

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 8, 2011
8:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
Representative Wes Keller, Vice Chair
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Max Gruenberg
Representative Pete Petersen
Representative Kyle Johansen

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 92

"An Act relating to special request Lao veteran registration plates; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 92(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 18

"An Act establishing Alaska Public Garden Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year."

- MOVED CSHB 18(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 92

SHORT TITLE: LAO VETERANS LICENSE PLATES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) PETERSEN

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/14/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	STA, FIN
02/15/11	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/15/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/15/11	(H)	MINUTE(STA)
03/08/11	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 18

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA PUBLIC GARDENS DAY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KERTTULA

01/18/11 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11 (H) STA
03/08/11 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

DAVE BREMER, Staff
Representative Petersen
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 92 on behalf of Representative Petersen, sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as sponsor of HB 18.

PETER FROEHLICH, Charter Member
Jensen Olsen Arboretum Advisory Board
Jensen Olsen Arboretum
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

PAT HARRIS, Chair
Jensen Olsen Arboretum Advisory Board
Jensen Olsen Arboretum
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

ED BUYARSKI, Owner/Operator
Ed's Edible Landscaping;
Past President, Master Gardeners;
Past President, American Primrose Society;
Board Member, Jensen Olsen Arboretum
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

JULIANNE MCGUINNESS, Executive Director
Alaska Botanical Garden
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

KATHERINE "KATIE" DiCRISTINA, Horticulturist
Georgeson Botanical Garden
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

PATRICIA HOLLOWAY, Director
Georgeson Botanical Garden
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 18.

DONNA DINSMORE, President
Georgeson Botanical Garden Society
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 18.

GRANT MATHEKE, Employee
Georgeson Botanical Garden
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 181.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:58 AM](#)

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Keller, Seaton, Wilson, Johansen, Petersen, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Representative Gruenberg arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 92-LAO VETERANS LICENSE PLATES

[8:05:15 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced that the first order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 92, "An Act relating to special request Lao veteran registration plates; and providing for an effective date."

[8:05:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for HB 92, Version 27-LS0375\B, Luckhaupt, 2/28/11, as a work draft.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON objected for discussion purposes.

8:05:58 AM

DAVE BREMER, Staff, Representative Petersen, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 92 on behalf of Representative Petersen, sponsor. He said the proposed bill would create a special license plate for Lao veterans. He said Version B would make the following changes: allow for U.S. and non-U.S. veterans to request plates, as long as they served in Laos [sometime between 2/28/61 to 5/15/75]; change "combat" to "military operations" to include those who may have served without bearing arms; and change "Hmong" to "Southeast Asian" to accommodate all ethnic groups in military operations in Laos during the aforementioned period.

MR. BREMER addressed concerns that had been brought up by the committee during the previous hearing on HB 92. He directed attention to the word "evidence", on page 1, line 11, and noted that the bill drafter said that requirement is not used in any other license plate legislation. Another concern had to do with whether or not people who lease cars would still be able to get the special request plates, and he said the answer from Legislative Legal and Research Services is yes, because the person leasing the vehicle would be the registered owner.

8:08:04 AM

MR. BREMER, in response to Chair Lynn, listed guidelines set up by the federal government by which former citizens of Laos who moved to the U.S. could prove that they fought on the side of the U.S. during the war.

8:10:47 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON withdrew his objection to the motion to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for HB 92, Version 27-LS0375\B, Luckhaupt, 2/28/11, as a work draft. There being no further objection, Version B was before the committee.

8:11:01 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to report CSHB 92, Version 27-LS0375\B, Luckhaupt, 2/28/11, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being

no objection, CSHB 92(STA) was reported from the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

HB 18-ALASKA PUBLIC GARDENS DAY

[8:11:50 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced that the final order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 18, "An Act establishing Alaska Public Garden Day on the Saturday immediately preceding Memorial Day each year."

[8:12:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for HB 18, Version 27-LS0139\B, Luckhaupt, 2/17/11, as a work draft.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON objected for discussion purposes.

[8:12:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA, Alaska State Legislature, as sponsor of HB 18, explained that the sole change in Version B is a change from "garden" to "gardens".

[8:13:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON withdrew his objection. There being no further objection, Version B before the committee.

[8:13:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA explained that growing season is shorter in Alaska, which makes National Gardens Day, on May 6th, too early for Alaska's season. She said a constituent requested legislation to set up a day later in the season to recognize gardens in Alaska. Under HB 18, Alaska Public Gardens Day would be recognized on the Saturday preceding Memorial Day each year.

[8:14:51 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[8:15:10 AM](#)

PETER FROEHLICH, Charter Member, Jensen Olsen Arboretum Advisory Board, Jensen Olsen Arboretum, testified in support of HB 18.

He noted that the Jensen Olsen Arboretum is a public garden in Juneau, Alaska. He offered his understanding that there are representatives of other public garden who also support the proposed legislation.

[8:16:58 AM](#)

PAT HARRIS, Chair, Jensen Olsen Arboretum Advisory Board, Jensen Olsen Arboretum, echoed Mr. Froehlich's statement of support for HB 18. She said it is a wonderful endorsement of public gardens. In response to Chair Lynn, she said the Jensen Olsen Arboretum doesn't use much if any pesticide, and offered her understanding that the Alaska Botanical Garden uses no pesticides. She said there is a move toward diminishing pesticide use.

[8:18:05 AM](#)

ED BUYARSKI, Owner/Operator, Ed's Edible Landscaping; Past President, Master Gardeners; Past President, American Primrose Society; Board Member, Jensen Olsen Arboretum, invited everyone to the Jensen Olsen Arboretum. He said local nurseries around the state benefit from public gardens, because people who visit those gardens inquire as to where they can buy the plants they see there. He emphasized the importance of the educational component of public gardens.

[8:21:22 AM](#)

MR. FROEHLICH noted that the public gardens are free of charge.

[8:21:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG stated his support of HB 18 and his intent to co-sponsor the bill. He related that he had donated the stakes from his leftover campaign signs to the Alaska Botanical Garden, and he said they are being used as tomato stakes. He mentioned legislation a few years ago regarding noxious weeds, and he encouraged those present to let the committee know if other legislation is needed. He talked about the community gardens in his community and expressed his hope for more of such.

[8:24:19 AM](#)

MR. BUYARSKI acknowledged that there are other gardens that exist aside from the three aforementioned public gardens; however, he said they are not specifically recognized.

MR. FROEHLICH explained that the distinction is that the Jensen Olsen Arboretum, the Georgeson Botanical Gardens, and the Alaska Botanical Garden are members of the American Public Garden Association. He said there are also private gardens, which people pay a fee to view, such as [Jewel Gardens] in Skagway.

MR. HARRIS relayed that she is a member of the Juneau Community Garden Board. She said the Juneau Community Garden welcomes visitors, and she said she anticipates it would celebrate Alaska Public Gardens Day. She said she would like to interpret the proposed day as "a wonderful celebration for all gardeners and all gardening spots."

[8:27:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted that the bill does not recognize any particular organization, and said he wants to ensure the committee's understanding [is correct] that all communities will be equally able to celebrate "the role gardens play in promoting environmental stewardship, education, plant conservation, recreation, and research."

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA confirmed that HB 18 is not exclusive legislation.

[8:28:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PETERSEN expressed his support of HB 18, and said he plans to be co-sponsor. He said visitors to Alaska are often surprised to find gardens in the state.

[8:29:51 AM](#)

JULIANNE MCGUINNESS, Executive Director, Alaska Botanical Garden, stated that garden tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism, with some visitors coming to Alaska specifically to see its agricultural industry. Another aspect of gardening includes education and public awareness. She said public gardens in the state have programs for youth, as well as workforce development programs, which impart skills related to horticulture and agriculture development in the state. She talked about public outreach to schools, churches, agencies, and

individuals. She imparted that over 6,500 school children participate in the Junior Master Gardener program in the summer.

[8:32:20 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN recalled Victory Gardens during World War II.

[8:32:49 AM](#)

KATHERINE "KATIE" DiCRISTINA, Horticulturist, Georgeson Botanical Garden, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), stated that public gardens are places of beauty and of learning. She said creating a day to celebrate public gardens would increase awareness of the existence of public gardens and the many roles they play. She related her experience watching children learn about plants. Ms. DiCristina opined that having a day to celebrate Alaska gardens on a date later than the National Public Garden Day is important because of Alaska's climate difference.

[8:34:39 AM](#)

PATRICIA HOLLOWAY, Director, Georgeson Botanical Garden, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), expressed appreciation for the efforts made to celebrate Alaska public gardens. She said there are "little pockets of beauty and education" around the state. She said there are many reasons that people come to public gardens. She opined that one reason to support HB 18 is for the state to affirm that public gardens play a significant role in education and research in northern plant cultivation and conservation. She echoed Ms. McGuiness' statement that Alaska gardens contribute to the tourist industry. She said UAF began a peony growing enterprise, and she related a story about peony growers from New Zealand who were surprised to find peonies growing in Alaska and have since shared their expertise to help the fledgling industry. She ventured that Alaska Public Gardens Day would be a tool that public gardens could use to promote their missions, increase public awareness of gardens, and showcase the importance of native and introduced plants. She said the Day would provide the opportunity for people to make more connections and would provide greater educational benefits to Alaskans.

[8:38:29 AM](#)

DONNA DINSMORE, President, Georgeson Botanical Garden Society, explained that the society supports the Georgeson Botanical

Garden. She said growing in Alaska is challenging, but the industry is growing. She said Alaska public gardens provide the opportunity for education, plant conservation, recreation, and research. She emphasized the importance of a colorful garden after a long winter. She related tourists' comments on gardens, and urged support of HB 18.

[8:40:25 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN relayed that he is an amateur photographer, and some of his best photographs are of flowers grown in Alaska.

[8:40:45 AM](#)

GRANT MATHEKE, Employee, Georgeson Botanical Garden, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), stated that he has the best job in town. He said it is frustrating for him to hear people say they did not know Georgeson Botanical Garden exists, and he ventured that establishing "Alaska Public Gardens Day" would bring an awareness of existing gardens to people.

[8:42:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG noted that included in the committee packet is a letter from Victoria Naegele, the executive director of Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom, who indicated that the state had previously established Alaska Agriculture Day. Representative Gruenberg said that day was established under AS 44.12.105, which read as follows:

Sec. 44.12.105. Alaska Agriculture Day.
Alaska Agriculture Day is established on the first Tuesday in May each year in order to recognize the many contributions of the agricultural industry in Alaska. Alaska Agriculture Day may be observed by celebratory events, projects, and activities directed at or involving people of all ages to increase their awareness and appreciation of Alaska agriculture and agriculture in general.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG posited, "This goes nicely with that."

[8:43:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA thanked the committee.

[8:43:55 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN closed public testimony.

[8:44:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON noted that there is a community garden in a park in Wrangell. She further noted that there are beautiful flower gardens surrounding the Sitka Pioneer Home. She said visitors to Alaska comment about the flowers around town, and HB 18 will bring an added awareness of Alaska's gardens.

[8:45:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON mentioned that Homer has garden tours, and he related the improvements he made to his own garden last year to participate as one of the tour destinations. He said there were approximately 380 people who took the tour, and quite a few people from Outside plan their trips to Alaska with consideration to seeing its gardens.

[8:46:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN said there is an active group of gardeners in Ketchikan. He noted that testifiers had mentioned the positive effects of the bill on the economy and food sources, and said he would work to get that information highlighted in the bill language.

[8:47:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to report CSHB 18, Version 27-LS0139\B, Luckhaupt, 2/17/11, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 18(STA) was reported from the committee.

[8:48:17 AM](#)

MR. FROEHLICH issued an invitation to the arboretum.

[8:49:49 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:49 a.m.