

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 7, 2017

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bert Stedman, Chair  
Senator Anna MacKinnon  
Senator Click Bishop  
Senator David Wilson  
Senator Dennis Egan

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 50

"An Act relating to fees for the sale or installation of studded tires; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 50 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**CONFIRMATION HEARING**

State Board of Marine Pilots  
Ron Ward

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

**BILL: SB 50**

SHORT TITLE: INCREASE STUDED TIRE FEE

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) GIESSEL

02/06/17	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/06/17	(S)	TRA, FIN
02/15/17	(S)	SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE INTRODUCED-REFERRALS
02/15/17	(S)	TRA, FIN
02/23/17	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/23/17	(S)	Heard & Held
02/23/17	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)

03/07/17

(S)

TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 50.

RON WARD, Captain  
Southwest Alaska Pilots  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as an appointee to the Board of Marine Pilots.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CHAIR BERT STEDMAN** called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Egan, Wilson, and Chair Stedman. Senators MacKinnon and Bishop arrived shortly thereafter.

**SB 50-INCREASE STUDED TIRE FEE**

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**CHAIR STEDMAN** announced the consideration of SB 50. It was previously heard on February 23 and included public testimony.

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**SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL**, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of SB 50, related that the bill would increase an already existing fee for studded tires to \$50 per tire for a new studded tire or a used tire in which studs were inserted. She stated that the purpose of the bill is to help fund the cost of the damage studded tires do to roads, exemplified by ruts which are dangerous.

**CHAIR STEDMAN** noted the presence of Senators MacKinnon and Bishop. He asked if any committee members had questions concerning the bill.

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**SENATOR EGAN** moved to report SB 50 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal notes.

**SENATOR WILSON** objected.

SENATOR WILSON voiced concern about having a rate increase without knowing where the tax would go and how it would benefit Alaskans. He said the higher traffic roads are where the ruts occur, but having a broad user tax fee that would benefit a small population is not equitable. He said he is ok with a slight increase in the tire fee, but going from \$5 to \$50 seems high. The lack of conclusive data is also a concern. He concluded that he cannot support SB 50.

SENATOR WILSON removed his objection.

CHAIR STEDMAN found no further objection and SSSB 50 was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

### **CONFIRMATION HEARING**

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CHAIR STEDMAN announced the final order of business would be a confirmation hearing on Ron Ward for the Board of Marine Pilots. He noted that Captain Ward was appointed by Governor Walker on March 1, 2017, to the Board of Marine Pilots. He asked Captain Ward to share his professional expertise and willingness to serve on the Board.

He noted the hearing will not bind committee members to any future votes they may or may not take.

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RON WARD, Captain, Southwest Alaska Pilots, testified as an appointee to the Board of Marine Pilots. He described his background, work history, and affiliation with the Southwest Alaska Pilots. He noted he has been a pilot with Southwest since 1997. He started training in 1993 and became a full pilot in 2000. He has attended Board of Marine Pilots since 1993 when he first moved to Alaska. Prior to that he was a tanker captain for 17 years transporting Alaska crude oil from the Trans Alaska Pipeline in Valdez. He became a pilot in 1997 with Southwest Alaska Pilots.

CAPTAIN WARD said he is very committed to the mission of the Board of Marine Pilots - protecting the Alaskan environment and promoting safe commerce. He has been a member of the Anchorage Port Commission at various times the last five or six years. He is the Vice President of the Cook Inlet Safety Committee promoting best practices for commerce in Cook Inlet. He has been

a licensed mariner since 1980, a licensed unlimited master since 1989, and piloting in the state since 1997.

CHAIR STEDMAN assumed he was willing to serve because he applied to do so.

CAPTAIN WARD said he is eager to serve and honored to have been nominated.

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SENATOR MACKINNON requested that he state when he was re-licensed as an unlimited master mariner

CAPTAIN WARD clarified that it was in 1991.

SENATOR MACKINNON asked about the licensed marine pilot date.

CAPTAIN WARD agreed it was 1977 to present. He explained that he received his deputy marine pilot license in 1997 and then trained for three years and received his unlimited marine pilot license in 2000.

CHAIR STEDMAN thanked Captain Ward.

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SENATOR BISHOP moved to advance the name of Ron Ward for appointment to the Board of Marine Pilots to the full membership of the legislature in joint session for consideration and a final vote. This does not reflect any intent by the members to vote for or against the confirmation of the individual during any further sessions.

CHAIR STEDMAN found no objection and Captain Ward's name was forwarded for consideration by the full body.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stedman adjourned the Senate Transportation Committee at 1:40 p.m.