM	SARAH SCANLAN, RURAL CAP, ANCHORAGE	Described the services of Rural CAP. She requested acceptance of the \$3.9 million community services block funds. She stressed that the use of the funds will enhance energy efficiency.
9:31:59 AM	MITZI BARKER, RURAL ALASKA	Discussed the phenomenon and effects of foreclosure in the state. She stressed

	COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (RURAL CAP), CHUGIAK	that Rural CAP proposes to inform and educate the public regarding the process leading towards losing a home. She encouraged acceptance of funds for community service block grant program.
9:35:47 AM	ROGER PURCELL, MAYOR, HOUSTON	Supported acceptance of stimulus funds for shovel-ready projects for the Mat-Su, especially the public safety building. He pointed out how dangerous the highway near Houston is. He described needs for road work near a new housing project and need for a public works building.
9:39:12 AM	DANE CROWLEY, SUPERIOR PELLET FUELS, WASILLA	Asked for acceptance of funds related to renewable energy upgrades. He pointed out that Power Cost Equalization applies only to oil-fired systems and does not apply to other technologies. He stressed that the costs for energy in rural Alaska is a critical issue.
9:41:12 AM	MELINDA MYERS, SENIOR MANAGER, BEST BEGINNINGS ALASKA, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of funding for early childhood programs, especially for professional development for early care programs. She supported \$113 million for public schools and the university, funding for special needs children, the Title 1 grant funds, and funds for workforce training.
9:43:33 AM	JUDY CORDELL, ABUSED WOMEN'S AID IN CRISIS (AWAIC), ANCHORAGE	Requested that federal stimulus funds be accepted for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Public Safety. She described difficulties in shelters resulting from funding cuts.
9:45:32 AM	LUKE HOPKINS, ASSEMBLY MEMBER, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	Requested acceptance of all stimulus funds, especially Department of Revenue funds for weatherization and energy conservation, and block grants. He described the importance of energy projects. He supported accepting education and social services funds.
9:48:17 AM	CHERYL KEEPERS, EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION, FAIRBANKS	Supported acceptance of funds for early care and education. She stated that access to child care makes it possible for lower income families to work while their children are supported. Children with good early care have a better chance of succeeding in school.
9:51:00 AM	DENISE DONIELLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA	Supported acceptance of funds for older Alaskans for services, including meals delivered at home or served at senior centers. She described experience with food services for elder Alaskans.

	COMMISSION ON AGING	
9:53:50 AM	NANCY DECHERNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUNEAU ARTS & HUMANITIES COUNCIL	Encouraged acceptance of all federal stimulus funds for the arts. She reported that funding will replace funding lost for projects that are already planned. She drew attention to the fact that individual donations are up significantly, indicating the importance the public places on the arts. She listed projects that need the funds.
9:55:35 AM	Senator Ellis	Asked if the council understood the nature of one-time stimulus funding.
	Ms. DeCherney	Replied that all funding for the arts is one-time funding and that they understood fully how to use the funds.
9:56:36 AM	Senator Ellis	Stressed for the record that the one-time nature of the funding was understood and urged other testifiers to clarify their understanding of the same.
9:56:52 AM	PEGGY BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA NETWORK ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT	Requested that federal stimulus funds be accepted for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Public Safety. She pointed out the connection between economic downturns and an increase in domestic violence. She stated that the network understood the nature of the one-time funding.
9:58:58 AM	JOY LYON, CHAIR, ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN	Urged acceptance of federal stimulus funding for education, particularly for early childhood care and education. She described grants that have increased quality of early childhood programs.
10:02:01 AM	CANDICE WINKLER, ALASKA CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL NETWORK	Supported accepting stimulus funding of early childhood education programs, especially the early childhood development block grant funds. She stated that the network understood the one-time nature of the funding. She hoped to enhance technical assistance and training of teachers of young people with behavioral problems.
10:04:58 AM	AT EASE	
10:05:14 AM	RECONVENED	
10:05:17 AM	JOHANNA DARROUGH, DIRECTOR, ALASKA PRIMARY CARE	Testified in support of accepting stimulus funds for electronic health records program. She described the increase in healthcare quality that would result from the program.

10:07:10 AM	CAROL COMEAU, SUPERINTENDENT , ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT	Urged acceptance of all stimulus money, especially for K-12 education. She emphasized her clear understanding of the one-time nature of the stimulus funding. She explained the funds would be used for training and to redirect Title I funds. The school district is completely willing to be accountable for the use of the funds.
10:08:54 AM	KAREN PARR, CHAIRMAN, SENIOR PROJECT, FAIRBANKS	Urged acceptance of stimulus funds for housing and services for seniors. She understood the one-time nature of the funds. She suggested appointing a watchdog to make sure stimulus funds are expended as intended by the legislature.
10:11:08 AM	SARAH FINNELL, HOMELESS YOUTH ADVOCATE, FAIRBANKS COUNSELING AND ADOPTION, FAIRBANKS	Asked for stimulus funding of any sort that would help homeless youth. She described the struggles and needs of youth.
10:12:24 AM	PAUL SHERRY, PRESIDENT, ALASKA E- HEALTH NETWORK, FAIRBANKS	Urged acceptance of funds for competitive grant funding for high-tech health information exchange and electronic health records. He asked for clarification of the intent of Title 13 high-tech funds. He referred to SB 133.
10:16:21 AM	TOM MORGAN, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OF ALASKA	Urged acceptance of federal stimulus funding for education. He discussed results from other funding for libraries and reading. He stated that non-profit agencies understand the nature of one-time funding as a bridge during a difficult economic time.
10:19:14 AM	Co-Chair Stedman	Closed public testimony.
		SB 161 was HEARD and HELD in Committee for further consideration.
10:19:35 AM	# <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 AM.