

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

April 20, 2022

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

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Geran Tarr

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 180

"An Act relating to commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance; relating to commercial passenger vessel fees; establishing the wastewater infrastructure grant fund; repealing the authority for citizens' suits relating to commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance; repealing the commercial passenger vessel recognition program; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 180(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 177

"An Act relating to microreactors."

- MOVED CSSB 177(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 219

"An Act providing for the transfer of and addition of names to a personal use cabin permit for a cabin on state land; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 219 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 227

"An Act relating to state ownership of submerged land within and adjacent to federal areas; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 228

"An Act requiring the designation of outstanding national resource water to occur only by statute; relating to the management of outstanding national resource water by the Department of Environmental Conservation; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 228 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Supporting the Alaska Ocean Cluster in its mission, efforts, and vision for a vibrant coastal economy in the state, its promotion of a diversified and resilient state economy that creates value from ocean resources, and its building of a statewide integrated ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship relating to the state's ocean economy.

- MOVED HCR 2 OUT OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 54(FIN)

"An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SCS CSHB 54(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 180

SHORT TITLE: PASSENGER VESSEL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/04/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/04/22	(S)	RES, FIN
02/14/22	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/14/22	(S)	Heard & Held

02/14/22 (S) MINUTE (RES)
03/18/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/18/22 (S) Heard & Held
03/18/22 (S) MINUTE (RES)
04/13/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/13/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/18/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/18/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 177

SHORT TITLE: MICROREACTORS

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/01/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/01/22 (S) CRA, RES
02/15/22 (S) CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/15/22 (S) Heard & Held
02/15/22 (S) MINUTE (CRA)
02/17/22 (S) CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/17/22 (S) Heard & Held
02/17/22 (S) MINUTE (CRA)
03/08/22 (S) CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/08/22 (S) Moved SB 177 Out of Committee
03/08/22 (S) MINUTE (CRA)
03/09/22 (S) CRA RPT 1DP 3NR
03/09/22 (S) DP: HUGHES
03/09/22 (S) NR: GRAY-JACKSON, MYERS, WILSON
03/21/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/21/22 (S) Heard & Held
03/21/22 (S) MINUTE (RES)
04/06/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/06/22 (S) <Bill Hearing Rescheduled to 4/8/22>
04/08/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/08/22 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
04/11/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/11/22 (S) Heard & Held
04/11/22 (S) MINUTE (RES)
04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 219

SHORT TITLE: TRANSFER PERSONAL USE CABIN PERMITS

SPONSOR(s): MICCICHE

02/22/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/22/22 (S) RES
03/14/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

03/14/22 (S) Heard & Held
 03/14/22 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 04/13/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/13/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/18/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/18/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 227

SHORT TITLE: STATE OWNERSHIP OF SUBMERGED LAND
 SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/11/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/11/22 (S) RES
 04/08/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/08/22 (S) Heard & Held
 04/08/22 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 04/15/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/15/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/18/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/18/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 228

SHORT TITLE: OUTSTANDING NAT'L RESOURCE WATER
 SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/11/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/11/22 (S) RES
 04/06/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/06/22 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/08/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/08/22 (S) Heard & Held
 04/08/22 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 04/15/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/15/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HCR 2

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORTING ALASKA OCEAN CLUSTER
 SPONSOR(s): STUTES

02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/18/21 (H) FSH, RES
 04/08/21 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 04/08/21 (H) Heard & Held
 04/08/21 (H) MINUTE(FSH)

04/13/21 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 04/13/21 (H) Moved HCR 2 Out of Committee
 04/13/21 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
 04/14/21 (H) FSH RPT 4DP 2NR
 04/14/21 (H) DP: STORY, KREISS-TOMKINS, ORTIZ, TARR
 04/14/21 (H) NR: MCCABE, VANCE
 05/03/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 05/03/21 (H) Heard & Held
 05/03/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 05/05/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 05/05/21 (H) Moved HCR 2 Out of Committee
 05/05/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 05/06/21 (H) RES RPT 3DP 5NR
 05/06/21 (H) DP: FIELDS, HANNAN, SCHRAGE
 05/06/21 (H) NR: MCKAY, CRONK, RAUSCHER, GILLHAM,
 PATKOTAK
 02/11/22 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 02/11/22 (H) VERSION: HCR 2
 02/15/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/15/22 (S) RES
 02/21/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/21/22 (S) Heard & Held
 02/21/22 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 04/15/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/15/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HB 54

SHORT TITLE: INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

SPONSOR(S): FISHERIES

02/18/21 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/15/21
 02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/18/21 (H) RES, FSH
 02/24/21 (H) RES REFERRAL MOVED TO AFTER FSH
 02/24/21 (H) BILL REPRINTED
 03/11/21 (H) FSH AT 11:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 03/11/21 (H) Heard & Held
 03/11/21 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
 03/12/21 (H) BILL REPRINTED
 03/18/21 (H) FSH AT 11:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 03/18/21 (H) Heard & Held
 03/18/21 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
 03/25/21 (H) FSH AT 10:30 AM GRUENBERG 120
 03/25/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 03/30/21 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 03/30/21 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>

04/01/21 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 04/01/21 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
 04/06/21 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
 04/06/21 (H) Moved CSHB 54(FSH) Out of Committee
 04/06/21 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
 04/07/21 (H) FSH RPT CS(FSH) 7DP
 04/07/21 (H) DP: KREISS-TOMKINS, ORTIZ, MCCABE,
 VANCE, STORY, STUTES, TARR
 04/16/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/16/21 (H) Heard & Held
 04/16/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 04/21/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/21/21 (H) Moved CSHB 54(FSH) Out of Committee
 04/21/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 04/22/21 (H) RES RPT CS(FSH) 3DP 3DNP 3NR
 04/22/21 (H) DP: SCHRAGE, HANNAN, FIELDS
 04/22/21 (H) DNP: GILLHAM, RAUSCHER, CRONK
 04/22/21 (H) NR: MCKAY, HOPKINS, PATKOTAK
 04/22/21 (H) FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER RES
 04/22/21 (H) BILL REPRINTED
 05/11/21 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
 05/11/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 05/18/21 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
 05/18/21 (H) Heard & Held
 05/18/21 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
 02/02/22 (H) FIN AT 9:00 AM ADAMS 519
 02/02/22 (H) Moved CSHB 54(FIN) Out of Committee
 02/02/22 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
 02/04/22 (H) FIN RPT CS(FIN) 4DP 3NR
 02/04/22 (H) DP: ORTIZ, JOSEPHSON, WOOL, FOSTER
 02/04/22 (H) NR: EDGMON, THOMPSON, MERRICK
 02/17/22 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 02/17/22 (H) VERSION: CSHB 54(FIN)
 02/22/22 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/22/22 (S) RES, FIN
 03/11/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 03/11/22 (S) Heard & Held
 03/11/22 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 04/13/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/13/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/18/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/18/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/20/22 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

RANDY BATES, Director
Division of Water
Department of Environmental Conservation
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about the Ocean Ranger Program during the discussion of SB 180.

CHRISTINA CARPENTER, Director
Division of Environmental Health
Department of Environmental Conservation
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the discussion of SB 177.

BEN MULLIGAN, Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the discussion of SB 227.

JIM WALKER, Public Access Assertion and Defense Section Chief
Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the discussion of SB 227.

TIM LAMKIN, Staff
Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Reviewed the Explanation of Changes, from Version N to Version D of HB 54.

MIKE WOOD, Chair
Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Chase, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint on Alaska Fisheries on the Mat-Su Fish & Wildlife Commission.

PETE PROBASCO, Member
Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint on Alaska Fisheries on the Mat-Su Fish & Wildlife Commission.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:34:59 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 Kiehl, Stevens, Micciche, von Imhof, Kawasaki, and Chair Revak. Senator Bishop arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 180-PASSENGER VESSEL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

[3:36:51 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 180 "An Act relating to commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance; relating to commercial passenger vessel fees; establishing the wastewater infrastructure grant fund; repealing the authority for citizens' suits relating to commercial passenger vessel environmental compliance; repealing the commercial passenger vessel recognition program; and providing for an effective date."

[SB 180 was previously heard on 2/14/22 and 3/18/22.]

[3:37:02 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK solicited a motion to adopt an amendment.

[3:37:27 PM](#)

At ease

[3:38:36 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and solicited a motion.

[3:38:47 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 32-GS2493\A.3.

32-GS2493\A.3
Radford
3/23/22

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: SB 180

BY SENATOR KIEHL

Page 6, line 13:
Delete "and"

Page 6, line 15, following "passengers":
Insert "; and

(4) help port communities adapt to increased demand for seasonal wastewater treatment resulting from wastewater produced by commercial passenger vessels and passengers"

[3:38:56 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

[3:39:02 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL explained that Amendment 1 would add a fourth criterion for weighting grant applications for municipality wastewater improvements. This would include consideration of seasonal needs as a result of impacts to communities from cruise ships. The bill currently contains requirements related to public health, water quality, and environmental impact, but the expense of a wastewater treatment facility increases dramatically with volume. The facility's capacity must be built for the peak number of toilets flushed. A treatment facility's wastewater processing capacity is a significant factor to consider for small towns serving cruise ships.

[3:40:12 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his objection; he found no further objection, and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[3:40:34 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved to adopt Amendment 2, work order 32-GS2493\A.4.

32-GS2493\A.4
Radford
3/28/22

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: SB 180

BY SENATOR KIEHL

Page 1, line 1, following "**compliance;**":
Insert "**relating to ocean rangers;**"

Page 3, following line 29:

Insert new bill sections to read:

"* **Sec. 9.** AS 46.03.476(a) is amended to read:

(a) An owner or operator of a large commercial passenger vessel entering the marine waters of the state is required to allow [HAVE] an ocean ranger hired or retained by the department on board the vessel to act as an independent observer for the purpose of monitoring state and federal requirements pertaining to marine discharge and pollution requirements and to ensure [INSURE] that passengers, crew, and residents at ports are protected from improper sanitation, health, and safety practices.

* **Sec. 10.** AS 46.03.476 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) The department shall ensure an ocean ranger is present on not less than 20 percent of large commercial passenger vessel voyages in the marine waters of the state."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 7, line 5:

Delete "46.03.490(7),"

Page 7, line 7:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 7, lines 15 - 17:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 7, line 18:

Delete "Sections 18, 20, and 21 of this Act take"

Insert "Section 21 of this Act takes"

Page 7, line 20:

Delete "secs. 21 and 22"

Insert "sec. 22"

[3:40:37 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

[3:40:41 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that Amendment 2 would scale back the ocean ranger program instead of repealing it. He related that the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has shore-based, occasional ride-along observers that provide periodic checks. The administration strongly argued that an ocean ranger is unnecessary on every cruise ship coming to Alaska. However, deleting the Ocean Ranger Program fails to reflect the strong public sentiment of Alaskans who support this self-funded program. He explained that DEC would contract to have an ocean ranger on board 1 in 5 cruise ships sailing in Alaska waters.

[3:42:02 PM](#)

SENATOR VON IMHOF asked whether this amendment would change the fiscal note on the bill.

SENATOR KIEHL offered his belief that Amendment 2 would reduce the savings because it would not eliminate the Ocean Ranger Program. He said this program should be able to operate more cheaply and efficiently than the old program.

[3:42:34 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK maintained his objection.

[3:42:39 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that he does not support Amendment 2. He said he believes in the spirit of the bill, which should deliver dramatic improvements to commercial passenger vessel performance regarding water quality. He said he supports other provisions in the bill that were partially funded by eliminating the Ocean Ranger Program. He acknowledged that the compliance program worked and has public support, but the program in SB 180 has the potential to deliver more enhanced performance.

[3:43:37 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS commented that the Ocean Ranger Program was quite successful. He said he views Amendment 2 as a step in the right direction because it does not eliminate the program entirely. He spoke in favor of Amendment 2 to have 1 in 5 cruise ships manned, noting that if it worked out well, the program could be phased out entirely.

[3:44:10 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI stated that he has an amendment that is similar to Amendment 2, which would have 1 in 4 cruise ships manned. He

agreed that the Ocean Ranger Program was successful. He indicated that the department did not provide sufficient justification to completely eliminate the program. He suggested that the department could transition into a different system providing other compliance checks and operational verification to ensure that cruise vessels are performing the necessary compliance in state waters. However, he said he did not believe the program should be eliminated and that he views Amendment 2 as a compromise. He offered his support for Amendment 2.

[3:45:08 PM](#)

SENATOR VON IMHOF asked Senator Micciche the reasons ocean rangers are unnecessary and how the compliance requirements in SB 180 would be sufficient.

SENATOR MICCICHE deferred to DEC to respond. He said was unsure whether members understood that DEC's Ocean Ranger Program is not currently operating. He noted that the program was not significantly related to water quality compliance.

[3:45:51 PM](#)

At ease

[3:46:14 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting.

[3:46:19 PM](#)

RANDY BATES, Director, Division of Water, Department of Environmental Conservation, Juneau, Alaska, responded that Senator Micciche addressed the value of the Ocean Ranger Program. The program was established in 2006 and served an important purpose. He explained that ocean rangers observed activities on the passenger vessels and provided a written report for DEC. DEC staff would review and evaluate their observations, but often their observations fell outside DEC's authority, which is wastewater discharge. Ocean rangers had a broad checklist of activities, such as observing vessel cleanliness and reviewing logs. This resulted in DEC evaluating how it manages its authorities regarding cruise ships and all industries with wastewater discharges. DEC considered whether its Ocean Ranger Program provide the department knowledge about vessel operations. He related that the department believes that SB 180 appropriately addresses wastewater discharges. The ocean rangers served a purpose when the program was initiated. He said the ocean rangers are not inspectors and do not carry badges.

[3:48:08 PM](#)

MR. BATES stated that the department does not currently see the value of the ocean rangers as observational individuals on cruise vessels. Instead, DEC finds that its inspection protocols conducted on 100 percent of all vessels early in the cruise ship season, following up with scheduled and unscheduled inspections, as necessary. Further, DEC would have ride alongs from port to port for vessels discharging in state waters. This means DEC will have someone on board to observe how the discharges occur.

MR. BATES explained that DEC has inspection authority throughout the vessel, which ocean rangers did not have. He summarized by stating that ocean rangers provided an important service at the time, that the department has evaluated their effectiveness and cost, and developed a viable plan going forward that ensures that the environment and human health are protected.

3:49:32 PM

SENATOR VON IMHOF asked him to confirm that DEC would essentially be taking over the Ocean Ranger Program by having sufficient staff to conduct scheduled and unscheduled inspections and ride-alongs from port to port on vessels discharging wastewater.

MR. BATES answered that is correct. He reviewed the DEC compliance and inspection staff, noting that DEC has one marine engineer currently and plans to recruit a second one. DEC has three full-time, dedicated inspection staff and two part-time positions. He highlighted that DEC has built and bolstered its program to monitor large and small vessels. He noted that the ocean rangers never monitored small vessels.

3:50:40 PM

MR. BATES noted that 41 large and 18 small vessels transporting 1.5 million passengers plan to come to Alaska this year. He stated that DEC looks forward to visiting the cruise ships with staff that have enforcement authority to inspect vessels, observe and sample wastewater discharge, and examine their logs to ensure that everything is operational and adheres to the engineering plans. He highlighted that DEC is trained to do so.

3:51:15 PM

SENATOR MICCICHE asked when the ocean rangers last operated.

MR. BATES answered that the last time the ocean rangers operated was in 2019. The Ocean Ranger Program contract expired in 2020, and DEC did not renew it. He reported that Alaska did not have a cruise season in 2020. DEC did not contract out in 2021 because

Alaska had a limited season, and DEC's staff could conduct onboard inspections for all of the vessels.

[3:52:14 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE commented that he supports the bill because it would use the funding for the ocean ranger program to address water quality more effectively. He highlighted that the water quality has been exemplary, which is why the state repealed the zero-mixing zone citizen initiative a few years ago.

SENATOR MICCICHE offered his belief that the bill provides an opportunity to create a program to help Southeast Alaska waived communities, which could significantly impact water quality. He indicated he would like to see forward motion, moving away from waived communities in the future. He offered his view that the Ocean Ranger Program was a great program that proved that the state's other programs were working. This bill will allow DEC to address water quality issues. He said he would not support Amendment 2.

[3:53:36 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that he would not get into why the state does not have a program since the funding is available. He said this program is ready for an update. The committee acknowledged the excellent work DEC has done to improve water quality. He agreed that the ocean rangers did more than observe water quality. He recapped that a citizen's initiative gave the program a broader mandate. He said he agrees that the state does not need to monitor every single vessel, that the state should use some of the program's funds to do some things better as Mr. Bates described, and that the bill provides new provisions. He argued that these changes could occur without entirely repealing the program. Amendment 2 would continue to reform the Ocean Ranger Program but not end it altogether.

[3:55:24 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK maintained his objection.

[3:55:33 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Senators Stevens, Kiehl, and Kawasaki voted in favor of Amendment 2, and Senators Micciche, von Imhof, and Revak voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 failed on a 3:3 vote.

CHAIR REVAK stated that on a vote of 3 yeas and 3 nays, Amendment 2 failed.

[3:56:16 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI stated that two amendments he intended to offer [work order 32-GS2493\A.1 and 32-GS2493\A.2] would increase the ocean ranger presence, so he would not be offering them.

[3:56:39 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK solicited a motion.

[3:56:43 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report SB 180, work order 32-GS2493\A, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:56:55 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL objected.

[3:57:14 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Senators von Imhof, Micciche, and Revak voted in favor of reporting SB 180 as amended from committee, and Senators Stevens, Kiehl, and Kawasaki voted against it. Therefore, the motion to report SB 180 as amended from committee failed by a 3:3 vote.

[3:57:45 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK stated that on a vote of 3 yeas and 3 nays, SB 180 failed to be reported from committee.

SB 177-MICROREACTORS

[3:57:58 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 177 "An Act relating to microreactors."

[SB 177 was previously heard on 3/21/2022, 4/6/2022, and 4/11/2022.]

[3:58:16 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 32-GS2503\A.1.

32-GS2503\A.1
Radford
4/5/22

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: SB 177

BY SENATOR KIEHL

Page 1, line 1, following "Act":

Insert "**relating to nuclear facility siting permits; and**"

Page 1, following line 2:

Insert a new bill section to read:

*** Section 1.** AS 18.45.025(c) is amended to read:

(c) The Department of Environmental Conservation shall adopt regulations governing the issuance of permits required by (a) of this section. However, a permit may not be issued until the municipality with jurisdiction over the proposed facility site has approved the permit or, if the proposed facility site is located in an unorganized borough, until the legislature has approved the permit."

Page 1, line 3:

Delete "**Section 1**"

Insert "**Sec. 2**"

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

[3:58:21 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for purposes of discussion.

[3:58:24 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL explained that Amendment 1 addresses a concern discussed at the last hearing on SB 177. If a microreactor is proposed outside of a municipality, Amendment 1 will clarify that the legislature must approve site decisions in an unorganized borough. It would maintain that the legislature does not decide on microreactor sites that fall within a municipality.

[3:59:01 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his objection.

[3:59:13 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if the department had an opinion on Amendment 1. He related his understanding that no other energy facility has a "trump card" from a municipality regarding permitting capacity. He wondered what impact this might have.

[3:59:47 PM](#)

At ease

[4:00:34 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and asked Senator Micciche to restate the question for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

[4:00:38 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that he knows of no other cases where a community has a "trump card" on a facility or facility siting. He asked what effect Amendment 1 would have on any future facility located at a mine that may be near a municipality or for a private entity that is attempting to provide power but is located near a municipality. He noted it would become very dependent on who was currently serving on the city council.

[4:01:36 PM](#)

CHRISTINA CARPENTER, Director, Division of Environmental Health, Department of Environmental Conservation, Anchorage, Alaska, asked for clarification that his question relates to the requirement for municipal approval for the siting of a microreactor.

SENATOR MICCICHE answered that is correct.

MS. CARPENTER related that the statutes were developed in the 1980s and require local approval and legislative approval for any siting of a microreactor. She indicated that she could not speak to the legislative intent when the legislature adopted the statutes.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked whether the department supports Amendment 1 since it would continue to use that approval process.

MS. CARPENTER responded that SB 177 would remove the requirement for legislative approval for siting a microreactor unless the site is in an unorganized borough. The Alaska Constitution already refers back to the legislature in an unorganized borough, so the administration doesn't believe that Amendment 1 is necessary but does not oppose it.

[4:04:10 PM](#)

At ease

[4:04:42 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting.

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his objection to Amendment 1; he heard no further objection, and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[4:05:12 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved to adopt Amendment 2, work order 32GS2503\A.7.

32-GS2503\A.7
Radford
4/14/22

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR KIEHL

Page 1, line 7:

Delete "a new subsection"

Insert "new subsections"

Page 1, following line 9:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(c) If the Department of Environmental Conservation receives notice that a person has submitted a Nuclear Regulatory Commission license application for a microreactor located in the state, the Department of Environmental Conservation shall coordinate and submit comments from departments or agencies under (a) of this section on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensing process specific to the microreactor."

[4:05:16 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

[4:05:20 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that he had worked with the department on several iterations to ensure that the language was functional. He stated that the existing statutes provide a long list of departments that must study aspects relevant to their department for any nuclear proposal. SB 177 exempts microreactors. Amendment 2 provides that when the state becomes aware of a nuclear microreactor application submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), DEC would be the lead department and coordinate with other departments to comment on the

application. This would ensure that the State of Alaska is involved in the federal process and that Alaskans' interests are represented.

[4:06:28 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK removed his objection; he heard no further objection, and Amendment 2 was adopted.

CHAIR REVAK discerned there were no further amendments and solicited a motion.

[4:06:54 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report SB 177, work order 32-GS2503\A, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR REVAK heard no objection, and CSSB 177(RES) was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:07:23 PM](#)

At ease

SB 219-TRANSFER PERSONAL USE CABIN PERMITS

[4:09:27 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 219 "An Act providing for the transfer of and addition of names to a personal use cabin permit for a cabin on state land; and providing for an effective date."

[SB 219 was previously heard on 3/14/2022.]

[4:09:49 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that the personal use cabin permits on state land had experienced issues. He recalled that bills were introduced in previous legislatures designed to clean up the permitting process. He said that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) needs to find solutions. He highlighted that SB 219 was designed to allow families that have leased personal use cabin sites from the state, sometimes for many generations, to retain ownership. This can occur in two ways to enable DNR and the legislature to find long-term solutions. He stated that he had not heard any opposition from DNR.

[4:10:43 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that Section 1 of SB 219 would allow any living, personal use cabin permit holder a one-time only

transfer to add a name of an immediate family member to their permit. This would allow the department time to find long-term solutions to the issues. The permit would be valid for the lifetime of the immediate family member. The second change relates to a personal use permit holder who has died. In that instance, the family can submit the name of an immediate family member. Still, the permit term cannot extend beyond the average life expectancy of the deceased person's longevity. This would benefit the permit holder for a period equal to the difference between the original permit holder's age at death and the life expectancy as determined by statute.

[4:11:39 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP joined the meeting.

[4:11:54 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK solicited the will of the committee.

[4:11:54 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report SB 219, work order 32-LS1224\I, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR REVAK found no objection, and SB 219 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:12:21 PM](#)

At ease

SB 227-STATE OWNERSHIP OF SUBMERGED LAND

[4:15:21 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 227 "An Act relating to state ownership of submerged land within and adjacent to federal areas; and providing for an effective date."

[SB 227 was previously heard on 4/8/2022.]

CHAIR REVAK solicited a motion to adopt the committee substitute.

[4:15:43 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 227, work order 32-GS2561\B, as the working document.

[4:15:56 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

[4:16:20 PM](#)

BEN MULLIGAN, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, Alaska, stated that the department spoke to Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) experts who suggested several changes. He referred to subsection (j) on page 4, line 9 of Version B, which read:

(j) For purposes of (b) and (c) of this section, the commissioner shall make a determination of navigability based on evidence consistent with the meaning given to "navigable water" in (g) of this section, and after considering factors that include

[4:17:08 PM](#)

MR. MULLIGAN pointed out that the ANILCA experts interpreted the language in Version A as too constraining and that the department could only consider what was listed below for criteria to determine navigability. He said the department suggested adding the language "that include" to provide flexibility in future situations when determining navigability. Still, if it did not meet the criteria listed, the navigable water could be brought forward and not constrain the department.

[4:17:52 PM](#)

MR. MULLIGAN referred to page 4, line 12 to the second change, which read:

(1) a showing that a river is boatable at any time during the open-water season

MR. MULLIGAN stated that the original version of SB 227, Version A, read:

(1) a showing that a river is boatable at least one-third of the open water season ...

MR. MULLIGAN explained that this change was made to avoid restricting the department when determining navigable waters and asserting the state's rights on navigability.

[4:18:41 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI referred to the definition of navigability. He asked if boatable was a term of art. He further asked if there was a stronger definition of navigability in current statute or used by federal agencies.

[4:19:10 PM](#)

MR. MULLIGAN deferred to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

[4:19:44 PM](#)

JIM WALKER, Public Access Assertion and Defense Section Chief, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage, Alaska, explained that the definition of navigability is largely found within case law for determining what it means for a particular river to be deemed navigable for title or ownership purposes. As discussed in the previous hearing, navigability can mean different things depending on the context. He indicated that the term "boatability" refers to the ability to boat with the requisite criteria on a particular waterway for the period of the open water season. He stated that boatability is a useful term for better understanding the legal definition of navigability.

[4:21:25 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his objection; he heard no further objection, and Version B was adopted as the working document.

[4:21:44 PM](#)

At ease

[4:24:28 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting. He explained that the committee would like to further review some of the legal issues on this bill.

[4:24:48 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK held SB 227 in committee.

SB 180-PASSENGER VESSEL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

[4:24:50 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK moved to rescind the previous action taken on SB 180.

[SB 180 failed to move from committee in a roll call vote taken earlier in the meeting by a vote of 3 yeas and 3 nays.]

[4:25:06 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK asked for a roll call vote.

[4:25:10 PM](#)

At ease

[4:26:14 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting.

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his motion to rescind; he heard no objection, and the motion to rescind was withdrawn.

[4:26:20 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK moved to reconsider the vote reporting SB 180, work order GS2493\A, as amended from committee.

CHAIR REVAK explained that a yes vote would report the bill from committee, and a no vote would fail to report the bill from committee.

[4:26:40 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Senators Micciche, Bishop, von Imhof, and Revak voted to report SB 180 from committee, and Senators Stevens, Kiehl, and Kawasaki voted against it. Therefore, CSSB 180 (RES) was reported from committee on a 4:3 vote.

CHAIR REVAK announced that on a vote of 4 yeas and 3 nays, CSSB 180 (RES) was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:27:11 PM](#)

At ease

SB 228-OUTSTANDING NAT'L RESOURCE WATER

[4:29:30 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 228 "An Act requiring the designation of outstanding national resource water to occur only by statute; relating to the management of outstanding national resource water by the Department of Environmental Conservation; and providing for an effective date."

[SB 228 was previously heard on 4/8/2022.]

[4:29:57 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked whether the intention was to seek the will of the committee today.

CHAIR REVAK said that is correct.

SENATOR KIEHL stated that he would not object to reporting the bill out of committee, but he had some concerns. He said that bills that authorize the legislature to pass a bill were probably more about making a statement than changing the process. He suggested that the method to resolve Tier III water issues in SB 228 was not the preferred way to establish resource policy. He characterized it as putting politics into it rather than taking it out.

[4:30:56 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK solicited the will of the committee.

[4:30:58 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report SB 228, work order 32-GS2492\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[4:31:18 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK found no objection, and SB 228 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:31:24 PM](#)

At ease

HCR 2-SUPPORTING ALASKA OCEAN CLUSTER

[4:33:47 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2 Supporting the Alaska Ocean Cluster in its mission, efforts, and vision for a vibrant coastal economy in the state, its promotion of a diversified and resilient state economy that creates value from ocean resources, and its building of a statewide integrated ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship relating to the state's ocean economy.

[HCR 2 was previously heard on 2/21/2022.]

[4:33:57 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK acknowledged the presence of Representative Tarr.

[4:34:19 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK solicited the will of the committee.

[4:34:21 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report HCR 2, work order 32-LS0496\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[4:34:33 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK found no objection, and HCR 2 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

Alaska Fisheries Presentation

[4:34:56 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the presentation on Alaska Fisheries, which would focus on Mat-Su fisheries.

[4:35:29 PM](#)

At ease

[4:37:42 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting.

CHAIR REVAK rolled the presentation to the bottom of the agenda in order to take up HB 54.

HB 54-INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

[4:37:48 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the consideration of CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 54(FIN) "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing for an effective date."

[CSHB 54(Fin) was previously heard on 3/11/2022.]

[4:37:50 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK stated that the committee worked with the sponsor to improve certain aspects of the bill. He then solicited a motion to adopt the Senate Committee Substitute (SCS).

[4:38:06 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to adopt the Senate Committee Substitute (SCS) for CSHB 54, work order 32-LS0057\D, as the working document.

[4:38:19 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked whether the motion was to adopt version B or version D.

SENATOR MICCICHE clarified that the motion was to adopt Version D. He restated the motion.

[4:38:52 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK objected for discussion purposes.

[4:39:13 PM](#)

TIM LAMKIN, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, reviewed the Explanation of Changes for Version N to Version D. He stated that Version D is the result of a request by Senator Stevens to amend CSHB 54(Fin) in conjunction with an agreement with the sponsor. He stated that Version D primarily made two substantive changes:

1) Version N, Page 2, lines 5 and 6.
Refer to a fixed \$20 dollar fee for decals.

Version D, Page 3, lines 5 and 6.

[4:39:51 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN paraphrased the changes.

Changes the fixed dollar amount to an amount recommend by the advisory council. It was considered more flexible and appropriate to put fee setting in regulation rather than come before the legislature time and time again to request fixed dollar amount changes. Especially, since the cost of decals may increase over time.

2) Version D, Page 4, Lines 13-17.
Legislative representation was added to include two members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, including one member of the minority organizational caucus; and two member so the senate appointed by the president of the senate, including one member of the minority organizational caucus.

MR. LAMKIN stated that the legislative representation is consistent with the composition of other task forces set up by the legislature. He stated that this would bring the membership of the council to 31 members. Since the council would be substantially represented by private sector members, and because it is a public policy forum that conceivably would use public

dollars, the governor would appoint one of the four commissioners as the chair of the council.

[4:41:06 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN referred to page 5, line 4, which read, "A majority of the council constitutes a quorum." He said this is consistent with task force language. Finally, on page 5, lines 17-18, "A vacancy on the council shall be 18 filled in the same manner as the original appointment." He noted Legislative Legal Services made conforming amendments.

[4:41:30 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked whether Senator Stevens had volunteered to serve on the Alaska Invasive Species Task Force [Council].

[4:41:48 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS clarified that the council was comprised of 31 members. He offered his support for Version D.

[4:42:12 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK withdrew his objection; he heard no further objection, and Version D was adopted as the working document.

CHAIR REVAK solicited the will of the committee.

[4:42:39 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE moved to report the Senate Committee Substitute (SCS) for CSHB 54, work order 32-LS0057\D, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[4:43:02 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK found no objection, and SCS CSHB 54(RES) was reported from Senate Resources Standing Committee.

ALASKA FISHERIES PRESENTATION

[4:43:11 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK announced the Alaska Fisheries presentation.

[4:43:36 PM](#)

MIKE WOOD, Chair, Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFWC), Chase, Alaska, stated that he had served on the commission for eight years.

[4:44:00 PM](#)

PETE PROBASCIO, Member, Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFWC), Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Palmer, Alaska, introduced himself.

MR. WOOD stated that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFWC) is strictly an advisory body to the assembly and the political representatives in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). The MSBFWC is diverse and has a scientist who works for the Chitlin Tribal Council and three members who have a career with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He said he owns a small setnet business and is a Northern District setnetter on the Ivan River. The commission uses the science-based information that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game provides to advise the MSB Assembly on fisheries.

MR. WOOD directed attention to slide 1, which showed a photograph of the Mat-Su Borough. He said the Yentna River flows into the Susitna River and the Northern District of Cook Inlet.

[4:45:37 PM](#)

MR. PROBASCIO reviewed slide 2, Overview.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Who is the MSB FWC?
- What do we do?
- Our priorities
- Why our work matters
- Moving forward

MR. PROBASCIO stated that the MSBFWC's priorities are focused on fish and wildlife. He offered his view that habitat is the key to improving any fish and wildlife population.

[4:46:02 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 3, What is the MSB FWC?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Started in 2007
 - An 8-member MSB commission advocates for sound fish and wildlife management on behalf of MSB and its citizens
 - Uses science & citizen input
 - Provides local expertise to the MSB Assembly, citizens, regulators

MR. WOOD expressed concern that the legislature did not pass a bill to establish recreational rivers and recreation river corridors. He stated that the MSB FWC supports the recreational river corridors because it provides a safeguard for habitat on six recreation rivers. He noted that three of the six rivers have commercial fishing weirs for sockeye salmon, at Jug Lake, Larson Lake, and Chelatna Lake.

[4:47:12 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 4, What's at stake in our fisheries work?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- We need better tools in our weirs.
 - The Mat-Su has been famous for its King and Coho Salmon runs...
 - Fishing is important to us - sustenance for the soul and the body
 - Fishing provides significant economic contribution to the Mat-Su

MR. WOOD stated that the emphasis has been on enhancing king salmon returns by preserving fish habitat, which has been improving in the Mat-Su. He highlighted the need for better tools such as funding for weirs to understand fish returns.

[4:48:02 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 5, Economics of Sportfishing in MSB

[Original punctuation provided.]

- In 2017 direct spending on sport fishing in MSB totaled over \$57 million.
 - Though still significant, this level of spending is down from 2007.
 - How do we maintain the robust economic contributions of fisheries to the local economy

MR. WOOD highlighted the importance of sport fishing in MSB. He also recognized that many commercial fishermen live in the MSB and setnet in the Northern district. He related that many businesses are affected by the fishing industry. He indicated

that direct spending could increase if the king runs were to improve to the level of the 1980 and early 1990 returns.

[4:48:33 PM](#)

MR. PROBASCO emphasized the final bullet point, noting the importance of maintaining the robust economic contributions of fisheries to the local economy. He stated that the key is to focus on healthy fish habitat to improve salmon returns. He offered his view that the lack of management research programs could help ensure healthy habitat and adequate escapement.

[4:49:08 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 6, The MSB investment in Fisheries: Fish Passage

- Since 2000, over \$20 million invested
- Over 100 fish passage culverts installed
- Restoration of 67 stream miles and 6,224 lake acres of anadromous fish habitat - we walk our talk!

MR. WOOD emphasized the rehabilitation and restoration of streams and lakes in the Mat-Su. He highlighted the prevention measures taken to eradicate invasive Elodea and Northern Pike, culvert work to improve fish habitat, and discouraging development in critical habitat areas.

[4:49:48 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 7, Fisheries Investments: Research & Management.

- In 2014 the MSB received a \$2.5 million state legislative grant for fisheries work:
 - Fish passage culverts installed
 - Research gap analysis done
 - 13 research and management projects funded

MR. WOOD offered his view that the funding was spent to enhance science. The commission no longer has this level of funding.

[4:50:21 PM](#)

MR. PROBASCO noted that \$900,000 of the \$2.5 million went for culvert removal or upgrade, and the remainder was spent on research management projects. He said the commission worked closely with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Some private sector and Native communities funded temperature

and limnological studies to understand the river and lake systems better.

[4:51:06 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 8, Alaska Board of Fisheries/Wildlife Work. The slide consisted of three maps, the Northern District, the Susitna River and Kenai River, and the harvest zone.

- We engage in the BOF/BOG meetings to advocate for science-based management and regulation.

MR. WOOD highlighted the efforts the commission has taken to understand how fish move through Cook Inlet and the impacts some policies have had on the Mat-Su. The commission has worked with ADF&G's commercial and sport fishery divisions to restore the runs in the Northern District of Cook Inlet. He said this area includes Anchorage and the Mat-Su. The habitat for commercial sockeye is not as robust as the Kenai River area, partly due to the lakes, but the Mat-Su has thriving king salmon and coho salmon spawning grounds. He emphasized the importance of ensuring these salmon return to the Northern District. He highlighted the importance of working with ADF&G biologists and the Board of Fisheries to better understand fish movement through Cook Inlet into the Northern District.

[4:52:25 PM](#)

MR. WOOD commented that the commission's focus would be on federal management in the coming year. He stated that the [North Pacific Fishery Management Council] closed the Exclusive Economic Zone in Cook Inlet. He was unsure of the impact or what management strategies would be implemented. He related that the focus had been on the Kenai River, which has a robust run. The commission is unsure whether the closure will be beneficial or hinder fish movement through Cook Inlet. He indicated that the commission would follow this closely and work with ADF&G to identify what work should be done better to understand this shift in Cook Inlet commercial fisheries.

[4:53:14 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 9, to 2020 BOF UCI Finfish Meeting: Feb. 7-19, Egan Center.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- We worked collaboratively to advance science-based proposals that benefit fisheries conservation, traditions, and the public interest.

[4:53:48 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 10 Looking for partners and allies.

- We see common interests -
 - How can we best conserve our fish/wildlife resources?
 - How can we maintain and pass on our Alaskan fish and wildlife cultural traditions?
 - We feel that finding partners and allies around common interests will benefit fisheries and wildlife in the MSB and Alaska, now and in the future.

MR. WOOD stated that at the last Board of Fisheries meeting, the commission worked with the Northern District to have an equitable king salmon catch and release and commercial fishery. He offered his view that the agreement seems to be working well.

MR. WOOD emphasized the importance of ADF&G data on genetics and escapement. He expressed that funding for weirs, which impacts the Mat-Su, should be increased. He highlighted that the Mat-Su continues to grow. He stressed that ADF&G needs funding to accomplish fish counts over an extended period.

[4:55:18 PM](#)

MR. PROBASCO reviewed slide 11, How can we work together?

- By advocating for sound fisheries/wildlife management, all can benefit.
 - Filling knowledge & management gaps:
 - Genetic fish stock analysis in Cook Inlet
 - Funding fishing weirs and sonar for better in-season management
 - Applying the successful model of commercial fishing from Bristol Bay in the complex mixed stock fishery of Cook Inlet

MR. PROBASCO emphasized the importance of legislative funding to provide sufficient data to establish sound fisheries and wildlife management. He stated that the MSBFWC has focused on better understanding sockeye, coho, and king salmon passage in Cook Inlet to their natal streams.

MR. PROBASCO related that funding genetic fish stock analysis in Cook Inlet had helped the commission better understand the fish

movement, but more research and funding are needed. He expressed concern that reduced funding to ADF&G has adversely impacted fish weirs. He related that ADF&G must shut down the fish weirs before the runs are completed. He said that ADF&G must estimate escapement rather than use actual counts. He emphasized the importance of ensuring adequate escapement for a healthy system and its effect on future runs.

MR. PROBASCO advocated establishing management and research programs within the Mat-Su Valley and Cook Inlet region.

[4:56:47 PM](#)

MR. WOOD reviewed slide 12, to A better future together? [The slide consisted of a photograph of salmon harvested and one showing fish packaged for the freezer.]

- Let's work together for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and each other.

MR. WOOD expressed concern that three generations of kids in the Mat-Su do not know what it is like to catch a king salmon. He lamented that the attachment to fishing was being lost over time. He emphasized the importance of ensuring adequate escapement so people could enjoy catching and eating fish. He highlighted the enjoyment people could experience the wild rivers in Alaska.

[4:58:05 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK commented that the salmon in the photograph looked tasty.

[4:58:18 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE encouraged the presenters to reach out to others in the watershed. He stated that the Northern District was not the only district facing king salmon issues. He acknowledged that the Mat-Su and the Kenai Peninsula were neighbors and partners. He said he hoped that they could work together as partners to solve problems.

[4:58:57 PM](#)

MR. WOOD emphasized that he enjoyed sharing stories about commercial fishing with the Kenai Peninsula setnet fishermen.

[4:59:26 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked if the commission had identified any culverts that should be replaced.

MR. PROBASCO highlighted that the early construction and development in the Mat-Su Valley did not meet the needs of anadromous fish streams. He stated that culverts were constructed better, but more work was needed in the upper reaches. He noted that coho salmon could use water bodies that most people would not think supported salmon. He said culverts in subdivisions and rural roads often do not adequately provide fish passage.

[5:00:27 PM](#)

MR. WOOD added that he recently drove on the Parks Highway, and every bridge from Montana Creek to Big Lake was being repaired due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding. He noted that Spur Road in Talkeetna needs extensive repairs.

[5:01:06 PM](#)

CHAIR REVAK thanked Mr. Wood and Mr. Probasco for their perspective on the bill to establish recreational rivers and recreation river corridors. He stated that the issue that brought that bill before the committee was access to a dock on Judd Lake. He explained that some lakes have a shallow shoreline, and the regulations would not allow residents to construct a dock that extends far enough for access. He noted that the easiest solution was to repeal it, but that did not seem like the right approach.

[5:02:55 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Revak adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 5:02 p.m.