

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON SB 241**

March 28, 2020

8:02 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senate Members

Senator John Coghill, Chair

Senator Click Bishop

Senator Tom Begich

House Members

Representative Chuck Kopp, Chair

Representative Ivy Spohnholz

Representative Dave Talerico

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(RLS) am

"An Act extending the March 11, 2020, governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; relating to the COVID-19 outbreak; relating to a financing plan; relating to standing orders of the chief medical officer; relating to occupational and professional licensing; relating to telemedicine and telehealth; relating to fingerprinting requirements; relating to elections in calendar year 2020; relating to permanent fund dividend applications; relating to automatic voter registration; relating to tax filings, payments, and penalties; relating to shareholder meetings; relating to the teachers' retirement system and the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska; providing for electronic and videoconference notification, verification, and acknowledgment of documents; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(RLS) am H

"An Act extending the March 11, 2020, governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; relating to the COVID-19 outbreak; relating to a financing plan; relating to standing

orders of the chief medical officer; relating to occupational and professional licensing; relating to telemedicine and telehealth; relating to fingerprinting requirements; relating to elections in calendar year 2020; relating to permanent fund dividend applications; relating to automatic voter registration; relating to tax filings, payments, and penalties; relating to shareholder meetings; relating to corporations; relating to municipal government deadlines; relating to the Alaska regional economic assistance program; establishing a conclusive presumption that COVID-19 is an occupational disease for firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, peace officers, and health care providers; relating to allowable absences for the permanent fund dividend; relating to the Department of Health and Social Services; relating to retail sellers; tolling deadlines for action by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska; relating to disconnection of utility service for nonpayment; relating to power cost equalization; relating to regulatory assets of a utility; relating to evictions; and providing for an effective date."

FREE CONFERENCE CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241

"An Act extending the March 11, 2020, governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; providing for a financing plan; making temporary changes to state law in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the following areas: standing orders of the chief medical officer; occupational and professional licensing, practice, and billing; telehealth; fingerprinting requirements for health care providers; elections in calendar year 2020; permanent fund dividend applications and eligibility; state tax filings, payments, and penalties; corporations; state and municipal government deadlines; the Alaska regional economic assistance program; Medicaid and public assistance; workers' compensation; sanitation standards for retail sellers; actions by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska; utilities and residential utility service; power cost equalization; forbearance of specified state loans; foreclosures; evictions; wills; repossessions; access to federal stabilization funds; seafood purchase and distribution; homelessness; administrative hearings; and liability for issuing, providing, or manufacturing personal protective equipment; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED FCCS SB 241 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 241

SHORT TITLE: EXTENDING COVID 19 DECLARATION/RELIEF

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/22/20 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/22/20 (S) RLS  
03/23/20 (S) RLS WAIVED PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE, RULE  
23 & UR 24B  
03/23/20 (S) RLS RPT CS 4DP 1AM NEW TITLE  
03/23/20 (S) DP: COGHILL, GIESSEL, HOFFMAN, VON  
IMHOF  
03/23/20 (S) AM: BEGICH  
03/23/20 (S) RLS AT 11:15 AM BUTROVICH 205  
03/23/20 (S) Moved CSSB 241(RLS) Out of Committee  
03/23/20 (S) MINUTE(RLS)  
03/25/20 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
03/25/20 (S) VERSION: CSSB 241(RLS) AM  
03/25/20 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/25/20 (H) RLS  
03/25/20 (H) RLS AT 1:00 PM DAVIS 106  
03/25/20 (H) Moved HCS CSSB 241(RLS) Out of  
Committee  
03/25/20 (H) MINUTE(RLS)  
03/26/20 (H) RLS RPT HCS(RLS) NT 2DP 4NR  
03/26/20 (H) DP: THOMPSON, KOPP  
03/26/20 (H) NR: JOHNSON, PRUITT, STUTES, EDGMON  
03/26/20 (H) LIMIT AMS TO AM NO 15  
03/26/20 (H) LIMIT DEBATE ON AMS TO 2 MIN EACH - UC  
03/26/20 (H) VERSION: HCS CSSB 241(RLS) AM H  
03/26/20 (H) BILL REPRINTED  
03/27/20 (S) UNIFORM RULE 42(A) WAIVED UC  
03/27/20 (S) FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
03/27/20 (S) COGHILL, BISHOP, BEGICH  
03/27/20 (H) FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
03/27/20 (H) KOPP (CHAIR), SPOHNHOLZ, TALERICO  
03/28/20 (H) SB241 AT 11:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

GRACE ERVINE, Staff  
Representative Chuck Kopp  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Reviewed the changes the House made to SB  
241 and where those appear in the FCCS, version G.

JULIE LUCKY, Staff

Senator von Imhof  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the sectional analysis for the Free Conference Committee Substitute for SB 241.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:02:58 PM](#)

**CHAIR JOHN COGHILL** called the Free Conference Committee on SB 241 meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Begich, Bishop, and Coghill; and Representatives Talerico, Spohnholz, and Kopp.

**SB 241-EXTENDING COVID-19 DISASTER EMERGENCY**

[8:03:28 PM](#)

**CHAIR COGHILL** announced the business before the committee was a Free Conference on:

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(RLS) am

"An Act extending the March 11, 2020, governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; relating to the COVID-19 outbreak; relating to a financing plan; relating to standing orders of the chief medical officer; relating to occupational and professional licensing; relating to telemedicine and telehealth; relating to fingerprinting requirements; relating to elections in calendar year 2020; relating to permanent fund dividend applications; relating to automatic voter registration; relating to tax filings, payments, and penalties; relating to shareholder meetings; relating to the teachers' retirement system and the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska; providing for electronic and videoconference notification, verification, and acknowledgment of documents; and providing for an effective date." and

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(RLS) am H

"An Act extending the March 11, 2020, governor's declaration of a public health disaster emergency in response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; relating to the COVID-19 outbreak; relating to a financing plan; relating to standing orders of the chief medical officer; relating to occupational and professional licensing; relating to telemedicine and telehealth; relating to fingerprinting requirements; relating to elections in calendar year 2020; relating to permanent fund dividend applications; relating to automatic voter registration;

relating to tax filings, payments, and penalties; relating to shareholder meetings; relating to corporations; relating to municipal government deadlines; relating to the Alaska regional economic assistance program; establishing a conclusive presumption that COVID-19 is an occupational disease for firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, peace officers, and health care providers; relating to allowable absences for the permanent fund dividend; relating to the Department of Health and Social Services; relating to retail sellers; tolling deadlines for action by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska; relating to disconnection of utility service for nonpayment; relating to power cost equalization; relating to regulatory assets of a utility; relating to evictions; and providing for an effective date."

[8:03:41 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL explained that the Free Conference Committee on SB 241 will operate under Uniform Rule 42. Uniform Rule 42(a) was waived and the conference committee was granted the powers of free conference. This gives the committee the ability to consider all issues that are germane to the titles of the bills before the committee.

[8:04:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP stated that Senator Coghill will chair the meeting because the bill originated in the Senate.

CHAIR COGHILL advised that powers of free conference were granted because new sections had to be added to SB 241 to satisfy an agreement on the legislation.

[8:04:49 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL solicited a motion from Representative Kopp.

[8:04:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to adopt the free conference committee substitute (FCCS) for SB 241, work order 31-GS2260\G, as the working document.

CHAIR COGHILL objected for discussion purposes.

He asked Ms. Ervine to explain the changes made in the House and Ms. Lucky to walk through the sectional analysis for version G of SB 241.

[8:05:27 PM](#)

GRACE ERVINE, Staff, Representative Chuck Kopp, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained the process she would follow to review the changes made in the House.

8:06:20 PM

JULIE LUCKY, Staff, Senator von Imhof, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained the process she would follow to walk through the sectional analysis for SB 241, version G.

CHAIR COGHILL listed the individuals who were available to answer questions.

8:07:35 PM

MS. LUCKY advised that Sections 1-12 were part of the original emergency disaster declaration. She paraphrased the prepared document titled, "Sectional Analysis for CCS for SB 241."

Sec. 1 Legislative Findings (page 1□3). Makes legislative findings related to COVID□19, establishing the need to extend the March 11, 2020, public health disaster declaration.

Sec. 2 Extension of Public Health Emergency / Disaster (pages 3□4). Extends the public health disaster emergency until the earlier of November 15, 2020 or the date on which the governor declares the emergency over. If the Department of Health and Social Services commissioner certifies to the governor that there is no longer an outbreak of COVID□19 or a credible threat of an outbreak, the governor shall issue a proclamation declaring the disaster over. The certification must be based on specific information from a state or federal agency, or another source the commissioner decides is reliable.

MS. LUCKY noted that the House added the November 15, 2020 date.

Sec. 3 Disaster Financing Plan (pages 4-5). Presents the financing plan for the public health disaster emergency, referencing the appropriations made in several bills passed by the 31st Legislature. Allows the governor to spend up to \$10 million from the disaster relief fund in response to the emergency.

Limits emergency spending to the financing plan.

Sec. 4 Chief Medical Officer Standing Orders (page 5-6). Allows the Department of Health and Social Services' chief medical officer to issue standing orders related to COVID-19. If the chief medical officer is incapacitated, a designee may issue the orders. Standing orders are effective until retracted or through the duration of the emergency declaration. The chief medical officer and health care providers are not liable for civil damages for issuing or acting under a standing order, except misconduct.

MS. ERVINE advised that the House changed Section 4. An amendment on the Senate floor allowed the Chief Medical Officer to establish standing orders related to retail seller sanitation. The House removed that section and inserted it in a subsequent section.

MS. LUCKY continued to review the sectional analysis.

Sec. 5 Reports to Legislature (page 6). Requires the governor to report monthly the expenditures made in relation to the COVID-19 public health emergency and the actions taken related to prevention, control and status of COVID-19. Reports begin May 1, 2020 and culminate with a final report due to the legislature no later than January 15, 2021 or 60 days after the date the Governor determines that the public health disaster emergency no longer exists, whichever is earlier. Repealed on January 16, 2021.

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Sec. 6 Professional and Occupational Licensing (page 6-7). During the public health emergency, allows the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing director or a relevant board to grant a license, permit or certificate on an expedited basis to an individual who holds a corresponding license in another jurisdiction. The boards,

commissions and director may take additional action as necessary to protect public health, including temporarily waiving or modifying continuing education requirements; regulating the scope and duration of licenses; not increasing licensing fees; and arranging for supervision of licensees. Professionals who come to Alaska to work under one of these licenses must comply with CDC travel guidelines. A professional or occupational license expedited under this section expires on November 15, 2020 or the date the Governor determines that the public health disaster emergency no longer exists, whichever is earlier.

Sec. 7 Telemedicine and Telehealth (page 7-8). During the emergency declaration and limited to actions related to COVID-19, licensing is waived for health care providers who provide treatment, diagnosis, or prescribe prescriptions (other than controlled substances), and who do not first conduct an in-person exam, for telemedicine and telehealth. Providers must be in good standing in their jurisdiction and practicing within their scope of license. The amount charged for telehealth must be reasonable and customary, and may not exceed 5 percent of the regular fee for the service provided. The Department of Health and Social Services commissioner may waive regulations or laws that would substantially prevent provision of telehealth services.

MS. ERVINE advised that the House expanded and clarified the definition of "telehealth" to utilize the existing definition in AS 47.05.270(e).

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MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 8 Fingerprinting (page 8-9). For professional occupations related to public health that require fingerprinting for licensure, directs the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to coordinate with the

Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Safety to expedite the fingerprinting process.

Sec. 9 Division of Elections (page 9). For the duration of the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency declaration, the director of the Division of Elections may conduct all elections in the same manner as an election by mail under AS 15.20.800.

MS. ERVINE advised that House Rules extended the Senate's September 1, 2020 disaster sunset date to November 15, 2020. This encompasses the general election so the Division of Elections, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Services, has expanded authority to establish a vote by mail election for the primary, special, and statewide general election.

[8:11:19 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL offered his understanding that this is still permissive to the lieutenant governor and the Division of Elections.

MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 10 Permanent Fund Dividend Application Deadline (page 9). Extends the application period for the 2020 Permanent Fund Dividend from March 31, 2020, to April 30, 2020. Automatic voter registration will be processed through April 30, 2020.

Sec. 11 Department of Revenue Taxation (page 9). Extends to July 15, 2020, the filing deadline for certain tax returns, reports or payments to the Department of Revenue. The filing dates for oil and gas taxes and oil and gas property taxes will not be extended. Department of Revenue will not assess penalties or interest to individuals who file under the extension.

Sec. 12 Electronic and Videoconference Meetings (page 9-10). Allows for meetings of shareholders to be held by electronic communication to the extent allowed by the corporation's board,

and allows corporations that have or are planning to distribute a proxy statement and notice of annual meetings to re-notice or notice so that it can be held via electronic communication. It additionally allows nonprofit corporations to do telecommunication meetings and for meetings of shareholders, village corporations organized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Native corporations to be held via electronic communication or telecommunication - to the extent the corporation's board authorizes and adopts guidelines for this type of meeting, or amends the corporation's bylaws to allow for this type of meeting.

MS. ERVINE explained that the Senate bill dealt with shareholder meetings for for-profit corporations and the House expanded that to nonprofit corporations as well as village and Native corporations.

MS. LUCKY advised that Ms. Ervine would discuss the next few sections that the House added.

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MS. ERVINE reviewed Sections 13-22.

Sec. 13 Municipal Government Deadlines (page 10). Provides that certain deadlines established under AS 29 that occur on or after the effective date of SB 241 is extended until the earlier of November 15, 2020 or the date the Governor determines that the COVID-19 public health emergency no longer exists.

Sec. 14 Alaska Regional Economic Assistance Program (page 11). Provides that during the COVID-19 public health emergency disaster declaration, the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development may make grants to organizations for distribution as financial assistance to businesses with operating expenses and shall distribute grants under this Section among qualified organizations based on regional populations.

"Organization" is defined under AS 44.33.896.

Sec. 15 Workers' Compensation Presumption of Compensability (pages 11-12). Provides that individuals employed as firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, peace officers, or health care providers, who contract COVID-19, are presumed to have contracted an occupational disease arising out of and in the course of employment during the public health disaster emergency declaration and are eligible for workers' compensation benefits.

Sec. 16 Allowable Absence for the Permanent Fund Dividend (page 12). Provides that an individual who is otherwise eligible for a permanent fund dividend under AS 43.23.005(a)(4) and AS 43.23.008(d), and expects to be absent from the state for a continuous period due to conduct related to avoiding or preventing the spread of COVID-19, including voluntary or compulsory quarantine, remains eligible to receive a permanent fund dividend.

MS. LUCKY clarified that the intent is to include somebody who is out of the state before March 11, 2020 as long as they are continuously out of state past that date.

8:15:00 PM

MS. ERVINE continued to review the sections of SB 241 that were added by the House.

Sec. 17 Department of Health and Social Services; Retail Sellers (page 12-13). Allows DHSS, in coordination with the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, to establish sanitation procedures for retail sellers.

MS. ERVINE relayed that DHSS advised that Section 17 (rather than Section 4) was a more appropriate place within the department's structure for these types of sanitation procedures. She noted that this was permissive.

She highlighted that the House removed language that was in the Senate bill that dealt with the cost of living allowance (COLA) for retirees. The House received assurance that the Department of Administration was already proactively reaching out to retirees to ensure they did not lose their COLA because of longer than allowed absence from the state due to COVID-19.

CHAIR COGHILL recalled that the Finance Committee also received that assurance.

MS. LUCKY affirmed that an amendment was offered in Senate Finance and then withdrawn after there was reassurance on the record that the COLA issue was already being addressed.

[8:16:23 PM](#)

MS. ERVINE continued to review the sections of SB 241 that were added by the House.

Sec. 18 Tolling Deadlines for Action by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (page 13). Provides that during the public health emergency disaster declaration for COVID-19, all statutory and regulatory deadlines for action by the RCA are tolled, and failure by the RCA to act on a filing does not constitute approval or dismissal by the RCA. This section does not apply to statutory or regulatory deadlines extended by the RCA before March 11, 2020, for good cause under AS 42.05.175(f).

Sec. 19 Moratorium on Disconnection of Residential Utility Service (pages 13-14). Provides that a public utility may not disconnect residential utility service for nonpayment during the COVID-19 public health emergency disaster declaration and shall make reasonable efforts to reconnect utility service to a dwelling occupied by a person experiencing financial hardship related to COVID-19. A person seeking protection under this section shall provide a signed statement stating they are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 and work with the public utility to negotiate and agree to a deferred payment arrangement. The public utility may not impose interest or

late fees on a person receiving protection under this section. The RCA and the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) may not deny a utility otherwise eligible to receive power cost equalization (PCE) payments on behalf of a utility customer PCE payments for customers receiving protection under this section.

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SENATOR BEGICH pointed out that this section refers to the definition of "public utility" in AS 42.05.990. He noted that "telecommunications" is included under this definition and while "internet services" is not specifically mentioned, it is the intent that the moratorium on disconnection would apply to internet services as well.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ referred to Section 18 and related that the RCA has given assurance that it is not their intention to use COVID-19 to further delay the Chugach Electric purchase of ML&P. Nothing in SB 241 will impede the progress of that sale, she said.

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MS. LUCKY explained that the term "financial hardship" is defined first on page 14, lines 20-26, and is repeatedly defined in each subsequent section that talks about financial hardship. The reason for the redundancy is that these temporary measures are in uncodified law. Because there is no statute to refer to, the definition must be included in each section where the term appears. The intention was that the definition would be identical in every section it is mentioned. She read the definition:

(1) "financial hardship" means that a person's liquid assets from any source, including payments from the state or federal government because of the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency or a state or national disaster declaration related to COVID-19, when combined, would be insufficient to pay the reasonable cost of food, housing, health care, and other goods and services vital to the health and wellness of the person and the person's spouse and dependents; in this paragraph, "dependent" has the meaning given in AS 23.20.350(g);

MS. LUCKY said she was pointing this out to clarify that when people are trying to figure out their level of financial

hardship, they need to include in their calculations any wage replacement and enhanced unemployment insurance payments they have received from the federal government.

[8:20:16 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked her to confirm that the definition is intended to be identical each time.

MS. LUCKY answered that is the intent.

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MS. LEVINE continued to review the sections of SB 241 that the House added.

Sec. 20 Regulatory Assets for Unpaid Utility Bills and Extraordinary Expenses (page 14). Provides that a certificated utility may record regulatory assets to be recovered through future rates, for uncollectable residential utility bills and extraordinary expenses that result during the period of time that a public health emergency disaster declaration for COVID-19 is in effect. A determination as to whether an extraordinary expense resulted from COVID-19 and the amortization periods for the regulatory assets are subject to RCA approval before recovery through future rates.

CHAIR COGHILL added that the determination would go through the regular RCA process.

MS. LEVINE agreed. She advised that Section 21 is the last section that the House changed.

Sec. 21 Moratorium on Evictions for Nonpayment (page 15). Provides a moratorium on evictions from rental properties and storage units containing personal belongings for nonpayment of rent from March 11, 2020 to June 30, 2020 for a person experiencing a financial hardship due to COVID-19. The statutory cause of action for forcible entry and detainer for nonpayment of rent and any other statutory cause of action that could be used to evict or otherwise eject a person for nonpayment is suspended for persons

experiencing financial hardship during the disaster. A person seeking protection under this section shall provide a signed statement to the landlord stating they are experiencing financial hardship. This section does not prevent evictions for misconduct, violations of law, or violations of contracts outside of inability to pay rent, nor can it be construed to increase civil liability in a court of law.

CHAIR COGHILL stipulated that these moratoriums apply to hardships related to COVID-19.

SENATOR BEGICH emphasized that the intent is to safeguard the interests of those who are truly suffering hardship while maintaining a fair relationship between landlord and tenant that is respectful of this crisis.

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SENATOR BISHOP pointed out that in Senate Finance, Senator Olson added storage units to this provision. He added that he learned today that the Courts are not hearing evictions through May 1, 2020.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP stressed that bad actors who are violating the law or their rental contract will receive absolutely no protection. This section deals purely with inability to pay as a direct result of COVID-19.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ added that it is important for the public to understand that there are a lot of sideboards on this moratorium. The intent is to ensure that the homeless problem is not exacerbated during this emergency, but the responsibility to pay rent is not waived. Someone who is unable to pay their rent as a result of COVID-19 will still accrue the liability.

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REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO pointed out that there is a significant penalty for signing a perjured statement to a landlord. He recalled that it is a class B felony, which carries up to 10 years in jail and a \$100,000 fine.

CHAIR COGHILL noted that any federal assistance will be viewed as income.

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MS. LUCKY pointed out that each section of the conference CS that relates to financial hardship clearly states that a statement must be made under penalty of perjury; each clearly states the definition of financial hardship; each clearly states that the financial hardship must be due to the COVID-19 virus; and each clearly states that a person is not absolved of their debt. The intent is that people cannot be evicted and items cannot be repossessed due to financial hardship that is a direct result of COVID-19. She noted that each section also has a date certain, which is a little different than conventional statutory construct. In Section 21, the end date for the moratorium on evictions is June 30, 2020.

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MS. LUCKY advised that the remainder of the sections came from the Senate bill.

Sec. 22 Income Determinations for Public Assistance (pages 15-17). Ensures that payments including a Permanent Fund Dividend or aid provided by the state or federal government to mitigate the economic effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency shall not be considered when determining eligibility for Medicaid or public assistance.

Sec. 23 Forbearance for State Loans (pages 17-18). Prohibits the state from finding a borrower in default or seizing loan collateral from a person experiencing a financial hardship due to COVID-19 from March 11, 2020 to June 30, 2020. Applies to state agencies, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. Does not apply to the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, The Alaska Municipal Bond Bank, the Alaska Retirement Management Board or the Department of Revenue, Treasury Division. A borrower shall provide a signed statement, sworn under perjury, to the entity stating they are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency and would still owe the debt.

MS. LUCKY pointed out that paragraph (3) on page 18, lines 9-12, has the definition of "state." It calls out the State of Alaska, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education as lenders. It specifically exempts the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alaska Municipal Bond Bank, Alaska Retirement Management Board, and Department of Revenue, Treasury Division. The idea was to keep people who have loans from these state agencies from losing their good credit or their boats or permits, but to exempt agencies that use loans as an investment asset.

CHAIR COGHILL noted that Alaska Housing does both individual lending and asset-based lending.

[8:30:40 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 24 Moratorium on Foreclosures (page 18). Prohibits a lender from foreclosing on a personal residence owned by a borrower experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 from March 11, 2020 to June 30, 2020. A borrower shall provide a signed statement, sworn under perjury, to the entity stating they are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency and would still owe the debt. Does not apply to vacant or abandoned property.

MS. LUCKY highlighted that the moratorium does not relieve the borrower of the obligation to pay their debt. She also pointed out that this section does not apply to real property that is vacant or abandoned and that the language on page 19, line 10 clarifies that this applies only to natural persons, not businesses or corporations.

Sec. 25 Witnessing of Will Signing by Videoconference (page 19). Allows a person to have their will signing witnessed by videoconference during the disaster declaration if the person is at high risk for severe illness due to COVID or, is under advice from a health care provider or government agency to avoid being in the presence of others. Within 60 days, the witnesses must sign a statement, which

will be attached to the will, attesting that it is the document they witnessed the person sign on the videoconference.

MS. LUCKY said she believes that this language quells the concerns expressed in both bodies.

SENATOR BEGICH extended thanks to Suzanne Cunningham who helped to ensure this is a "good Department of Law piece of language" that can satisfy all parties.

CHAIR COGHILL mentioned the effort that Representative Claman put into this section.

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MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 26 Unfair or Deceptive Trade Practices (page 20).  
During the COVID-19 public health disaster, prohibits charging more than 10% over the price charged for "normal course of business" before the emergency was declared. Exceptions when the price paid by the person for the item is increased by more than 10%.

MS. LUCKY noted that the definition of "supply" includes food, medicine, medical equipment, fuel, sanitation products, hygiene products, essential household supplies, and other essential goods.

CHAIR COGHILL noted that there would be a subsequent discussion on fuel.

MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 27 Moratorium on Repossession of Motor Vehicles (pages 20-21). Prohibits a lender from repossessing a motor vehicle from March 11, 2020 to June 30, 2020. A borrower shall provide a signed statement, sworn under perjury, to the entity stating they are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency and would still owe the debt. Applies to motor vehicles, aircraft, and watercraft as defined in current statute.

Sec. 28 State Access to Federal Education Stabilization Funds (page 21). Requires the Governor to apply for and make reasonable efforts to provide necessary assurances to receive the maximum funding available through the Education Stabilization Fund as outlined in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES).

MS. LUCKY advised that the available federal money is estimated to be up to \$8.7 million but a fiscal note for this will not be adopted.

Sec. 29 Purchase of Seafood for Distribution (pages 20-21). Encourages the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to purchase Alaska seafood to provide to food banks and soup kitchens.

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SENATOR BISHOP credited Senator Wilson for offering this amendment in Senate Finance and described the provision as another arrow in the quiver to solidify food security for the people of Alaska.

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MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 30 Financial Assistance to Address Homelessness (page 21). Allows the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) to provide additional funds using existing programs to prevent homelessness - \$5 million is provided for this purpose.

MS. LUCKY said this provision would add homelessness that is the result of the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency to the existing AHFC programs that keep people from becoming homeless. The fiscal note adds \$5 million, subject to appropriation, to the AHFC grant program to meet the higher demand.

Sec. 31 Tolling of the Office of Administrative Hearings Deadlines (page 22).

MS. LUCKY explained the intent is to ensure that OAH deadlines that are missed due to the COVID-19 emergency disaster do not result in an automatic denial or approval. This provision will

remain in place for the duration of the emergency declaration and 30 days thereafter. She noted that this does not apply to a statutory or regulatory deadline occurring before [March 11, 2020], or after the public health disaster emergency ends; a deadline under AS 44.64.060 relating to a matter referred by the Department of Revenue or the Department of Health and Social Services; or a deadline for acting on a summary suspension of a facility or occupational license. She advised that the sideboards were added to make everyone comfortable with the types of hearings that would be tolled.

CHAIR COGHILL said, for example, the sanction would continue for a health care official who had been sanctioned.

MS. LUCKY said yes; not having certain license and facility suspensions was seen as a possible safety risk. She also pointed out that subsection (d) on page 23, lines 17-19 says OAH shall continue to make reasonable efforts to take action and issue decisions as soon as possible. This language allays the concerns expressed in Senate Finance about automatic approvals or denials.

CHAIR COGHILL recalled that the Office of Administrative Hearings reviewed the language and suggested adding "or a final decision maker" to paragraph (3) on page 23, lines 4-5, because the actual decision maker may be in a bureaucratic office, not OAH.

MS. LUCKY confirmed that the Office of Administrative Hearings vetted and approved the language in Section 31.

8:42:05 PM

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ referred to Section 14 that talks about the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance Program and the grants that the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development may make to organizations. She recalled that in an earlier version of the bill, the definition of "organization" included nonprofit organizations. She asked if anybody could help with that definition because she understood that the intent wasn't necessarily that the money would only go to regional economic development organizations. Rather, it could also be distributed to nonprofit organizations that are working to prevent hardships.

MS. LEVINE stated that Section 14 of HCS CSSB 241(RLS) am H gives the definition of "organization" as the meaning given in AS 44.33.896.

[8:43:05 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP highlighted that \$358 billion in Small Business Administration funds are going to be available in Alaska and nonprofits could qualify for those loans.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ questioned whether the definition of "organization" needed to be supplemented. "I think it's important that we get this piece right because we're talking about a lot of money funneling through and we want to make sure it gets to where it needs to go," she said.

[8:44:45 PM](#)

MS. ERVINE advised that the House floor amendment has the same definition of "organization" as the meaning given in AS 44.33.896.

CHAIR COGHILL observed that it is the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance Program, but the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) will make and distribute the grants to organizations.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ added that those grants will go to the regional economic development organizations.

CHAIR COGHILL said there will be accountability. He asked Ms. Lucky to continue and give a high level explanation of the transitions.

MS. LUCKY continued the sectional analysis.

Sec. 32 Authority for regulations for sections 22  
(Public Assistance Hold Harmless) and 23  
(Forbearance for State Loans).

MS. LUCKY explained that the transition regulations allow the commissioner of health and social services to adopt regulations to implement the hold harmless provisions in Section 22; and the commissioner of administration to adopt regulations to implement the forbearance of state loans in Section 23.

Sec. 33 Repeals the sections related to the disaster  
declaration (except reporting requirements),  
income determination for public assistance,  
forbearance of state loans, and financial  
assistance to address homelessness on  
November 15, 2020 or the date on which the

governor declares the emergency over,  
whichever is earlier.

8:47:37 PM

Sec. 34 Repeals the reporting requirements on January 16, 2021.

Sec. 35 Repeals the sections related to moratoriums on evictions, foreclosures and repossession of vehicles on June 30, 2020.

Sec. 36 Repeals the sections related to witnessing wills by videoconference, unfair or deceptive trade practices, state access to stabilization funds, purchase of seafood for distribution, and tolling of Office of Administrative Hearings deadlines on March 11, 2021.

MS. LUCKY clarified that if there is a date in the section, that is the date the provision will no longer be effective. The repeal removes the words from statute. If there are dates that conflict, it is the date in the section of law that the program ends.

Sec. 37 Repeals the temporary regulations on March 11, 2021.

Sec. 38 & 39 Retroactivity sections and immediate effective date.

MS. LUCKY said Section 38 amends uncodified law to allow for retroactivity. If the bill doesn't pass on time, this would be retroactive to April 10, 2020 for certain sections, and through March 11, 2020 for certain sections.

8:50:42 PM

MS. LUCKY advised that Senate Finance intended to insert unemployment insurance or wage recovery in the economic mitigation package, but found that putting it in statute might jeopardize funding from the federal government, and the federal benefit was better anyway. She said her understanding was that \$600 per week would be provided for those on unemployment insurance as well as those in the gig economy who do not pay into unemployment. She deferred to Senator Bishop to add more detail.

[8:52:32 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH noted that she had misstated the extension for will signing in Section 25. He pointed out that the language on page 19, line 16, of the bill says witnessing of will signing by videoconference will be extended for 10 days beyond the emergency extension outlined in Section 2. "This is the language we all agreed to," he said.

SENATOR BEGICH then referenced the earlier question about whether nonprofits are included in the definition of "organization" in Section 14 on page 11, line 19. He pointed out that for that section, the definition has the same meaning given in AS 44.33.896(f)(2). [The definition includes nonprofit organizations.]

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ thanked him for putting that on record. She said that's important because nonprofits are important resources that provide an efficient means to get money into communities.

CHAIR COGHILL asked Ms. Lucky to review the fiscal notes.

[8:55:06 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY advised that there are roughly 22 fiscal notes and she would review them in groups of those that have money, those that are indeterminant, and those that are zero and require no regulations.

MS. LUCKY stated that Fiscal Notes 27 and 24 are the only ones that have money.

**Fiscal Note 27.** Department: Department of Revenue; Appropriation: Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; Allocation: AHFC Operations; OMB Component: 3048. This is a new fiscal note for version G. There are no operation costs but it has a supplemental appropriation of \$5 million for grants to homelessness.

**Fiscal Note 24.** Department: Department of Revenue; Appropriation: Taxation and Treasure; Allocation: Permanent Fund Dividend Division; OMB Component: 981. There is an estimated supplemental cost of \$7.2 thousand for database programing associated with extending the filing season until April 30, 2020.

[8:57:14 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY advised that the next fiscal note is zero but it has indeterminant costs associated to adopt emergency regulations.

**Fiscal Note 23.** Department: Office of the Governor; Appropriation: Elections; Allocation: Elections; OMB Component: 21. This is a zero fiscal note but the agency will need to adopt emergency regulations to implement vote by mail at a statewide level.

[8:57:46 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY said the next two fiscal notes are indeterminant. They will have a fiscal impact, but it is not clear what the impact will be.

**Fiscal Note 5.** Department: Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs; Appropriation: Military and Veterans' Affairs; Allocation: Office of the Commissioner; OMB Component: 414. This is an indeterminant appropriation request.

**Fiscal Note [17].** Department: Department of Administration; Appropriation: Risk Management; Allocation: Risk Management; OMB Component: [71]. This is an indeterminant appropriation request.

MS. LUCKY advised that the next two Fiscal Notes have an indeterminant change in revenue. The appropriation requests are zero but revenues will be less.

**Fiscal Note 28.** Department: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Appropriation: Workers' Compensation; Allocation: Workers' Compensation; OMB Component: 344. This is a new fiscal note due to House floor Amendment 5 that amends uncodified law to establish the presumption of certain categories of emergency response employees and providers related to COVID-19. This is the presumption of compensability [that was discussed in Section 15].

**Fiscal Note 29.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; Allocation: Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; OMB Component: 1234. There is an indeterminant change in revenue for AIDEA receipts due to the prohibition for the state as a lender to find a borrower in default, ask a court or arbitrator to find

a borrower in default, or seize or seize or otherwise obtain collateral from a borrower. The department cannot predict the fiscal impact SB 241 would have on revolving loan fund balances, but if AIDEA is unable to foreclose on debts, losses in excess of \$100 million could result.

[9:01:04 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY advised that the rest of the fiscal notes are zero.

**Fiscal Note 1.** Department: Office of the Governor; Appropriation: Executive Operations; Allocation: Executive Office; OMB Component: 6.

**Fiscal Note 6.** Department: Department of Public Safety; Appropriation: Statewide Support; Allocation: Criminal Justice Information Systems Program; OMB Component: 3200.

**Fiscal Note 11.** Department: Department of Revenue; Appropriation: Taxation and Treasury; Allocation: Tax Division; OMB Component: 2476.

**Fiscal Note 18.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Community and Regional Affairs; Allocation: Community and Regional Affairs; OMB Component: 2879.

**Fiscal Note 20.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Insurance Operations; Allocation: Insurance Operations; OMB Component: 354.

**Fiscal Note 21.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Alaska Energy Authority; Allocation: Alaska Energy Authority Power Cost Equalization; OMB Component: 2602.

**Fiscal Note 22.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Regulatory Commission of Alaska; Allocation: Regulatory Commission of Alaska; OMB Component: 2417.

**Fiscal Note 23.** Department: Office of the Governor; Appropriation: Elections; Allocation: Elections; OMB Component: 21.

**Fiscal Note 25.** Department: Department of Health and Social Services; Appropriation: Public Health; Allocation: Emergency Programs; OMB Component: 2877.

**Fiscal Note 26.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Investments; Allocation: Investments; OMB Component: 383.

**Fiscal Note 30.** Department: Department of Health and Social Services; Appropriation: Public Assistance; Allocation: Public Assistance Field Services; OMB Component: 236.

**Fiscal Note 31.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing; Allocation: Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing; OMB Component: 2360.

**Fiscal Note 32.** Department: Department of Administration; Appropriation: Centralized Administrative Services; Allocation: Office of Administrative Hearings; OMB Component: 2771.

**Fiscal Note 33.** Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Appropriation: Banking and Securities; Allocation: Banking and Securities; OMB Component: 2808.

**Fiscal Note 34.** Department: Department of Education and Early Development; Appropriation: Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education; Allocation: Program Administration & Operations; OMB Component: 2738.

**Fiscal Note 35.** Department: Department of Law; Appropriation: Civil Division Except Contracts Relating to Interpretation of Janus v AFSCME; Allocation: Deputy Attorney General's Office; OMB Component: 2205.

**Fiscal Note 36.** Department: Department of Health and Social Services; Appropriation: Medicaid Services; Allocation: Medicaid Services; OMB Component: 3234.

[9:07:51 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL removed his objection and the FCCS for SB 241, work order 31-GS2260\G, was adopted.

[9:07:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved Amendment 31-GS2260\E.1, identified as Conceptual Amendment 1.

31-GS2260\E.1  
Marx  
3/28/20

**CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT 1**

OFFERED IN CONFERENCE BY REPRESENTATIVE KOPP  
TO: FCCS SB 241, Draft Version "E"

Page 20, line 9, following "supplies":

Insert "or, for a person in the business of selling fuel, caused by normal fluctuations in the market for fuel based on supply and demand"

CHAIR COGHILL objected for an explanation.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP said the amendment is conceptual because it was drafted to version E. The change in version G would be on page 20, line 19. He explained that the sale of fuel would be exempted from the list of supplies subject to unfair or deceptive trade practices. Fuel acts more like a commodity in the market and this recognizes that normal market fluctuations may fall outside the parameters in this provision. He reported that he reviewed this exemption with the member who originally offered the unfair trade practices amendment and he was supportive.

[9:10:47 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said he supports the amendment with the caveat that this is not the time for sellers to take advantage of this crisis to hurt consumers. He committed to keep a close eye on price fluctuations and to seek redress if needed.

CHAIR COGHILL agreed that fuel is a commodity that fluctuates widely. He noted that when legislators arrived in Juneau in January, the price of a barrel of oil was \$60 to \$65 and now it's \$20 to \$25.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ said she supported the amendment but she also would be watching to see that Alaskans are protected. She noted that when the price of fuel drops on the international market, Alaskans often do not see a commensurate drop at the fuel pump.

[9:12:28 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL removed his objection. Finding no further, objection he announced that Conceptual Amendment 1 was adopted

[9:12:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ moved Amendment 31-GS2260\E.2, identified as Conceptual Amendment 2.

31-GS2260\E.2  
Marx  
3/28/20

### CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN CONFERENCE

TO: FCCS SB 241, Draft Version "E"

Page 23, following line 10:

Insert a new bill section to read:

**"\* Sec. 32.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

LIABILITY: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. (a) In addition to the immunity available under AS 09.65.091, during the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) public health disaster emergency declared by the governor on March 11, 2020, as extended by sec. 2 of this Act, a

health care provider or manufacturer of personal protective equipment is not liable for civil damages resulting from an act or omission in issuing, providing, or manufacturing personal protective equipment in the event of injury or death to the user of the personal protective equipment if the personal protective equipment was issued, provided, or manufactured in good faith to respond to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency.

(b) Nothing in this section precludes liability for civil damages as a result of gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct.

(c) A health care provider or manufacturer of personal protective equipment that issues, provides, or manufactures personal protective equipment to respond to the COVID-19 public health disaster emergency declared by the governor on March 11, 2020, as extended by sec. 2 of this Act, shall notify the user of the personal protective equipment that the equipment may not meet established federal standards and requirements.

(d) In this section, "health care provider" has the meaning given in AS 18.15.395 and a nursing home."

Re-number the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 23, line 19:

Delete "Sections 1 - 4 and 6 - 20"

Insert "Sections 1 - 4, 6 - 20, and 32"

Page 23, line 27:

Delete "sec. 32"

Insert "sec. 33"

Page 24, line 1:

Delete "22 - 31"

Insert "22 - 32"

CHAIR COGHILL objected for discussion purposes.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ explained that Conceptual Amendment 2 ensures civil liability protection for personal protective equipment (PPE) that is manufactured in good faith. The purchaser or user of the equipment would be informed that the PPE was not necessarily in compliance with federal guidelines so they could make an informed decision about how and whether to use the equipment. However, this does not preclude civil liability for gross negligence, neglect, or intentional misconduct. She said the amendment first came through the UAA Center for Economic Development, the Business Enterprise Institute, and the Alaska Manufacturing Enterprise Partnership. Health care providers were also consulted and would like it advanced so Alaskans can step up and help ensure there is more PPE on the market.

SENATOR BEGICH referenced the language in subsection (b) regarding civil liability for gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct and asked if her intent was that defective masks would be a civil liability issue.

[9:15:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP related that in the public safety arena, officers and firefighters are specifically warned that the personal protective equipment they are issued may be defective. Everyone is instructed to visually inspect each piece and use it just once. It is recognized in the industry that any protective covering is not guaranteed to be without defect.

SENATOR BISHOP, speaking as a former safety instructor for about 20 years, made two points. First is that it typically takes more than 24 months for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health to certify a new piece of respiratory protective equipment and this crisis is now. Second, people that use this type of equipment are trained to fit test and use PPE so they know if a piece is defective.

SENATOR BEGICH expressed satisfaction with the answers.

CHAIR COGHILL stated that this is an attempt to have Alaskans help Alaskans but purchasers and users should be alert.

[9:17:44 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL removed his objection. Finding no further objection, he announced that Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

[9:17:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP move Amendment 31-GS2260\E.4 identified as Conceptual Amendment 3.

31-GS2260\E.4  
Marx  
3/28/20

### CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT 3

OFFERED IN CONFERENCE

TO: FCCS SB 241, Draft Version "E"

Page 18, following line 2:

Insert a new paragraph to read:

"(A) Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, when the corporation is providing a loan that is not a single family residential mortgage loan or public housing assistance;"

Reletter the following subparagraphs accordingly.

CHAIR COGHILL objected for discussion purposes.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP directed attention to Section 23 [subsection (d)(3) on page 18 of version G] relating to forbearance of state loans. He said this adds Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to the exceptions under the definition of "state" when the corporation is making a loan that is not single family residential or public housing assistance. He deferred to Senator Begich to provide further explanation.

[9:20:12 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH explained that the current bill lists five corporations or agencies that are excepted from forbearance of state loans and the amendment adds the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to the list of exceptions, but it does not apply to single family residential mortgages or public housing assistance. Those two programs would be subject to forbearance. The concern was that there could be an inadvertent hardship placed on residential mortgages or public housing.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP thanked him for the clarification.

[9:21:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ pointed out that the amendment was crafted this way to allow AHFC the needed flexibility to do investment work to effectively achieve its public mission. Those two loan programs were specifically carved out.

[9:22:32 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL removed his objection. Finding no further objection, he announced that Conceptual Amendment 3 was adopted. Finding no further amendments, he solicited a motion.

[9:22:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved the free conference committee report for SB 241 from committee and recommended that the House and Senate adopt the free conference committee substitute (FCCS) for SB 241, work order 31-GS2260\G as amended, with the accompanying fiscal note(s).

[9:23:21 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL stated that the motion before the committee is to send a report to the respective bodies recommending the approval of the free conference committee substitute for SB 241. He asked if there was objection.

[9:23:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO objected to comment on his anxiety that the bill has a lot of moving parts. He articulated particular concern over the moratoriums on residential utility services, evictions, and foreclosures because someone will be on the receiving end of these moratoriums at some point. He said legislators have heard extensively from landlords and that has been well covered, but utilities are providers and there are costs associated with generating power. It's the same with foreclosures because someone is holding the note. He said he hates to use the term "keeping my fingers crossed" but he hopes the committee is doing the right things in this bill and that

the legislature is doing the right things to deal with and get beyond this pandemic. He emphasized that all legislators are working to protect Alaska residents.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO repeated the warning that trying to game the system to take advantage of any of the provisions in the bill is nothing to play with. He reminded those listening that making a false statement to take advantage of the relief measures in the bill would be perjury. It is a class B felony, which carries much more serious ramifications than many people may realize, he said.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO removed his objection.

[9:26:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ highlighted the measure in Section 20 that the House added to provide for power companies whose ratepayers are unable to pay their utility bills. She cited the work done with the Alaska Power Association and the RCA to allow power companies to book uncollectable residential utility bills as regulatory assets and then to recoup the costs. In addition, these companies can collect power cost equalization money even if their ratepayers individually wouldn't be able to pay, which will be particularly important for rural energy providers. She concluded her comments:

So we worked really hard to craft a compromise that would help address those concerns. I wanted to put that on the record for people who might be watching. To know that we worked very hard to try to mitigate some of the challenges associated with pushing through a very broad-ranging measure in short order.

CHAIR COGHILL thanked the governor, the House, and the Senate for their work in trying to help Alaskans.

[9:28:05 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP expressed appreciation for the untold hours of behind the scenes work that went into crafting the bill.

[9:28:42 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL requested a roll call on the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Talerico, Spohnholz, and Kopp; and Senators Begich, Bishop, and Coghill voted in favor of the motion. Therefore, the free conference committee report for SB 241 was adopted unanimously with the

recommendation that the House and Senate each adopt FCCS SB 241. The vote was 3:0 by House members and 3:0 by Senate members.

9:29:27 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Coghill adjourned the meeting of the Free Conference Committee on SB 241 at 9:29 p.m.