

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 5, 2022

1:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Robert Myers, Chair
Senator Mike Shower, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Kiehl

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Click Bishop
Senator Peter Micciche

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 170

"An Act relating to the Alaska marine highway system; establishing the Alaska Marine Highway Corporation; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 170

SHORT TITLE: MARINE HIGHWAY CORPORATION

SPONSOR(s): TRANSPORTATION

01/21/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/22	(S)	TRA, L&C, FIN
02/17/22	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/17/22	(S)	Heard & Held
02/17/22	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
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03/29/22 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/29/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
03/31/22 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/31/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/05/22 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SHANNON ADAMSON, Alaska Regional Representative
Masters, Mates and Pilots (MMP)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 170 but highlighted several concerns.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR ROBERT MYERS called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Shower, and Chair Myers.

SB 170-MARINE HIGHWAY CORPORATION

[1:37:34 PM](#)

CHAIR MYERS announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 170 "An Act relating to the Alaska highway system; establishing the Alaska Marine Highway Corporation; and providing for an effective date."

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CHAIR MYERS opened public testimony on SB 170.

[1:38:11 PM](#)

SHANNON ADAMSON, Alaska Regional Representative, Masters, Mates and Pilots (MMP), Juneau, Alaska, stated that MMP represents the licensed deck officers with the Alaska Marine Highway System. She said she was also speaking on behalf of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), which represents the licensed engineering officers for AMHS. She provided her background, indicating that she sailed with AMHS as a licensed deck officer for seven years; and served on the Marine Transportation Advisory Board and Southeast Conference's AMHS Reform Steering Committee. She stated that many provisions in the bill would

create a stronger and more reliable marine highway system, including the public comment period for service or schedule changes, the creation of a long-term comprehensive plan that has provisions for vessel replacement after 30 years of service, and the section regarding performance reporting and transparencies.

[1:39:14 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON expressed concern about some provisions in the bill, including the board composition that lacks a designated union seat, that this board would prevent more than one union member from serving. She offered her view that MMP and MEBA believes that the more engagement that the board receives from those working on vessels would better inform the board. The unions also have concerns regarding the language that requires each sailing to show that anticipated incremental revenue meets or exceeds the cost of providing the service. MMP and MEBA are concerned that this may be unrealistic for all routes. She stated that some routes will make more money than others which would offset the costs of the routes that provide necessary service to rural communities and villages. The language regarding the rates for tickets could mean that ticket prices would be set above market value, which seems prohibitive, particularly for village runs where service is a necessity. She suggested that rates could be determined by the corporation or a third-party company, similar to Washington state's rate setting. She thanked members for the opportunity to testify and expressed optimism that this bill would create positive change.

CHAIR MYERS closed public testimony on SB 170.

[1:40:47 PM](#)

CHAIR MYERS held SB 170 in committee.

CHAIR MYERS provided the email address for anyone who wished to submit written testimony to the committee as senate.transportation@akleg.gov.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Myers adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 1:41 p.m.