

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARCTIC**

April 17, 2018

12:31 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair  
Senator Donald Olson  
Senator Click Bishop

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Pete Kelly  
Senator Lyman Hoffman

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33 (AET)  
Urging the Alaska delegation in Congress to pursue the establishment of a U.S. Coast Guard port in the Arctic region; supporting the increase in defensive capabilities in the Arctic region; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.

- MOVED CSHJR 33 (AET) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 33

SHORT TITLE: DEVELOP: ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE/DEFENSE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TUCK

02/09/18	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/09/18	(H)	AET
02/27/18	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
02/27/18	(H)	Heard & Held
02/27/18	(H)	MINUTE (AET)
03/06/18	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
03/06/18	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
03/08/18	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
03/08/18	(H)	Moved CSHJR 33 (AET) Out of Committee
03/08/18	(H)	MINUTE (AET)
03/09/18	(H)	AET RPT CS (AET) NT 4DP 2AM
03/09/18	(H)	DP: EDGMON, JOSEPHSON, TUCK, LINCOLN

03/09/18 (H) AM: NEUMAN, TALERICO  
04/04/18 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)  
04/04/18 (H) VERSION: CSHJR 33 (AET)  
04/06/18 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
04/06/18 (S) ARC  
04/17/18 (S) ARC AT 12:30 AM BUTROVICH 205

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

MICHAEL LOWE, Staff  
Representative Chris Tuck  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HJR 33 on behalf of the sponsor.

RICHARD BENEVILLE, Mayor  
City of Nome  
Nome, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported HJR 33.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[12:31:07 PM](#)

**CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL** called the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic meeting to order at 12:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Olson, Bishop, and Chair Giessel.

#### **HJR 33-DEVELOP: ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE/DEFENSE**

[12:31:36 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of HJR 33, which urges the Coast Guard to establish a port in the Arctic and bolster defense capabilities in the Arctic. [Version 30-LS1350\J was before the committee.] She noted that this was a key topic of discussions for the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, which she and Senator Olson were on several years ago.

MICHAEL LOWE, Staff, Representative Chris Tuck, Alaska State Legislature, presented HJR 33 on behalf of the sponsor.

[12:32:44 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL shared that on the Arctic Policy Commission, former Admiral Tom Barrett said the thing that kept him awake at night was concern about the lack of infrastructure to respond to any accidents involving passage vessels and cruise ships going through the Bering Strait. All those lives that would need to be

rescued with no means to execute that, to say nothing of the fuel, and so forth. The resolution has zero fiscal note.

[12:33:28 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony.

[12:33:34 PM](#)

RICHARD BENEVILLE, Mayor, City of Nome, supported HJR 33. He said his remarks would be brief but passionate. Nome is working to expand its port into a deep-draft, strategic port. He just returned from Norway from an Arctic Frontiers presentation. The people of Norway, Finland, Sweden, and even Russia are not looking at the future. They are dynamically in it. He would like to see Alaska, the United States, more in it. He grew up in the Air Force and just outside of town when he was a kid was a White Alice site, part of defense during the Cold War. The reason for its presence in Alaska was proximity to the Bering Strait and Russia. Although the Coast Guard and the Russians are working together now, which is wonderful news, he grew up in the Air Force and remembers the Cold War. He looks forward to a series of port infrastructure going north to put Alaska in the game. Senator [Lisa] Murkowski was brilliant to get a \$1 billion into a DoD [Department of Defense] bill for a new icebreaker. The country should have three. It is so outnumbered. He loves the country. He loves Alaska. It is so important to speak with one voice. An incredible half of the country's coastline is in Alaska.

[12:36:19 PM](#)

SENATOR OLSON asked Mayor Beneville where else he has lived.

[12:36:31 PM](#)

MAYOR BENEVILLE replied that he has been in for Nome 30 years. Before that Barrow, now Utqiagvik, for eight years and he loved it. Before that, he was in New York City, the Upper West Side.

SENATOR OLSON asked him to remind the members of what he did in Barrow, or what his mother told him he would be doing in Barrow.

[12:37:18 PM](#)

MAYOR BENEVILLE replied that he will, but he has to preface it by saying that this is the truth and he does not mean to insult the Inupiaq people at all. He has told it many times. They know the story and appreciate the irony in the story. When he was little, his grandmother used to chide him during the subway baseball series because he rooted for the Yankees just to make her angry because she was born in Brooklyn. She would turn to

him, look at him with her steely blue eyes, shaker her finger, and say, "Dick, you know, one of these days with your mouth, you're going to end up selling freezers to the Eskimos. And, sir, I proudly worked for Alaska Commercial up there and had a wonderful time." That changed his life. The people of Utqiaġvik allowed him to improve his life to where it is today, which he is very happy about.

[12:38:25 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony.

[12:38:34 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP said he was in full support.

CHAIR GIESSEL called the committee's attention to Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America in their packets. She entertained a motion.

[12:38:58 PM](#)

SENATOR OLSON moved HJR 33, Version 30-LS1350\J, out of committee.

[12:39:14 PM](#)

There being no objection, CSHJR 33(AET) moved from the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic.

[12:39:23 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic at 12:39 p.m.