

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 7, 2024

1:27 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 272

"An Act relating to big game hunts for persons with physical disabilities; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 272 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 281

"An Act relating to the permitting, lease, and sale of state land for remote recreational cabin sites; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 223

"An Act relating to the production tax and royalty rates on certain gas; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING RESCHEDULED TO 02/09/24

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 272

SHORT TITLE: BIG GAME HUNTING BY PERSON W/ DISABILITY

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/24 (H) RES
01/29/24 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/29/24 (H) Heard & Held
01/29/24 (H) MINUTE (RES)
02/07/24 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 281

SHORT TITLE: STATE LAND FOR REMOTE REC CABIN SITES
SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/22/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/24 (H) RES, FIN
01/29/24 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/29/24 (H) Heard & Held
01/29/24 (H) MINUTE (RES)
02/07/24 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

JAMES SQUYRES, representing self
Deltana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 281.

RACHEL LONGACRE, Chief of Operations
Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 281.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:27:22 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:27 p.m. Representatives Rauscher, McCabe, Baker, Wright, Saddler, Mears, Armstrong and Dibert were present at the call to order.

HB 272-BIG GAME HUNTING BY PERSON W/ DISABILITY

[1:28:23 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 272, "An Act relating to big game hunts for

persons with physical disabilities; and providing for an effective date."

[1:29:10 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY opened public testimony. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:29:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER moved to report HB 272 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 272 was reported from the House Resources Standing Committee.

[1:30:44 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:30 p.m. to 1:34 p.m.

[1:33:57 PM](#)

HB 281-STATE LAND FOR REMOTE REC CABIN SITES

[1:34:13 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 281, "An Act relating to the permitting, lease, and sale of state land for remote recreational cabin sites; and providing for an effective date" and opened public testimony.

CHAIR MCKAY opened public testimony on HB 281.

[1:35:00 PM](#)

JAMES SQUYRES, representing self, testified during the hearing on HB 281. He opined that the bill has a number of "red flags" and requires further discussion. He said the fiscal note is "way off," as it does not include provisions for the increased efforts taken by the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection in fighting wildfires and triaging limited resources. He cited AS 41.15.010 and questioned whether a new cabin would increase the fire protection level from limited to a full or critical protection rating. He shared an anecdotal example to illustrate the increased burden that would be placed on the state as a result of this "gold rush." He reiterated his belief that the potential unintended consequences of the proposed legislation had not been thoroughly vetted by the committee.

[1:37:50 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY closed public testimony.

[1:38:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 281, labeled 33-GH2026\A.1, Bullard, 2/5/24, which read:

Page 1, line 6, through page 2, line 5:

Delete all material and insert:

"PURPOSE. The longstanding policy of the state, declared in art. VIII, secs. 1, 2, and 9, Constitution of the State of Alaska, and AS 38.05 (Alaska Land Act) has been to encourage the settlement of the state's land and the development of its resources by making land available for the maximum use consistent with the public interest. The purpose of this Act is to use the full extent of the authority under the Constitution of the State of Alaska to provide residents of the state a more efficient and fair process to obtain an interest in remote state land for recreation."

[1:38:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER objected for purposes of discussion.

[1:39:47 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:39 p.m.

[1:40:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said Amendment 1 tightens up the purpose statement of the legislation to its essentials and makes it easier to understand.

[1:41:03 PM](#)

RACHEL LONGACRE, Chief of Operations, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said DNR supports Amendment 1.

[1:41:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER removed his objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[1:41:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 2 to HB 281, labeled 33-GH2026\A.2, Bullard, 2/5/24, which read:

Page 7, line 30, following "applicants":
Insert "for the applicants' own noncommercial use"

[1:41:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER objected for purposes of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said Amendment 2 clarifies that this bill is for recreational use only, not for commercial purposes.

CHAIR MCKAY asked whether DNR had any objection to Amendment 2.

MS. LONGACRE answered no.

[1:42:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG asked whether the bill would preclude Airbnb and short-term rentals.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER answered, yes, if the individual is using [the property] to make money it would be considered commercial use.

[1:43:01 PM](#)

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

[1:43:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment 3 to HB 281, labeled 33-GH2026\A.3, Bullard, 2/5/24, which read:

Page 9, line 31, following "Act":
Insert ", but notwithstanding AS 38.05.600(f), added by sec. 6 of this Act, may not be renewed to provide a lessee a remote recreational cabin site for more than 30 years in total under AS 38.05.600 as it

read on the day before the effective date of this Act and AS 38.05.600 as repealed and reenacted by sec. 6 of this Act"

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER objected for purposes of discussion.

[1:43:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said Amendment 3 clarifies that the total lease period would be three years.

CHAIR MCKAY asked whether DNR had any objection to Amendment 3.

MS. LONGACRE answered no.

[1:44:26 PM](#)

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

[1:44:54 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:44 p.m.

[1:45:42 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY sought further comments from committee members.

[1:45:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said he supports the proposed legislation because he wants to get land into Alaskans hands. He disagreed with the notion that wildland firefighting should be included in the fiscal note.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked Ms. Longacre to respond to the testimony given by Mr. Squires.

MS. LONGACRE offered to follow up with a response by Friday.

[1:49:32 PM](#)

CHAIR MCKAY announced that HB 281 would be held over.

[1:50:16 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.