

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

March 29, 2011

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Albert Kookesh, Chair
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Linda Menard
Senator Charlie Huggins

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Joe Thomas, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

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 SB 108 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

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

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 108.

GENEVEIVE WOJTUSIK, Staff
Senator Lesil McGuire
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding SB 108.

ACTION NARRATIVE

1:01:48 PM

CHAIR ALBERT KOOKESH called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Huggins, Egan, and Chair Kookesh. Senator Menard arrived shortly thereafter.

SB 108-SPC. STEPHEN "MAX" CAVANAUGH OVERPASS

1:02:02 PM

CHAIR KOOKESH announced the first order of business would be SB 108.

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE, sponsor of SB 108, said it was a great honor to the family to have the bill taken up so quickly. She said in Alaska we name things in honor of those who have lost their lives. This is a tradition we have followed for extraordinary people. Specialist Stephen Cavanaugh took over 300 missions to Iraq and safely returned home. The sorrow is that he fought so valiantly for our country only to return here and die on the Seward Highway.

1:03:57 PM

SENATOR MCGUIRE said we all know that living in Alaska is a risk. In Anchorage, as the population has grown there are very few places left to build and they have started to develop in areas that are bogs and wetlands. This has trapped the moose population in certain areas where they conflict with humans. They are trying to relocate this population into the rural areas. People in the villages are harvesting one moose per village per year, instead of one per family.

Specialist Cavanaugh was driving on the Seward Highway, an area that is a well-known moose corridor. He had a head-on collision with a moose and died. This bill intends to place four signs that honor him and also warn pedestrians and drivers about moose. He was an organ donor so his life went to save many other lives. The signs could emphasize organ donation. In Alaska we know that we share our state with wildlife; we will work as hard as we can to mitigate this circumstance.

We can look at the kinds of vegetation that attract moose to these corridors. Willow, cottonwood, birch and aspen trees are the kinds of vegetation that moose love to feed on. The moose are attracted to the medians because of this. They will cross

the highways to get to that food. Efforts are being made to remove this vegetation, and to require the Department of Transportation to put in vegetation that is not attractive to moose.

She reiterated this is a wonderful opportunity to honor someone who has served our country. In Alaska we have more men and women returning per capita than any other state; we have more than return with traumatic brain injuries; we have more organ donors per capita than any other state, and more collisions with moose. This is an opportunity to do something good and celebrate his life. The fiscal note is \$10,000 for four different signs that would delineate Milepost 123.7.

[1:08:56 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD asked how far the signs would be from Milepost 123.

GENEVEIVE WOJTUSIK, staff to Senator McGuire, said the signs would be placed at the four entrances to the round-about.

SENATOR MENARD asked if there would be a picture of a moose.

MS. WOJTUSIK said there is no design yet.

SENATOR HUGGINS said he had the opportunity to meet Mr. Cavanaugh's parents and they are preparing a portrait of Max to go to the family.

[1:10:32 PM](#)

SENATOR MCGUIRE said the Cavanaugh's were delighted at the hospitality of the Legislature, and their time with Senator Huggins was very meaningful. It was very emotional to share stories with him.

SENATOR KOOKESH closed public testimony.

SENATOR MENARD moved to report SB 108 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, SB 108 moved from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

[1:12:03 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kookesh adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.