

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 26, 2017

3:20 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Sam Kito, Chair
Representative Adam Wool, Vice Chair
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Chris Birch
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Mike Chenault (alternate)
Representative Bryce Edgmon (alternate)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 229

"An Act relating to a bond or cash deposit required for an oil or gas business; relating to claims against an oil and gas business; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 229 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION: THE ROAD TO CENSUS 2020

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 229

SHORT TITLE: OIL & GAS BUSINESS BOND

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SEATON

04/14/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/14/17	(H)	L&C
04/24/17	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

04/24/17 (H) Heard & Held
04/24/17 (H) MINUTE (L&C)
04/26/17 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

LINDA AKERS SMITH, Geographer
Los Angeles Regional Office
U.S. Census Bureau
Van Nuys, California

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "The Road to Census 2020."

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:20:11 PM](#)

CHAIR SAM KITO called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:20 p.m. Representatives Kito, Sullivan-Leonard, Stutes, Birch, and Josephson were present at the call to order. Representative Wool arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 229-OIL & GAS BUSINESS BOND

[3:20:57 PM](#)

CHAIR KITO announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 229, "An Act relating to a bond or cash deposit required for an oil or gas business; relating to claims against an oil and gas business; and providing for an effective date."

[3:21:50 PM](#)

CHAIR KITO [resumed public testimony from April 24, 2017]. He closed public testimony after ascertaining that no one wished to testify.

[3:22:00 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL moved to report HB 229 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 229 was reported from the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[3:22:22 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:22 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.

Presentation: The Road to Census 2020

[3:25:51 PM](#)

CHAIR KITO announced that the final order of business would be a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "The Road to Census 2020," provided by Ms. Linda Akers Smith.

[3:26:10 PM](#)

LINDA AKERS SMITH, Geographer, Los Angeles Regional Office, U.S. Census Bureau, provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "The Road to Census 2020." Addressing slide 2, "Why We Do a Census," she stated that a census is done to apportion the 435 seats of the U.S. House of Representatives. Turning to the map of U.S. states on slide 3, "Apportionment, 2010 Official Results," she explained that once the official results are released the apportionment occurs - the states depicted in orange on the map lost seats and those depicted in blue gained seats.

MS. AKERS SMITH moved to slide 4, "Also About Fairness...," and noted that while the decennial census population count is about the apportionment to congressional seats of the states, it is also about fairness. The legislation is the basis of federal legislation, including the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, and the Fair Housing Act. Continuing to slide 5, "And About Funding," she said that the decennial count is also the basis of the distribution of over \$400 billion annually to the states. The Brookings Institution created the table displayed on slide 5, which shows the ten largest government programs, she continued. Distribution is directly tied to population data and this includes the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Transportation, and other assistance programs.

MS. AKERS SMITH displayed slide 6, "The 2010 Census," and stated that the net results were very good when compared to prior censuses. To produce the net results, the U.S. Census Bureau ("the bureau") does a separate independent operation to measure the outcome and then compares it to the results of the census. Speaking to the graph on slide 6, she explained that the bars above the line are the net undercount, as in the case of the 1980 and 1990 censuses. A half percentage over-count occurred in 2000 and the 2010 census had an over-count of .01 percent.

From a national quality perspective, the 2010 results were very good, she said, and the bureau wants this to continue.

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MS. AKERS SMITH turned to the graph on slide 7, "The Cost of the Census," and stated that conducting a census is very expensive, the cost going up exponentially. The bureau has traditionally done the census using pencil and paper, she said, and as the U.S. becomes more diverse the costs tend to be going up faster than inflation and faster than population growth. According to bureau estimates, she noted, if the census were repeated the same way as in 2010 the cost would be over \$17 billion.

MS. AKERS SMITH moved to slide 8, "Goals for the 2020 Census," and said the bureau can't continue its current path. Congress has challenged the bureau to drive down census costs, she continued, and therefore the bureau plans to test several initiatives that are believed will drive down the costs of the census similar to 2010 adjusted for inflation and yet produce high quality results.

MS. AKERS SMITH discussed the bureau's work on four areas of innovation, the first area being efficiency in building an address list. She said the bureau's address list was updated in the field in 2010 as part of a large-scale field operation where the bureau hired over 150,000 people to travel every road using a handheld device to verify and update the addresses on the roads. For the 2020 Census, she continued, completeness and accuracy remain equally as important. The bureau will do a 100 percent review of its address list using new methodologies and a combination of in-office and in-field review. For the in-office review, she explained, the bureau uses information from the postal service, imagery, commercial databases, and files provided from tribal, state, and local governments. Where sources are not available or there are areas of rapid change, the bureau puts people on the ground to update the address list.

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MS. AKERS SMITH related that the second innovation is generating the largest possible self-response, thereby reducing the number of households requiring follow-up. To motivate people to respond, the bureau includes a nationwide communications and partnership campaign, she stated. This campaign is focused on getting people to respond on their own as it costs significantly less to process a response over the Internet or through a paper

questionnaire than it does to send a field worker to knock on the door. The bureau is planning on targeting ads to specific audiences, she continued, and working with trusted voices to inspire participation in the census. The bureau is also working to allow more options to respond from any location at any time via phone, Internet, or mobile website. This time, she noted, a person doesn't need a questionnaire to respond - a person seeing an ad can log on and count him or herself. Also, the bureau might be at a community event with a table and iPads for people to write on and send their responses directly to the bureau. The bureau will continue to make paper questionnaires available in places such as libraries, post offices, and community centers, she said.

MS. AKERS SMITH noted that how the U.S. Census Bureau handles the delivery of questionnaires and the enumeration of Alaskans varies. In areas where there is an address for delivery to a house, the bureau uses postal delivery. In areas without postal delivery to the household, the bureau canvases the area, adds any houses not on its list, and then knocks on the door and conducts an interview. In Alaska's remote and sparsely settled areas, she said, the bureau does something very similar, but works closely with village leaders and starts its enumeration activities much earlier.

MS. AKERS SMITH said the third innovation is using information that the bureau already has to reduce expensive in-person follow-up. This data will be used to identify vacant households, determine the best time to visit a household, or count the people and fill in responses with existing high-quality data from trusted sources. However, she added, the bureau still plans to knock on every door, but the reduction in the number of visits will lead to significant cost savings.

MS. AKERS SMITH spoke to the fourth innovation of re-engineering field operations. In [2010], she recounted, the bureau's in-person follow-up was done mostly using pencil and paper. The bureau relied on in-person meetings with staff and these processes were significant contributors to cost increases. For the 2020 Census, however, the bureau plans to use technology to more efficiently and effectively manage its 2020 Census fieldwork. The bureau is re-organizing its field structure and reducing the number of field offices, she explained. The bureau has an operation-of-control system planned that will assist in managing the work and enabling more efficient case assignments and optimizing travel routes, she said; think in the style of the United Parcel Service (UPS).

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MS. AKERS SMITH addressed slide 9, "Three Main Reasons We Miss People," and explained that the first reason the bureau misses people is because it doesn't have their address in its address file. A form cannot be sent to someone for whom the bureau doesn't have an address and if the bureau gets a response it cannot match the person to a place on the ground. The second reason why the bureau misses people is that it doesn't get a response, she continued. The bureau sends a questionnaire and knocks on the door, but no one answers. The third reason is that the bureau gets a partial response, the census self-response only, so sometimes children and unrelated individuals don't get counted, or when multiple families live in a household, even temporarily, they don't get counted.

MS. AKERS SMITH turned to slide 10, "2020 Census Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)," and stated that regarding addresses missing from the bureau's address list, there is an opportunity to comment on the bureau's address list through the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. The bureau relies on a complete and accurate list for each living quarter, she explained, and if a house is not on the bureau's list then that housing unit and its associated population will not be visited or sent a questionnaire.

MS. AKERS SMITH displayed slide 11, "Who Can Participate in LUCA," and noted that those who can participate in the LUCA program include states, organized boroughs, incorporated places such as cities and towns, federally recognized tribes with reservation or off-reservation trust lands, and Alaska Native regional associations. When governments lack the resources or are not eligible to participate, she said, the bureau encourages coordination with participating higher levels of government.

MS. AKERS SMITH moved to slide 12, "Confidentiality and Security," and explained that Title 13 of the United States Code authorizes the U.S. Census Bureau's work and provides strong protection for the information that it collects. She said the commitment to maintain confidentiality and security is critical in gaining, and crucial in retaining, the public's support of the bureau's work. Participants, she added, must understand that information provided to and from LUCA falls under Title 13, which specifically requires that the bureau ensure confidential treatment of census related information, including individual addresses and structure coordinates.

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MS. AKERS SMITH addressed slide 13, "Preparation - Next Steps (Participant)," and related that the bureau is currently doing promotional workshops throughout the country via in-person and webinar. The bureau is encouraging tribal, state, and local governments to put a line item in their budgets now to ensure staff and resources are allocated for the address review that begins in February 2018, she said. The workshop provides step-by-step guidance on how to prepare for the program and provides suggestions on how to prioritize if a complete review is not possible. Drawing attention to the packet she provided the committee, she said there is a LUCA information guide that highlights information provided in the workshops. She noted that the guide, a letter regarding the program, and a request to identify a contact person for the program, were also sent to the highest elected officials and governors.

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MS. AKERS SMITH spoke to slide 25, "Preparation - 2020 LUCA Schedule." In January 2017, she said, the bureau sent letters to the highest elected officials and currently the bureau is out doing its promotional workshops. In July 2017, the bureau will mail a LUCA invitation that includes registration materials. In October 2017 the bureau will conduct technical LUCA workshops via in-person workshops and webinars. December 15, 2017 is the deadline for LUCA registration, she noted. Between February and April of 2018, the LUCA materials begin to ship to participants and upon receipt participants have 120 calendar days to conduct their review and update the U.S. Census Bureau's address list. Shortly thereafter, she continued, the bureau begins processing the LUCA submission and does its address canvassing operation. Between August and September 2019, the bureau delivers the LUCA feedback to participants, which is the enumeration list that the bureau plans on using to conduct the 2020 Census.

MS. AKERS SMITH concluded her presentation by thanking the committee, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Liz Brooks who scheduled today's presentation.

[3:38:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH offered his understanding of the census as it relates to allocation of congressional seats. Regarding illegal aliens and other people in the country who can't vote,

he inquired whether they are counted and therefore contribute to the reallocation of congressional seats.

MS. AKERS SMITH replied that on census day the bureau counts everyone, no matter if they are legal or illegal citizens. The bureau sends them a questionnaire, and citizenship status is not asked on the short-form questionnaire, she explained. The short-form questionnaire asks age, race, gender, relationship, and tenure.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH posed a scenario in which half of a state's population is there illegally. He asked whether the U.S. Census Bureau has any way to distinguish what that population is and whether the bureau would reallocate congressional seats based on that illegal population.

MS. AKERS SMITH responded that the bureau does not collect information regarding citizenship or illegal status. The bureau just counts the population and will provide the numbers to the states for redistricting purposes by March 31, 2021.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH posed a scenario in which a state has several million illegal residents who can't vote. He offered his understanding that the census doesn't have a mechanism for discerning whether people are reasonably and fairly a part of a state's population for reallocating the congressional seats.

MS. AKERS SMITH answered, "Yes, that's true." States create their own laws regarding redistricting, she continued, so it would be up to the states to make the determination of how they would want to do their redistricting. For the census, she added, the bureau counts everyone once in the right place no matter his or her citizenship status.

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH asked what the census questions are and whether there is a prescription for which questions are permissible, the level of detail of the questions, and whether the questions change from one census to the next. He further asked who comes up with the questions, whether the questions are invasive, and what the obligation is of a constituent to answer all the questions.

MS. AKERS SMITH replied that the U.S. Census Bureau does two things. Every ten years, she explained, the bureau takes a decennial census that has only five questions. She offered her

belief that in the year 2000 the bureau had two forms, one a long form that asked many questions and consisted of many pages. In 2010, she continued, the bureau separated the two and now the long-form questionnaire that asks social, demographic, and economic characteristics is done through the bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is done every year and samples three million people. The decennial census has been streamlined and asks only the questions necessary to comply with redistricting and other federal laws.

MS. AKERS SMITH said that in March [2017] the bureau published recommendations of the questions it will ask for the 2020 Census, which are not going to change, as well as the questions the bureau plans on asking through its American Community Survey. This has been sent to Congress, she continued, and she will provide a copy to the committee. In preparation for determining what questions will be asked, the bureau works through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and OMB works with all federal agencies to determine what their data needs are. Once that happens, the bureau aggregates that information to determine the questions that it needs to ask. A review is then done every year so that if laws change, the bureau can look at its questions and determine whether they are necessary to be asked again. The bureau will finalize the questions in March 2018. She added that the memo she will copy to the committee is interesting in that it provides every question the bureau asks, why it is asked, what agency needs it, and how the data that is gathered from that question benefits the community at large.

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REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH inquired as to the legal duty that a citizen must answer the short-form questionnaire versus the long form. He further inquired whether a person has the option to choose not to answer.

MS. AKERS SMITH responded that she believes there is a law that requires a person to answer the questions, but the bureau doesn't put anyone in jail for not [answering] the question. The bureau doesn't use the law to tie anyone's hands to answer the questions. She noted that the bureau attempts to educate the public by working with local governments through what the bureau calls Complete Count Committees. The bureau met with [Governor Walker's] staff this morning to request that a contact person be named for the bureau to work with, she said. The bureau tries to find trusted voices in the community to carry this message over to help people understand why it is important

to answer the census questionnaire and respond to the American Community Survey. The bureau tries to bring it down to the local level and tries to find ways in which the community would be more willing to respond and participate. A community might not care so much about apportionment, she continued, but it might care about federal legislation or community block grants that benefit that community. There are some instances where no matter how hard the bureau tries, it is not going to get a response. It is a very small number of people, she said, and in those cases the bureau tries to impute the data by looking at characteristics of the geography and the responses that are received around it.

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REPRESENTATIVE SULLIVAN-LEONARD admitted she is one of those stubborn people who didn't want to fill out all the information on the census sheets. She said she found the long form to be very invasive even though she understood what the bureau was trying to glean. She related that some folks in her district in Wasilla don't have an address on their home and no mailbox and a walk up the driveway may result in being greeted by a dog and a gun. She asked how [Alaska residents] can have a say in this so it is not so invasive. She added that she could understand questions related to a person's age, number of children, and how many children still live in the home, but beyond that the question is how much is too much.

MS. AKERS SMITH offered her understanding of the aforementioned concerns. She allowed a lot of information is being collected these days, such as when a person is on the Internet. She said she realizes that for some people it is very difficult to give this information out, especially with the amount of fraud that occurs. The bureau would like to work with legislators and their communities to provide better education about why it would be beneficial to the community. That is being done through the bureau's Complete Count Committees, she continued, where if a connection can be found for why someone should respond, why they should give the bureau their address, and why they should return a census questionnaire, the bureau will get a better response. That goes back to redistricting, the Voting Rights Act, and funding, she added. The U.S. Census Bureau uses population counts for funding and needs to find ways to connect with people to help them understand why it is important.

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REPRESENTATIVE SULLIVAN-LEONARD stated she understands the aforementioned but is wondering if there is a different venue that the bureau could use regarding funding that the bureau is seeking. She suggested that there should also be a piece where if someone gives the general information they shouldn't be excluded. She said four different census people came to her home and finally the Northwest director, Sharon Anderson, came up from California, someone she knew, and they sat and talked about it. There needs to be a little give and take or leniency, she opined. The bureau cannot say that someone must do this based on federal funding that is wanted or grants that might be obtained for a particular district or across the state and therefore the questionnaire must be filled out.

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CHAIR KITO recounted that he worked on the 2000 Census and that there were questions about how to make the process more efficient. Utilizing some statistical techniques was discussed, but it was ultimately pulled back. Many discussions took place coming up to 2000 about the benefits or detriments of not being fully compliant with the census. He worked for the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities at the time, he said. The big issue for the department was having an accurate account for the state because Alaska's population was a very big factor in how much would be received from the federal government in federal highway program allocations as well as the federal aviation program. Some of the formulas used the decennial census population to determine how much money would be received for those programs. He stated he appreciates that the long form is using the statistical methods to estimate who is responding in what way. He inquired whether the bureau uses the statistical techniques and has ways to ground truth whether it is projecting accurate information from the sample of three million people.

MS. AKERS SMITH replied she doesn't know if she can answer that question very well and will follow up with the chair in this regard. However, she said, when projecting information from the American Community Survey's annual sample of three million people, the bureau aggregates the data over time to create smaller population estimates so that the smallest data estimates used for the American Community Survey are the block groups. In the block groups the bureau uses five years of ACS data to get a good estimate. With each estimate, she added, the bureau also has a margin of error that indicates how accurate or inaccurate that data is. A margin of error will be given for every piece

of data because some populations can be very, very small and so the margin of error will be very high.

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CHAIR KITO inquired whether there is a committee or a process for coming up with the questions for the community survey. He recalled Ms. Akers Smith saying the bureau has information that designates which agency is requesting the question and why. He further inquired whether there is a process for having the group of people come together and decide which questions need to be asked in the community survey.

MS. AKERS SMITH confirmed the bureau works through community groups to gather information on the best way to ask these questions. She said the package she will provide the committee explains what federal agency is asking the question and includes documentation on the process of working with community groups to come up with some of the questions and to reword some of the questions.

MS. AKERS SMITH added that Chair Kito brought up a good point about some of the statistical methods used by the U.S. Census Bureau. She noted that administrative records are one of the statistical methods being used for the 2020 Census; the bureau uses information that it already must get answers from folks who don't return the questionnaire. She posed an example where the bureau sends out a questionnaire and it comes back from the postal service as undeliverable as addressed. The bureau would visit the address to see if it is vacant, she explained, and if it is, then the bureau wouldn't go back to visit it again. She related that in the 2010 Census, the bureau would go up to six personal visits, but she said that is not being done anymore. Now the bureau attempts to make a visit and if there is no response the bureau will use, if available, good quality records data from trusted sources that the bureau already has with the federal government or administrative records from states or other organizations, to determine the status of that household. Thus, she said, the bureau is reducing the number of visits.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL referenced the graph showing the amount of over- and undercount. In regard to counting the population, he asked what the bureau is comparing in order to know whether it is over- or undercounting.

MS. AKERS SMITH responded that the bureau does a separate operation independent of the decennial census called the Coverage Measurement Program. In this program, she explained, the bureau samples a small population that is stratified throughout the U.S. and does a separate operation. The bureau creates its own address list, has a staff separate from the regular decennial census workers, and collects that information separately. Then, in addition to personal visits and collecting the same information, the bureau will go back multiple times and ask coverage questions, such as whether there is anyone that is being missed or whether there are any children in college and in dormitories. Those results, she continued, are compared to the census count to come up with the over- or under- coverage results.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL referenced the graph showing the annual increase in costs and asked why the costs are going up given the bureau is getting away from paper and pencil and digitizing would make it more efficient.

MS. AKERS SMITH answered that it is much more difficult to count people these days. The U.S. is a society that moves around more than it used to 30 years ago and there are a lot of different living situations now, she said. The bureau is spending more time, and therefore money, trying to capture information from people because people aren't aware of what the census does and the importance of the census, and they don't easily answer the census questionnaire.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL recalled that when he was a child the 1960 Census was a big deal, interesting and fun. But, he continued, in 2010 Census people going door to door in Fairbanks were chased away by individuals who were sometimes armed. He asked when the switch occurred from fun and friendly to not fun and friendly. He further asked when the short form/long form began and whether it saves time and money.

MS. AKERS SMITH replied she isn't sure when it changed from fun and friendly to not so fun. Maybe society has changed a little bit since then, she suggested, and people are now inundated with information and are asked to give a lot of their information. Regarding short form versus long form, she offered her belief that the 2000 Census was the last time the bureau did both the

short and long forms and probably the last time the bureau used the long form data. The American Community Survey (ACS) was begun in 2005 and that is now where the long form data is collected. In the 2010 Census the bureau only collected the short form data, she continued, and in the 2020 Census the bureau will also only collect short form data. She added that collecting the long-form data was costlier because folks who received the long form were more likely not to respond initially and this lower response rate resulted in additional cost attempting to collect the information. It was a very long interview and if there were 10 people in a household, it could take a very long time to complete that interview.

CHAIR KITO stated that he believes the change was a gradual process. In the 1970s, he recalled, social security numbers were used for a lot of things. Other people getting ahold of social security numbers was not that big in the 1970s, but it was a bit more in the 1980s and was big in the 1990s and individuals became much more concerned about the proliferation of their personal data. He offered his belief that the shift occurred between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL offered his understanding that anyone who gets the 2020 Census will get the short form of five questions, and that the long form is a different survey.

[4:04:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BIRCH agreed that the census used to be a pleasant and monumental experience. He inquired whether the data from census forms is available to researchers without attribution. He further inquired whether the data is accessible to folks that the government wants it accessible to, even if it isn't tied back to a specific individual. He also inquired whether the data is aggregated after it is gathered.

MS. AKERS SMITH responded yes, the bureau takes data and removes all personally identifiable information from the data, mixes it up somewhat and makes it available to researchers through the bureau's public use micro-data samples and this happens right after the census.

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CHAIR KITO asked whether there are things that need to be done at the state level right now.

MS. AKERS SMITH answered that there are a few things that the U.S. Census Bureau would like the state to do. The bureau is going to be doing a national campaign and is going to start its outreach, she said. A partnership specialist has already been hired who has experience working the 2010 Census as a recruiting assistant in remote Alaska areas. This specialist is working directly with Native Alaskan and village areas and is currently in the field communicating with the local governments. The bureau would like to see the state participate in the LUCA program any way it can, she continued, whether it is reviewing addresses or encouraging local governments to participate in the program and to review their address lists. Next, the bureau needs to take its message to the local level and help Alaskans understand why it is important to conduct the census and who better to tell Alaskans than other Alaskans. She said the bureau wants to work with communities and needs someone at the executive level to help create what the bureau calls a "Complete Count Committee." That committee works with the bureau's partnership staff and that helps direct different types of campaigns to get information out about the census and why it is important. She pointed out that the committee packet includes copies of legislation that has been passed by the states of New York and Illinois and which established Complete Count Committees. She said the bureau further requests a line item in the state's budget, so the state can support work of the Complete Count Committee.

CHAIR KITO thanked Ms. Akers Smith and said he looks forward to working with her.

[4:08:33 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.