

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 2, 2023
1:34 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Johnson called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative DeLena Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Julie Coulombe
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Will Stapp

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Co-Chair
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Frank Tomaszewski

ALSO PRESENT

Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game; Melissa Hill, Acting Administrative Services Director, Department of Fish and Game.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

SUMMARY

HB 39 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUND; SUPP

HB 39 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 41 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

HB 41 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

FY 24 BUDGET OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Co-Chair Johnson reviewed the meeting agenda.

#hb39

#hb41

HOUSE BILL NO. 39

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making reappropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE BILL NO. 41

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; and providing for an effective date."

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^FY 24 BUDGET OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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DOUG VINCENT-LANG, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME, provided a PowerPoint presentation titled "Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) FY2024 Budget Overview," dated March 2, 2023 (copy on file). He reviewed slide 3 titled "Constitutional and Statutory Mandates:"

The Constitution of the State of Alaska

Article 8 -Natural Resources; §4. Sustained Yield.

Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and all other replenishable resources belonging to the State shall be utilized, developed, and

maintained on the sustained yield principle, subject to preferences among beneficial uses.

The Alaska Statutes

Title 16. Fish and Game; Sec. 16.05.020.
Functions of commissioner.

(2) manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the state.

Mission Statement

To protect, maintain, and improve the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state, and manage their uses and development in the best interest of the economy and the well-being of the people of the state, consistent with the sustained yield principle.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang turned to slide 3 titled "Core Services:"

Management

Provide hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities, protect state's rights to manage its fish and wildlife resources, conserve and improve habitat and access.

Stock Assessment & Research

Ensure sustainability and harvestable surplus, improve assessment and research capabilities, invest in new technologies, anticipate changing conditions.

Customer Service and Public Involvement

Make improvements to information and education services, the Boards and other regulatory processes, licensing and permitting.

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Representative Ortiz cited slide 2 related to the Alaska statutes and read the following from the slide, "manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the state." He asked if the directives were prioritized.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that in his view there was no priority. The legislature had never implemented a priority either. He believed that it was a balancing act between himself, the Alaska Board of Fish and Board of Game, the legislature, and the people of the state. Representative Ortiz referred to the "interest of the economy" and asked if it was in the context of fisheries or was the meaning extended to other areas of the economy versus exclusively fisheries. Commissioner Vincent-Lang thought there was a recognition in the words, "interest of the economy and the well-being of the people of the state..." He exemplified that the state could likely get the highest value for bear hunts in the Municipality of Anchorage, yet it was likely not a priority for the city; public safety was probably a higher priority. He considered the two statements in context of the situation and then discussed it with the regulatory board. Subsequently a decision would be made regarding either maximizing the economy or the general well-being of the state. He provided the example of subsistence use where it may not be in the best economic interest, but it was in the best interest for cultural wellbeing.

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Representative Galvin pointed to the Constitutional mandates of fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and the aquatic plant resources listed under state statutes. She wondered whether kelp, mariculture, etc. was included in fisheries. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that the Natural Resources Section of the Constitution also was a mandate for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage to the sustained yield principle. He related that the legislature had granted him, as commissioner, with the specific ability to manage fish, game, and aquatic plant resources. Clearly, mariculture was an aquatic plant resource that fell under the Department of Fish and Game's purview. Representative Galvin commented that aquatic resources was "a newer area" and she wanted to highlight that management was under the department's "umbrella." Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that it was under his umbrella, but it was under DNR's umbrella for permitting water use. Commissioner Vincent-Lang highlighted slide 4 titled "Leadership." He listed some members of DFG's leadership team (listed on the slide) and directed attention to his Deputy Commissioners, Ben Mulligan and Rachel Baker. He noted that Rachel Baker sat on the North

Pacific Fisheries Management Council and dealt with treaty issues under the International Pacific Halibut Commission and Ben Mulligan also served as Director of the Habitat Division among his other duties.

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Representative Hannan asked for information on the professional background of Ben Mulligan, Rachel Baker, and Tom Taube, Acting Director, Division of Sport Fish. He answered that Deputy Commissioner Mulligan worked for the department for 10 years and worked as the Legislative Liaison under the prior commissioner. He felt that he was doing an excellent job navigating the interface between the Federal Subsistence Board and DFG. He reported that Deputy Commissioner Baker had worked for the state and then the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which was helpful in her role on the council. He indicated that he had the ability to appoint directors. Tom Taube, was the Acting Director of Sport Fish with about 30 years experience in the division. He chose not to appoint a director until the end of the board cycle because he felt it was unfair to appoint someone in the middle of a board cycle without being involved in the board preparation and proposal development. Acting Director Taube had willingly accepted his current position and had applied for the director position. The commissioner would decide at the end of the board cycle.

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Representative Cronk was concerned that there was not a designated person for subsistence research. He thought it needed to be elevated and was a high priority for Alaskans. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that subsistence had a presence at every Board of Game and Board of Fish meeting. He emphasized that nothing was happening from a regulatory standpoint in terms of informing the board's decisions on subsistence. He was not in favor of spending money to hire a director. He relayed that the subsistence section's statutory purpose was to collect information to inform board discussions as necessary for subsistence and customary and traditional practices.

Representative Ortiz referred to the two director roles [Subsistence Research and Habitat Sections] that were cut from the department. He recalled that the positions were

moved to the governor's office, which decreased the department's expenditures but not the total spend for the government. He asked whether he was correct. Commissioner Vincent-Lang could not recall where the positions went. He recounted that he had been asked to find reductions in both programs. He added that it had been his decision to forego hiring the positions that were vacant at the time. He viewed it as more valuable to keep the same number of staff working in the field and researching than filling the two vacant director positions. Representative Ortiz did not doubt it was a good decision. He was uncertain the commissioner's actions saved the state money. He asked if habitat was something the state needed to start paying more attention to and whether water was included in habitat. He voiced that the oceans were changing and wondered whether the state needed to invest more resources to understand the problem.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that most of the research was being done by the science groups in the Division of Sport Fish and the Division of Fisheries. The Habitat Section was associated with Title XVI permitting authority. He emphasized that the Title XVI authority was a unique function granted to the commissioner of DFG. He could not think of another situation in any other state where the commissioner could halt fishing in an anadromous waterway by refusing to issue a Title XVI permit. The Habitat Section's primary responsibility was to issue the Title XVI permit thought the Fish and Game Coordination Act. He reiterated his reasoning for not hiring the director positions and why he felt they were not necessary.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang addressed slide 5 titled "Budget Organizational Chart." He indicated that the department had 7 different budget departments: Sport Fish, Anchorage & Fairbanks Hatcheries, Southeast Hatcheries, Wildlife Conservation, Statewide Support Services, Subsistence Research and Monitoring, and Commercial Fisheries. He reported that Anchorage & Fairbanks Hatcheries and Southeast Hatcheries used to be subcomponents of Sport Fish and were now separate components in the budget as defined by the legislature in the prior year. He noted that the Commercial Fisheries Component which included several

regional fisheries management subcomponents, and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) was contained within the Commercial Fisheries Division, but they were really separate components. The Statewide Support Services Component included the Commissioner's Office, Boards of Fish and Game, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee Council, and State Facilities Maintenance.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang summarized slide 6 titled "FY 2024 Budget Overview:"

The Department will continue to provide an excellent return on investment as we have in the past under the Governor's proposed budget.

ADF&G turns a \$240 million dollar (of which \$65 million is GF) into a return of over \$12.5 billion annually.

We do not anticipate any reduction in services as a result of the proposed budget.

The proposed budget includes new funding for fisheries, wildlife, and resource projects.

Consolidating the various budget components in the Division of Commercial Fisheries into a single unit to improve efficiency.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang delineated that when he began as commissioner the DFG budget was roughly \$195 million and much of the recent increase was in federal dollars.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang discussed slide 7 titled "FY 2024 Budget Overview - Comparison." He pointed to the table on the bottom of the slide containing the FY 2024 total budget request and related that \$65 million was in UGF, \$13 million in DGF, \$75.6 million in Other (primarily the Fish and Game Fund), and \$88.5 million in Federal funding totaling the \$242 million request compared to the FY 2022 Actuals of \$184.3 million. He believed the governor was aware of the value of DFG and the worth of adding funding to address the challenges in fisheries and wildlife management across the state.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang briefly reviewed slide 8 titled "FY 2024 Fund Group Breakdown by Fund Category," which included a pie chart of the department's fund categories. He moved to slide 9 titled "FY 2024 Fund Source Breakdown by Fund Category" showing the fund group breakdown in a table format.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang drew attention to slide 10 titled "FY 2024 Division Breakdown" and explained that the Division of Commercial Fisheries (DCF) was the largest division at \$82 million, followed by the Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) at \$63 million, Division of Sport Fish (DSF) at \$50 million, and the Division of Statewide Support Services at \$22 million. He noted that Habitat and the Subsistence Sections were relatively small sections. He turned to slide 11 titled "Budgeted Positions and History:

FY2024 Governor Budget:
819 permanent full-time positions
596 permanent part-time positions
1 non-permanent position

Commissioner Vincent-Lang reported that the department experienced a decrease in position counts, but the budget had increased. He added that the situation was beginning to affect the existing staff who were relaying to him that their workloads were too heavy. He notified the committee that he would ask for more positions in the future so the employees could have a fair work life balance.

Representative Galvin thought she heard the commissioner say he made sure there was a subsistence voice at every meeting. She asked if there was a person in a position of power who represented subsistence in the department. Commissioner Vincent-Lang clarified that the department did not advocate for any position, it only provided information when asked questions. He shared that he was a non-voting member of the board and a staff person from each relevant division or section was present at all the meetings. Representative Galvin was not suggesting an advocate, but a representative; a person who was able to provide information. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that the deputy operation manager had a seat at the table and was supported by regional staff who were also present.

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Representative Hannan had reviewed the department's budgeted positions and noted that 10 years prior there were 68 non-permanent positions and currently there was only one. She deduced that they were seasonal or temporary positions. In addition, the overall Position Control Number (PCNs) had decreased. She asked what happened to the jobs that used to be non-permanent. Commissioner Vincent-Lang replied that he had been the commissioner since 2019. He furthered that many of the positions were re-hires and retirees that were moved into those rolls in permanent positions so there would not be so called "double dippers" in the system. He was unsure what caused the precipitous decline and offered to look into the matter and provide the answer. He acknowledged that the overall position count had decreased, and the department was examining the issue. He ascertained that there were some vacant PCNs in difficult to fill jobs like bio-nutritionists that required a high level of education for low pay or the more stressful management biologists. Representative Hannan asked when the department undertook its last job classification study and had looked into how it related to recruitment. She voiced that management biologists were paid much less than other agency staff with far less responsibility. Commissioner Vincent-Lang responded that the department had hired a consultant to address some of the issues related to recruitment and retention and the report would be done in the following week.

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Representative Josephson asked if the Habitat Section had been a division at one point. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered in the affirmative. Representative Josephson asked what the public should take away from the change from a division to a section. Commissioner Vincent-Lang reiterated his prior answer that he was faced with the choice of hiring the directors at the expense of cutting funding in other areas of the budget and reduce services. He added that he had not heard of any significant issues from the decision from the Habitat section. Regarding Subsistence, he had heard concern over representation at the table. He noted that the Subsistence Section had only approximately 25 employees versus hundreds in the other divisions. Representative Josephson understood the commissioner's decision and noted that the state's finances had improved

somewhat since he eliminated the positions. He noted that the department increased UGF in other areas and wondered why they remained vacant. Commissioner Vincent-Lang replied that if he were appropriated an additional \$200 thousand, he would choose to hire more permittees for Title XVI.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang illuminated slide 12 titled "FY2024 Operating Budget Change Highlights Division of Commercial Fisheries:"

Central Region Fisheries Management
Maintain UGF Support for Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute Watershed Projects \$800.0 UGF

AYK Region Fisheries Management
Restore Assessment and Management Projects that were Eliminated in Prior Year Budget Reductions \$285.0 UGF

Westward Region Fisheries Management
Alleviate Shortfall in Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab Test Fishery Receipts \$1,000.0 UGF \$-1,000.0 DGF

Statewide Fisheries Management
Consolidate Division of Commercial Fisheries Regional Components \$0.0

Commissioner Vincent-Lang expounded that the \$800,000 from the Central Region fisheries management had been cut in prior years. It was a state core service that the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute in part, had to take on, which was a burden for the institute. The state had spent roughly \$400 million for Alaska Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) salmon management in prior years that was currently replaced in the amount of \$1.5 million from non-UGF sources. The amount of \$285,000 was reinstated for the AYK region fisheries management to help discover the reason for the Chinook and Chum decline issues. He pointed to Statewide Fisheries Management [consolidation] on the slide and explained that he had determined that the department could be more efficient by managing the regional components as one statewide fisheries management component. He reasoned that many of the management activities benefitted all the state's commercial fisheries, and the department was investing a lot of time in administratively moving money around via the single components.

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Representative Cronk asked how the test fisheries worked. He asked if someone caught the crab and then sold it. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered in the affirmative.

Representative Ortiz commented that it was apparent what would happen in the regions specified on slide 12 and having regional budget components was very helpful to understand where the funding was going; especially from an appropriator standpoint. He was not in favor of the budget consolidation. Commissioner Vincent-Lang responded that the budgeting will still be project based and regional projects would be listed under one component. He reiterated that he was trying to administratively streamline the budgeting process.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang continued on slide 13 titled "FY 2024 Operating Budget Change Highlights Division of Sport Fish:"

Sport Fisheries

Restore Authority to Sport Fish Projects Post Pandemic
\$500.0 Other 1024 Fish/Game

Anchorage and Fairbanks Hatcheries

Delete Capital Improvement Project Authority \$-53.4
Other 1061 CIP Rcpts.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang related that during the pandemic, sport fisheries lost money due to lack of visitors. The division reduced its expenditure as a result, but currently it was thriving again hence, the restoration of spending authority to pre-pandemic levels. He reported that the plan was to restore the projects that were cut during the pandemic.

Representative Hannan recalled that there had been some issues around a sportfish license fee surcharge of \$5 to help with hatchery reimbursement. She had always understood it to be important for the hatcheries to keep producing fish. She did not know of any current legislation by the administration and wondered if the desire or need for the surcharge had been eliminated. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that the state had a unique way of paying for the

Fairbanks and Anchorage hatcheries; they established a surcharge to repay the bonds and used Dingle-Johnson money for the match. The state built two hatcheries largely at the expense of non-resident anglers through a surcharge fee, which was eliminated once the bonds were repaid. Presently, the state was left with paying the maintenance costs and the need still existed. The Senate opposed the prior surcharge bill. The department was in talks with the Senate to find a pathway forward. He elaborated that when the bonds were paid, DFG had built up credit with the federal Fish and Wildlife Service that it could use as match money for maintenance. The current budget structure implemented by the Senate had the Fairbanks and Anchorage hatcheries in one component resulting in leaving a lot of match money on the table. The action hamstrung the department's ability to utilize it for maintenance.

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Co-Chair Johnson asked about a dilapidated hatchery in her district in Eklutna. She did not know the history of why some hatcheries were abandoned. Commissioner Vincent-Lang responded that there had been the Fishery Rehabilitation Enhancement Division in DFG that built hatcheries around the state and eventually, the legislature and the department transferred its operations to private nonprofits (PNPs). The Eklutna Hatchery was transferred to the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, and they determined how to best operate it through their own cost recovery mechanism. The state maintained ownership over many PNP hatcheries. He offered to provide more information. He did not believe they were currently operational and reiterated that it was up to the PNP regarding hatchery operations. Co-Chair Johnson requested a status update.

Representative Cronk inquired that regarding the Fairbanks and Anchorage Hatcheries what was prohibiting the use of the matching funds. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that they were placed in a separate budget unit or component, and it structurally became harder to utilize the funds. The department could only utilize the amount of funding in that specific component and if it was UGF there was no funding for the match. There had been better opportunities to use the match when it had been one component. He was working to find mechanisms to make it work.

Representative Coulombe asked where the money for the Fish and Game Fund came from. She asked for the balance. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that when the Dingle Johnson and Pittman Robertson Funds (federal funding sources designated by Congress) were developed it required states to pay a guaranteed match. The fund was constitutionally protected by the voters in the state. The fees came from the sale of hunting and sport fishing licenses and fines. He was uncertain of the current balance and guessed that it was \$50 million on an annual basis. He would follow up.

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Representative Coulombe wondered whether the department had the authority to use the funding outside of the matching funds. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that the funds could only be used for very specific purposes.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang turned to slide 14 titled "FY 2024 Operating Budget Change Highlights Division of Wildlife Conservation:"

Wildlife Conservation
Maintain Prior Years Level of Fish and Game Fund
Authority for Wildlife Conservation
\$5,000.0 Other 1024 Fish/Game
Support and Outreach of Non-Pittman-Robertson Projects
\$1,302.0 UGF
State Match for Increased Pittman-Robertson Funding
\$2,080.1 Other 1024 Fish/Game
Capital Improvement Project Authority to Accommodate
Additional Projects \$90.0 Other 1061 CIP Rcpts.

Hunter Education Public Shooting Ranges
Additional Pittman-Robertson for Shooting Ranges
\$63.5 Fed 1002 Fed Rcpts.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang explained that a few years prior the department had some Pittman-Robertson funding reverted due to lack of match money. He worked to restore the health of the Fish and Game Fund for wildlife and was presently able to request spending authority from the fund. The second item was for \$1.3 million GF to use as match to study species that were not hunted. He furthered that the department could not study animals not hunted using Pittman-Robertson funds. Other sources of federal funds

were available like State Wildlife Action Grants. He exemplified a study on bumble bees.

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Representative Hannan asked if work could be done on invasive species monitoring and research using Non-Pittman-Robertson Projects funding. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered in the affirmative.

Representative Coulombe referenced the last item on the slide, the public shooting range increment on slide 14. She asked if the \$63.5 thousand was for ranges. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that the match requirement under federal law for shooting ranges had increased.

Commissioner Vincent-Lang highlighted slide 15 titled "FY 2024 Operating Budget Change Highlights Division of Statewide Support Services:"

Commissioner's Office

Replace Federal Receipt Authority with Interagency Receipt Authority \$-107.0 Fed \$107.0 Other 1007 I/A Rcpts.

Administrative Services

Fund Source Alignment Related to Change in Accounting Method for Agency Indirect Cost Allocation Plan \$-135.9 DGF \$-96.8 Other 1061 CIP Rcpts \$232.7 Other 1108 Stat Designated Rcpts.

One-time Increase of Statutory Designated Program Receipt Authority \$900.0 Other 1108 Stat Desig

Department Facilities Maintenance Unit True-Up \$111.6 Other 1007 I/A Rcpts

Boards of Fisheries and Game

Joint Board Meeting of the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game \$75.0 UGF

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Representative Stapp asked about the mechanism to replace federal receipts with interagency receipts under the commissioner's office. Commissioner Vincent-Lang replied

that DFG gained the authority to increase the tax on federal receipts it received therefore, the balance had increased. He decided to use inter-agency receipts for the commissioner's office.

Representative Josephson pointed to the third bullet point and deduced that the department was increasing fees by \$900,000. He asked for more information.

MELISSA HILL, ACTING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME, replied that the division received funding from the federal government and a fee was charged that was called "indirect" or "overhead." The department collected enough to carry forward the funds. The \$900,000 request was to spend a large chunk of carryforward for administrative costs for the divisions for one year. Therefore, the divisions had more funding available for programs.

Ms. Hill reviewed the other two items under the Administrative Services Division on slide 15. She referenced the first bullet point and noted that the fund source changed to Statutory Designated Receipts from dwindling capital funds. The last item was necessary for current facility maintenance to keep the deferred maintenance requests down.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang discussed slide 16 titled "FY 2024 Operating Budget Change Highlights Habitat & Subsistence Sections:"

Habitat
Travel for Permitting Site Visits
\$50.0 UGF

State Subsistence Research
Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory
Council Update Project -Subsistence Harvest Surveys
Contract \$150.0 Other 1007 I/A Rcpts.

Representative Hannan recounted that in 2019 all of the departments had been asked to cut travel substantially. She asked how close the amount of the appropriation prior to the cuts was. She believed that travel was essential. Commissioner Vincent-Lang replied that the amount was the

same as prior to 2019. Representative Hannan requested the amount that had been cut. Commissioner Vincent-Lang would follow up with the information.

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Commissioner Vincent-Lang concluded with slide 17 titled "Issues and Concerns:"

- Federal intrusion into state management authority
- Reduced marine survivals of salmon and crab resulting in restricted or closed fisheries
- Intercept and Bycatch
- Poor winter survival affecting big game populations
- Food Security
- Urban wildlife management issues
- Impacts from Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Non-Finfish mariculture
- Invasive species
- Recruitment and retention issues

Commissioner Vincent-Lang briefly spoke to each of the issues and concerns that he faced as a commissioner. He indicated that the state was in a lawsuit over property rights in the Kenai Peninsula where the federal government had property rights on federal land over DFG management. The scenario had ramifications on the ability of DFG to manage fish and game on federal property.

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Representative Josephson asked about the federal intrusion issue. He cited the Kenai case that was currently being considered by Supreme Court. He ascertained that the Supreme Court had not yet decided whether to hear the case. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered in the affirmative. Representative Josephson had heard from hunting guides regarding the Kenai case and the federal rule making around predator control. He relayed that the guides were concerned that the definition of the preclusion of methods and means was so expansive it included standard forms of hunting. He asked whether he was correct. Commissioner Vincent-Lang agreed with his statements. He detailed that the Kenai Rule was a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Rule that granted a plenary right over management. However, the National Park

Service (NPS) rules indicated that any kind of hunting, specifically sport hunting, that impacted a predator was incompatible with the value system of the national preserve system. The state argued that the discussion was held during Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) deliberations and hunting bears was allowable. He elucidated that the NPS ruled that it was incompatible with the natural diversity mandates of the preserve. However, the rule would allow bear hunting under federal hunting regulations but disallowed sport hunting under state regulations.

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Representative Josephson surmised that the result would allow sport hunting, but it would be done under a federal regime. Commissioner Vincent-Lang interjected that his statement was not accurate. He clarified that a federally qualified user would be able to hunt bears, but a hunting guide on a preserve was prohibited from taking a non-resident or a non-federally qualified hunter. Representative Josephson assumed that guides primarily took nonresidents. He deduced that there was a serious substantive difference between the state and federal regimes. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that under federal rules only federally qualified users would be able to participate in the activity. Representative Josephson would need to know the definition of [federally qualified users.]

Co-Chair Johnson asked if a bumble bee was an actual species. Commissioner Vincent-Lang answered that different species of bumble bees existed and Alaska had Western Bumble Bees.

Co-Chair Johnson thanked the presenters.

HB 39 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 41 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Johnson reviewed the schedule for the following meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

2:42:38 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m.