

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 14, 2011

1:14 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
Representative Lance Pruitt, Vice Chair
Representative Eric Feige
Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Pete Petersen

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 115

"An Act designating a portion of Minnesota Drive in Anchorage the Walter J. Hickel Expressway."

- MOVED CSHB 115(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 108

"An Act naming the Dowling Road overpass at milepost 123.7 on the New Seward Highway the Spc. Stephen "Max" Cavanaugh, Jr., Memorial Overpass."

- MOVED OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 115

SHORT TITLE: NAMING WALTER J. HICKEL EXPRESSWAY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) JOHNSON

01/21/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/11	(H)	TRA, FIN
04/14/11	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 17

BILL: SB 108

SHORT TITLE: SPC. STEPHEN "MAX" CAVANAUGH OVERPASS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MCGUIRE

03/21/11 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/11 (S) TRA, FIN
03/29/11 (S) TRA AT 1:00 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/29/11 (S) Moved SB 108 Out of Committee
03/29/11 (S) MINUTE(TRA)
03/30/11 (S) TRA RPT 4DP
03/30/11 (S) DP: KOOKESH, HUGGINS, MENARD, EGAN
04/13/11 (S) FIN RPT 6DP 1NR
04/13/11 (S) DP: HOFFMAN, STEDMAN, THOMAS, EGAN,
MCGUIRE, ELLIS
04/13/11 (S) NR: OLSON
04/13/11 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
04/13/11 (S) VERSION: SB 108
04/13/11 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
04/13/11 (S) Moved SB 108 Out of Committee
04/13/11 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
04/14/11 (H) FIN AT 8:30 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/14/11 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 17
04/14/11 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519

WITNESS REGISTER

ERIN SHINE, Staff
Representative Craig Johnson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 115 on behalf of the prime sponsor.

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 108 as prime sponsor of the bill.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:14:50 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR PRUITT called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:14 p.m. Representatives Pruitt, Munoz, Feige, and Gruenberg were present at the call to order. Representative Wilson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 115-NAMING WALTER J. HICKEL EXPRESSWAY

[1:15:39 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR PRUITT announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 115, "An Act designating a portion of Minnesota Drive in Anchorage the Walter J. Hickel Expressway."

1:16:00 PM

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 115, labeled 27-LS0345\M, Kane, 4/12/11, as the working document. There being no objection, Version M was before the committee.

1:16:23 PM

ERIN SHINE, Staff, Representative Craig Johnson, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the prime sponsor of HB 115, explained that the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 115, Version M, would concurrently name a 7.5 mile portion of Minnesota Drive and O'Malley Road in Anchorage the "Water J. Hickel Expressway." This road segment extends from 15th Avenue to the New Seward Highway, she said. She pointed out that by concurrently naming this road segment, no establishment or businesses will have to change their business name or address.

MS. SHINE related that throughout his long and distinguished career, Walter J. Hickel served as Governor of Alaska twice and as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior under U.S. President Richard Nixon. He advocated for the State of Alaska (SOA) and the circumpolar Arctic region. In his many elected and public roles, Wally Hickel successfully pushed to open Prudhoe Bay to oil development and oversaw the permitting process for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). She said it is fitting to concurrently naming a portion of Minnesota Drive and O'Malley Road in Anchorage after Walter J. Hickel since he was a strong advocate for public roads and transportation. In his letter of support for HB 115, Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell said, "I can think of no better road to bear Wally Hickel's name. This road runs through much of the Anchorage life and infrastructure that Wally helped build: from the neighborhoods along Campbell Lake, Spenard, and Turnagain that he worked to develop from the 1950s on, to the Northern Lights Center of 1959, which was the first modern shopping center in Alaska, and the downtown Hotel Captain Cook that he started in 1964."

1:17:29 PM

VICE CHAIR PRUITT recalled that another road was previously named after Wally Hickel. He suggested that may be one reason why HB 115 proposes naming the highway an expressway rather than a road or highway.

MS. SHINE responded at one point the Dalton Highway or "Haul Road," was informally referred to as the "Hickel Highway" although it was never its official name. The Minnesota Drive/O'Malley Road highway was selected because Minnesota Drive is located in the largest city in Alaska and is often traveled by Alaskans.

[1:18:40 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR PRUITT, after first determining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 115.

[1:18:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ moved to report the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 115, Version M, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, the CSHB 115(TRA) was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

SB 108-SPC. STEPHEN "MAX" CAVANAUGH OVERPASS

[1:19:20 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR PRUITT announced that the next order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 108, "An Act naming the Dowling Road Overpass at milepost 123.7 on the New Seward Highway the Spc. Stephen "Max" Cavanaugh, Jr., Memorial Overpass."

[1:19:43 PM](#)

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE, Alaska State Legislature, stated that SB 108 would name the Dowling Road overpass at milepost 123.7 on the new Seward Highway after Specialist (Spc.) Stephen "Max" Cavanaugh Jr. This bill would commemorate his life, she said. Spc. Max Cavanaugh, Jr. was an Alaskan serving in the Fort Richardson's Warrior Transition Unit. He had recently returned from Iraq after surviving 300 convoys where he manned a .50 caliber machine gun. In Iraq, Max suffered a minor traumatic brain injury, which she brought up to remind committee members that many of our heroes return from Iraq with head injuries sustained from shrapnel. However, Max had rehabilitated from

his injury and had resumed his life in Alaska. At the time of his fatal crash, he was driving on Seward Highway near Dowling Overpass in an area frequently known as a "moose corridor." Unfortunately, his vehicle struck a moose and Mr. Cavanaugh lost his life.

[1:22:07 PM](#)

SENATOR MCGUIRE explained that Mr. Cavanaugh was an organ donor. Thus, he went on to save many other lives through his tissue and organ donations. This was the sixth human life lost to a moose collision in the state in 2007. She stated that a project has begun to help increase safety in the corridor. This effort was assisted by the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), the Alaska Highway Safety Office, the SAGA's AmeriCorps program, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). The project area included the west side of the New Seward Highway between Dimond and O'Malley Road. She described the work area as the area between the bike trail and highway right-of-way. She related that volunteers worked for four days in October 2008 to cut, haul, and chip 11 dumpsters full of willow, cottonwood, birch, and aspen trees. She pointed out that these trees and plants such as lavender are food that moose love to eat. In fact, the trees and plants become an attractive nuisance. She highlighted that moose will even cross highways to forage on the browse in medians. This bill would commemorate the overpass at milepost 123.7 on the New Seward Highway in Max's honor by naming it the "Spc. Stephen "Max" Cavanaugh, Jr. Memorial Overpass."

VICE CHAIR PRUITT, after first determining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on SB 108.

[1:23:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG moved to report SB 108 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, SB 108 was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ commented that she believes Mr. Cavanaugh's tragic death has raised awareness of a serious problem throughout Alaska. She pointed out that this committee is working with the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to find ways to resolve the issue of motorist crashes with moose. She said she appreciated Senator McGuire bringing this bill forward.

[1:24:44 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR PRUITT reiterated that the committee reported out SB 108 from committee with no objections.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ moved to rescind the committee's action to report Version M of HB 115 from committee since the committee had taken action without a quorum present. [Representative Gruenberg had momentarily left the room when the motion to move the bill from committee was made.] There being no objection, the motion was adopted. [Version M was before the committee.]

[1:25:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ then moved to report the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 115, Version M, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, the CSHB 115(TRA) was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

[1:26:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON joined the meeting.

[1:27:49 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.