

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

May 4, 2023

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Stanley Wright, Chair
Representative Laddie Shaw
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Cliff Groh
Representative Andrew Gray

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative George Rauscher

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): OVERVIEW OF THE DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 155

"An Act establishing the Alaska Military Affairs Commission; and relating to the duties and powers of the Alaska Military Affairs Commission."

- MOVED CSHB 155 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 155

SHORT TITLE: ESTABLISH AK MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STAPP

04/10/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/10/23	(H)	MLV
04/20/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/20/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/20/23	(H)	MINUTE (MLV)
04/25/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/25/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/25/23	(H)	MINUTE (MLV)
04/27/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

04/27/23 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
05/04/23 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

BRYAN FISHER, Director
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Fort Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave the Overview of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management presentation.

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 155.

FORREST WOLFE, Staff
Representative Stanley Wright
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the changes within the proposed committee substitute, Version U, to HB 155.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR STANLEY WRIGHT called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Gray, Groh, Shaw, Carpenter, Saddler, and Wright were present at the call to order.

**PRESENTATION(S): OVERVIEW OF THE DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the first order of business would be the Overview of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management presentation.

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BRYAN FISHER, Director, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, began the PowerPoint presentation [hardcopy included in

committee packet], titled "Overview of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management," and described how the division is organized under the department, as shown on slide 2. He moved to slide 3 to show the division's organizational chart. He moved to slides 4 and 5 to show which offices are activated in a disaster. On slides 6 and 7, he talked about the division's disaster response planning process. He explained that the chart shows several agencies that assist in flow of operations as well as how the private sector is involved in disaster response. Slides 7 and 8 address the small community emergency response plan (SCERP), which is a customizable, community-specific document to assist Alaskans in disaster planning and response. The SCERP process informs the community of critical locations, contacts, as well as resources available to them. He moved to slides 9 and 10 to talk about the state's hazard mitigation development process. He said communities need to work on such plans every five years and receive approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He stated that having a plan is the first step in accessing federal funding. On slides 11 and 12, he spoke about funding sources for mitigation projects. He said that a barrier to the program is the cost to match federal dollars, and that communities have been unsuccessful in getting federal funding. As for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), he explained that the cost share is paid for by the state when a federally declared disaster is called. He thanked the legislature for funding the program, and explained that the grant application requires extensive documentation, like a benefit-cost analysis.

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MR. FISHER moved to slides 13 and 14 and talked about preparedness, training, exercises, and outreach. He said that, as the division learns from disaster response, it reviews the actions for future review. He shared that the department partners with several organizations to carry out emergency preparedness outreach in communities. He moved to slides 15 and 16 to talk about the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), which he said is the central location in coordinating disaster responses in the state. In a disaster, SEOC assists with initial damage assessment and helps draft the disaster declaration request.

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MR. FISHER moved to slide 17 to outline the disaster declaration process, including economic and natural. He stressed the

importance of the governor's signature as it relates to funding. He said that federal declaration is different in what triggers it, and he noted that the federal government does recognize the uniqueness of Alaska's landscape. He moved to slides 18 and 19 to explain the division's disaster assistance programs, like grants to repair infrastructure. He moved to slide 20 to outline what makes a project eligible. He shared what programs fall under individual assistance, which are individual and family grants, as well as temporary housing grants. On the temporary housing grant, he talked about what help the division provided. He said FEMA has similar programs. He moved to slides 22 and 23 to talk about program support, which he said consists of the division's administrative support, logistics, grants, and audits.

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MR. FISHER, in response to Representative Saddler, described the several communications systems used and talked about tribes being partners, as well as having the right to go directly to the federal level. Also, tribes can declare their own emergencies.

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The committee took an at-ease from 1:46 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.

HB 155-ESTABLISH AK MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION

[1:48:40 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 155, "An Act establishing the Alaska Military Affairs Commission; and relating to the duties and powers of the Alaska Military Affairs Commission."

[1:49:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) to HB 155, Version 33-LS0701\U, Bergerud, 4/27/23, as a working document.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER objected for the purpose of discussion.

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FORREST WOLFE, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright, Alaska State Legislature, explained that Version U would make two changes to HB 155: on page 2, line 26, it would add subsection (e) to AS 44.19860 to add language that places administrative support responsibilities in the Office of the Governor; and it would change "Armed Services" to "Armed Forces of the United States" to be in compliance with U.S. code and state statute.

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REPRESENTATIVE GRAY asked why administrative support duties would be moved from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to the Office of the Governor.

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 155, answered that the change is a matter of resource with existing personnel and funding to be able to absorb the commission.

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REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER removed his objection. There being no further objection, Version U was before the committee as a working document.

[1:52:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 155, Version U, which read as follows:

Page 1, following line 3:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* Section 1. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:
LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that the mayors and public members appointed to the Alaska Military Affairs Commission be geographically distributed to represent as many different communities across the state as possible."

Page 1, line 4:

Delete "Section 1"

Insert "Sec. 2"

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 4, line 1:

Delete "sec. 1"
Insert "sec. 2"

Page 4, line 2:
Delete "sec. 1"
Insert "sec. 2"

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that he supports HB 155, Version U, and sees that its goal benefits the entire state by planning for and encouraging more military missions. He said Amendment 1 expresses the legislature's intent that members of the commission be geographically distributed.

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REPRESENTATIVE SHAW maintained his objection.

[1:54:06 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Shaw, Carpenter, Groh, Gray, Saddler, and Wright voted in favor of Amendment 1. Therefore, Amendment 1 was adopted by a vote of 6-0.

[1:54:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 2 to HB 155, Version U, as amended, which read as follows:

Page 3, line 23, following "state":
Insert ";

(8) report to the Joint Armed Services Committee and any special committee of the legislature relating to military and veterans' affairs, if such committee exists at the time the report is due, issues on the commission's activities over the previous calendar year; the commission shall provide the report in an electronic format and deliver the report by January 31 each year"

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER explained that Amendment 2 seeks to accommodate a prohibition on members of the legislature serving on the Military Affairs Commission. He said the amendment

requires a report, which would keep committees and legislators informed.

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW removed his objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 2 was adopted.

[1:55:28 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 3 to HB 155, Version U, as amended, which read as follows:

Page 2, line 14, following "States,":
Insert "and one of whom, to the extent possible,
representing a geographic region not otherwise
represented on the commission,"

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER explained that Amendment 3 is similar to the Amendment 1 as it relates to seat distribution by geographic location. He said the amendment would allow that one of the two public members be from an area that is not otherwise represented.

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW removed his objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 3 was adopted.

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REPRESENTATIVE STAPP thanked committee members.

[1:57:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW moved to report CSHB 155, Version 33-LS0701\U, Bergarud, 4/27/24, [as amended], out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 155(MLV) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.