

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

February 2, 2023

10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Sarah Vance, Chair  
Representative Kevin McCabe  
Representative CJ McCormick  
Representative Ben Carpenter  
Representative Louise Stutes

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 19

"An Act relating to the registration of commercial vessels; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 19

SHORT TITLE: REGISTRATION OF BOATS: EXEMPTION

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STUTES

01/19/23	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/19/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/23	(H)	FSH, RES
02/02/23	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE STUTES

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, introduced HB 19.

MATT GRUENING, Staff

Representative Louise Stutes

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HB 19 on behalf of Representative Stutes, prime sponsor.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:00:37 AM](#)

**CHAIR SARAH VANCE** called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Representatives McCabe, Carpenter, and Stutes were present at the call to order. Representative McCabe and McCormick arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**HB 19-REGISTRATION OF BOATS: EXEMPTION**

[10:01:13 AM](#)

CHAIR VANCE announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 19, "An Act relating to the registration of commercial vessels; and providing for an effective date."

[10:01:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE STUTES, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 19. She stated that the intent of HB 19 is to remove burdensome and duplicative licensing fees created under Senate Bill 92, "the derelict vessel bill," passed during the Twenty-Ninth Alaska State Legislature and imposed by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to current motor vessel owners. Representative Stutes explained that currently, commercial fishers must register with two state agencies, and the proposed legislation seeks to remove that duplication.

[10:03:16 AM](#)

MATT GRUENING, Staff, Representative Louise Stutes, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 19 on behalf of Representative Stutes, prime sponsor. He gave an overview of vessel documentation as a long-standing national form of vessel registration with the U.S. Coast Guard. He pointed to document [included in the committee packet] that outlines its applications, and explained that in the context of the bill discussion, "documented" and "undocumented" would apply "to having or not having that U.S. Coast Guard registration." He stated the purpose of the bill is to exempt the requirement to register vessels every three years. He reiterated the beginning of the information the bill sponsor had given from the first couple paragraphs of the sponsor

statement [included in the committee packet], then he paraphrased the next three paragraphs of the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Prior to the passage of SB 92, USCG documented vessels were exempt from DMV registration; however, that exemption was repealed by the bill and as a result, documented vessels now must register with the DMV.

The rationale for this requirement was to provide the State and local municipalities with a state-maintained database of who owns and operates vessels in Alaskan waters, as well as how to contact those individuals.

However, the database CFEC maintains for commercial fishing vessels was overlooked. Active commercial fishing vessel owners must renew their vessel license annually with the CFEC and the commission provides the necessary contact information in a publicly accessible, state database.

MR. GRUENING defined CFEC as standing for the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. He said HB 19 would institute an annual \$8 fee for documented CFEC vessels upon renewal, in lieu of the three-year \$20 fee at the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), to keep the bill cost-neutral; the fiscal notes attached to HB 19 reflect interagency transfers the first couple years. This ensures that although CFEC vessel owners are exempt from an unnecessary trip to the DMV, they are still paying their way toward boating safety programs through the Department of Natural Resources, such as the "Kids Don't Float" program. He noted there are other related boating programs through the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED). The rest of the money, after licensing fees are paid, goes into the derelict vessel fund.

[10:07:16 AM](#)

MATT GRUENING, in response to Chair Vance, offered further details regarding the fee, including that vessel owners who had already paid the \$24 fee would have that amount apply toward the \$8 fee [for three years]. In further response to Chair Vance, he cited Section 3 of HB 19, beginning on page 2, line 26, [through page 3, line 2], as addressing this issue.

[10:10:03 AM](#)

CHAIR VANCE ascertained that there were no questions from the committee. She expressed her support for "cutting out extra red tape."

[10:10:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES expressed appreciation to the Department of Public Safety for becoming aware of the duplicate issue and working with her office.

CHAIR VANCE indicated that [the duplication of fees] was an unintended consequence of Senate Bill 92.

[10:11:40 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 10:11 a.m. to 10:12 a.m.

[10:12:36 AM](#)

CHAIR VANCE noted that the committee had briefly discussed its intent for HB 19 during the at-ease.

[10:12:53 AM](#)

MR. GRUENING noted that since mentioning the Kids Don't Float program, he recalled that approximately \$147,000 annually goes to the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA), which conducts marine training and safety exercises.

[10:13:27 AM](#)

CHAIR VANCE announced that HB 19 was held over.

[10:13:44 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at [10:14] a.m.