

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 4, 2013

2:36 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair  
Representative Doug Isaacson, Vice Chair  
Representative Eric Feige  
Representative Lynn Gattis  
Representative Bob Lynn  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Craig Johnson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 24

"An Act relating to the Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board."

- MOVED HCS SB 24(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 24

SHORT TITLE: MARINE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) STEVENS

01/18/13	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/13	(S)	TRA, FIN
02/19/13	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/19/13	(S)	Moved SB 24 Out of Committee
02/19/13	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
02/20/13	(S)	TRA RPT 4DP 1NR
02/20/13	(S)	DP: EGAN, BISHOP, DYSON, FAIRCLOUGH
02/20/13	(S)	NR: FRENCH
03/15/13	(S)	FIN RPT 2DP 3NR
03/15/13	(S)	DP: MEYER, BISHOP
03/15/13	(S)	NR: KELLY, DUNLEAVY, OLSON
03/15/13	(S)	FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
03/15/13	(S)	Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled
03/29/13	(S)	TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/29/13	(S)	VERSION: SB 24

04/01/13 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
04/01/13 (H) TRA, FIN  
04/04/13 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

DOUG LETCH, Staff  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified on behalf of the sponsor of SB 24.

JOE BAILOR, Economic Development Specialist  
Kodiak Chamber of Commerce  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 24.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[2:36:19 PM](#)

**CHAIR PEGGY WILSON** called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:36 p.m. Representatives Feige, Lynn, Kreiss-Tomkins, Gattis, Isaacson, P. Wilson were present at the call to order.

#### **SB 24-MARINE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

[2:36:54 PM](#)

CHAIR P. WILSON announced that the only order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 24, "An Act relating to the Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board."

[2:37:18 PM](#)

DOUG LETCH, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the sponsor, stated that SB 24 would add an additional seat to the 11-member Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB). The new seat would represent the Kenai Peninsula areas of Seldovia and Homer, and the Kodiak Island communities that receive ferry service, including Kodiak, [and the smaller communities of Port Lions, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Seldovia, and Homer]. The additional MTAB member would allow these communities to submit names to serve on the board. Additionally, the bill would allow Gustavus an

opportunity to apply to the board since this community has had ferry service in recent years. He clarified that this change would not guarantee that anyone from these communities would be appointed to serve; however, it would give them an opportunity to advance a name for consideration to the MTAB.

[2:39:24 PM](#)

MR. LETCH stated that the sponsor questioned the even number membership of the MTAB since the bill would increase membership to 12 members. The sponsor has subsequently discussed this with the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) liaison. He provided additional information. First, there are not any bylaws for the MTAB. Second, there has never been a tie vote; however, in the event of a tie vote the issue would die. He offered his belief that the MTAB currently seems to get along well, without any personality conflicts. Further, the MTAB's role is to provide an advisory role on marine transportation issues. He related the bill has a small fiscal note in the amount of \$3,000 per year. The board requires members to attend one meeting in person each year. The bill had unanimous support in the Senate when it came up for a vote. He characterized this bill as a good bill that will give people opportunities to better represent their communities on the MTAB, in particular, since the area represents a large geographical area, stretching from the Aleutian chain to Prince William Sound and the Kenai Peninsula area of Kachemak Bay. He thanked members and understood an amendment may be forthcoming.

[2:41:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON also questioned the even number of MTAB members and asked if it is common for state boards to not have bylaws.

MR. LETSCH answered he was unsure, but offered to find out for the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON pointed out the even-numbered membership on the board could result in split decisions. He offered his support for the bill; however, he did raise the concern.

[2:42:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS said she has served on municipal advisory boards, but has not served on state advisory boards. She recalled her groups got together as working groups and served in

an advisory capacity. She further recalled the municipal groups could advise; however, the municipal officials could choose to do something else. She offered her belief that the key is that the MTAB is advisory in nature.

[2:43:26 PM](#)

CHAIR P. WILSON recalled the MTAB was created via an executive order under Governor Murkowski, but the next governor halted the MTAB. However, since the MTAB is so important to communities, she subsequently introduced a bill to place the MTAB into statute. She offered her belief that the MTAB has made a difference. While everyone wants to see services expand, she cautioned that she did not want services expand at the expense of losing service for communities currently served. She would like to ensure that existing services are not decreased. She also suggested that the MTAB must be careful in this regard.

[2:45:02 PM](#)

MR. LETCH acknowledged Chair Wilson has raised a good point and the MTAB's history is accurate. He recalled the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce considered MTAB membership, too, and is one reason the sponsor is limiting the board membership to just add one seat; that the goal is to keep the MTAB's membership as small as possible, but expand the communities' sense of being represented. He pointed out that Kodiak is very reliant on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). He remarked that the community is vocal on questions about vehicle maintenance and scheduling. Senator Stevens frequently hears from constituents throughout the year. The intent of the bill is to separate a little of the large geographic area with no malice towards the current MTAB representative for the area, who is the mayor of Unalaska. Instead, the bill would give the communities more voice on issues since the AMHS is Kodiak's highway as well as the small communities also served by ferries. In conclusion, he related that the bill was introduced in response to the communities' need with the added goal of keeping the cost very low.

[2:46:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE clarified that the bylaws are addressed in statute under AS 65.

[2:47:15 PM](#)

JOE BAILOR, Economic Development Specialist, Kodiak Chamber of Commerce, offered his support for SB 24, which will add an additional seat for Southcentral Alaska to the MTAB board. He said that this community needs adequate representation for the Kodiak region to communicate service needs for the region. The Kodiak region has been growing and last summer the AMHS added Old Harbor and Ouzinkie to its M/V Tustumena route. This brings the total number of communities served on Kodiak Island to four. The community needs reliable and consistent marine transportation to fuel growth and development for the whole island. Many businesses and individuals rely on the M/V Tustumena and the M/V Kennicott to provide basic transportation and shipping needs to the Kodiak region. The Kodiak region, like other medium-sized Alaskan communities, has seen a loss and consolidation of local businesses. The community has become more reliant on the Anchorage, and Kenai areas to provide basic needs. However, the only link to those communities is the AMHS except for air freight. A few years ago, Kodiak Island lost regular barge service from Western Pioneer in Seattle. This forced the village leadership to look for other transportation solutions for their basic necessities, which sometimes has involved using more costly air freight. The U.S. Coast Guard transfers continue each summer and many families use the AMHS to relocate their families to and from Kodiak Island. Further, local schools and activity groups use the ferry to keep costs down and enable more kids to travel to various communities to compete in academics and sports and to also bring students to Kodiak for home meets and competition events. The economy in the Kodiak region is tied to its infrastructure, which the community needs to continue to develop, which includes the AMHS, to support growth for the region. The first step requires good communication, which will come with the added seat on the MTAB to represent Kodiak, [Old Harbor, Port Lions, Ouzinkie, Seldovia, and Homer]. In conclusion, he said that Kodiak and Southcentral Alaska needs the AMHS's support. He urged members to pass SB 24 this legislative session.

[2:50:30 PM](#)

CHAIR P. WILSON made a motion to adopt Conceptual Amendment 1, on page 2, line 10, delete "retired" and add "with 20 or more years" after "engineer."

CHAIR P. WILSON explained that it is sometimes difficult to find retired people willing to serve [on the MTAB], so an alternative would be to have someone serve who has 20 or more years of experience.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE objected for purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE removed his objection.

[2:51:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE moved to amend Conceptual Amendment 1, to add "experience" after "with 20 or more years". There being no objection, the amendment to Conceptual Amendment 1 was adopted.

[2:52:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked whether the source of Conceptual Amendment 1 was feedback from MTAB.

CHAIR P. WILSON answered yes; a member of MTA suggested it.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS removed his objection.

CHAIR P. WILSON announced that Conceptual Amendment 1, as amended was adopted.

[2:53:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE moved to report SB 24, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no further objection, the HCS SB 24(TRA) was reported from the House Transportation Standing Committee.

[2:54:41 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.