

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 17, 2021

3:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Joshua Revak, Chair
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

Calling on President Biden to immediately seek and secure an end to the embargo imposed by Russia on seafood imports from abroad so that Alaska seafood producers' access to the Russian domestic seafood market is fully restored.

- MOVED SJR 16 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

Requesting the United States Trade Representative to bring a renewed focus on the plight of producers of seafood in the state and the United States and to compel China to comply with its commitment to increase its imports of seafood products from the United States.

- MOVED SJR 17 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 22 AM

"An Act relating to shared animal ownership; and relating to the sharing of raw milk and raw milk products."

- MOVED SCS HB 22 (RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SJR 16

SHORT TITLE: END RUSSIA EMBARGO ON U.S. SEAFOOD

SPONSOR(s): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WORLD TRADE

05/11/21 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/11/21 (S) WTR
05/12/21 (S) RES REFERRAL REPLACED WTR
05/17/21 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SJR 17

SHORT TITLE: INCREASE SEAFOOD EXPORTS

SPONSOR(s): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WORLD TRADE

05/11/21 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/11/21 (S) WTR
05/12/21 (S) RES REFERRAL REPLACED WTR
05/17/21 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HB 22

SHORT TITLE: SHARED ANIMAL AND RAW MILK/PRODUCTS

SPONSOR(s): TARR

02/18/21 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21 (H) CRA, RES
03/30/21 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/30/21 (H) Heard & Held
03/30/21 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
04/06/21 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/06/21 (H) Moved HB 22 Out of Committee
04/06/21 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
04/07/21 (H) CRA RPT 6DP 1NR
04/07/21 (H) DP: MCCARTY, DRUMMOND, PRAX, MCCABE,
HANNAN, SCHRAGE
04/07/21 (H) NR: PATKOTAK
04/16/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/16/21 (H) Heard & Held
04/16/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
04/19/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/19/21 (H) Moved HB 22 Out of Committee
04/19/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
04/21/21 (H) RES RPT 6DP 1NR 2AM
04/21/21 (H) DP: MCKAY, FIELDS, CRONK, HANNAN,
SCHRAGE, PATKOTAK
04/21/21 (H) NR: HOPKINS
04/21/21 (H) AM: RAUSCHER, GILLHAM

05/06/21 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
05/06/21 (H) VERSION: HB 22 AM
05/07/21 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/07/21 (S) RES
05/17/21 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

STEPHANIE MADSEN

Executive Director
At-Sea Processors Association
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on SJR 16 and SJR 17 by invitation.

MATT TINNING, Director of Sustainability and Public Affairs
At-Sea Processors Association (APA)
Washington, D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearings on SJR 16 and SJR 17.

CHRIS BARROWS, President
Pacific Seafood Processors Association
Seattle, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 16 and SJR 17.

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 22.

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff
Representative Geran Tarr
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding HB 22.

SUZY CROSBY, Owner
Cottonwood Creek Farm
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 22 by invitation.

AMY PETTIT, Executive Director
Alaska Farmland Trust
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 22 by invitation.

MARLENE WENGER, representing self
Kenny Lake, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 22.

LARAE SMITH, representing self
Willow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 22.

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director
Alaska Farm Bureau
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 22.

MILENA SEVIGNY, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 22.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:34:17 PM](#)

CHAIR JOSHUA REVAK called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Micciche, Stevens, Kiehl, Kawasaki, and Chair Revak. Senators Bishop and von Imhof arrived during the course of the meeting.

SJR 16-END RUSSIA EMBARGO ON U.S. SEAFOOD

[Contains discussion of SJR 17.]

[3:35:20 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the consideration of SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16 Calling on President Biden to immediately seek and secure an end to the embargo imposed by Russia on seafood imports from abroad so that Alaska seafood producers' access to the Russian domestic seafood market is fully restored.

[3:35:36 PM](#)

SENATOR GARY STEVENS, speaking as chair of the Senate Special Committee on World Trade that sponsored SJR 16, stated that Alaska's fisheries are a centerpiece of the state's economy and anything that increases the value of Alaska seafood improves the health of the state's economy. He reminded the committee that in August 2014, Russia banned a broad range of food products from the European Union (EU), the United States, Canada, Australia, and Norway in retaliation to the Western sanctions to the Ukraine crisis. The ban includes nearly all seafood products

from Alaska which makes it very difficult for Alaska seafood processors to stay competitive in the world market. They need help from the federal government.

SJR 16 reaches out and urges the federal government to restore Alaska's seafood industry for fair market access to Russia.

3:37:11 PM

CHAIR REVAK announced invited testimony.

3:37:25 PM

STEPHANIE MADSEN, Executive Director, At-Sea Processors Association (APA), Juneau, Alaska, stated that since most of the committee members attended the earlier detailed informational session, she would save time by speaking to both SJR 16 and SJR 17. She thanked the committee for its leadership on these critical issues. She said seafood industry workers do not typically discuss international trade rules on the dock, but it is a critically important variable for these workers and seafood processors.

She related that the majority of seafood produced in Alaska is destined for export to markets in Japan, China, the EU, and the United Kingdom, and if the U.S. were to become uncompetitive in these markets, Alaska seafood markets would lose value. This would translate to lower revenue, fewer jobs, and lower wages and crew shares. She pointed out that Alaska often has been on the losing end in recent years due to developments in international trade policy, and this has always resulted in a direct loss for Alaska's seafood industry.

MS. MADSEN cited Russia as an example. As Russian seafood exports to the U.S. have boomed since 2014, this lucrative market has been almost entirely closed to U.S. seafood exporters and thus has imposed ongoing costs on the Alaska seafood economy. She thanked the committee for focusing SJR 16 on Russia's outrageous embargo in American seafood. Hopefully it will help to end the embargo and restore fair access to Russia for Alaska/American products, she said.

MS. MADSEN turned her attention to SJR 17, stating that China's July 2018 retaliatory tariffs on U.S. seafood products have made it nearly impossible for Alaska's seafood industry to compete. She reported that the unprecedented growth wave of the Alaska pollock industry in China has been devastated under the weight of the tariffs. The value of these exports to China has fallen 55 percent since 2017. Despite the Phase I Trade Agreement,

there does not seem to be an end in sight. She noted the trade press today confirmed that China has not met its seafood purchase commitments.

MS. MADSEN said SJR 17 requests a level playing field, so consumers globally have the option to buy Alaska's premium seafood products. If the terms are fair, the industry will thrive. She relayed the At-Sea Processors Association's fervent hope that SJR 16 and SJR 17 will catalyze a renewed fairness in seafood trade. If this is successful, she said Alaska seafood workers and the broader Alaska economy will benefit.

SENATOR STEVENS emphasized that the industry is not asking for an unfair advantage; it is simply asking for a level playing field.

[3:42:01 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if the U.S. trade representative or the Biden administration were working on these issues currently.

[3:42:27 PM](#)

MATT TINNING, Director of Sustainability and Public Affairs, At-Sea Processors Association (APA), Washington, D.C., answered it is early days in the Biden administration's trade agenda, but APA has been encouraged that the new U.S. trade representative (USTR), Katherine Tai, is committed to enforce the Phase I deal and review trade relations with China. He offered his perspective that SJR 16 and SJR 17 were coming at a critical time to encourage the administration to move in the right direction to help Alaska's seafood industry.

[3:43:37 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK opened public testimony on SJR 16.

[3:44:01 PM](#)

CHRIS BARROWS, President, Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA), Seattle, Washington, stated support of SJR 16 and SJR 17, calling attention to the unfair trade practices in Russia and China that prevent Alaska seafood from competing on a level playing field.

MR. BARROWS related that PSPA, which was founded in 1914, is comprised of eight major seafood processing companies that operate 25 facilities in 15 Alaskan coastal communities. These companies purchase Alaska seafood from harvesters, process it into various products, and distribute it to markets in the U.S. and worldwide.

MR. BARROWS emphasized the critical importance of highlighting that seafood is an important economic engine for the state. The industry accounts for half of Alaskan exports, but the long-standing and unfair trade conditions have made it increasingly difficult to maintain and expand value for Alaska seafood products. Federal trade policies and negotiations have consistently failed to safeguard seafood producer interests, while seafood imports overwhelmingly enter the U.S. duty free.

He said the biological success and importance of Alaska fisheries has been a U.S. and Alaskan priority, but it is equally important for the fisheries to be economically successful. A robust U.S. seafood export economy directly shapes the long-term health of Alaska's seafood processing sector, including the ability to maintain and replace aging infrastructure and obtain ongoing capital investment. It supports Alaska fishermen, fishing communities, and related economies that support seafood production.

MR. BARROWS thanked the committee for its support of SJR 16 and SJR 17 to correct the long-standing injustices currently embedded in the U.S. trade frameworks.

[3:44:09 PM](#)

SENATOR VON IMHOF joined the committee meeting.

[3:46:51 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK discerned there was no one else who wished to testify and closed public testimony on SJR 16. Finding no committee comments or questions, he solicited a motion.

[3:47:17 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report SJR 16, work order 32-LS0912\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:47:32 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced that without objection, SJR 16 moved from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[3:47:43 PM](#)

At ease

SJR 17-INCREASE SEAFOOD EXPORTS

[Contains discussion of SJR 16.]

[3:49:22 PM](#)

SENATOR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17 Requesting the United States Trade Representative to bring a renewed focus on the plight of producers of seafood in the state and the United States and to compel China to comply with its commitment to increase its imports of seafood products from the United States.

[3:49:36 PM](#)

SENATOR GARY STEVENS, speaking as chair of the Senate Special Committee on World Trade that sponsored SJR 17, stated this resolution has to do with retaliatory Chinese tariffs on U.S. seafood products. According to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI), two-thirds of the seafood harvested in the U.S. has traditionally come from Alaskan waters. Unfortunately, market demand for Alaska seafood in China has been substantially damaged since 2018 when China imposed tariffs on U.S. seafood products. For example, the tariff on Alaska pollock is 500 percent higher than the same pollock that is called Russian Alaska pollock. SJR 17 seeks to restore focus on negotiations with China, ease the tariff war, and right the international market in favor of Alaska seafood products

[3:50:52 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE advised that SJR 17 and SJR 16 were the result of a World Trade Committee meeting where several hours were devoted to discussing the details of these issues.

CHAIR REVAK added it was a joint meeting with the Senate Resources Committee, so the members are familiar with the issues.

[3:51:24 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK opened public testimony on SJR 17; finding none, he closed public testimony.

SENATOR STEVENS thanked the committee for hearing the resolutions and pointed out that testimony on the previous resolution addressed both SJR 16 and SJR 17.

CHAIR REVAK found no further questions or comments and solicited a motion.

[3:52:13 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report SJR 17, work order 32-LS0913\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:52:29 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced that without objection SJR 17 moved from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[3:52:43 PM](#)

At ease

HB 22-SHARED ANIMAL AND RAW MILK/PRODUCTS

[3:54:35 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 22 am "An Act relating to shared animal ownership; and relating to the sharing of raw milk and raw milk products."

[3:55:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HB 22, stated this bill is the result of five years of working closely with farmers statewide to try to create additional opportunities in the state's agriculture industry. HB 22 strengthens the existing herd share program by moving it from regulation into statute. The notion is this will provide more certainty that the program will continue to exist.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR said HB 22 also provides the opportunity for farmers to provide herd share members with value added raw milk products such as cheeses, yogurt, and ice cream. She described this as a modest step to expand the herd share program after decades of safe operation. She noted the packets contain a sample contract that a person who participates in a herd share program signs when they become a member. All members have an opportunity to inspect the facility and get to know the farmer and animals.

[3:57:29 PM](#)

She stated her office worked with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to allow the department to respond to any foodborne illness outbreak. The department suggested the language for this new section, and it is incorporated in the forthcoming committee substitute (CS). She said the CS also reflects DEC's recommendation that farmers provide two forms of contact to each herd share member.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR described HB 22 as an opportunity to improve food security and the potential for economic development, particularly for rural areas.

[3:58:52 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced invited testimony.

[3:59:12 PM](#)

SUZY CROSBY, Owner, Cottonwood Creek Farm, Wasilla, Alaska, presented the PowerPoint, "Managing A Goat Herd Share Operation In Alaska." She offered her perspective that goats are a missing link between pets and livestock. They have personalities, are easy to handle, produce milk with minimal infrastructure, and the cleanup is simple.

She discussed the reasons for participating in herd share listed on slide 3. Herd share is a way for goats to help pay their way; it connects consumers to producers; it accommodates the locavore trend for locally grown or produced food; it provides freedom of choice in food; and it contributes to food security in Alaska. She pointed to the image of empty cooler case shelves at a local store in March 2020 and compared it to the image at her farm that same day of full refrigerator shelves in her downstairs milking room kitchen. She said the members of her herd share operation never experienced food insecurity related to their weekly milk share.

[4:01:07 PM](#)

MS. CROSBY stated herd share is the only legal way to access raw milk in Alaska. It currently is restricted to fluid milk, but HB 22 seeks to expand this. It is sustainable, community-supported agriculture. The producer and herd share member enter into a trust relationship where the member commits to pick up their milk share on a regular schedule. The basis of herd share is to know your farmer. Inspections can and do occur every time someone goes to a farm to inquire about herd share and thereafter every time they pick up their milk.

She described what herd share is not. It is not the grocery store. There is no purchase associated with picking up one's share of milk on a regularly scheduled basis. Value-added products are not offered yet, although HB 22 seeks to allow cheese and other value-added products within the definition of the herd share relationship.

[4:02:41 PM](#)

MS. CROSBY directed attention to slides 7-9 that address safety and sanitation. She emphasized the importance of keeping things clean and the milk cold. Following these guiding principles will ensure a good, high-quality product. She said Cottonwood Creek Farm stresses hand washing and draws a sharp line between excrement and food. She described the image on slide 8 and explained the milk is accepted into the stainless canisters and then is filtered into glass jars that are immediately put into an ice bath in the refrigerator. Share members are educated about the importance of keeping the product clean and cold.

She displayed images of the value-added products queso fresco, feta with sundried tomatoes and calamata olives, and chevre, all of which would be legal components of a herd share agreement if HB 22 were to pass. She reviewed the benefits of HB 22 to consumers listed on slide 13 that read as follows:

- Freedom to make food choices without restriction
- Having a variety of dairy options besides milk
- Access to digestible products for those intolerant to commercial dairy
- Many consumers prefer ready-made vs. DIY
- Growing preference for unique locally made/artisan food

MS. CROSBY highlighted the benefits to producers of allowing value-added products. The slide read as follows:

- Allows for best usage of seasonal surplus milk
- Farmer can buy more hay per gallon of milk (goats eat even during their dry period!)
- Specialty products would still be available in winter even when fluid milk production drops

MS. CROSBY reviewed the overall benefits of HB 22 listed on slide 15:

- Help strengthen Alaska's fragile food system
- Help prevent food waste
- Expand Alaskan agriculture by offering a new business opportunity for farmers

[4:05:27 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP joined the committee meeting.

MS. CROSBY referenced Senator Kiehl's forthcoming amendment that adds annual testing of these raw milk products the results of which would be provided to the department. She questioned whether it would add a fiscal note, expressed concern that the data would not be confidential, and maintained the legislature should be trying to make it easier rather than harder for herd share to grow.

[4:07:43 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK advised that the committee was not considering an amendment at this time.

[4:08:13 PM](#)

AMY PETTIT, Executive Director, Alaska Farmland Trust, Palmer, Alaska, began her presentation with a survey of who had eaten today, whether it was Alaska grown, and whether they would have liked to have eaten more Alaska grown food today. She expressed satisfaction with the results.

MS. PETTIT stated the Alaska Farmland Trust (AFT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Palmer that focuses on three areas: 1) protect agricultural land; 2) promote the agriculture industry; and 3) educate consumers and Alaskans generally about the benefits of the agriculture industry. She directed attention to the next several statistics slides and related the following information:

- According to the most recent agriculture census, the number of Farms in Alaska grew 30 percent from 2012 to 2017. In the Lower 48, the number of farms decreased 3 percent during the same time.
- Alaska leads the nation in the number of new farmers; 46 percent of Alaskan farmers have less than 10 years of farming experience.
- The number of small farms with fewer than 10 acres is up 73 percent in Alaska. Securing herd share in statute allows for responsible growth over time.
- In Alaska, 47 percent of farmers are women. The national average is 27 percent of farmers are female.
- The value of food sold directly to consumers increased from \$2.2 million in 2012 to \$4.5 million in 2017.

MS. PETTIT challenged members to name an industry that had experienced this type of growth in five years.

[4:12:25 PM](#)

MS. PETTIT advised that HB 22 has been five years in the making and it enjoys industry-wide support. It is about access, removing barriers, developing economies, and expanding production. She described this as a bipartisan issue and Alaskan agriculture as a renewable resource that all members should support. She directed attention to the various "free the cheese" lapel pins depicted on slide 11 and said she would like the sponsor to distribute them to the members if the bill passes from committee today.

MS. PETTIT concluded the presentation displaying an image of a child wearing an Alaska Grown sweatshirt and a statement of support for the bill and the next generation of farmers. She asked for a showing of hands for those who want to allow greater access to local food today and expressed hope the cheese would be freed this year.

[4:14:56 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated support for HB 22 and asked her to confirm that he would not have to wear a free the cheese pin if it were to pass.

MS. PETTIT replied they are in hot demand, and he could probably auction it.

[4:15:27 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK asked Mr. Brouwer to explain the changes in the Senate committee substitute (CS) for HB 22.

[4:15:47 PM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff, Representative Geran Tarr, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the explanation of changes between version A.A and Version I of HB 22:

Version I adds a new subsection starting on page 2 line 6 to wit: "(c) If the department suspects or determines that there is an outbreak of a foodborne illness that can be traced to a facility where raw milk or raw milk products are produced under this section, the department may exercise its authority under AS 17.20.005(7) and (8) and AS 17.20.200 for that facility."

Furthermore, on page 2 lines 17-28 a new Section 2 has been added to provide clarifying language for AS 17.20.200(a) to wit: "...or to a facility, as provided under AS 17.20.015(c)."

The above language was added at the request of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and has been agreed upon by the bill sponsor. Adding this language would allow DEC to respond if there is a foodborne illness outbreak related to herd share raw milk or raw milk products. DEC believes they would be able to investigate and respond to any outbreaks utilizing their current resources, and therefore would not produce a fiscal note.

[4:17:09 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK listed the individuals available online to answer questions.

[4:17:35 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked how often herd share facilities conduct internal tests for things like salmonella, E coli, and listeria or if they wait to test until an illness outbreak.

MR. BROUWER responded that the last foodborne illness outbreak associated with the raw milk program was in 2013. He deferred further response to Ms. Crosby.

[4:18:24 PM](#)

MS. CROSBY stated that it was not industry standard to test for those bacteria. She reported just two outbreaks in the last 20 years. Both were in the same family, and both related to Campylobacter in cattle. She proffered her belief that unsanitary conditions played a role.

[4:18:58 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK found no further questions and solicited a motion to adopt the Senate Committee Substitute.

[4:19:09 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to adopt the [Senate] CS for HB 22, work order 32-LS0212\I, as the working document.

[4:19:22 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK found no objection and version I was adopted.

[4:19:39 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK opened public testimony on HB 22.

[4:20:08 PM](#)

MARLENE WENGER, representing self, Kenny Lake, Alaska, stated that she and her husband have been farming in the Copper River Valley since 1985 and they started the Copper River Valley Farm Bureau 20 years ago. She stated support for the sale of raw milk products and shared that she raises goats for a hobby. They run a grocery/feed/hardware store and sell as many Alaska grown products as are available. She noted that Alaskan products were available during the COVID-19 pandemic whereas products from outside Alaska were not available. She expressed support for local agriculture and legalizing raw dairy products.

[4:21:30 PM](#)

LARAE SMITH, representing self, Willow, Alaska, related that she is currently a consumer of raw dairy milk and will eventually be a producer. She said she was living in Idaho when COVID-19 broke out and she could not find milk in the stores. She was able to access raw milk and other local food, so she did not go hungry. She voiced support for supporting local Alaska farmers including dairy. It is a huge resource for the state that provides food stability. She spoke of the health benefits of raw goat's milk and stated support for HB 22.

[4:23:24 PM](#)

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director, Alaska Farm Bureau, Soldotna, Alaska, stated the Alaska Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the economic wellbeing and expansion of agriculture to enrich the quality of life for all Alaskans. She emphasized that a robust local food system will enrich the lives of Alaskans through improved access to food and less dependence on a long and complicated supply chain. It will also help diversify the economy.

MS. SEITZ reported that Alaskans spend close to \$2 billion to purchase food each year, just 5 percent of which is produced in the state. She referenced the Agriculture Census that shows Alaska farmers are able to expand. She encouraged support for this growth through good policies. HB 22 is designed to help farmers succeed and provide increased access to local food products by giving herd share owners the option to produce value-added products such as cheese, butter, and kefir. She pointed out that HB 22 not only supports farmers and increases food security, it also is a freedom of choice bill. It gives people the option to choose raw milk products. She noted the safety features of knowing the farmer, the farm, the animals, the process, and the cleanliness of the system. The herd share program also has built in traceability. She encouraged the members to support HB 22 and moving it forward today.

[4:25:51 PM](#)

MILENA SEVIGNY, representing self, Wasilla, Alaska, stated support for HB 22 and shared that she is a herd share member in Wasilla. When she moved to Wasilla with her family it was important to find a source of goat's milk for her son who is allergic to cow's milk. She was relieved to find local, fresh raw milk that was dependable. She is able to visit the farm any time to observe the care and cleanliness while milking and to get to know the goats. Her kids know their names and ask whose milk they are drinking.

MS. SEVIGNY related she works at the Port of Alaska and sees first hand how quickly the food supply can get cut off. She said the port infrastructure is deteriorating and it was a miracle it survived the recent earthquake. Another concern is the increasing number of late ship arrivals due to stronger winter storms. The depleted grocery store shelves readily reflect these late arrivals, she said. Produce and dairy are particularly hard hit. She emphasized the importance of increasing food security in Alaska and making local food supplies more accessible.

[4:28:28 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK closed public testimony on HB 22.

[4:28:40 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved Amendment 1, work order 32-LS0212\I.1.

32-LS0212\I.1
Lemons
5/17/21

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR KIEHL
TO: SCS HB 22 (RES), Draft Version "I"

Page 2, following line 5:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(c) Under regulations adopted by the department, the department may require the collective owners of a milk-producing animal to test, not more than once a year, a shared raw milk product of the milk-producing animal and provide the test results to the department."

Reletter the following subsections accordingly.

Page 2, line 23:

Delete "AS 17.20.015(c)"

Insert "AS 17.20.015(d)"

[4:28:50 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

SENATOR KIEHL stated the amendment is about basic food safety in the commercial arena. It would require herd share owners to test a shared raw milk product from one of their milk-producing animals once a year and provide the test results to DEC. He noted the department is able to specify what product is tested. Depending on the product, the herd share owner could expect to pay from \$17 to \$70 for the test. Since DEC only receives the results, the amendment is not expected to generate a fiscal note.

[4:33:38 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK noted that these are small dairy operations, and asked the sponsor her position on Amendment 1.

[4:34:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR confirmed that these are small businesses with animals that number in the dozens. She stressed that her office sought input from DEC and annual testing was not mentioned. She said she appreciates the intent, but she does not believe the amendment is necessary at this time.

CHAIR REVAK commented on his experience growing up and consuming his neighbor's raw milk cheese and said he would like to think that these small operations would have the tests done without the government telling them to do so.

[4:36:31 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK maintained his objection to Amendment 1.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if herd share owners in remote areas would have ready access to the tests.

[4:36:55 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL replied, depending on the location, the samples may need to be mailed, which is not unlike other food businesses subject to inspection and testing.

SENATOR KAWASAKI expressed confidence that the CS would provide adequate protections and said the amendment was not necessary.

[4:38:05 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL said he still views the issue as live, but he would withdraw Amendment 1.

SENATOR REVAK stated Amendment 1 has been withdrawn.

SENATOR MICCICHE quipped about a future goat milk bill from Senator Kiehl.

SENATOR STEVENS observed that none of the free the cheese lapel pins mentioned Kodiak even though that community has a very productive goat herd.

SENATOR REVAK solicited a motion.

[4:39:30 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report [SCS HB 22], work order 32-LS0212\I, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s).

[4:39:45 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced that without objection, SCS HB 22(RES) moved from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:40:21 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Revak adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:40 p.m.