

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 9, 2011

1:20 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stoltze called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Thomas Jr., Co-Chair
Representative Anna Fairclough, Vice-Chair
Representative Mia Costello
Representative Mike Doogan
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Les Gara
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Mark Neuman
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Vernon Jones, Chief Procurement Officer, Division of General Services, Department of Administration; Representative Max Gruenberg, Sponsor; Gretchen Staft, Staff, Representative Max Gruenberg; Darren Snyder, Cooperative Extension Agent, University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Ward Hurlburt, Director and Chief Medical Officer, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services; Elizabeth Mafi, Teacher, Coffman Cove; Wes Schott, Homer; Lindsey Ansorno, Secretary, Homer; Susan Willsrud, Calypso Farm and Ecology; Barbara Smith, Chinook Montessori Charter School, Fairbanks.

SUMMARY

HB 49 EARLY CHILDHOOD ED: PARENTS AS TEACHERS

HB 49 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

HB 74 INFO ON MATTERS IN ELECTION PAMPHLET

HB 74 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

HB 89 EXTRACTION OF BEDLOAD MATERIAL

HB 89 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

HB 93 SCHOOL GARDENS, GREENHOUSES, AND FARMS

HB 93 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 129 DECEASED VETERAN DEATH CERTIFICATE

CSHB 129(FIN) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously published fiscal note: FN1, DHS.

HB 181 COMMERCIAL FISHING CREWMEMBER STATISTICS

HB 181 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

HB 204 STATE PROCUREMENT CODE

HB 204 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously published fiscal note: FN1, ADM.

HB 205 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

HB 205 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously published fiscal note: FN1, ADM.

#hb204

#hb205

HOUSE BILL NO. 204

"An Act relating to the State Procurement Code, including the use of small procurement provisions for certain amounts of leased space, the requirement of Alaska business license proof for Alaska bidder and other procurement preferences, the registration of construction contract bidders and offerors, the establishment and maintenance of lists of persons who want to provide supplies or services to the state, state agencies, and state instrumentalities, electronic bids and proposals, small procurements, and writings; and providing for an effective date."

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VICE-CHAIR ANNA FAIRCLOUGH, SPONSOR, explained the legislation. She pointed out that HB 204 along with the companion bill HB 205 attempted to modernize the state procurement code, streamline procurement processes and change the definition of small procurement. She offered that HB 204 clarified business license requirements for sealed bids and qualifications for the Alaskan bidder's preference. The threshold for small procurements was increased from \$50 thousand to \$100 thousand and construction procurements were increased to \$200 thousand. The bill increased the square footage for small procurements from 3000 to 7000 square feet. Electronic bids and signatures were allowed. The legislation updated the vendor list and enabled the Department of Administration (DOA) to manage the vendor list online. She concluded that the legislation modernized the entire procurement process.

VERNON JONES, CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER, DIVISION OF GENERAL SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, provided a sectional analysis of HB 204 (copy on file).

Section 1: Amends AS 36.30.080(f)

Increases the threshold limit for small procurements of leased space from 3,000 square feet to 7,000 square feet, consistent with section 7.

Section 2: Amends AS 36.30.110(b)

Clarifies Alaska business license requirements for competitive sealed bids and qualification for the Alaska bidder preference. Change would require bidders to show proof of their Alaska

Business License prior to award, but would require the license at the time of bid submission in order to qualify for the Alaska bidder preference.

Mr. Jones expounded that the department experienced a disproportionate amount of technical disqualification on larger procurement bids. The change was recommended by a legislative audit to remedy the situation.

Section 3: Amends AS 36.30.130(a)

Eliminates reference to a procurement officer's use of vendor lists, reflecting the repeal of the statute establishing the vendor lists, consistent with section 10.

Mr. Jones added that bid requests were noticed online for the public.

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Mr. Jones continued with the sectional analysis.

Section 4: Amends AS 36.30.210(b)

Clarifies construction contractor registration requirements, now explicitly requiring registration before award of a contract.

Section 5: Amends AS 36.30.210(e)

Clarifies Alaska business license requirements for competitive sealed proposals and qualification for the Alaska bidder preference using language consistent with that used in section 2.

Section 6: Amends AS 36.30 by adding a new section 36.30.290

Adds a new section allowing an agency to accept electronic bids and proposals.

Section 7: Amends AS 36.30.320(a)

Increases the threshold under which a state agency may use informal procurement process to

\$100,000 for goods and professional services, to \$200,000 for construction, and 7,000 square feet for lease of space.

Section 8: Amends AS 36.30.655

Eliminates reference to the removal of debarred or suspended persons from vendor lists, reflecting the repeal of a law establishing the vendor lists, consistent with section 10.

Section 9: Amends AS 36.30.990

Adds new definitions for "in writing" and "written."

Section 10: Repeals statute establishing the vendor list.

Section 11: Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska

Clarifies the application of the procurement act to pending solicitations during transition period.

Section 12: Effective Date

Language making the procurement act effective immediately.

Representative Gara remarked that he liked the bill. He questioned Section 5. He wanted to tighten the Alaska bidder preference. He felt that it was too easy for non-residents to procure bids. Vice-chair Fairclough replied that HB 204 did not attempt to change the bidder preference. She communicated that restrictions were legally challenged in the past and failed. The legal precedent maintained what latitude did exist in state statute. She revealed how Section 5 related to the Alaska bidders preference. The bidder's preference process was frequently appealed and challenged because of ambiguity in the language on procurement. Both Section 2 and Section 5 provided explicit language that an Alaska business license was required at the time of bid submission. She noted that the change does address Representative Gara's concern. The

provision at least ensured an Alaska residential preference on the opening bid.

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Representative Gara commented on the legal issue. He informed the committee that interstate commerce laws precluded that the state cannot require residency in Alaska for more than a year. A residential bidder preference was legal up to one year. He wanted to research a way to ensure that the Alaskan presence [residency] was real and not a "shell presence." Mr. Jones outlined the existing requisite for the Alaska bidder preference. The statute required that a place of business in Alaska was operating and staffed six months prior to the bid opening. A shell presence was illegal.

Representative Gara argued that the problem existed. An outside company can open a fake office and pay an employee to appear busy. Mr. Jones countered that tightening the regulations would hurt honest businesses. Further regulatory measures could eliminate small business or large corporations from the competitive bid process.

Co-Chair Stoltze noted flaws in Alaska's procurement process. He gave the example of a Colorado company that was considered an Alaskan business because its previous business in the state counted as a presence. The company acquired an Alaskan bidder's preference over an Arizona firm. Mr. Jones confirmed that the firm did qualify because of their presence in the state even though the work was performed out of state.

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Representative Guttenberg cited Sections 2 and 5 of the legislation. He queried the language change from "must" to "shall." Mr. Jones replied that the change in semantics did not make a difference.

Representative Costello asked whether Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) had the ability to share their business license data base with DOA. Mr. Jones answered in the affirmative. He related that DOA often referenced DCCED's data base when verifying qualifications.

Representative Costello referred to Section 7. She asked what percentage of projects would fall under the lower limit of small procurements. Mr. Jones voiced that the question was difficult to answer due to lack of an automated procurement system to tally the numbers. He explained the logic behind the changes in small procurements. The previous raise in dollar limits occurred in the 1990's. The changes in small procurement afforded procurement officials more time to deal with higher risk procurements and less time on simple procurements. The department hoped that by raising the threshold and placing more procurement in the small procurement realm small and rural business would benefit. The small procurement realm offered small business a streamlined process and easier access to state bids.

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Representative Costello cited the repeal of the vendor list in Section 10. She wondered what the vendor list was and what effect removal would provide the process. Mr. Jones explained that vendor lists were used by DOA to notify bids to interested parties. The state law mandated DOA to maintain vendor lists. The vendor list became outmoded since the onset of electronic media. Currently, the state provided public notice of bids on its online public notice website. The online tool was convenient and free. The public learned where to find the information online. The department abandoned expensive newspaper notices and mailings. He did not believe the lists were useful any longer.

Representative Neuman questioned how the changes to small procurements ensured that the process remained competitive for the state. Mr. Jones revealed that the state was required to obtain a minimum of three informal bids. The change removed the more formal competitive bidding requirements. He assured that minimum levels of competition remained in statue for small procurements.

Co-Chair Stoltze OPENED and CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Stoltze noted the zero fiscal note for DOA.

HOUSE BILL NO. 205

"An Act relating to state and public entity procurement, including the State Procurement Code, procurement preferences, and contract awards; relating to the meaning of 'Alaska bidder'; and providing for an effective date."

REPRESENTATIVE ANNA FAIRCLOUGH, SPONSOR, highlighted the legislation. She explained that HB 205 endeavored to provide uniformity to the application of preferences through statutory changes in the procurement code. Currently, preferences do not contain the same language so they must be applied differently. It also clarified which preferences are cumulative and those that may not be combined. The legislation consolidated the procurement preferences under one statute. The bill eliminated the seldom used preference for employers of the disabled. The changes streamlined the procurement code to ensure consistent application of the law which resulted in a clear and efficient procurement process.

Mr. Jones emphasized that HB 205 made preferences more consistent and organized into a single section of statute. He related that the current process was complex. The preferences were diffused through statute with different formulas and applications. A three-hour class was provided for procurement employees to learn how to apply the preferences. He noted that HB 205 did not eliminate the Alaska offers preference.

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Mr. Jones pointed out that the biggest change to statute was Section 11, which consolidated all preferences into a new section of statute. All of the preferences would transfer into the new section except for the preference related to the disabled. The department viewed it as a duplicate preference. He identified two other preferences that benefit the disabled. He noted that the section authorized use of alternative verification for the disabled who qualify for a preference. Under current law the disabled must provide letters from doctors. The requirement placed undue burden on the disabled.

Vice-chair Fairclough emphasized that the controversial offers preference contained in the legislation in the past was not included in HB 205. She stated that it was not her intention to offer the preference as an amendment. Her

intention was to provide a better working environment and more competition and savings for the state. She noted that the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce supported both HB 204 and HB 205 and read the contents of a handwritten letter:

Dear Vice-chair Fairclough:

The Alaska State Chamber of Commerce supports HB 204 and HB 205 as important steps in reforming the procurement code. Thanks for working with us on this.

Rachael Petro
Executive Director

Vice-chair Fairclough noted that she did a substantial amount of outreach before she offered the legislation.

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Representative Costello queried what organizations supported the legislation. Vice-chair Fairclough responded that her staff contacted the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce which redirected the request to all local chambers. Her staff contacted Anchorage homebuilders and any homebuilding association, the Associated General Contractors, as well as any entities that opposed or expressed interest in the previous versions of the legislation. She added that the legislation was vetted to all of the interested and contacted parties.

Representative Costello questioned whether the administration requested the changes or if she initiated the legislation. Vice-chair Fairclough responded that the legislation was her own idea. She expounded that she was working on the Alaska veteran's preference when she discovered inconsistencies in the preference language. She began discussions with the department and learned of DOA's challenges with the preferences. She offered the complex legislation because she wanted to create efficiencies in the code, save procurement officer's time, and provide opportunities for competitive bids in smaller communities.

Representative Neuman shared concerns with Sections 2 and 3 of HB 205. He noted that the legislation provided a 7 percent preference for agricultural products purchased in the state and deleted language that specified the agricultural products shall be of like quality compared to

agricultural products harvested outside the state. He maintained that Alaskan suppliers produced superior quality products. He supported the purchase of Alaskan agricultural products by state agencies and schools. He felt that quality was an inducement to buy locally.

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Representative Neuman worried that removing the language regarding "comparable quality" would hurt Alaskan producers. Mr. Jones indicated the change in language was specifically meant to make the application of the preference simpler and would not change how the products were graded. He judged that changing the language would remove an impediment currently in place that mandated comparison of Alaska produce to outside produce. He added that the current agricultural preference was cumbersome. In order to calculate the preference the state went through a bidding process, applied the Alaska bidder preference and found the lowest bid, took 7 percent of that bid and subtracted that number from the bid that offered the Alaskan produce. The change would allow for a simple 7 percent deduction. He deemed that the change was easier to understand and apply, and would remove an impediment.

Representative Neuman argued that the problem was where the quality of the produce was measured. The outside produce was graded and compared at point of origin. The produce lost quality and vitamin content in transit to Alaska. Alaskan agricultural products cannot compete against the outside produce with the existing process. In reality Alaskan produce was the better product measuring quality and nutritional value.

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Co-Chair Stoltze asked whether Vice-chair Fairclough would object to a "friendly" floor amendment on the issue if warranted. Vice-chair Fairclough reminded that the preference guaranteed 7 percent instead of up to 7 percent. She requested confirmation that the 7 percent agricultural preference could couple with a 12 percent "assurity" preference for agricultural products. Mr. Jones confirmed that the agriculture preferences accumulated.

Representative Neuman noted that price was not the only factor. He recognized the important multiplier effect and

substantial benefit to the state by purchasing Alaska products. He contended that Alaska cannot compete with outside suppliers because of economies of scale. The outside supplier was aware of the 7 percent preference and was able to underbid Alaskan suppliers. The bidder's preference did not consider the significant value to the state when large state institutions buy locally. He exemplified that the Department of Corrections (DOC) purchased large quantities of agricultural products but are often able to purchase large quantities from outside buyers at greater than 7 percent savings compared to in-state products. He was uncertain how to rectify the situation with preferences. He reported that many agency commissioners agreed with his assessment. He asked if the legislation was an opportunity to correct the problem. Mr. Jones agreed the problem was difficult. He noted that the department was focused on bottom line costs. He suggested an increase in the agricultural preference but was not sure that was the answer.

Representative Neuman believed that a solution was authorizing commissioners to purchase in-state if the purchase provided substantial benefit to the state. Mr. Jones related that he had dealt personally with the issue through several administrations. He reminded the committee that HB 205 raised the small procurement threshold. He informed that a state agency could simply call a small procurement from three Alaskan vendors and ensure buying in-state. He thought the problem was more complicated than simply preference. Market issues, timing, and the way the state purchased products contributed to the problem. He exemplified that DOC held contracts with large firms that purchased agriculture products. The purchasers were looking for year around consistency and reliability. Alaskan suppliers cannot provide that.

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Representative Gara supported the agricultural preference. He was concerned about the size of some of the preferences. He pointed to Page 5, Line 11, and asked where the 15 percent preference applied. He believed in the state accepting the extra costs of a 5 to 7 percent preference for the benefit but thought 15 percent was excessive. Mr. Jones explained that the preference benefited employment programs that employ people with developmental disabilities. Representative Gara established that the

entire section dealt with vocational programs for the disabled. Mr. Jones agreed. Representative Gara thought the preference was justified. He asked if the state was losing the blind person's preference for vending machines. Mr. Jones replied that was a federal program not affected by the bill.

Representative Gara turned to Page 8, line 13, which cited cumulative preferences. He asked which preferences were cumulative and what the cumulative sum was. Mr. Jones answered that in general, a bidder that qualified for two similar preferences was prohibited from receiving both. He exemplified that someone cannot be a disabled bidder and receive a preference for an employment program or a bidder cannot receive an agricultural preference and also obtain a timber preference. He added that agricultural, timber, and fisheries products cannot be combined. Disability preferences cannot be combined. He exemplified that someone can qualify for an Alaskan bidders preference or Alaskan products preference and also be a disabled bidder. A bidder could have an Alaskan product preference but could not combine an agricultural preference.

[2:04:09 PM](#)

Representative Gara asked if cumulative language existed in current statute. Mr. Jones responded in the affirmative. He offered to provide a complete list. He reiterated that HB 205 did not change how preferences accumulated.

Co-Chair Stoltze OPENED and CLOSED public testimony.

[2:05:44 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:06:09 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Vice-chair Fairclough MOVED to report HB 204 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 204 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously publish fiscal note: FN1, ADM.

Vice-chair Fairclough MOVED to report HB 205 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

Representative Doogan OBJECTED to state that he commended the work and did not want to see the bills again.

Representative Joule agreed.

There being NO further OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 205 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously published fiscal note: FN1, ADM.

[2:11:14 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:22:45 PM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb129

HOUSE BILL NO. 129

"An Act relating to providing a death certificate for a deceased veteran without charge."

[2:22:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG, SPONSOR, introduced his chief of staff.

GRETCHEN STAFT, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG, explained the legislation. The bill authorized the Bureau of Vital Statistics to provide a death certificate to eligible survivors of a deceased veteran without charge for the purpose of obtaining survivor benefits of some kind. She defined eligible recipient as a spouse, child, relative, heir, estate administrators or executors of the veteran. The bill covered veterans who were residents of the state of Alaska at the time of death. She noted that Amendment 1 (27-LS0450\B.1, Bullard, 4/7/11) was withdrawn.

Page 2, lines 22-23:

Delete "one certified copy"

Insert "up to five certified copies"

Page 2, line 23:
Delete "an eligible recipient"
Insert "a person"

Page 2, line 26 through page 3, line 2:
Delete all material.

Page 3, line 3:
Delete "(B)"

Page 3, line 4:
Delete "(i)"
Insert "(A)"

Page 3, line 9:
Delete "(ii)"
Insert "(B)"

[2:25:22 PM](#)

Representative Costello offered conceptual amendment 1 sponsored by Representative Costello to include "and as many certified copies as requested" after the word "certificate" on Page 2, line 23.

Vice-chair Fairclough OBJECTED for purpose of discussion.

Representative Costello discussed the conceptual amendment. She related from personal experience that often family members need more than one copy of a death certificate. She believed the amendment facilitated the true intention of the legislation. Vice-chair Fairclough wondered how much an individual copy of a certificate cost to produce and whether additional copies would impact the fiscal note. She relayed that occasionally, a recipient requested 40 copies of a certificate. She added that she did not have an objection if the change did not increase the fiscal note. She encouraged limiting the number of certificates issued.

Representative Gruenberg referred to the fiscal note, FN1 (DHS). He explained that the fiscal note represented a loss of revenue but did not cost the state money. He reminded the committee that HB 129 was specific to the recipient's need to procure benefits.

Co-Chair Thomas asked what the cost of a certified copy of a death certificate was.

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WARD HURLBURT, DIRECTOR AND CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (via teleconference), explained the fiscal note. He reported that the lost revenue was based on the \$25 charge per certificate. The projection calculated that 75 percent of recipients at an average of five copies were requested per deceased veteran. The lost revenue was significant. The revenue generated supported the bureau through program receipts. The decreased revenue would cause negative impacts. Staff reductions, increased death certificate fees, or a general fund supplement would result.

Co-Chair Thomas wondered what the cost was to make a Xerox copy of the certificate certified by the department. Mr. Hurlburt replied that the copy and a stamp would not cost much. The certificate fees reflected the cost of operating the bureau not the actual cost to produce the certificate. The usual request was for original certified copies. He did not know the actual cost to produce a death certificate.

Vice-chair Fairclough observed that the change would actually reduce the department's revenue. She relayed that the department would need an additional \$75,000 to cover the cost of decreased program receipts. The program receipts were built into the budget. She believed that the legislature needed to step up and provide financial support to the department if the legislation was implemented. She restated her support to limit the amount of no cost death certificates.

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Representative Gruenberg did not object to a limit placed on the number of copies granted. He remarked that he originally proposed a five copy limit. He clarified that on [Page 2], line 24 the word "benefit" was not qualified. The intention of the legislation was not to restrict the type of survivor benefit the recipient could apply for; private insurance, governmental benefits, or other private benefits qualify.

Co-Chair Thomas thought that providing a copy of a certified certificate was sufficient.

Representative Guttenberg wondered what benefits were acceptable. Representative Gruenberg restated that any type of death benefit was permissible for qualification.

Representative Gara guessed that the sponsor knew the estimate of how many copies were needed per recipient. He thought that the cost of the copies was insignificant. The money lost was the amount for the original and that was unavoidable. He asked how many free copies the sponsor believed were necessary. Co-Chair Thomas indicated that the fiscal note was based on five original copies per veteran. He thought the fiscal note was overestimated and therefore, too high.

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Representative Neuman asked if the legislation was retroactive. Representative Gruenberg surmised that retroactive requests would be insignificant. He could not speak to the exact number. He surmised that most estates were settled within a year. Representative Neuman believed that it would increase the number of copies requested. He supported a limit.

Co-Chair Thomas thought that the issue was a simple one. He contended that making certified copies was easy to do.

Representative Wilson discussed that the issue was related to having multiple family members request original certificates. She suggested that only one recipient should qualify for eligibility. Representative Gruenberg explained that the original amendment specified "decedent" and deleted "eligible recipient". The language specified the designated decedent. The amendment limited the number of certificates to five. He declared that his amendment would remedy the committees concerns.

Co-Chair Thomas responded that the original amendment would change the fiscal note. Representative Gruenberg explained that the fiscal note was based on an average of three or four certificate per veteran.

Vice-chair Fairclough addressed the original amendment. She restated the concern that multiple family members were eligible to receive copies. The provision was factored into the fiscal note. The original amendment would address the concern. She advocated amending the fiscal note to replace

an additional \$75,000 with general funds. The bureau operated on 3 percent general funds and paid for its program based on fees. She did not want the department to be faced with layoffs. She was supportive of the legislation but did not want to harm the department with a loss of revenue.

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Representative Costello withdrew the conceptual amendment 1.

Representative Gruenberg was in favor of the original amendment 1.

Vice-chair Fairclough MOVED to AMEND Amendment 1. The amendment revised Page 2, line 23, that replaced "five" with "four."

Page 2, lines 22-23:

Delete "one certified copy"

Insert "up to five certified copies"

Page 2, line 23:

Delete "an eligible recipient"

Insert "a person"

Page 2, line 26 through page 3, line 2:

Delete all material.

Page 3, line 3:

Delete "(B)"

Page 3, line 4:

Delete "(i)"

Insert "(A)"

Page 3, line 9:

Delete "(ii)"

Insert "(B)"

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered. The amended Amendment 1 was ADOPTED.

Vice-chair Fairclough noted that the fiscal note did draw the lost revenue from the general fund and resulted in a net zero for the department.

Co-Chair Thomas CLOSED public testimony.

Representative Costello MOVED to report CS HB 129 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSHB 129(FIN) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with attached previously published fiscal note: FN1, DHS.

[2:47:54 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:49:42 PM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb93

HOUSE BILL NO. 93

"An Act relating to school gardens, greenhouses, and farms."

[2:49:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID GUTTENBERG, SPONSOR explained the school gardens program. He relayed that public schools in conjunction with a local farm operated school gardens in Fairbanks. The children actively participated in gardening supported by curriculum in the classroom. The program was very successful. The gardens produce over 1,000 pounds of produce per year. He noted the enthusiastic participation by the students. He pointed out that the program was exportable throughout the state. The legislation enabled the program to operate state-wide. Non-profit groups like 4 H and Future Farmers could bring the program into the schools.

Representative Guttenberg expounded that Calypso Farm in Fairbanks started slow and raised money for each school. The farm expanded the program from school to school. The program required a teacher who wanted to sponsor the program and a sustainable site at the school. The farmers support the teacher and the curriculum. The curriculum integrated science and other relevant subjects.

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Representative Guttenberg furthered that HB 93 supported interested non-profits in launching the school gardening program in other parts of the state.

Co-Chair Stoltze OPENED public testimony.

ELIZABETH MAFI, TEACHER, COFFMAN COVE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. She reported that she was a teacher in Southeast Islands school district and lead a 4H group in Coffman Cove. She described how she started a garden program at the school. She spoke of the positive effects the garden had on the students and community; from teaching life skills to fostering community involvement. She stated the legislation would augment their fund raising efforts.

2:57:49 PM

WES SCHOTT, HOMER (via teleconference), reported that he was a member of the Homer Grange. He asked how the matching grant worked. Representative Guttenberg believed that the \$10,000 grant was awarded in cash for the program's general use.

LINDSEY ANSORNO, SECRETARY, HOMER (via teleconference), was in support of the legislation. She reported her involvement with the Homer Grange. She believed the legislation would provide education, training, food security and foster obesity awareness in the community. She asked if the committee would consider expanding the program if more than ten schools applied. Representative Guttenberg replied that the original bill included all Alaskan schools. The fiscal note was very expensive. He informed the testifier that the program took time to develop. The bill allowed for more schools to transition into the program each year. He advised that each garden program needed to develop a solid structure for success.

3:00:53 PM

DARREN SNYDER, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AGENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA-FAIRBANKS, was in support of the legislation. He appreciated the type of learning opportunity for youth the school gardening program provided. He relayed that he spent much of his university time seeking funding for similar

programs in schools. He supported the ongoing funding stability that the bill provided. He was concerned that the program grant was not in-kind.

SUSAN WILLSRUD, CALYPSO FARM AND ECOLOGY (via teleconference), was present to answer questions.

BARBARA SMITH, CHINOOK MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced strong support of the legislation. She relayed that Chinook's curriculum was hands on. A garden program would enhance the student's study of Botany. Co-Chair Stoltze asked where Chinook Montessori Charter School was located. Ms. Smith replied that they were located in Fairbanks.

Co-Chair Thomas CLOSED public testimony.

HB 93 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[3:07:57 PM](#)

#hb49

HOUSE BILL NO. 49

"An Act establishing in the Department of Education and Early Development a voluntary parent and early childhood education program for pre-elementary aged children."

HB 49 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

#hb74

HOUSE BILL NO. 74

"An Act relating to election pamphlets; relating to information that must be provided for a bill under consideration by the legislature that authorizes the issuance of state general obligation bonds and to information that must be provided before the issuance of state general obligation bonds is submitted to the voters for ratification; and providing for an effective date."

HB 74 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

#hb89

HOUSE BILL NO. 89

"An Act authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to offer bedload material for disposal for flood control purposes in exchange for a percentage of the profit from the sale of that material."

HB 89 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

#hb181

HOUSE BILL NO. 181

"An Act requiring the Department of Fish and Game annually to collect confidential information related to days worked by commercial fishing crewmembers and to compile statistical data."

HB 181 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

[3:08:17 PM](#)

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 PM.