

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 26, 2014

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Fred Dyson, Vice Chair
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Lesil McGuire
Senator Anna Fairclough
Senator Hollis French

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 26

Urging the United States Congress to provide a means for consistently and equitably sharing with all oil and gas producing states adjacent to federal outer continental shelf areas a portion of revenue generated from oil and gas development on the outer continental shelf to ensure that those states develop necessary infrastructure to support outer continental shelf development and preserve environmental integrity.

- MOVED HJR 26 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(RES)

Supporting the introduction and enactment of federal legislation acknowledging that the federal government is financially responsible under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for the remediation of contaminated land subject to conveyance under the Act.

- MOVED SCS CSHJR 15(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 137

"An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 137 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 105

"An Act requiring the state to quitclaim to the federal government land or an interest in land that was wrongfully or erroneously conveyed to the state by the federal government."

- BILL HEARING POSTPONED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 26

SHORT TITLE: OFFSHORE OIL & GAS REVENUE SHARING

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) SADDLER

02/17/14	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/17/14	(H)	RES
02/19/14	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
02/19/14	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
02/19/14	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
02/21/14	(H)	RES RPT 5DP
02/21/14	(H)	DP: SEATON, JOHNSON, OLSON, FEIGE, SADDLER
02/21/14	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/21/14	(H)	VERSION: HJR 26
02/24/14	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/24/14	(S)	RES
02/24/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/24/14	(S)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/26/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HJR 15

SHORT TITLE: FEDERAL CONTAMINATION OF ANCSA LANDS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) MILLETT

03/27/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/13	(H)	RES
02/10/14	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
02/10/14	(H)	Moved CSHJR 15(RES) Out of Committee
02/10/14	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
02/12/14	(H)	RES RPT CS(RES) 6DP 1AM
02/12/14	(H)	DP: HAWKER, JOHNSON, SEATON, TARR, OLSON, P.WILSON
02/12/14	(H)	AM: KAWASAKI
02/17/14	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/17/14	(H)	VERSION: CSHJR 15(RES)
02/18/14	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/14	(S)	RES

02/26/14 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 137

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BISHOP

01/24/14 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/24/14 (S) RES
02/24/14 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/24/14 (S) Scheduled But Not Heard
02/26/14 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 26.

ADRIAN HERRERA, Coordinator
Arctic Power
Washington, D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT Supported HJR 26.

VASILIOS GIALOPSOS
Staff to Representative Millett
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 15 for the sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 15.

MAVER CAREY, President and CEO
Kuskokwim Corporation

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 15.

BRENNAN KANE, Chair
Land Committee
Alaska Native Village CEO Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 15.

PJ SIMON, Second Chief
Allakaket, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 15.

CURTIS MCQUEEN, Chief Executive Officer
Eklutna, Inc.
Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 15.

MICHELE METZ, Lands Manager
Sealaska Corporation
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 15.

BRITTANY HUTCHISON
Staff to Senator Bishop
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 137 for the sponsor.

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor
Division of Legislative Audit
Legislative Affairs Agency
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 137.

ROBERT SCHER, Chair
Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 137.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:56 PM](#)

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Fairclough, Micciche, French, Bishop and Chair Giessel.

HJR 26-OFFSHORE OIL & GAS REVENUE SHARING

[3:31:30 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced HJR 26 to be up for consideration.

[3:31:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER, sponsor of HJR 26, Alaska State Legislature, said this resolution simply asks the federal government to enact a fair and equitable system of sharing

federal revenues from offshore development. He explained that offshore oil and gas development is a boon for the country; it brings us a secure source of domestic energy, revenue and jobs, but it creates costly impacts in states like Alaska. The federal government recognizes these strains by sharing some of the proceeds of this development to help state's offset the costs for the improvements and services necessary to have responsible and safe development. On land they share half of the revenues and within three miles from shore they share 27 percent. In the four states bordering the Gulf of Mexico they share a whopping 37.5 percent. Current law says Alaska will receive a zero percent share from oil produced in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, Cook Inlet and offshore.

Everyone knows the federal waters offshore contain a lot of oil, but development of Alaska's offshore resources require infrastructure investments including new roads, airports, utilities and housing, and additional services must be provided for including oil spill and emergency response, environmental monitoring mitigation, public health and safety.

[3:34:04 PM](#)

The Chukchi and Beaufort Seas sales generated \$2.75 billion and that would have brought more than \$1 billion to Alaska if the same revenue sharing provisions were afforded Alaska as the Gulf of Mexico states. But Alaska didn't get a single cent.

Opponents of revenue sharing argue that the federal treasury cannot afford to give up money, but Representative Saddler would argue that revenue sharing opportunities can incentivize more lease sales and bring in more development, ultimately opening up more opportunities for the federal government and states to share more money.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said the time couldn't be better or more opportune to have this kind of legislation move through the Congress as Senator Lisa Murkowski is the ranking member in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and the new chair of that committee is Senator Merrill Landrew of Louisiana who is also a strong advocate for the oil industry and OCS revenue sharing. These two senators have introduced the Fixing America's Inequities with Revenue Act (FAIR ACT), which would extend to Alaska and all Outer Continental Shelf States (OCS) states the same 37.5 percent share that the Gulf States now receive.

[3:35:58 PM](#)

ADRIAN HERRERA, Coordinator, Arctic Power, Washington, D.C., supported HJR 26. He said Arctic Power is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit organization arguing for the environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration in Alaska's Arctic. { Arctic Power strongly supports HJR 26 as it will bring parity with onshore resource development and parity with the Gulf of Mexico states which currently do enjoy revenue sharing. They believe it will allow for much safer and environmentally sound development to occur nationwide, particularly in Alaska's rural Arctic, the area closest to the most active OCS leasing areas in the nation currently.

Zero revenue sharing does nothing to encourage or allow safe OCS resource development and by allowing the state to have a share of the resources will allow for a much more even playing field and safer situations as states develop their offshore areas.

[3:37:49 PM](#)

SENATOR MCGUIRE joined the committee.

MR. HERRERA said the House of Representatives has passed an OCS revenue sharing bill, HR 2231, that passed last summer with a vote of 2035 in favor and 186 against. This issue is quite a non-partisan issue. Senator Begich also has a revenue sharing bill, S 199, but it is Alaska-centric only and probably won't generate much support. It uses the same 37.5 percent as the Landrew Murkowski bill.

MR. HERRERA said this resolution will be up against the White House view and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. They testified last year against the FAIR Act and their main complaint was that this will be a loss of revenue for the national treasury. But they strongly disagree and feel it is a short sighted view for many of the reasons Representative Saddler does. They believe the perceived notion that revenue sharing will take away from the President's environmental policies. Ironically, the prime beneficiary of the fund is Louisiana, Chair Landrew's home state.

Further, he said if you make OCS developed and more attractive - whether it be a wind turbine or an offshore oil field - you could expect more companies to operate in these areas. Thus you would get a better revenue stream, and under revenue sharing the state would be mandated to use 10 percent of their winnings for environmental conservation, environmental mitigation and alternative energy development, which are exactly the same

projects that the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the President's environmental policies are trying to achieve.

CHAIR GIESSEL found no further comments and closed public testimony.

[3:41:04 PM](#)

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH moved to report HJR 26, version 28-LS1439\N, from committee to the next committee of referral with attached fiscal note and individual recommendations.

SENATOR FRENCH objected, saying that about a week ago the committee heard a nearly identical resolution, SJR 5, sponsored by Senator Wielechowski, which was held in committee. He supported this resolution but wondered why the other one didn't pass. He thought his caucus member had not been treated fairly in this instance. He then withdrew his objection.

Finding no further objections, Chair Giessel said HJR 26 moved from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[3:43:37 PM](#)

At ease from 3:43 to 3:45 p.m.

HJR 15-FEDERAL CONTAMINATION OF ANCSA LANDS

[3:45:26 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced HJR 15 to be up for consideration [CSHJR 15(RES), version 28-LS071\U, was before the committee].

VASILIOS GIALOPSOS, staff to Representative Millett, sponsor of HJR 15, explained that the resolution urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to hold the federal government financially responsible for contaminated sites that were found on lands conveyed to Native corporations through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Though the intentions were good, several encumbrances occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s that culminated in the U.S. Congress passing legislation in 1995 to have a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Interior. That report identified 650 such contaminated sites that ranged in size and from a variety of agencies and departments and a variety of contaminants (PCPs, arsenic, mercury, petroleum); many of the sites are in the area of living settlements and cultural habitats.

[3:46:06 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON joined the committee.

MR. GIALOPSOS explained that lands were conveyed for a specific societal purpose, but now have an additional encumbrance upon the corporations and shareholders. Remediation costs in the range from tens of millions to tens of tens of millions. But the main motivation was just the hypocrisy that there is a consideration for wildlife in in one decision in one aspect of the Department of the Interior or another federal department or agency and yet the situation is allowed to perpetuate.

[3:48:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT, sponsor of HJR 15, said these are similar to the legacy wells except that these are lands that were given to Native with the right to develop, live on and subsist. You can't live on contaminated lands or subsist on them.

[3:50:05 PM](#)

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH said that when they refer to "legacy wells" that "travesty" strikes closer to the mark of what they are trying to say as far as devastation of the lands that have been left behind.

[3:51:30 PM](#)

MAVER CAREY, President and CEO, Kuskokwim Corporation, an ANCSA corporation comprised of ten villages upriver from Bethel all the way up to Stony River, said she is also Chairman of the Board of the Alaska Native Village CEO Association that is comprised of other village corporations and their executives and 9 out of 13 regional corporations. When the federal government conveyed millions of acres of land to ANCs they included lands contaminated with arsenic, asbestos, PCBs, unexploded ordinances, mining waste chemicals, spilled diesel fuel, petroleum and oil, solvents, toxic metals, and mercury. As ANVCA gathers more data about these sites, they are finding even more than 650 and contamination in drinking water and drums of toxins buried in soil saturating the tundra and infecting the local food and water sources. White Alice sights that were left behind after the Cold War are leaking contaminants such as PCBs and PCEs. The known health effects of these specific contaminants include cancer, miscarriages, attacks on the central nervous system, suppression of the immune system to neurological learning disabilities. Clearly contaminated land can result in a significant health risks to residents of the State of Alaska, the animals and the environment.

[3:53:54 PM](#)

MS. CAREY said that almost 20 years after ANCSA was passed and signed into law the Alaska Native community has raised the concern that the Department of Interior (DOI) had conveyed contaminated lands to ANCs.

In 1995, Congress directed the Secretary of Interior to prepare a report on these specific contaminated lands that were conveyed to ANCs; so in December 1998 the DOI submitted a report to Congress entitled "Hazardous Substance Contamination of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Lands in Alaska." In that report the DOI acknowledged conveying 650 contaminated sites to ANCs; the report identified numerous types of hazardous wastes including the ones she spoke of earlier recognizing the unjustness of conveying these lands to ANCs in the Settlement of the aboriginal rights and recommended an approach to fully identify these sites and to clean them up. The report included six recommendations almost 20 years ago and none have been done.

The conveyance of these significant amounts of contaminated lands to ANCs is unjust and although Congress did not intend to stick Alaska Natives with them BLM has spent over \$10 million on cleaning them up and the job is not done. This would have bankrupted the corporation.

[3:57:27 PM](#)

She had five recommendations on how the state could assist the situation.

1. Pass this resolution
2. Push the federal government to acknowledge their financial responsibility to clean up the contaminated lands they transferred to ANCs.
3. Urge Alaska's governor to include this as one of the lobbying priorities of his Washington, D.C. office staff.
4. Conduct high level meetings with all relevant federal agencies and identify which lead agency is responsible for the timely remediation.
5. Help ANVCA identify these sights and prioritize them.

[3:58:27 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL said that Senator McGuire would be in Washington, D.C. related to Arctic issues and would carry that message.

[3:58:55 PM](#)

BRENNAN KANE, Chair, Land Committee, Alaska Native Village CEO Association, Anchorage, Alaska, supported HJR 15 and its companion SJR 12. He said he was also Vice President and General Counsel of Eyak Corporation.

He said that Representative Millett's staff mentioned the 1998 Interior Department report, a copy of which was being emailed to the committee right now. The report was a "solid piece" of work that included six recommendations. Three bear mentioning: establishing a forum for ANCSA land owners and federal, state, local and tribal agencies to collaborate on cleanup of these contaminated sites, compiling a comprehensive inventory of contaminated sites and recommending further cleanup federal actions.

In the report the department said they were going to coordinate the implementation of these six recommendations, but nothing happened over the next 15 years, Mr. Kane said. It's important to note that BLM's people are "solid people" and recently informed them that they will now review those 650 sites that are listed and see which ones had been remediated. But additional sites have been found since 1998. ANVCA wants to work collaboratively with everyone to address these sites. This issue needs attention and this resolution will give it that visibility.

MR. KANE said the cost to clean up these sites would bankrupt most native corporations and HJR 15 addresses the unjustness of Alaska Native Corporations being subject to legal exposure for contamination caused by the federal government. And as landowners, Alaska Native Corporations are subject to strict liability under federal and state law for contamination on their lands, even if that land was contaminated by the federal government prior to conveyance.

So HJR 15 proposes a solution to this problem: if the federal government conveyed contaminated land to an Alaska Native Corporation through ANCSA the federal government is financially responsible for the remediation of that land.

4:04:04 PM

P.J. SIMON, Second Chief, Allakaket, Alaska, said he also sits on the Tanana Chief's Executive Board and he supported HJR 15. He lives in Allakaket next to Hughes that has had a White Alice early warning site since the Cold War called Indian Mountain. The planes are in a museum and Air Force personnel have retired, but right now this site has contamination; remediation is in order to protect the natural resources up there.

He said they support the military at Alatna and Hughes and hope they can bring the White Alice site behind Hughes where 600

truckloads of contamination needs to go out. This would also add an economic boost for the area.

[4:06:02 PM](#)

CURTIS MCQUEEN, Chief Executive Officer, Eklutna, Inc., said he has the authority to testify on behalf of the Tribe and Cook Inlet Regional, Inc. (CIRI). They are in strong support of this resolution, but are in a bit of a different situation in that contamination has been being cleaned up on some Eklutna lands for the last six or seven years through Army Corps of Engineers funds. They even recently found a large diesel spill from an old motor pool and were able to cook that gravel into asphalt, which ended up in the Anchorage road system.

They are also due 17,000 acres of JBER land, however some of the lands that have had contamination identified on them and are looking for funds to try to clean those lands before they are delivered. Some other communities are not as lucky.

[4:08:34 PM](#)

MICHELE METZ, Lands Manager, Sealaska Corporation, Juneau, Alaska, supported HJR 15. Their issue was community landfills that were conveyed with their land. She had also been authorized to convey that the ANCSA regional CEOs had met earlier and passed a motion in support of this issue and getting it resolved at the federal level.

[4:09:45 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further comments, closed public testimony.

CHAIR GIESSEL offered Amendment 1, labelled 28-LS0717\U.1.

28-LS0717\U.1
Nauman
2/25/14

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: CSHJR 15(RES)

BY SENATOR GIESSEL

Page 2, following line 9:
Insert new clauses to read:

"**WHEREAS**, in that report, the United States Department of the Interior proposed six recommendations to "fully identify contaminated sites and clean-up needs of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands"; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of the Interior has not fully implemented any of the six recommendations it proposed to the United States Congress; and"

Page 2, line 22, following "Act":

Insert "; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Department of the Interior to fully implement the six recommendations in its 1998 report to the United States Congress"

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT said she fully supported the amendment and agreed with two whereas clauses and one resolve that were inserted. The other body had some consideration about who they had addressed the resolution to and decided not to fill in names, since a new Department of Interior Secretary people was being appointed.

[4:11:40 PM](#)

She introduced three Kuskokwim Student Education Foundation Scholarships students who are shareholders in the contaminated lands.

CHAIR GIESSEL moved Amendment 1. There were no objections and it was adopted.

SENATOR DYSON moved to report HJR 15, version 28-LS0717\U, as amended, from committee to the next committee of referral with attached fiscal notes and individual recommendations.

There were no objections and SCS CSHJR 15(RES) moved from committee.

[4:14:08 PM](#)

At ease 4:14 to 4:15 p.m.

SB 137-EXTEND SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

[4:15:38 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced SB 137 to be up for consideration.

[4:15:57 PM](#)

BRITTANY HUTCHISON, staff to Senator Bishop, sponsor of SB 137, presented the bill for the sponsor. She said that SB 137 extends the termination date of the Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission from June 30, 2014 to June 30, 2020. She said that

Alaska has more earthquakes than any other region in the United States and is one of the most seismic reactive areas in the world. In fact, we are fast approaching the 50th Anniversary of the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake, the most powerful recorded in North American history.

Given the historical record and inevitable potential of future earthquake activity, she said Alaska needs this Commission. The Commission was created in 2002 in able to help reduce the disaster potential of major earthquakes and reduce dependence on disaster relief. It is an advisory body administered through the Department of Natural Resources in the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys. They operate on a \$10,000 annual budget; they have six standing committees and 11 members each appointed for three-year terms by the governor. They are designed to include a cross-section of public and private sector representatives.

She said the Commission serves all Alaskans and works in providing policy, goal, and priority recommendations to the governor, legislature, local governments, and the public and private sectors alike in order to reduce the state's vulnerability to seismic hazards and to advise them on approaches for mitigating earthquake risks and potential damage. They have significantly impacted school safety by collaborating with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) on seismic issues concerning school construction and renovations.

In addition, they have amended state regulation and departmental practices to ensure that all registered civil and structural engineers have a full understanding of Alaska's earthquakes. They also assist with seismic hazard training efforts by coordinating with the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) in order to help put on two day workshops focusing on post disaster facility safety assessments and work with other organizations who are concerned with seismic hazards.

MS. HUTCHISON said for these reasons and many more Senator Bishop agrees with the legislative audit, which concluded that the commission should be extended for six more years and that they are serving the public's interest.

[4:19:01 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if six years is a typical extension period.

MS. HUTCHISON answered no; they were originally designed in 2002 and came up again two years ago. The problem with a two-year extension is that the commission is not able to focus on their job in that short of a time.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if the budget is \$10,000 a year.

MS. HUTCHISON answered yes.

[4:20:24 PM](#)

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor, Legislative Audit Division, Legislative Affairs Agency, said their agency did conduct a sunset audit of the commission and the purpose was to review whether it was serving the public's interest and whether its termination date should be extended. The last time they did a sunset audit was 2011 and then they recommended a four year extension accompanied by some recommendations. They were given a two year extension at that point and their progress is being reviewed. They did conclude that the commission was serving the public's interest and recommended a six year extension.

[4:22:01 PM](#)

At ease from 4:22 to 4:27 p.m.

[4:27:06 PM](#)

MS. CURTIS said the audit included four recommendations:

1. Improve prioritization and accountability within its strategic planning documents: the prior sunset audit found the commission lacked a clear strategy for prioritizing and monitoring its efforts, but this audit found the commission had made significant progress toward resolving this finding by developing a strategic plan that identifies objectives and strategies to correlate with the commission's statutory mandate. Each strategy lists a priority, a target date and a planned outcome; the commission also used goals contained in its annual report and action list during committee meetings to really focus its efforts.
2. They offered another recommendation to basically fine tune their strategic plan (page 9). They clearly need to prioritize their tasks. While each task has a priority, 27 of 29 tasks are listed as important and the commission goals and action lists did not contain priorities. They recommended consistently identifying the person or subcommittee responsible for task completion.
3. They recommended associating their goals and action lists with the commission's over-arching strategic plan objectives and

consistently identifying specific outcomes. By improving their prioritization and accountability, the commission could improve its ability to serve the public.

[4:29:03 PM](#)

On page 12 of the audit they found that the commission did not consistently specify the organization responsible for implementing a recommendation. Additionally, they found that not all recommendations adequately identify the action to be performed. At times the commission was uncertain about where to direct its recommendations. So they recommended that it ensure that recommendations clearly identify the organization responsible for implementing an action and the action to be performed. Additionally, they recommend that the commission seek assistance from Department of Natural Resources (DNR) management in identifying the appropriate organization responsible for implementing their recommendations.

4. Finally, there are two more administrative type recommendations: one directing the commission to recommend replacement of habitually absent members and the other to work with the Office of the Governor to fill vacant positions in a timely manner.

[4:30:11 PM](#)

ROBERT SCHER, Chair, Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission, Anchorage, Alaska, supported SB 137. He said the Commission is an advisory body that recommends goals and priorities for mitigating seismic hazards - things like strong ground shaking, landslides, avalanches, tsunami inundation, fault displacements, large area subsidence - recommending policies including needed research mapping, monitoring programs, reviewing practice for recovery and reconstruction after a major earthquake, recommending improvements to mitigate losses from future earthquakes as well as gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information of general interest on seismic hazards. These duties are done on behalf of the legislature, the Governor, local governments, as well as the public and private sectors at large; these duties are not shared by any other state department or commission.

MR. SCHER said the commission was originally formed under HB 53 in 2002; but in 2005 the first commissioners were appointed by Governor Murkowski. In 2006, HB 83 increased the membership from 9 to 11 commissioners and extended the commission through 2012 (6 years). Most recently, HB 279 extended it through June 30, 2014, which is where they are right now. They are an eclectic

body, comprised of geologists, seismologists, civil and structural engineers, emergency response planners and managers, and a representative from the insurance industry.

They believe they have been functioning in the state's and publics' interest as was concluded by the Division of Legislative Audit's report of September 2013. They look forward to being extended for another six years and already have a full list of projects that are either started or in the planning stages that they would take advantage of performing during that period of time. They would welcome any opportunity to assist this committee and the full legislature with matters pertaining to earthquakes and tsunamis.

[4:35:43 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON asked him to talk a little about their large gathering of seismologists this summer.

MR. SCHER answered that it is the 50th year following 1964 Good Friday Alaska Earthquake and the Seismological Society of America is hosting its annual meeting in Anchorage in its commemoration and hundreds of seismologists and geologists will attend; then in July there will be a week-long conference sponsored by the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute entitled the Tenth National Conference on Earthquake Engineering. It is held every four years in the North America, but it has international influence and over 800 papers are being presented.

CHAIR GIESSEL thanked him for serving.

[4:37:44 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further comments, closed public testimony.

SENATOR DYSON moved to report SB 137 from committee to the next committee of referral with attached fiscal note and individual recommendations. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

[4:38:48 PM](#)

Finding no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:37 p.m.