

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 22, 2023

2:44 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Tom McKay, Chair
Representative George Rauscher, Vice Chair
Representative Kevin McCabe
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Stanley Wright
Representative Jennie Armstrong
Representative Donna Mears
Representative Maxine Dibert

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Josiah Patkotak

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 83

"An Act reestablishing the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 83 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Department of Resources, Commissioner

John Boyle - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 83

SHORT TITLE: CITIZEN ADVISORY COMM ON FEDERAL AREAS

SPONSOR(S) : REPRESENTATIVE(S) RAUSCHER

02/27/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/27/23	(H)	RES, FIN
02/27/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
02/27/23	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard

03/15/23 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/15/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/15/23 (H) MINUTE (RES)
03/22/23 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

JOHN BOYLE, Commissioner Designee
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as commissioner designee to the Department of Natural Resources.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[2:44:53 PM](#)

CHAIR TOM MCKAY called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:44 p.m. Representatives Wright, Rauscher, Saddler, Mears, Armstrong, and McKay were present at the call to order. Representatives McCabe and Dibert arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 83-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMM ON FEDERAL AREAS

[2:45:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 83, "An Act reestablishing the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

[2:46:32 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY opened public testimony on HB 83. After ascertaining there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

CHAIR MCKAY noted that there were no amendments.

[2:47:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER, as prime sponsor, said HB 83 is long overdue and encouraged fellow committee members to pass it out of committee.

[2:48:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER moved to report HB 83 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 83 was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):Department of Natural Resources,
Commissioner

[2:48:52 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY announced that the final order of business would be the confirmation hearing for the governor's appointee as commissioner designee to the Department of Natural Resources.

[2:49:08 PM](#)

JOHN BOYLE, Commissioner Designee, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), first noted that it is nice to have moments of levity in public service. He further commented that everyone is here to serve fellow Alaskans, and accepting positions in public service comes with responsibilities. He stated he looked forward to working with the committee.

[2:50:21 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY thanked Commissioner Boyle and invited questions from the committee.

[2:50:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS offered Commissioner Boyle her understanding that the purpose of the commissioner was to be more of a representative of the government as a whole rather than partisan interests, and that she had concerns with some of his comments after the Willow ruling. She said that she hoped in the future he would stay more in the "neutral zone."

[2:51:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER paraphrased the mission statement of DNR and asked Commissioner Boyle what his priority would be to try and advance the mission.

COMMISSIONER BOYLE said addressing the pressing energy challenge with the high cost of energy for all residents in the state, especially rural communities. When people must spend more for

heating and powering their homes than on their mortgages, it is not a recipe for sustainability, he said. He stated that an effort that DNR can embark upon is looking at ways to utilize the endowment of resources that the state is blessed to have to provide relief, so there can be abundant and affordable energy.

[2:53:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for specifics on how Commissioner Boyle might use his status as commissioner to advance his goals.

COMMISSIONER BOYLE said there are many initiatives currently being looked at, such as laying the groundwork for what can be done for energy alternatives. As a state that sits along the ring of fire, he explained, there is tremendous potential for geothermal and its values. He further explained potentials for different sources of energy that included hydroelectric generation, wind, solar, and having a major gas line in the state.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER thanked Commissioner Boyle for his service and offered his support.

[2:57:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE thanked Commissioner Boyle for his leadership.

[2:57:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT thanked Commissioner Boyle for his willingness to step up for the position.

[2:58:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated that he is optimistic for Commissioner Boyle's confirmation and acknowledged the "rough waters" fiscally that the state faced. He asked Commissioner Boyle for any idea on how DNR can operate efficiently.

[2:58:56 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BOYLE replied that he was optimistic about the future of the state. He offered his belief that Alaska is inspiring and there is great promise. He reiterated the incredible array of resources the state possessed, and with the right management, many benefits can be brought to the state and

ultimately to the country. He said one of the greatest assets DNR has is its people, and he offered a personal example of the high caliber staff he had worked with. He said he hoped Alaska would be a place where many generations would want to stay and build their lives.

[3:03:17 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY moved to advance the confirmation of John Boyle, commissioner designee for the Department of Natural Resources, to the joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. He reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointment to boards and commissions in no way reflected individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations were merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

[3:04:10 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.