

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

May 2, 2017

10:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Zach Fansler
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Mike Chenault
Representative David Eastman
Representative Mark Neuman

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 231

"An Act relating to the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 231

SHORT TITLE: CFEC: BD. SALARY; STAFF CLASSIFIED SERVICE

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

04/15/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/15/17	(H)	FSH, FIN
05/02/17	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

LESLIE RIDLE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administration
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 231, on behalf of the governor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

10:03:04 AM

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Representatives Stutes, Eastman, Fansler, Chenault, Kreiss-Tomkins, and Neuman were present at the call to order. Representative Tarr arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 231-CFEC: BD. SALARY; STAFF CLASSIFIED SERVICE

10:04:02 AM

CHAIR STUTES announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 231, "An Act relating to the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; and providing for an effective date."

10:04:30 AM

LESLIE RIDLE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Administration, defined the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) as a regulatory and quasi-judicial agency that is tasked with the following duties: limit entry of participants and vessels into the commercial fisheries; issue and transfer annual commercial fishing permits and vessel licenses; adjudicate appeals of actions including denials of applications and transfers; study, analyze, and report on the economics and stability of commercial fisheries; ensure reliable and timely access to fishery data; promote the conservation and sustained yield management of Alaska's commercial fishery resources; and assess demerit points against, or suspend fishing privileges of, permit holders for convictions or violations of commercial fishing laws.

MS. RIDLE reviewed the effects that are anticipated through enactment of HB 231, which include: change the compensation for three commissioners of the CFEC by reducing the pay range from 27 at \$8,789 per month, to a 24 earning \$7,225. The commissioner pay would not be frozen, under the bill, and would continue to receive pay increment raises on the merit anniversary date. The bill removes the CFEC staff from exempt service and assigns them to classified service. The Division of Personnel and Labor Relations will perform a classification study and place positions on the appropriate pay scale. The current CFEC staff will not receive a reduction in pay, she said, and explained that their pay would be frozen until the pay scale catches up to the newly classified position. However, any

new CFEC staff would be hired at the new range/step A. Under the reorganization the staff will be represented by the appropriate union: Supervisors Union (SU), General Government Unit (GGU), or the Confidential Employees Association (CEA).

[10:08:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CHENAULT asked how many employees this might effect.

MS. RIDLE answered 19 or 20.

[10:09:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN asked for the pay scale of the staff involved.

MS. RIDLE offered to provide further information.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN questioned the reclassification process described and why the staff pay scales could not more simply be directly reduced, similar to the action being proposed for the commissioner salaries.

MS. RIDLE responded that previous experience has shown that invoking a pay change when a position turns over creates less stress and concern among the current employees, will not be perceived as a penalty, and cause less overall disruption in the agency.

[10:11:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN inquired how long the commissioner position has been vacant.

MS. RIDLE recalled that Governor Bill Walker's appointee was denied in 2015.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN suggested that perhaps it's a difficult position to fill at the current pay scale, and may be less inviting at a reduced pay range.

MS. RIDLE opined that it may not be the pay scale as much as locating a candidate acceptable to the legislature.

CHAIR STUTES interjected that a hire freeze by the governor may also be a reason that the position has remained vacant.

[10:12:20 AM](#)

MS. RIDLE said the estimated savings to the state from the reduction of the commissioner salaries is \$78,733 per year, and the savings from the staff reclassification is variable based on position turnover. She explained HB 231 is timely legislation based on the lighter caseload that is occurring at the CFEC. The decisions being considered have dropped from a high of 105 cases, in 1998, to 3 cases in 2015, and 0 in 2016. Further, it is a money saving measure. The commissioners will be aligned to similar ranges of similar positions and the staff will be aligned with similar classified service positions. Referring to the committee handout, titled, "HB 231 Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, May 2, 2017," she directed attention to the fourth page to illustrate the CFEC budget reductions for the years FY 16 through the FY 18 proposed plan. Further, she said the agency has undergone a reduction in space and staff, over the last few years, along with other budget cuts.

[10:14:10 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES asked how many unfilled position control numbers (PCNs) are on the books at CFEC, and whether the agency intends to transfer the positions into the classified system or if they will be eliminated.

MS. RIDLE offered to provide further information.

[10:15:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS questioned why the decisions being provided by CFEC have bottomed out at zero per year.

CHAIR STUTES said the commissioners will be available at a subsequent hearing to field that line of questioning.

[10:16:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CHENAULT referred to the fiscal note, and offered a ballpark estimate that the savings would be \$52,000; given the absence of one commissioner. He suggested a need to revisit the fiscal note.

[10:17:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN asked for the breakdown of how many staff would be classified to GGU, as well as SU.

MS. RIDLE answered that, until the classification study has been completed, the breakout for union representation is an unknown.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN asked what the highest position level being transferred into the classified service would be.

MS. RIDLE responded the executive director position, and she offered to provide further information.

[10:18:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CHENAULT inquired about the timeframe required to complete the study.

MS. RIDLE responded that it will take about six months following passage of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE CHENAULT commented that some reclassification studies have resulted in an increase in the costs necessary for providing services.

MS. RIDLE agreed and said there may be some people who are working below their class level.

[10:20:06 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced HB 231 as held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.