

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 4, 2013

2:23 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Dennis Egan, Chair
Senator Fred Dyson, Vice Chair
Senator Anna Fairclough
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Hollis French

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 153(TRA)

"An Act designating Minnesota Drive and a portion of O'Malley Road in Anchorage the Walter J. Hickel Parkway."

- MOVED CSHB 153(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 94

"An Act naming the northbound Chena Flood Channel Crossing Bridge the Nellie Miller Bridge and naming the southbound Chena Flood Channel Crossing Bridge the Con Miller Bridge."

- MOVED HB 94 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 85

"An Act relating to experimental vehicles."

- MOVED CSSB 85(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 94

SHORT TITLE: CON AND NELLIE MILLER BRIDGES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) ISAACSON

01/30/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/30/13	(H)	TRA, FIN
02/19/13	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
02/19/13	(H)	Moved Out of Committee

02/19/13 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
 02/20/13 (H) TRA RPT 6DP
 02/20/13 (H) DP: LYNN, JOHNSON, KREISS-TOMKINS,
 GATTIS, ISAACSON, P.WILSON
 03/19/13 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
 03/19/13 (H) Moved Out of Committee
 03/19/13 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/20/13 (H) FIN RPT 9DP
 03/20/13 (H) DP: KAWASAKI, HOLMES, MUNOZ, THOMPSON,
 EDGMON, GARA, T.WILSON, COSTELLO,
 03/20/13 (H) NEUMAN
 03/22/13 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 03/22/13 (H) VERSION: HB 94
 03/25/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/25/13 (S) TRA, FIN
 04/02/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/02/13 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/04/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM FAHRENKAMP 203

BILL: SB 85

SHORT TITLE: EXPERIMENTAL VEHICLE PLATES

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BISHOP

03/21/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/21/13 (S) TRA, FIN
 04/02/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/02/13 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/04/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM FAHRENKAMP 203

BILL: HB 153

SHORT TITLE: NAMING WALTER J. HICKEL PARKWAY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LYNN

03/04/13 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/04/13 (H) TRA, FIN
 03/12/13 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 03/12/13 (H) Moved CSHB 153(TRA) Out of Committee
 03/12/13 (H) MINUTE(TRA)
 03/13/13 (H) TRA RPT CS(TRA) NT 5DP 1AM
 03/13/13 (H) DP: LYNN, ISAACSON, GATTIS, KREISS-
 TOMKINS, P.WILSON
 03/13/13 (H) AM: FEIGE
 03/19/13 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
 03/19/13 (H) Moved CSHB 153(TRA) Out of Committee
 03/19/13 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/20/13 (H) FIN RPT CS(TRA) NT 9DP

03/20/13 (H) DP: KAWASAKI, HOLMES, MUNOZ, EDGMON,
 GARA, T.WILSON, THOMPSON, COSTELLO,
 03/20/13 (H) NEUMAN
 03/22/13 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 03/22/13 (H) VERSION: CSHB 153(TRA)
 03/25/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/25/13 (S) TRA, FIN
 04/02/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/02/13 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/04/13 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM FAHRENKAMP 203

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 153.

BRENDA HEWITT, Staff
 Representative Doug Isaacson
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 94 on behalf of the sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE DOUG ISAACSON
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 94.

BRITTANY HUTCHISON, Staff
 Senator Click Bishop
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 85 on behalf of the sponsor.

AMY ERICKSON, Director
 Division of Motor Vehicles
 Department of Administration
 Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 85.

SHELLY MELLOTT, Deputy Director
 Division of Motor Vehicles
 Department of Administration
 Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 85.

JIM DODSON, President and CEO
Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in favor of SB 85.

ALLISON AIRHART, Attorney
Volkswagen Group of America
Herndon, Virginia

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 85.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[2:23:02 PM](#)

CHAIR DENNIS EGAN called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:23 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dyson, Fairclough, Bishop, French, and Chair Egan.

HB 153-NAMING WALTER J. HICKEL PARKWAY

[2:23:59 PM](#)

CHAIR EGAN announced that the first order of business would be HB 153. [CSHB 153(TRA) was before the committee.]

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN, sponsor of HB 153, explained that HB 153 would designate a 7.5 mile portion of Minnesota Drive as the Walter J. Hickel Parkway. This would involve having only two large brown road signs similar to the ones posted on other historic roads. He highlighted Walter Hickel's contributions to the state, including the United States Secretary of the Interior and twice serving as the Governor of Alaska. Walter J. Hickel worked hard to open Prudhoe Bay for all development and oversaw the permitting process for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Representative Lynn requested the committee's approval of the bill.

CHAIR EGAN noted no public testimony.

[2:25:21 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON moved to report HB 153, version U, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHB 153(TRA) was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

[2:25:47 PM](#)

At ease from to 2:25 to 2:27 p.m.

HB 94-CON AND NELLIE MILLER BRIDGES

[2:27:08 PM](#)

CHAIR EGAN announced that the next order of business would be HB 94. He noted the attendance of all members of the committee.

BRENDA HEWITT, Staff, Representative Doug Isaacson, sponsor of HB 94, explained that in House District 1 there are two bridges that cross the Chena Flood Control. The bill proposes to name those two parallel bridges after Con and Nellie Miller, also known as Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. She highlighted the accomplishments of the Millers, noting that Con was the longest-serving mayor of North Pole. He also served as the post master, the civil defense director, and the fire chief. Nellie served on the local school board, was the post mistress, and the town's magistrate and marriage commissioner. She noted the Millers passed the value of public service on to their children.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH inquired if the sign would say "Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus" or their names.

REPRESENTATIVE DOUG ISAACSON, sponsor of HB 94, said that while the family has given permission to name the bridges, "The Original Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus," at this time, the signs will say Conrad "Con" Miller Bridge and Nellie Miller Bridge.

[2:32:08 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP voiced appreciation for the bill. He related a story about his role in building the bridge on February 16, 1976, and as a boy, enjoying the auctions at the Santa Claus House.

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON said he came to Alaska in June of 1977 and one of the first places he visited was the Santa Claus House. He said he appreciates Senator Bishop's history with the Millers. He invited everyone to come to the dedication ceremony.

SENATOR DYSON moved to report HB 94 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 94 was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

[2:34:30 PM](#)

SENATOR EGAN, in response to a question from Senator Fairclough, said no one else wished to testify.

[2:34:52 PM](#)

At ease from 2:34 to 2:36 p.m.

SB 85-EXPERIMENTAL VEHICLE PLATES

2:36:11 PM

CHAIR EGAN announced that the final order of business would be SB 85.

BRITTANY HUTCHISON, Staff, Senator Click Bishop, presented SB 85 on behalf of the sponsor. She explained that the difference between the CS and the original bill can be found on page 1, lines 6, 7, and 11. The wording was changed to get rid of the words "cold weather," so that Alaska would welcome all types of vehicle testing.

SENATOR EGAN asked if she was working from version U.

MS. HUTCHISON said yes.

MS. HUTCHISON continued to relate the history of the need for the bill. She said for many years, Alaska has been marketed as the most affordable, accessible, and reliable cold weather testing spot in the world. Currently, there are no statutes regarding registration for experimental vehicles. Recently, the Volkswagen Group of America, who has been testing vehicles in Alaska since 2000, had to bring their vehicles back for a second round due to stricter emission regulations. When they returned to Alaska, the DMV notified them that they would have to register and title all of their vehicles. The sponsor discovered that a statute change was required to fix the problem and worked with the DMV and the Volkswagen Group to draft SB 85.

MS. HUTCHISON related that the bill would allow the DMV to issue an experimental vehicle plate to a vehicle manufacturer or distributor for vehicle testing. The plates are good for 12 months and can be renewed twice for a total of 36 months.

CHAIR EGAN requested a motion to adopt version U.

2:39:09 PM

SENATOR BISHOP moved to adopt the work draft CS for SB 85, labeled 28-LS0692\U, as the working document. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

AMY ERICKSON, Director, Division of Motor Vehicles, Department of Administration, answered questions related to SB 85. She confirmed that Volkswagen Group approached the DMV several years

ago to register their vehicles, but DMV did not have the authority to register vehicles that cannot be titled. The former director of DMV allowed non-renewable registration for one year. She stated that DMV supports SB 85.

[2:40:23 PM](#)

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH asked how DMV treats large commercial trucks that are brought to Alaska for testing.

SENATOR BISHOP asked if they are foreign or domestically produced.

MS. ERICKSON explained that some vehicles were from Germany and some from Mexico. She could not recall whether there were any large trucks at the Volkswagen testing center.

SENATOR BISHOP clarified that most of the Class A trucks being tested are Navistar, an International Harvester derivative, and have been on the Haul Road for two years. He said he has not seen any other brands.

MS. ERICKSON said she believes the legislation covers those trucks.

[2:42:53 PM](#)

SHELLY MELLOTT, Deputy Director, Division of Motor Vehicles, Department of Administration, addressed the previous question, noting that DMV has not been approached about registering any large trucks; however, this bill would allow them to be registered.

JIM DODSON, President and CEO, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, testified in favor of SB 85. He described the affordability and economic impact of cold weather testing in Alaska. He said it is a growing industry. He voiced appreciation for the legislation.

[2:45:25 PM](#)

ALLISON AIRHART, Attorney, Volkswagen Group of America, testified in support of SB 85. She related that the bill would allow Volkswagen Group to continue with cold weather testing. She described the benefits of testing in Fairbanks.

[2:47:13 PM](#)

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH moved to report the CS for SB 85, labeled 28-LS0692\U, from committee with individual recommendations [and attached zero fiscal note]. There being no objection, CSSB

85(TRA) was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

2:49:59 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Egan adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee at 2:49 p.m.