

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
April 14, 2014  
5:36 p.m.

5:36:06 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Neuman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair  
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair  
Representative Mark Neuman, Vice-Chair  
Representative Mia Costello  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Lindsey Holmes  
Representative Cathy Munoz  
Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Dan Saddler; Representative Gabrielle LeDoux; Anthony DeMare, Denali Deaf Community Center, Anchorage; Morgan Evans, Denali Deaf Community Center, Anchorage; Tracy Pifer, Denali Deaf Center, Anchorage; Jeff Weltzin, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Tanana; Jack Hebert, President, CEO, Cold Climate Housing Research Center; James Marcus, District Manager, Southeast Soil and Water Conservation Council; James Sullivan, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, Juneau; Merrill Sanford, Mayor, City and Borough of Juneau; Bill Leighty, Business Owner, Juneau; Jan Dawe, BAKLAP, Juneau; Nancy Seamount, Teacher, Juneau; Doug Blanc, Site Coordinator, CIS, Juneau Douglas High School, Juneau; Ben Cornell, Self, Juneau; Richard Dawenhauer, Member, Parish Council, St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Juneau; Sally Wilson, Self, Juneau; Janet

Kussart, Self, Juneau; Rob Jordan, Executive Director, Alaska Craftsman Home Program, Juneau; Jim Kacsh, Mayor, City of Cordova; Albert Judson, Self, Juneau; Martha Moore, Volunteer Board Member, Alaska Brain Injury Network (ABIN), Juneau; Paul Fuhs, Self, Fairview.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Pam Mueller-Guy, Denali Deaf Community Center, Juneau; Joe Dinnocenzo, Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation, Kodiak; Nick Szabo, Treasurer, Alaska Search and Rescue, Kodiak; Amy Russel-Jamgochin, Kawerak Inc., Nome; Clay Koplun, CEO, Cordova Electric Cooperative, Cordova; Bret Bradford, Member, Cordova City Council, Cordova; Jennifer Gibbins, President, Cordova Chamber of Commerce, Cordova; Heidi Chay, District Manager, Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District, Kenai; Ken Ray, Self, Wasilla; Dick Zobel, Wasilla Soil Water Conservation District, Wasilla; Jeff Clark, Alaska Trauma Care Fund, Bethel; Edward Alexander, Second Chief Fort Yukon, Fort Yukon; PJ Simon, Allakaket Tribe, Allakaket; Lisa Charles, Newtok Traditional Council, Newtok; Clay Walker, Denali Borough Mayor, Healy; Jeff Smeenck, Self, Palmer; Bernice John, Newtok Traditional Council, Newtok; Rex Wrigley, Self, Delta Junction; Ken Marsh, Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation, Trapper Creek; Todd Pettit, Palmer Soil Water Conservation, Palmer; Robin Ward, Self, Anchorage; Cynthia Franklin, Anchorage Municipal Prosecutor, Anchorage; James Trump, Self, Talkeetna; Carrie Longoria, Anchorage Municipal Health and Human Services Department, Anchorage; Cat Bullington, Self, Wasilla; Peggy McLaughlin, Port Director, City of Unalaska; Lorraine King, Elected Official, Ekwok Village Council, Ekwok; Ronald K. Inouye, Self, Fairbanks; Ronda Schlumbohm, Boreal Alaska - Learning, Adaptation, Production (BAKLAP), Fairbanks; Lou Brown, Self, Fairbanks; Christina-Alex Liakos, Self, Fairbanks; Kaitlin Vadla, Self, Kenai; Zach Meyers, Self, Fairbanks; Andrew Allaby, BAKLAP, Fairbanks; Birch Pavelsky, Volunteer, BAKLAP One Tree, Fairbanks; Jim Sackett, CEO, Toghoththele Corporation, Fairbanks; Glenn Juday, Director, BAKLAP, Fairbanks; Lauren Lynch, Graduate Student, UAF, Fairbanks; John Ringstad, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks; Luke Hopkins, Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough; David Selunis-Messir, Rural Energy Coordinator, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks; Sarah Obed, Doyon Limited, Fairbanks; Mike Musick, Self, Fairbanks; Tammi Ganguli, Self, Fairbanks; Laura Comer, Self, Anchorage; Diane Hutchison, Finance

Chair, Assembly, Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly, Fairbanks; Patrice Lee, Citizens for Clean Air, Fairbanks; Don Gray, Self, Fairbanks; John Eberhart, Mayor, City of Fairbanks; Adam Krynicki, Employee, Office of Intellectual Property and Commercialization, UAF, Fairbanks; June Thomasson, Self, Fairbanks; Ron Yarnell, Owner, All About Adventure, Fairbanks; David Venenburg, Executive Director, Downtown Association of Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Robert Silvertsen, Member, City Council, Ketchikan; Dan Bockhorst, Manager, Ketchikan Gateway Borough; Trey Acteson, CEO, Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA), Ketchikan; Dee Pond, Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, Big Lake; Melissa Coady, Member, Talkeetna Community Council, Talkeetna; Jason Mayrand, Mayor, City of Nenana; Lynn Bateman, Director, Coffman Cove Community Library, Coffman Cove; Carolyn Bateman, Self, Coffman Cove; Howard Mermelstein, Executive Director, Tetlin Village Council, Tetlin; Molly Wood, Member, Chase Community Council, Chase; Earnest Arnold, Self, Tanacross; Ryan Stencel, Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District, Anchorage; Rhonda Pitka, First Chief, Beaver Village Council, Beaver; Ruth Wood, Self, Talkeetna; Kelly Swihart, Chief, Police Department, Petersburg; Stephan Giesbrecht, Petersburg Borough, Petersburg; Shawn Eisele, Self, Juneau; Axel Burgheim, Self, Anchorage; Suzi Pearson, Executive Director, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Anchorage; Virginia McCaslin, Programs Manager, Disability Abuse Response Team, AWAIC, Anchorage; Anna Brenninger, Member, Friends of the Library, Anchorage; Cathleen McLaughlin, Director, Partners for Progress Re-Entry Center, Anchorage; Regina Manteufel, Creator, Back to Work Network, Anchorage; Kylee Singh, Self, Anchorage; Carolyn Sayre, Self, Talkeetna; Melissa Martin, Self, Anchorage; Willi Prittie, Self, Sunshine; Leonard Menka, Self, Copper River; Jan Wrentmore, Self, Skagway; Shelby Surdick, Self, Skagway; Rachel Ford, Taiya Inlet Watershed Council, Skagway; Dustin Craney, Self, Skagway; C.E. Furbish, Self, Skagway; Deb Potter, Business Owner, Skagway; Jen Thuss, Self, Skagway; Cory Thole, Self, Skagway; Israel Mahay, Mahay's River Boat Service, Talkeetna; Ellen Wolf, Self, Talkeetna; Jeff Trotter, Head Football Coach, East High School, Anchorage; Mary Rasmussen, Self, Anchorage; Katherine Erickson, Self, Wasilla; Rich Koch, City Manager, Kenai; Deborah Mole, Self, Anchorage; Kerry Maclane, Chairman, Southeast Soil and Water Conservation District, Sitka; Dan Fauske, Board Member, Board of Directors, Cold Climate Housing Research

Center, Anchorage; Tara Bicknell, Soboloff-McRae Veterans Village and Wellness Center, Haines.

SUMMARY

CSSB 119(FIN)

BUDGET: CAPITAL

CSSB 119(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#sb119

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 119(FIN) am

"An Act making and amending appropriations, including capital appropriations, supplemental appropriations, reappropriations, and other appropriations; making appropriations to capitalize funds; and providing for an effective date."

[5:36:32 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Neuman stated that testimony from the Denali Deaf Community Center would be heard initially due to the testifiers' early flight plans out of Juneau.

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY

[5:36:53 PM](#)

ANTHONY DEMARE, DENALI DEAF COMMUNITY CENTER, ANCHORAGE, informed the committee that he worked with deaf children at the Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He shared a story about the loss of his hearing as a young boy. He stated that his parents enrolled him in a school for the deaf, where he learned American Sign Language, which allowed him to communicate and succeed. He pointed out that 20 thousand deaf and hard-of-hearing Alaskans required services. He explained that the Denali Deaf Community Center hoped to provide services including interpreter referral, employment, independent living skills and social services for deaf people in one central location. The centralized location would allow for cost savings.

[5:40:04 PM](#)

MORGAN EVANS, DENALI DEAF COMMUNITY CENTER, ANCHORAGE, discussed the necessity of the Denali Deaf Community Center. He believed that the center was full of possibility in its ability to help deaf people overcome communication barriers. He explained that he could speak with his voice, but some people had difficulty understanding him so he preferred to use American Sign Language to communicate. He believed that the center would enable support for other hard-of-hearing Alaskans requiring help. He appreciated the committee members' time and support.

Vice-Chair Neuman asked about a location for the deaf center and the amount of funding requested.

Ms. Evans replied that a location had been secured on Fifth Avenue in Anchorage. The center needed \$700,000 for the facility. The entity was hoping to receive an additional \$1 million for building renovations. The entity had plans in place. She discussed other funds from the Alaska Foundation and potentially from the Rasmuson Foundation. The entity planned to meet with the Municipality of Anchorage to discuss other fund options as well.

TRACY PIFER, DENALI DEAF CENTER, ANCHORAGE, replied that a location and price had been determined. The location had been secured on Fifth Avenue in Anchorage Alaska. She stated that the center required \$700 thousand for the facility and an additional \$1 million for renovations. The renovation plans were in place, but the next step was securing the building.

[5:43:45 PM](#)

PAM MUELLER-GUY, DENALI DEAF COMMUNITY CENTER, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Denali Deaf Community Center. She stated that 30 babies were born deaf in the state every year. The parents of these children required additional information about available resources. She stated that people can fly into Juneau, which made the process difficult. She mentioned early screening for infants and all of the tools that would be available in one centralized location. She wished that deaf people had a place to go to access the necessary services.

[5:47:33 PM](#)

Ms. Pifer introduced herself again as the interpreter for the testifiers. She stated her experience working with deaf and hard-of-hearing Alaskans. She stated that the building was in its third phase with the legislature having funded phases one and two. She stated that the building was secured with a lease-to-own agreement and once the building was purchased, social enterprise businesses would occupy the space. She described the center's many uses. The project was only \$1 million short of its goal. She stressed that the completion of the goal would complete any requests to the legislature for future funding, as the enterprise businesses would cover the ongoing costs. She spoke about the needs of the parents of deaf children. She worked at the Alaska State School for the Hard of Hearing. She pointed out that deaf and hard-of-hearing people had huge gaps in their knowledge without the ability to overhear certain facts.

[5:51:10 PM](#)

JOE DINNOCENZO, KODIAK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke about two CAPSIS requests, one to fund the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts for \$1.2 million, which provided administration and payroll for the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation. He mentioned another request of \$213 thousand for the replacement of culverts that were blocking salmon moving upstream. He noted that the upgrade would allow for a more reliable transportation system and promote Kodiak's salmon resources.

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Vice-Chair Neuman noted that testimony sign-up would be open until 8.

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NICK SZABO, TREASURER, ALASKA SEARCH AND RESCUE, KODIAK (via teleconference), stated that the Alaska Search and Rescue Association (ASARA) was a non-profit affiliation of 48 volunteer organizations statewide. He pointed out that the volunteers answered calls for help that commonly interrupted day jobs and family life. He expressed gratitude for the training funds received five years prior. None of the organizations had paid employees; every dollar was spent on training, equipment and supplies. He discussed

the need to train new people and provide advanced training for those already in the program. He worked under the supervision of the Alaska State Troopers. He stated that the request would be greater without volunteers.

[5:57:21 PM](#)

AMY RUSSEL-JAMGOCHIN, KAWERAK INC., NOME (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding the Alaska Native Cultural Center in a capital request for \$1.9 million. The request was initially for library matching funds. She spoke about the importance of the center to the community. She stated that the recession hit the community hard, and the funding for the building allowed the community to achieve partnership and collaboration that added to the viability of Nome. She stated that the timing was out of the city's control. She saw much funding allocated to other items, while the cultural center provided an important solution. She spoke about honoring Richard Foster.

[6:01:30 PM](#)

Co-Chair Austerman stated that he and Co-Chair Stoltze had duties that required his intermittent absence during the hearing.

[6:01:56 PM](#)

CLAY KOPLIN, CEO, CORDOVA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support of \$6.5 million for the Cordova Center, which was reduced to \$1 million in the CS. He stated that the center was part of a chain of economic investments in Prince William Sound beginning with the Whittier Tunnel. The Cordova Center was vetted by the community for 20 years and met a variety of needs including arts and convention space, emergency response and disaster preparation. He stated that the building would replace several old buildings. The Cordova Center was near completion. He spoke about the need for larger space for community gatherings.

[6:04:32 PM](#)

BRET BRADFORD, MEMBER, CORDOVA CITY COUNCIL, CORDOVA (via teleconference), requested reinstatement of \$6.5 million in matching funds to complete the Cordova Center. He spoke

about the many community benefits the center would provide including a new City Hall, library and museum facilities. The center would fulfill the need for economic diversity and create economic stimulus, which would affect the entire community.

6:06:24 PM

JENNIFER GIBBINS, PRESIDENT, CORDOVA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CORDOVA (via teleconference), requested the reinstatement of \$6.5 million in matching funds to complete the Cordova Center. She stated that the small businesses would continue to succeed and fishermen would continue to fish in the area. The chamber of commerce deemed the center an important asset.

6:07:38 PM

HEIDI CHAY, DISTRICT MANAGER, KENAI SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of the \$1.2 million request for the soil and water conservation district. She noted that the districts were locally-governed and state-authorized entities with responsibilities delegated by the Department of Natural Resources under Alaska statute. She described the district's responsibilities for conserving soil and clean water. She mentioned the preservation of soil and plants in the elementary schools in the Kenai Peninsula. She stated that the organization was an essential part of agricultural progress in the state.

6:10:36 PM

KEN RAY, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference) testified in support of the Wasilla bypass. He stated that the bypass would serve the entire valley with safety needs. The item would provide early acquisitions with right of way. He opined that the bypass would be a wise use of state funds. He advocated for moving the project along.

6:12:22 PM

DICK ZOBEL, WASILLA SOIL WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for soil and water conservation. He found achieving funding a struggle despite multiple requests to the Department of Natural Resources. He stated that he worked

as a farmer and was a long-time member of the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District. The conservation district work in Wasilla was accomplished with volunteer efforts with minimal funding through various grants. Basic funding would allow the payment of administrative costs. He stated that the organization's volunteers provided ample support. He requested reinstatement of the \$1.2 million request.

[6:15:49 PM](#)

JEFF CLARK, ALASKA TRAUMA CARE FUND, BETHEL (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the Alaska Trauma Care Fund. He stated that maintaining the level 4 trauma certification was one use of the funding. Another use was in training the nurses and providers and upkeep of equipment. He noted that he trained nurses in trauma nurse core curriculum to provide an advanced level of care for trauma patients. He mentioned that 10 trauma nurses were trained in the last week to aid those visiting the emergency room. Equipment was also purchased with the funding. The funding helped to purchase equipment that helped save lives in remote locations. He spoke about blood warmers and ultrasound devices that were purchased with the funding.

[6:19:30 PM](#)

EDWARD ALEXANDER, SECOND CHIEF FORT YUKON, FORT YUKON (via teleconference), testified in favor of a funding request for \$100 thousand, which would allow the leverage of \$287 thousand in additional funding from the Environmental Protection Agency. He anticipated the creation of 3-6 jobs in the community resulting from the presence of the greenhouse. He stated that lease agreements were completed for the project, which was 80 percent complete.

[6:21:32 PM](#)

PJ SIMON, ALLAKAKET TRIBE, ALLAKAKET (via teleconference), testified in support of a \$500 thousand request for the new Allakaket medical clinic. He stated that the center would replace a dilapidated building. The funding would leverage funding from the Rasmuson Foundation and another [undecipherable] foundation's funding. He stated that the modern clinic would aid in decline of influenza and would include running water and sewer. The clinic would bolster the health and welfare of all Allakaket residents. He

mentioned that there were 300 tribal members in the Allakaket tribe.

[6:23:39 PM](#)

LISA CHARLES, NEWTOK TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, NEWTOK (via teleconference), testified in support of the critical needs for her community. The three sections of needs included relocation for \$2.8 million, public facilities for \$945 thousand and public safety for \$125 thousand.

[6:24:57 PM](#)

CLAY WALKER, DENALI BOROUGH MAYOR, HEALY (via teleconference), testified in support of emergency medical service funding for his borough that hosted 400 thousand visitors annually. The volunteer fire department regularly transported patients in their ambulance over 220 miles to Fairbanks. The borough requested funding for a new ambulance, which was widely supported as the borough's number one priority totaling \$118 thousand. He mentioned a second request for \$170 thousand for an energy efficiency project that would pay for itself in less than two years. The project would plumb the cold boiler heat from Tri-Valley School to the elementary wing heated by fuel oil. An energy audit estimated annual savings of approximately \$90 thousand resulting from the project. He added that the Denali Borough was absent from the capital budget, so he urged the committee to consider the lasting benefits of the requests.

[6:27:13 PM](#)

JEFF SMEENK, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference) testified in support of the \$1.2 million request for the statewide soil and water conservation program. He shared the use of the \$60 thousand allocated to Palmer, for programs totaling \$300 thousand. He noted that he worked with invasive weeds that threatened salmon habitats in 2013 along with working with the Department of Environmental Conservation to reduce the hydrocarbons in the water resulting from recreational boating. He spoke about 2014 and his work with the United States Department of Agriculture to decrease soil loss from wind erosion.

[6:29:23 PM](#)

BERNICE JOHN, NEWTOK TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, NEWTOK (via teleconference), testified in favor of requests for public safety needs \$125 thousand and \$945 thousand, and relocation items \$2.8 million. All needs were critical for the community. She stated that a new water source was needed for the next 2-5 years.

[6:30:46 PM](#)

REX WRIGLEY, SELF, DELTA JUNCTION (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for the 12 soil and water conservation districts of \$1.2 million. He noted that the district provided support for Alaskan agriculture including nutrient and pest recommendations for farmers. Additional responsibilities included the control of noxious weeds in Alaska and compilation of agricultural research and addressing erosion and flooding concerns. The district provided the state the opportunity to grow its own food.

[6:32:38 PM](#)

KEN MARSH, UPPER SUSITNA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION, TRAPPER CREEK (via teleconference), spoke in favor of the \$1.2 million request for Alaskan soil and water conservation districts. He thanked the committee for the prior two years' support. He noted that the funding would allow each of the 12 districts to continue aiding the conservation needs of the state. He stated that the district saved time and money by providing efficient and vital work. He provided an example of an effort working with teenagers clearing streams and trails.

[6:35:24 PM](#)

TODD PETTIT, PALMER SOIL WATER CONSERVATION, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke in favor of \$1.2 million in funding for the 12 state soil and water conservation districts.. He stated that the funding would be distributed throughout the state. The grassroots community funded all districts to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality. He spoke about issues with funding regarding weed overgrowth.

[6:40:02 PM](#)

ROBIN WARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified in favor of restoration of non-profit funding for the Alaska craftsman home program and the cold climate housing

research center. She wished to utilize best practices and appropriate technology for the unique climate in Alaska. She stated that research, reports and information were provided by the center. The Alaska craftsman home program allowed for distribution of the center's information. The distribution relied on the two entities that were not included in this year's capital budget. She requested an additional \$750 thousand for the cold climate research center and \$250 thousand for the Alaska craftsman home program.

[6:42:44 PM](#)

CYNTHIA FRANKLIN, ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported funding for the Alaska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Intervention project for \$850 thousand. She spoke about the project, headquartered in Anchorage and utilizing the Anchorage police department, serving victims statewide. The goal of the project was increasing victim's safety and offender accountability. She stated that she had excellent data supporting the goal accomplishment. The program relocated victims. The project had statewide impact and was shown to be effective.

[6:44:54 PM](#)

JAMES TRUMP, SELF, TALKEETNA (via teleconference) testified in opposition to the \$32.7 million in funding for the Susitna Dam project.

[6:45:31 PM](#)

CARRIE LONGORIA, ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of \$850 thousand in funding for the Alaska Domestic Violence And Sexual Assault Intervention program funding. She noted that the statewide program served over 7,100 victims from 38 communities. She stated that the program's federal funding had been cut. She mentioned the partnership for victim's support and relocation for utilities, food, clothing, etc. She stated that the funding would provide much needed services for victims in Alaska.

[6:47:22 PM](#)

CAT BULLINGTON, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in favor of \$1.2 million in funding for the 12 state soil and water conservation districts. She spoke in support of the work to dispense funds and carry out projects. She spoke about the payroll and delivery of conservation education. She stated that financial support was provided for the 12 state districts with one full-time and one part-time employee. She explained that Alaska was unique and brought knowledge to the stewards of the planet and guardians of natural resources.

[6:49:42 PM](#)

PEGGY MCLAUGHLIN, PORT DIRECTOR, CITY OF UNALASKA (via teleconference), testified in support of two separate requests. The city requested the purchase of a fourth engine for the powerhouse. The city purchased a new generator for the community. The request of \$4.5 million would allow for installation of the engine to meet the growing demand of the city. The second request for the Unalaska Marine Center position 3 and 4 replacement. The city requested \$27 million of a \$40 million project to upgrade the Unalaska Marine Center. She mentioned the future for offshore drilling utilizing the center as a staging area.

[6:51:54 PM](#)

JEFF WELTZIN, TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE, TANANA, requested funding for 10 capital improvement projects. He explained his practice of leveraging federal and foundation dollars. He noted that eight clinics had been built throughout the interior by leveraging \$2.6 million in state funding with \$15 million of federal and foundation funding. He added that of six multipurpose community centers were also constructed throughout Interior Alaska. He listed the 10 requested projects that also leveraged federal and foundation dollars.

Representative Munoz requested a copy of Mr. Weltzin's letter.

[6:54:59 PM](#)

JACK HEBERT, PRESIDENT, CEO, COLD CLIMATE HOUSING RESEARCH CENTER, testified about his statewide organization founded by the Alaska State Homebuilding Association 14 years ago.

He stated that the center affected lives throughout the state. State funding was important and he mentioned his CAPSIS request number, 62130. He mentioned some members of the center's Board of Directors. He mentioned an energy-efficient building built at the University of Alaska. He explained that the center leased land from the university as a private corporation.

[6:57:32 PM](#)

JAMES MARCUS, DISTRICT MANAGER, SOUTHEAST SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COUNCIL, spoke in favor of \$1.2 million in funding for the 12 state soil and water conservation districts. He pointed out that the districts were classified as public-private partnerships under the purview of the Department of Natural Resources. He mentioned the district's goals including seafood processing and storage. Three goals of the council included regional food security, shellfish farming and invasive species management. He mentioned the goal of eradicating noxious plants in rural communities throughout Alaska.

[7:01:26 PM](#)

JAMES SULLIVAN, SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL, JUNEAU, testified against the \$35 million funding for the Juneau Access Road. He felt that the road would be among one of the most dangerous in the country. He pointed out that the environmental impact statement (EIS) was not scheduled for release until June. He felt that the legislature should wait until the project was presented as a final product, before designating funds for the road. He stressed that the road was designed to end at an unmanned ferry terminal, and restated the danger regarding that issue.

Representative Thompson asked for a copy of Mr. Sullivan's statement. Mr. Sullivan agreed to provide that information.

[7:05:16 PM](#)

LORRAINE KING, ELECTED OFFICIAL, EKWOK VILLAGE COUNCIL, EKWOK (via teleconference), testified in support of the \$204,000 for the Ekwok Landfill Access Road. She remarked that over ten years of planning occurred in order to formulate the proposal. She stated that the 115 foot bridge would cross Clutha Creek, and was critical to access the

landfill site. She remarked that the proposal was for \$2.68 million, and was separated into several components for material, freight, and installation. She stated that the existing landfill was scheduled to close, because it did not meet federal requirements and was too close to housing. The existing landfill was over capacity, suffered from windblown litter, and open burning. The dumpsite did not have an Alaskan Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Class III permit, and was an existing hazard to the community. The site was included in the high-threat site on the Indian Health Service Report to Congress on Tribal Open Dump Sanitation Deficiency List. She felt that Ekwok had a good plan to manage solid waste to protect the natural environment and human health.

[7:09:18 PM](#)

RONALD K. INOUE, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of funding for SLAM, and other library upgrade projects. He stated that the walls for the SLAM building were fabricated in Fairbanks, and then installed into the museum in Juneau. He stated that the fabrication of the walls established a new industry in Fairbanks, which employed about 30 people. He encouraged the committee to fully-fund the completion of the new SLAM building.

[7:10:39 PM](#)

RONDA SCHLUMBOHM, BOREAL ALASKA - LEARNING, ADAPTATION, PRODUCTION (BAKLAP), FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of \$700,000 for BAKLAP's One Tree program. She taught a 2-3 class just south of Fairbanks, in the heart of the Boreal Forest. She stated that the area was a beautiful place to teach and raise children. The community was 50 miles from Fairbanks, so the students were not given the same opportunities as those living in Fairbanks. She stated that field trips to Fairbanks required hours of travel, which left for limited time for educational opportunities. She announced that scientists visited her classroom once a week, which was possible through BAKLAP, which changed the dynamic of the science program in her school. She stated that Zack Myers, one of the visiting scientists, spent an hour a week in her classroom, teaching the children about birch trees.

[7:13:53 PM](#)

LOU BROWN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), urged the elimination of funding for the Road to Ambler. She felt that the \$8.5 million designated for the project could be used for other worthy projects. She testified in support of reinstating \$2 million for the Woodstove Change-out Program for the Fairbanks North Star Borough, in order to improve the borough's air quality. The poor air quality in Fairbanks has negatively impacted the health of children and adults. She noted that there was a large amount of funds in the capital budget designated for the replacement of the heat and power facility at the University of Fairbanks (UAF). She felt that the power plant was necessary, but felt that a new facility should be built to convert from a coal burning facility to a natural gas burning facility. She felt that there should be a focus away from burning coal, in order to continue to improve the air quality in Fairbanks.

[7:15:31 PM](#)

CHRISTINA-ALEX LIAKOS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified against funding for the new coal power plants and coal mining. She shared that she had developed asthma in Fairbanks, and her doctor stated that it was common for people to develop asthma in Fairbanks, because of the poor air quality. She moved away from Fairbanks, and her asthma improved. She felt that the legislature should focus on alternatives and solutions to the air quality problem. She testified in support of reinstating the \$2 million for the Fairbanks Woodstove Exchange Program. She spoke against the proposed heat and power plant at UAF, and felt that students' tuition should not increase to fund a project that proposed a great health risk. She felt that the funding could be used for health and education projects.

[7:17:40 PM](#)

KAITLIN VADLA, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), testified against the Susitna Dam and the Ambler Road, and felt that the money could be used for items with a greater purpose. She also spoke against the \$245 million for the new coal power plant at UAF. She felt that it would provide a poor return on investment, especially for a university that had a cutting edge international arctic research center and cold climate housing research center. She felt that the university would be investing in eighteenth century fuel sources. She felt that the money should be used to retrofit

the old plant, and invest the \$100 million on energy efficiency improvements to the buildings on campus.

7:18:53 PM

ZACH MEYERS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of \$700,000 for BAKLAP funding. He announced that BAKLAP was granted funding in 2011, and he was a participant in the program since its inception. He was a construction designer, and he was assigned to work with teachers throughout the district to develop projects and lessons that were engaging to both mind and body. He stated that BAKLAP had worked with over twelve schools and 800 students throughout the district. He announced that many students approached him to thank him for the work of BAKLAP. He felt that the work was innovative, exciting, and memorable.

7:21:28 PM

ANDREW ALLABY, BAKLAP, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for BAKLAP. He understood that the budget climate was challenging, but felt that the program should be funded until its completion. He stressed that wood biomass energy was increasingly vital to Alaskan communities and economies, and Alaskans needed a sustainable foundation to raise the next generation's biomass fuel. He quoted the Alaska Constitution, and shared that there was a mandate for the management of the natural resources for sustained yield. He felt that BAKLAP had a demonstrated capacity to bring young Alaskans, state agencies, and the University of Alaska (UA) together to ensure that the state met the responsibility outlined in the constitution. He stated that he was a current UAF student, studying forestry, so he understood the growing importance of Alaska's forest resource.

7:23:15 PM

BIRCH PAVELSKY, VOLUNTEER, BAKLAP ONE TREE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of funding for BAKLAP. He stated that he volunteered to help middle schools understand birch logs through crafting knitting needles, with the intent to understand tree structure. He felt that the analytical thinking required for the project was a metaphor that could be applied to science, engineering,

career choice, and elsewhere. He stressed that BAKLAP encouraged that kind of analytical thinking.

[7:24:28 PM](#)

JIM SACKETT, CEO, TOGHOTTHELE CORPORATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding the bridge over the Nenana River. He explained that the bridge was currently under construction, and would connect the road to the Parks Highway. The project was partially funded with \$6.5 million through a voter approved bond, and it was estimated that there was an additional \$1.5 million to complete the bridge to provide access to the Nenana gas basin. He remarked that the bridge would access UAF land, Mental Health Trust land, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, and Tanana Valley State Forest land.

[7:25:49 PM](#)

GLENN JUDAY, DIRECTOR, BAKLAP, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for BAKLAP. He stated that the program was developed to meet the demand for wood biomass energy research. He remarked that BAKLAP provided education through hands-on experience, and assists the state forest to meet the demand for wood biomass energy. He announced that BAKLAP was launched through a recent appropriation, and explained that the project was on-time and on-budget. The program had already produced some important new discoveries, including the first systematic assessment of forest regrowth on state harvest units in the Alaska Boreal Forest. He stated that the current funding request would support the completion of the analysis and publication of the results of the first finding. He announced that BAKLAP had uncovered important information regarding forest insects on growth, and the funding would initiate development of predictive tools for future forest yields. He stated that BAKLAP had identified which state forest management practices were producing acceptable tree-growth, and the requested funding would compare costs and identify which state forest practices produce an acceptable return on investment. He shared that BAKLAP was a partnership with DNR, UA, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

[7:29:07 PM](#)

LAUREN LYNCH, GRADUATE STUDENT, UAF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for BAKLAP. She stated that BAKLAP provided an opportunity for her to work with people of all different ages, and share some of her education. She stated that she had worked and learned from incredible teachers through the program. She observed that many elementary, middle, and high school students had benefitted from the BAKLAP program. She remarked that students had used many of their skills in other aspects of their lives, and shared some personal stories.

[7:31:51 PM](#)

JOHN RINGSTAD, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the completion of the Barnette Magnet School renovation.

[7:32:36 PM](#)

LUKE HOPKINS, MAYOR, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH (via teleconference), spoke in support of various economic development projects. He specifically spoke to \$11.2 million for phase 4 for the Barnette Magnet School. He encouraged support for the \$2 million for air quality mitigation. He urged support for the UAF power plant replacement funding. He also testified in support of funding the UAF engineering building completion. He stated that 40 percent of the economy in Fairbanks was based on the military, and he encouraged as much as \$250,000 to match the local contribution to military stabilization. He urged support of funding for BAKLAP, and educational opportunities through the STEM program. He urged the addition of \$400,000 for DCCED for economic development. He encouraged support of funding the statewide library construction grants.

[7:36:17 PM](#)

MERRILL SANFORD, MAYOR, CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, testified in support of the Juneau water project funding. He also spoke in support of SLAM funding. He also urged support of funding for the Juneau Access Project. He felt that speaking against the road would result in a poor economic decision. He stressed that roads were an economic driver for the state, just like the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS).

7:38:30 PM

DAVID SELUNIS-MESSIR, RURAL ENERGY COORDINATOR, TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fort Yukon Passive Solar Greenhouse. He stated that the project was the first of its kind north of the Arctic Circle, and would allow the community to heat a greenhouse for local food production for six months of the year with the use of an innovative passive solar heating system. The system used no oil or wood, but just the sun's rays, insulation, and thermal storage. He stated that the project had leveraged over \$300,000 worth of EPA and Department of Energy funding, was over 80 percent complete, and was slotted to complete the upcoming summer with the proposed funding. The local school district already had plans to purchase produce from private growers in Fort Yukon to serve in school lunches in 2015, and the Elders and Nutrition Program was planning to purchase fresh produce for elder community members across the Yukon Flats.

7:40:24 PM

SARAH OBED, DOYON LIMITED, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the \$100,000 for the Fort Yukon Greenhouse, and \$1.5 million for the City of Nenana bridge across the Nenana River. She remarked that the bridge would access UAF land, Mental Health Trust land, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, and Tanana Valley State Forest land.

7:41:21 PM

MIKE MUSICK, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), thanked the committee for including funding for a new power plant at UAF, but felt that it was a "black hole" for funding other worthy projects. He stressed that there were air quality issues in Fairbanks caused by wood burning. He encouraged the committee to reinstate funds to deal with the air quality issue. He remarked that he was at UAF before the current power plant was installed, and shared that the power plant was a technological leap from extremely dirty coal power to cleaner coal power. He remarked that there were even better technologies to allow for burning of the most ecologically friendly fuel source.

He also urged support of funding for the Barnette Magnet School renovation.

7:44:09 PM

TAMMI GANGULI, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding phase 4 of the Barnette Magnet School renovation. She shared that she and other community members had submitted written testimony. She felt that the project was important for enhancing children's health and safety. She felt that funding the last phase of the renovation would save money for Fairbanks and the state. She remarked that there were efficiencies in the project that would also save the state money.

Representative Wilson announced that she had read the submitted letters.

7:45:11 PM

LAURA COMER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified in support of funding to support clean air in Fairbanks. She announced that, according to the American Lung Association, Fairbanks was the ninth most polluted city for short-term particle pollution; and was tied fourteenth for the most year-round pollution. She stressed that funding for air quality mitigation programs, such as the Wood Stove Replacement Program, helped to curb energy costs, reduced fuel cost for owners, and improved the air quality for residents. She expressed concern over the removal of funding for the replacement program, while adding money for a new coal power plant at UAF. She remarked that coal power and old wood stoves were linked to asthma attacks, lung damage, increased risk of respiratory infection, and premature death. She urged the legislature to fully return \$2 million for the Fairbanks North Star Woodstove Exchange program.

7:47:01 PM

DIANE HUTCHISON, FINANCE CHAIR, ASSEMBLY, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH ASSEMBLY, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), appreciated the inclusion of a new heat and power plant at UAF, but emphasized that it should be a statewide project. She remarked that UA helped everyone in the state, not just Fairbanks. She urged the legislature to fully return \$2

million for the Fairbanks North Star Woodstove Exchange program.

[7:48:57 PM](#)

PATRICE LEE, CITIZENS FOR CLEAN AIR, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), urged the reinstatement of funding for the Woodstove Change Out program. She testified against funding for the new coal-powered plant at UAF. She expressed concern over the removal of funding for the replacement program, while adding money for a new coal power plant at UAF. She remarked that coal power and old wood stoves were linked to asthma attacks, lung damage, increased risk of respiratory infection, and premature death. She urged the legislature to fully return \$2 million for the Fairbanks North Star Woodstove Exchange program.

[7:51:26 PM](#)

DON GRAY, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of funding the UAF power plant. He stressed that the project was essential. He announced that the focus on power should be on more cost effective strategies with research and design vetted solutions as they are discovered. He felt that attempting current ineffective energy solutions would be costly to the state. He felt that a coal power plant, which was as clean as science could produce, at an affordable price should be the current solution. He remarked that there would continue to be discoveries of practical ways to obtain energy sources like wind, tidal, earth-heat differential produced power, and solar at affordable prices.

[7:55:54 PM](#)

JOHN EBERHART, MAYOR, CITY OF FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of \$250,000 for community service patrol. He explained that there was recent funding of an extra \$75,000 from the City of Fairbanks to expand the service to 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. He stressed that it was a public safety issue for the city. He also spoke in support of funding for a replacement of an ambulance. The 2003 ambulance needed replacement, along with two chest compression systems, and three cardiac monitors. Through mutual aid and automatic aid agreements, the replacement would affect the entire Fairbanks area. He

announced that the current ambulance was over ten years old, and had over 66,000 miles.

7:57:30 PM

ADAM KRYNICKI, EMPLOYEE, OFFICE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COMMERCIALIZATION, UAF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for high tech development in the state. He announced that, through the Alaska Technology Transfer Partnership, there was an increase in invention disclosures at UAF. He announced that UAF had the amount of invention and activity that was suited for a \$100 million a year research university. He remarked that the reason for the success was UAF's ability to engage its capacity for collaboration, small business innovation research agreements, and were licensing more technology than it ever had. He announced that, prior to 2011, UAF only licensed one technology. Currently, UAF licensed 37 technologies. Of those 37, ten went to Alaskan businesses with four start-up businesses.

7:59:47 PM

JUNE THOMASSON, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of reinstatement of the \$2 million for the Wood Stove change out program. She felt that Fairbanks was losing valuable residents because of the poor air quality in Fairbanks. She stated that she was a physician's assistant, and had patients who were unable to exercise because of air quality. She also spoke against funding for the road to Ambler, because she felt the residents did not support the road to Ambler. She also spoke in support of the proposed power plant at UAF, and encouraged the inclusion of funding the power plant's capability to use natural gas.

8:01:07 PM

RON YARNELL, OWNER, ALL ABOUT ADVENTURE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified against the funding for the Ambler Road. He felt that the money could be used for more worthy projects in Fairbanks such as the Fairbanks Clean Air Initiative or the UAF engineering building. He felt that the proposed road, a many other roads, were often not locally supported and only benefitted a limited number of companies and corporations at the expense of Alaskans. He stated that Nova Copper was a subsidiary of Nova Gold, and

the companies supporting the Ambler Road, had a terrible track record of failed mines throughout the state.

8:02:28 PM

DAVID VENENBURG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), echoed the remarks of Mayor Eberhart. He restated that effectiveness of the community service patrol (CSP) in Fairbanks. He stated that the funding for the patrol was the top legislative priority for the City of Fairbanks. The CSP had taken approximately 1300 publicly inebriated individuals into protective custody to obtain medical care. He remarked that public drunkenness in Fairbanks was non-criminal, so therefore the CSP allowed for police and fire patrol to monitor criminal activity.

8:04:27 PM

ROBERT SILVERTSEN, MEMBER, CITY COUNCIL, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Swan Lake Reservoir Expansion Project. The Swan Lake Project recently underwent a vigorous public vetting process, when was selected by Ketchikan and was considered the top community priority. The City of Ketchikan also passed a separate formal resolution strongly supporting the development of the project. He stated that the hydro-power enhancement project was critical infrastructure that was vital to the city, economic growth, and prosperity. The City of Ketchikan currently supplemented hydro-power production with diesel generation, in order to meet its annual energy requirements. The cost of diesel generation was approximately 24 cents per kilowatt hour, but the Swan Lake project would directly address that cost burden by alleviating Ketchikan's diesel dependency with providing important rate stability.

8:06:47 PM

DAN BOCKHORST, MANAGER, KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH (via teleconference), testified in support of \$12.3 million for the Swan Lake Reservoir Expansion Project and related that it was the Ketchikan Borough's number 1 priority. He stated that the project was essential to the continuing recovery of Ketchikan's economy, which had taken a huge blow from the loss of timber related jobs in the 1990s. He discussed the lingering impacts of the closure of the Ketchikan pulp

mill and pointed out that the current school enrollment in Ketchikan was 25 percent below the peak of when the borough suffered the loss of the mill. He stated that it was important to Ketchikan that it helped support its own projects and observed that the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and the City of Ketchikan had levied and collected more than \$35 million on local taxes annually; additionally they had incurred more than \$190 million in debt. He offered that Ketchikan residents were willing to make significant investments in public facilities for schools, hospitals, utilities, airports, fire stations, libraries, harbors, recreation facilities, and hydroelectric facilities. He pointed out that SEAPA had also incurred significant debt for its public facilities and urged the addition of funding for the project.

8:09:24 PM

TREY ACTESON, CEO, SOUTHEAST ALASKA POWER AGENCY (SEAPA), KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the funding request for \$12.3 million for the Swan Lake Reservoir Expansion Project. He stated that the existing reservoir had volatile inflows and that it had spilled water almost every year since its construction in the early 80s; additionally, spill water over the dam was energy that was lost forever. He stated that raising the dam would allow SEAPA to capture the clean renewable energy and use it to displace expensive diesel generation. He observed that one of the key findings in the Southeast Integrated Resource Plan was the lack of energy storage and noted that the Swan Lake project would address that need by providing an additional 25 percent in active storage to the reservoir; the storage increase would be achieved by raising the crest of the dam by 6 feet. He reported that the project would effectively raise the overall reservoir height by 15 feet and that it was an easy choice for his region because the power house, transmission lines, and other expensive infrastructure were already in place.

8:12:25 PM

BILL LEIGHTY, BUSINESS OWNER, JUNEAU, spoke against funding for the Juneau Access Project, and he felt that the money could be used for projects with greater cost benefit ratios. He stated that he had been a resident of Juneau for 40 years, and there were three prevailing issues that Juneau had faced in that time: 1) capital move anxiety; 2)

the myth that a road would make Juneau more anchored; and 3) the distraction that the lack of road caused lack of economic investment. He felt that the road would enhance capital move anxiety, because of accessibility.

[8:16:46 PM](#)

JAN DAWE, BAKLAP, JUNEAU, testified in support of the BAKLAP program funding. She echoed the comments of Mr. Juday and Mr. Lewis. She stated that there were six people in the Fairbanks Legislative Information Office (LIO) who were in support of the program. Those individuals would not be testifying in the current meeting, but they had submitted letters of support (copies on file). She remarked that the educational component of BAKLAP was called "K-20", because the power of the university was used to work with K-12 schools. She stated that over the last 18 months, BAKLAP had worked with over 30 teachers in 12 Fairbanks North Star schools, and over 850 students. During the summer, BAKLAP offered K-12 teachers continuing education courses. She stated that the BAKLAP methodology included integrated curriculum, which included science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and art instruction. She stressed that the arts provided a gateway to integrated curriculum.

[8:20:49 PM](#)

NANCY SEAMOUNT, TEACHER, JUNEAU, testified in support of \$225,000 for the Community in Schools (CIS) program. She stated that she had two other people with her who also would be testifying on the same topic. She announced that the staff of Juneau Douglas High School overwhelmingly supported the program. She remarked that the CIS site coordinator used his flexibility to intervene in school failure. She stated that the coordinator tracked down the failing students, and pushed those students to pass their classes resulting in on-time graduation. She announced that there was data outlining success rates, but remarked that there was not time to share that data. She stated that CIS was the largest and most effective community-based drop-out prevention program in the country, and used an evidence-based model. She shared that 99 percent of CIS targeted students stayed in school.

[8:22:55 PM](#)

DOUG BLANC, SITE COORDINATOR, CIS, JUNEAU DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL, JUNEAU testified in support of funding for CIS. He stated that CIS was important to Juneau schools and Juneau students. The program had a successful partnership with the Juneau School District for five years. He stated that CIS was a drop-out prevention program that operated on a national model. When the program was fully staffed at each Juneau high school, each school experienced at least a 10 percent increase in their graduation rate. The CIS staff had worked in local high schools and middle schools, and provided academic and non-academic services to hundreds of students. The CIS program worked with partner organizations to provide students to tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery, mental health services, after school programs, and in-school programs.

[8:24:18 PM](#)

BEN CORNELL, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of \$220,000 for CIS. He stated that the funding would help alleviate the stress of dealing with high school drop-outs in the judicial system. He remarked that he and his daughter had observed the individuals in downtown Juneau, who clearly had a drug problem. He remarked that many young people were living homeless in downtown Juneau, and felt that a high school diploma or attention while they were attending school may have helped these people to stay away from that lifestyle.

[8:26:47 PM](#)

RICHARD DAWENHAUWER, MEMBER, PARISH COUNCIL, ST. NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, JUNEAU, urged the reinstatement of funding for preservation work for St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church. He stated that the funding had been removed in the Senate Finance Committee. He understood the current financial situation in the state, and hoped that the state would consider adding the project to the budget. He felt that the funding would demonstrate state support for preservation of an important historic site in Juneau. He felt that even a small amount of legislative support would help the parish raise additional matching funds. He announced that he had some additional background information on the project.

[8:28:15 PM](#)

SALLY WILSON, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in opposition to the Juneau Access Project. She felt that the road out of Juneau would not enhance Juneau's economic climate, and would not increase the population or visitors to Juneau. She felt that the consideration of the geological and physical risks should preclude any consideration of the project. She felt that the cost benefit ratio was outrageous. She felt that the funding could be used for more worthy and beneficial projects to the state.

[8:30:27 PM](#)

DEE POND, ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, BIG LAKE (via teleconference), testified in support of the addition of the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts' request of \$1.2 million into the budget. She stated that the money would be distributed among the twelve state soil and water districts across the state. She announced that some of the districts would cease to function without the funding. The districts provide work on stream-bank restoration, wildlife habitat, salmon habitat, culvert replacement, trails, control of invasive plants, forest regeneration, and provided technical assistance to land users in both rural and urban environments.

[8:32:56 PM](#)

MELISSA COADY, MEMBER, TALKEETNA COMMUNITY COUNCIL, TALKEETNA (via teleconference), testified in opposition to the Susitna Watana Dam. She felt that \$5 billion was a poor investment in Alaska's energy future, and felt that items that were not included in the Alaska Energy Authority's request could increase the cost of the dam by several billion dollars.

[8:33:41 PM](#)

JASON MAYRAND, MAYOR, CITY OF NENANA (via teleconference), He explained that the bridge was currently under construction, and would connect the road to the Parks Highway. The project was partially funded with \$6.5 million through a voter approved bond, and it was estimated that there was an additional \$1.5 million to complete the bridge to provide access to the Nenana gas basin. He remarked that the bridge would access UAF land, Mental Health Trust land, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, and Tanana Valley State Forest land.

8:35:33 PM

LYNN BATEMAN, DIRECTOR, COFFMAN COVE COMMUNITY LIBRARY, COFFMAN COVE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the library construction project request. She stated that the Coffman Cove Community Library was listed number two on the request list along with Wasilla, Nome, and Thorn Bay. The total request was \$12.7 million, and each of the communities requesting library funding had their matching funds in order. All of the libraries had worked with the Foraker Group, and were shovel-ready. The Coffman Cove Community Library plan added the library to the existing post office and existing clinic, which would utilize the heat pump well source system that already existed.

8:37:44 PM

CAROLYN BATEMAN, SELF, COFFMAN COVE (via teleconference), echoed the comments of Ms. Lynn Bateman. She announced that Coffman Cove's timber industry was lost in 2002, so her community depended greatly on state and federal funds. She testified in support of funding for the library construction project request. She stated that the Coffman Cove Community Library was listed number two on the request list along with Wasilla, Nome, and Thorn Bay. The total request was \$12.7 million, and each of the communities requesting library funding had their matching funds in order. All of the libraries had worked with the Foraker Group, and were shovel-ready.

8:39:19 PM

HOWARD MERMELSTEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TETLIN VILLAGE COUNCIL, TETLIN (via teleconference), testified in support of the Tetlin Road Project. He stated that the project was in its final phase, and improvements would be made to the road that improves drainage, and increase safety and health. The improvements would greatly benefit the community and travelers. The Tetlin Road serves residents and is an economic driver as it provided a direct link for the village's economic development through the mineral industry. The road was the only access for the community to receive basic services like mail, health care, and education.

[8:42:46 PM](#)

MOLLY WOOD, MEMBER, CHASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL, CHASE (via teleconference), spoke against all funding for the Susitna Dam. She announced that the entire community of Chase was opposed to the dam. She felt that the project did not address Alaska's most urgent needs, and put local economies and salmon fisheries at risk. She urged the use of funds for other projects that would better meet the energy needs of Alaska like the Natural Gas Pipeline; funding for the return of a salmon fishery to the Susitna and upper Cook Inlet; and energy efficiency projects including those in rural villages.

[8:44:26 PM](#)

EARNEST ARNOLD, SELF, TANACROSS (via teleconference), urged support of the \$400,000 for the new multi-purpose facility that would provide space for a health clinic and community center. He stated that the funds would be used to leverage funds for a matching grant from the Rasmussen Foundation.

[8:46:04 PM](#)

RYAN STENCEL, ANCHORAGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding of the Sand Lake Elodea project and continuing services of the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District. The district would not be able to address the elodea and vegetation overgrowth in Sand Lake without the requested funding. She stated that the project already cost the district significant funds to barely deal with the issue, which inhibited the district's ability to provided services.

[8:47:46 PM](#)

RHONDA PITKA, FIRST CHIEF, BEAVER VILLAGE COUNCIL, BEAVER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the renovations of the first HUD home. She stressed that there was a desperate need for housing in Beaver. She stated that the last HUD home was built in 2008 by the Interior Regional Housing Authority. The requested funds would provide enough money to build three houses in Beaver. She remarked that the Beaver School had low enrollment, so Beaver was making efforts to attract families to the village. The current state of Beaver's housing made it

difficult for families to decide to move back to the village. She announced that the request was listed as the number one priority for the community of Beaver.

[8:49:23 PM](#)

RUTH WOOD, SELF, TALKEETNA (via teleconference) testified against the Susitna Dam. She stated that the project would cost more than \$5 billion, and would not supply affordable electricity. She felt that there were other more important projects that could be funded with the designated money. She felt that the money that was used to fund projects that did not seem to make sense was irresponsible.

[8:50:53 PM](#)

KELLY SWIHART, CHIEF, POLICE DEPARTMENT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the renovation of Petersburg's municipal building. He spoke to the deficiencies of the current municipal building as an adequate police and jail facility. He reported that the existing building was constructed in 1958 and had originally housed the public works maintenance garage; it had later been renovated into a police station, but the process had not been completed adequately. He reported that during the renovation, the foundation had not been properly tied in to the existing structure and that a second story was added to the poorly conceived foundation; as a result, the foundation was sinking in the middle from the weight of the second floor. He stated that the current jail facilities did not have adequate visiting room and required inmates to be moved out of secure areas for showering, visiting, and to receive medical and other treatment; the lack of security routinely put the public and employees in less than safe conditions. He discussed structural problems with the current municipal building and noted that when inmates showered, backed up water from the drain ran down the hallway towards the front door; as a result, employees and visitors had to walk past the contaminated water that was traversing a sloped floor to access other parts of the building.

[8:52:47 PM](#)

STEPHAN GIESBRECHT, PETERSBURG BOROUGH, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in support of \$9.7 million, needed to complete the Police Department Building. The

facility was dated and unsafe. The state jail facility was supported by the Alaska State Troopers. He noted the need for additional funding to complete the project.

8:54:29 PM

JANET KUSSART, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in favor of the Alaska Marine Highway System. spoke in opposition to the Juneau Access Project. She moved to Juneau with the understanding that there was no road connecting Juneau the national highway system. She felt that the ferry system was service to the public as Southeast Alaska's only "highway." She felt that the ferry was the safest way to travel, because there were many avalanche shoots along the proposed road. She remarked that the road would be built to serve Kensington Mine, which was a private entity, and took issue with using public funds to serve a business. She urged the committee to be used for current road repairs, complete SLAM, be put toward education, and maintain the current ferry system. She felt that the road was too dangerous, and was 90 miles of road to nowhere.

8:56:50 PM

ROB JORDAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA CRAFTSMAN HOME PROGRAM, JUNEAU, requested \$1 million for a hands-on energy efficiency training project through the Alaska Craftsman Home Program. He stated that the organization partnered with representatives from building industry, mortgage lenders, and housing authorities to provide more than 4000 hours of training per year in 30 communities to helping to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy costs. The training provided a value added benefit to programs like the Home Energy Rebate Program and the Weatherization Programs. He stressed that energy efficiency was very cost effective and was a worthy investment for reducing energy demand and waste.

9:00:11 PM

SHAWN EISELE, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference) testified against the Juneau Access Project. He felt that Juneau was already accessible. He remarked that the road literally went nowhere, and disagreed with Mayor Sanford's comments. He felt that Berners Bay was the epitome of local, wild recreations areas. He stated that the forests in the area were the most wild and productive forests in the City and

Borough of Juneau, and were test forests for the United States Forest Service to monitor what truly wild areas were like. He felt that the road would destroy the recreation in that area.

[9:02:25 PM](#)

AXEL BURGHEIM, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in against funding the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. He relayed that the coalition was not against hydro power and was aware of its benefits to the state. He opined that the scale of the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project was not acceptable and that hydroelectric facilities were not recognized as renewable at the size of the Susitna-Watana project. The coalition believed that the Susitna dam would not solve Alaska's energy problems and that the state could better spend its money elsewhere. He stated that the dam would be built in the location where he harvested his caribou and moose. He pointed out that he fished the river year round and set-netted at its mouth in the summers; he thought that it seemed crazy to spend billions to kill fish when you were spending millions to try and save them. He concluded that he and his family relied on the Susitna River for their way of life and that it was a healthy river that was abundant with Chinook, Sockeye, and Coho salmon.

[9:06:09 PM](#)

SUZI PEARSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ABUSED WOMEN'S AID IN CRISIS (AWAIC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), addressed the \$2 million request sponsored by Senator McGuire to expand the existing facility to meet demands. She explained that the shelter provided victims of domestic violence with support since 1977. The agency occupied the same building for approximately 35 years. She stated that the emergency shelter was the only one of its kind in a community of 290 thousand people. She stated that the 52 bed shelter operated at or over-capacity 50 percent of the time last year. She stated that services were limited due to lack of space to accommodate additional staff. She mentioned a separate request by the governor that was specific to repair and renovation.

[9:08:37 PM](#)

VIRGINIA MCCASLIN, PROGRAMS MANAGER, DISABILITY ABUSE RESPONSE TEAM, AWAIC, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of an additional \$1 million to expand AWAIC. She announced that working in domestic violence prevention was very difficult. She shared that she had recently observed a situation regarding an abused woman who was unable to find a safe shelter, because of lack of space at AWAIC.

[9:10:45 PM](#)

ANNA BRENNINGER, MEMBER, FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified for the requested \$10 million in funding for the Loussac Public Library. She stated that the Friends of the Library donated approximately \$90,000 per year to put books on the shelves of the library and sponsor critical library projects like the Summer Reading Program and the Innovation Laboratory. She stated that the Anchorage Library Foundation raised capital money for large projects.

[9:13:14 PM](#)

CATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN, DIRECTOR, PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS RE-ENTRY CENTER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified about the re-entry program. She stated that the center served 580 individuals leaving incarceration in the seven months since opening. The center enabled one to two hires each day leading to collaborations with landlords that were willing to rent to and employ participants. She stated that community-based re-entry programs were effective in other states and Alaska's experiment was successful. She noted that most prisoners were released in Anchorage so the program served people statewide.

[9:14:51 PM](#)

REGINA MANTEUFEL, CREATOR, BACK TO WORK NETWORK, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the \$5 million for Partners for Progress. She announced that she had worked with poor people and addicts become productive members of society.

Vice-Chair Neuman handed the gavel to Co-Chair Austerman.

[9:19:45 PM](#)

KYLEE SINGH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified against funding for the proposed Susitna Dam. She stated that the project would cost more than \$5 billion, and would not supply affordable electricity. She felt that there were other more important projects that could be funded with the designated money. She felt that the money that was used to fund projects that did not seem to make sense was irresponsible.

[9:20:45 PM](#)

JIM KACSH, MAYOR, CITY OF CORDOVA, spoke in support of \$6.5 million in funding for the Cordova Center. He discussed the slow recovery of Cordova after the Exxon Valdez oil spill and pointed out that the loss of herring and crab fisheries in the area had left families and businesses struggling in the winter months. She stated that the Cordova Center was at the core of an economic development plan to include to winter tourism, conventions, and meetings to Cordova's economy. He stated that the Cordova Center could bring over \$500,000 in new money every winter to Cordova. He stated that the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council had committed \$8.3 million to the project and that Cordova was asking \$6.5 million in matching funds. He concluded that the project would help keep Cordova's residents employed and businesses open during the long winter months.

[9:22:17 PM](#)

ALBERT JUDSON, SELF, JUNEAU, testified against the Juneau Access Project. He referred to a prepared testimony (copy on file). He felt that the people of all three communities had expressed great opposition to the project, and felt that they had been purposefully excluded from meetings. He felt that the money should be used to only improve the ferry system. He felt that the committee did not understand the environmental impacts of the project.

[9:25:38 PM](#)

MARTHA MOORE, VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBER, ALASKA BRAIN INJURY NETWORK (ABIN), JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for ABIN. She stated that ABIN was a small non-profit organization dedicated to helping brain injured Alaskans find treatment and services that would improve their lives and help them return to productivity. She stated that ABIN was the only organizations of its kind in the state. She

explained that ABIN had helped hundreds of brain injury survivors. Alaska had one of the highest rates of brain injuries in the country, and as awareness increases, more people are screening and identified as having a brain injury.

[9:27:28 PM](#)

PAUL FUHS, SELF, FAIRVIEW, testified in support of requested \$5 million for a three year program for controlling the chronic inebriates in Anchorage. He remarked that many of the chronic inebriates began drinking in the morning, by the afternoon they were vomiting anywhere they could find, exposing themselves, passing out, and continuing with the same behavior the next day. He stated that the Fairview Business Association hired some of the best social service providers in Anchorage, who agreed to divert people from prison. He stated that there was current development of a case-managed coordinated system to enhance accountability. He stressed that the alcohol tax should be used to fund substance abuse treatment.

[9:31:27 PM](#)

CAROLYN SAYRE, SELF, TALKEETNA (via teleconference) testified in opposition to Susitna-Watana hydroelectric project funding. She stated that \$30.9 million was previously allocated for the necessary work. The licensing study efforts were on hold due to inability to fulfill the study schedule.

[9:32:50 PM](#)

MELISSA MARTIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding the East High School Track and Field Stadium. She stated that the current stadium was in great disrepair. The outdoor field was used by all types of community groups for various types of activities. She felt that the spectator stands were in major disrepair, and in worse shape than most of the local middle schools. She stated that the property had potential for great revenue.

[9:34:45 PM](#)

WILLI PRITTIE, SELF, SUNSHINE (via teleconference) testified in opposition to funding for the Susitna-Watana hydroelectric project. He strongly supported investment in

future technologies as opposed to past problems. He wished to avoid mistakes seen in the Lower 48 related to dam projects.

[9:36:32 PM](#)

LEONARD MENKA, SELF, COPPER RIVER (via teleconference), discussed historical experience in Alaska related to TAPS, but lost connection.

[9:38:31 PM](#)

JAN WRENTMORE, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference) testified against funding the Juneau Access Road. She believed that the state spending was premature without good data regarding final costs. She mentioned the increased fiscal note from \$260 million to \$507 million. She understood that \$180 million had been appropriated to the project. She expressed confusion about the additional \$35 million in proposed funding. She added that the Juneau Access Road project was not construction ready.

[9:40:20 PM](#)

SHELBY SURDICK, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference), spoke against the Juneau Access Project. She understood that there were many financial and transportation issues that the residents of Skagway are faced with, but did not approve of the project. She stated that she was a fourth generation Skagwegian, and understood first-hand the transportation issues that Skagway faced. She did not think that the proposed road would solve any transportation issues.

[9:41:53 PM](#)

RACHEL FORD, TAIYA INLET WATERSHED COUNCIL, SKAGWAY (via teleconference), spoke against the Juneau Access Project. She felt that the proposal was dangerous and inefficient. She encouraged the committee to reallocate the \$35 million to less destructive projects. She felt that the ferry/road concept for travel along the Lynn Canal would be hardly useable due to avalanches and would scar the currently undeveloped landscape. She wanted the funds to be used to improve the ferry system.

[9:42:33 PM](#)

DUSTIN CRANEY, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference), spoke against the Juneau Access Project. He felt that the money could be used for more important projects that were shovel-ready. He stressed that the project did not have local support, because Juneau voted "no" on the project, and Haines and Skagway strongly opposed the project. He remarked that the Army Corps of Engineers, DOT, and the EPA did not agree on the best route for the road. He also pointed out that the EIS was not complete and there was no consensus on the cost of the project.

[9:43:43 PM](#)

C.E. FURBISH, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference), spoke against the Juneau Access Project. She felt that the money should be used for other worthy, uncontroversial, and community-supported projects. She remarked that the Army Corps of Engineers, DOT, and the EPA did not agree on the best route for the road. She also pointed out that the EIS was not complete and there was no consensus on the cost of the project.

[9:45:28 PM](#)

DEB POTTER, BUSINESS OWNER, SKAGWAY (via teleconference) testified against funding the Juneau Access Project. She felt that the project was controversial and a poor use of money. She encouraged the committee to reallocate the \$35 million to less destructive projects. She felt that the ferry/road concept for travel along the Lynn Canal would be hardly useable due to avalanches and would scar the currently undeveloped landscape. She wanted the funds to be used to improve the ferry system. She also felt that the money could be used for education.

[9:47:11 PM](#)

JEN THUSS, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference) testified against funding the Juneau Access Road. She believed that the state spending was premature without good data regarding final costs. She mentioned the increased fiscal note from \$260 million to \$507 million. She understood that \$180 million had been appropriated to the project. She expressed confusion about the additional \$35 million in proposed funding. She added that the Juneau Access Road project was not construction ready.

[9:48:13 PM](#)

CORY THOLE, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference) testified in opposition to the \$35 million contribution to the Juneau Access Road. He stated that the cost of the road including maintenance was excessive. He stated that if the road was extended, the community would be responsible for the cost of the emergency response in the event of landslide or avalanche. He suggested contributing the proposed funding to education. He urged the committee to disregard the comments of Mayor Sanford regarding comparing the proposed road to TAPS.

[9:50:45 PM](#)

ISRAEL MAHAY, MAHAY'S RIVER BOAT SERVICE, TALKEETNA (via teleconference), spoke in against funding the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. He relayed that the coalition was not against hydro power and was aware of its benefits to the state. He opined that the scale of the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project was not acceptable and that hydroelectric facilities were not recognized as renewable at the size of the Susitna-Watana project. The coalition believed that the Susitna dam would not solve Alaska's energy problems and that the state could better spend its money elsewhere. He stated that the dam would be built in the location where he harvested his caribou and moose. He pointed out that he fished the river year round and set-netted at its mouth in the summers; he thought that it seemed crazy to spend billions to kill fish when you were spending millions to try and save them. He concluded that he and his family relied on the Susitna River for their way of life and that it was a healthy river that was abundant with Chinook, Sockeye, and Coho salmon.

[9:51:55 PM](#)

ELLEN WOLF, SELF, TALKEETNA (via teleconference), urged the committee to avoid allocation of funds for the proposed Susitna-Watana hydroelectric project. She stated that over 6000 Alaskans opposed the dam and provided concerns and frustrations regarding the projects that were left unfunded.

[9:53:02 PM](#)

JEFF TROTTER, HEAD FOOTBALL COACH, EAST HIGH SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the inclusion of funding for the East High School field project. He stated that the current stadium was in great disrepair. The outdoor field was used by all types of community groups for various types of activities. He felt that the spectator stands were in major disrepair, and in worse shape than most of the local middle schools. He stated that the property had potential for great revenue.

[9:55:24 PM](#)

Mr. Menka added to his previous testimony. He stated that he had a degree in History, and remarked that there were many projects that were worthy of state funding.

[9:57:37 PM](#)

MARY RASMUSSEN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified for the requested \$10 million in funding for the Loussac Public Library. She stated that the Friends of the Library donated approximately \$90,000 per year to put books on the shelves of the library and sponsor critical library projects like the Summer Reading Program and the Innovation Laboratory. She stated that the Anchorage Library Foundation raised capital money for large projects.

[9:59:18 PM](#)

Co-Chair Stoltze queried the status of the bond election. Ms. Rasmussen replied that the bond vote lost by 14 votes.

[9:59:40 PM](#)

KATHERINE ERICKSON, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference) testified against the Susitna Dam. She stated that the project would cost more than \$5 billion, and would not supply affordable electricity. She felt that there were other more important projects that could be funded with the designated money. She felt that the money that was used to fund projects that did not seem to make sense was irresponsible.

[10:00:38 PM](#)

RICH KOCH, CITY MANAGER, KENAI (via teleconference), urged inclusion of \$2.1 million for the construction of an access

road to the south shore of the mouth of the Kenai River, that would provide access to over 10,000 personal use fishery participants each year. He stated that the project was submitted late, so it was not considered by the Senate Finance Committee.

[10:03:37 PM](#)

DEBORAH MOLE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified for the requested \$10 million in funding for the Loussac Public Library. She stated that the Friends of the Library donated approximately \$90,000 per year to put books on the shelves of the library and sponsor critical library projects like the Summer Reading Program and the Innovation Laboratory. She stated that the Anchorage Library Foundation raised capital money for large projects.

[10:06:13 PM](#)

KERRY MACLANE, CHAIRMAN, SOUTHEAST SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, SITKA (via teleconference), urged the inclusion of \$1.2 million for the Statewide Soil and Water Conservation Program, specifically the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD). He stated that the funds would be used for twelve districts. The AACD handled payroll and served as a fiscal agent to provide funding for additional grants. He stated that there were several partnerships, and there would be a mariculture training workshop in Kake in the upcoming spring. The workshop would feature experienced oyster farmers and scientists who would provide scientific business and marketing classes.

[10:09:03 PM](#)

DAN FAUSKE, BOARD MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COLD CLIMATE HOUSING RESEARCH CENTER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Cold Climate Housing Research Center. He stated that the organization had made immense contributions to develop energy research. He remarked that one of the biggest impediments for home ownership in rural Alaska was the cost of energy. He stressed that the center provided an industry to Alaska.

[10:11:19 PM](#)

TARA BICKNELL, SOBOLOFF-MCRAE VETERANS VILLAGE AND WELLNESS CENTER, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in support of \$500,000 for the Soboloff-McRae Veterans Village and Wellness Center. She explained that the funding would be used to build over 10,000 square feet for Alaska veterans and over 10,000 square feet of service space for the health care groups that serve the region. She announced that the funding would almost complete the project. The project would help to close the housing gap for veterans across the state. It would also improve health care and create jobs for the region.

Co-Chair Austerman CLOSED public testimony.

CSSB 119(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#  
ADJOURNMENT  
10:16:16 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.