

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
May 4, 2022  
10:06 a.m.

10:06:42 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Merrick called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice-Chair  
Representative Ben Carpenter  
Representative DeLena Johnson  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Bart LeBon  
Representative Sara Rasmussen  
Representative Steve Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Adam Wool

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Geran Tarr, Bill Sponsor; David Myung Keun Song, Staff, Representative Geran Tarr; Andy Mills, Legislative Liaison, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Key Getty, President, Korean American Community of Anchorage, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

HB 357 NAMING THE INSOOK BAIK BRIDGE

HB 357 was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations and two "no recommendation"

recommendations and with one previously published fiscal note: FN1(DOT).

Co-Chair Merrick reviewed the agenda for the morning.

#hb357

HOUSE BILL NO. 357

"An Act naming the Bragaw Street overcrossing of the Glenn Highway the Insook Baik Bridge."

10:07:13 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, BILL SPONSOR, thanked the committee for the opportunity to present HB 357. The bill had been a fun process which had been community driven and involved networking with neighbors.

DAVID MYUNG KEUN SONG, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, introduced the PowerPoint presentation: "House Bill 357: Insook Baik Bridge" (copy on file). He began with slide 2 and read from it as follows:

Last year, we were made aware of an unnamed bridge in our district after the passage of HB 27 (Irene Webber Bridge).

- Bragaw St. Overcrossing over the Glenn Highway in Mountain View.

Mr. Song advanced through slides 3 and 4, which showed a map of the bridge location and a street view of the bridge.

10:09:05 AM

Mr. Song spoke to the process of naming the bridge on slide 5. He read from the slide as follows:

- We wanted a neighbor-led process to determine the name of this currently unnamed bridge.
- Collaborated with Community Councils in HD 19 (Mountain View, Russian Jack, Airport Heights) for months to gather suggestions for potential names for the Bragaw St. Bridge.
- Created survey for constituents to weigh in on the name of this bridge and suggest additional names.

Mr. Song turned to slide 6 which showed all of the suggested names that were considered. He pointed out that there were a diverse mix of names on the list. He turned to slide 7 and read it as follows:

- Support coalesced most around Insook Baik, owner of the Mt. View Shell station and organizer of an annual Thanksgiving meal drive.
- Received tremendous support from the Korean community in Anchorage.

Mr. Song continued to slide 8 and read from it as follows:

- 35-year resident of Anchorage, originally from South Korea, where she lived through the Korean War.
- Ms. Baik has organized a large-scale Thanksgiving meal drive every year for over a decade serving Mt. View.
- Distributes hundreds of meals every year - served nearly 1000 meals in 2021.
- Active member of her church community and the Korean American community in Anchorage
- Won a Presidential Service Award in 2018 at the Bridge Builders Gala.

Mr. Song indicated that Ms. Baik had received news coverage with the Anchorage Daily News as depicted on slide 9. He progressed through pictures of her on slides 10 and 11.

[10:12:01 AM](#)

Mr. Song continued to slide 12 which read as follows:

- Hundreds of signatures in support of HB 357.
- Change.org petition collected 213 signatures as of 3/14, as well as hand signatures collected across Anchorage.
- Letter of support from KACA (Korean American Community of Anchorage)

Mr. Song ended the presentation with slide 13 containing quotes from community members about Ms. Baik. He concluded that her story embodies the best of Anchorage and the best of Alaskans.

Co-Chair Foster commented that the legislation seemed to represent great collaboration between community members.

Representative Rasmussen appreciated that the sponsor and her staff sought the respect and approval of community members. She wondered if there had been many bridges named after living people.

Representative Tarr responded that she had looked into it and learned that it was permissible to name a bridge after someone who was still living. She learned that Representative Gillham had proposed naming a bridge after Congressman Don Young prior to his passing. She wanted the decision to be driven by the neighbors in the area and went with what the community members wanted.

Representative Rasmussen asked if Representative Tarr had checked for support from community members in other areas of Anchorage.

Representative Tarr indicated she had sought and received approval from a variety of community members, including members of the body.

Co-Chair Merrick noted Representative Carpenter had joined the meeting.

[10:16:48 AM](#)

Co-Chair Merrick OPENED public testimony.

[10:17:06 AM](#)

KEY GETTY, PRESIDENT, KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF ANCHORAGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of HB 357. She indicated Ms. Insook Baik was a great role model. She noted Ms. Baik's generosity and consistency in giving back to the community and thought it took someone special to do what Ms. Baik had done. Ms. Baik had risen above the problems that she had experienced and chose to help others.

Ms. Getty noted that as a minority association, the Korean American Community of Anchorage (KACA) carried out community activities and events throughout the year. The association only had one half-time employee and otherwise counted on its volunteers. She talked about having fundraised over \$300,000 for high school graduates. She indicated Koreans were resilient and would do whatever it

took to make things great. She thought naming the bridge after Ms. Baik would be an honor for the Korean community.

[10:24:05 AM](#)

Co-Chair Merrick CLOSED public testimony.

ANDY MILLS, LEGISLATIVE LIASON, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES, reviewed Fiscal Note 1 with the control code YGlpe. He shared that the note had an associated cost of \$6,700.

Representative LeBon asked if the state had paid 100 percent of the cost in recent years for similar proposed names changes or had the costs been shared with community organizations.

Mr. Mills responded that all naming of state infrastructure by the Department of Transportation and Public facilities (DOT) was done through Alaska Statute (AS) 35.40. In considering infrastructure that had been renamed within the last 5 years, he discovered that there were many projects with zero fiscal notes because they were ongoing and therefore signage costs were part of the total project budgets already. There were one or two situations where a name was designated, but it was decided that signage would be placed at a future time when another project happened at that site. He indicated that this could be an option for HB 357 as well. There were also a couple of pieces of legislation currently before the legislature that would add a component for individuals and organizations to provide funds or potentially even materials to contribute to a project. The legislation would have to dictate whether the funding would come from the state or from an individual.

[10:27:35 AM](#)

Representative LeBon noted there had been some bridges that were recently named, such as the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Bridge on the Glenn Highway. He asked whether Mr. Mills was familiar with this bridge.

Mr. Mills believed that the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Bridge included a fiscal note with a similar associated cost of around \$6,000 to \$7,000. He indicated that unless the bill stated that donations were acceptable, the state would be responsible for the costs.

10:28:55 AM

Representative LeBon asked if the bridge had been concretely designated in the name of Ms. Baik and was already in a reserve status within DOT.

Mr. Mills reported that DOT maintained a bridge index that included factual information about every bridge. Every bridge had an associated number which was included in the index and typically also in the fiscal note. The name designated by the legislature was what would be included on the public facing signage.

Representative LeBon asked whether the math would change if another group came forward and wanted to name the bridge after someone else and pay for it with donations raised by the group. He asked whether the name was already locked in for the bridge, pending action by the legislature.

Mr. Mills indicated a future legislature could rename the bridge. Each bill that sought to name something could have language in it that allowed for third parties to provide donations. The process was that DOT would receive a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an organization or individual, the fiscal note would reflect that DOT was collecting the funds, and upon the collection of the full amount, DOT would produce the signage. He reiterated that specific language would have to be passed by the legislature first. He believed that there were bills currently before the legislature that sought to codify that process so that it could be referenced instead of having to be repeated every time a similar bill was proposed.

Co-Chair Merrick indicated Representative Josephson had joined the meeting. She would think of Ms. Baik every time she drove over the bridge headed to Costco.

10:32:03 AM

AT EASE

10:34:09 AM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report HB 357 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 357 was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations and two "no recommendation" recommendations and with one previously published fiscal note: FN1(DOT).

10:34:39 AM

AT EASE

10:35:30 AM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Merrick reviewed the agenda for the afternoon meeting.

#

ADJOURNMENT

10:36:17 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36 a.m.