

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 4, 2024

3:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Laddie Shaw, Chair
Representative Stanley Wright, Vice Chair
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Jamie Allard
Representative Ashley Carrick
Representative Andi Story

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Craig Johnson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Recognizing and commending the National Conference of State Legislatures on its 50th anniversary in 2025.

- MOVED HCR 13 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 188

"An Act relating to animal adoption and foster care records."

- HEARD & HELD

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 68 (RES) AM

"An Act relating to public notice for certain state actions and public hearings; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 287

"An Act relating to public notice for certain state actions and public hearings; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 13

SHORT TITLE: RECOGNIZING NCSL ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY

SPONSOR (s) : REPRESENTATIVE (s) SADDLER

02/20/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/24 (H) STA
03/26/24 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/26/24 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/04/24 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 188

SHORT TITLE: ANIMAL ADOPTION RECORDS

SPONSOR (s) : REPRESENTATIVE (s) DIBERT

05/03/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/03/23 (H) STA
05/16/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
05/16/23 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/04/24 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: SB 68

SHORT TITLE: PUBLIC NOTICE FOR STATE ACTIONS/HEARINGS

SPONSOR (s) : RESOURCES

02/10/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/10/23 (S) RES
03/15/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/15/23 (S) Heard & Held
03/15/23 (S) MINUTE(RES)
03/24/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/24/23 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
04/19/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/19/23 (S) Heard & Held
04/19/23 (S) MINUTE(RES)
04/21/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/21/23 (S) Heard & Held
04/21/23 (S) MINUTE(RES)
04/26/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/26/23 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
05/01/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
05/01/23 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
05/05/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
05/05/23 (S) Moved CSSB 68(RES) Out of Committee
05/05/23 (S) MINUTE(RES)
05/08/23 (S) RES RPT CS 3DP 3NR NEW TITLE
05/08/23 (S) DP: BISHOP, GIESSEL, KAUFMAN
05/08/23 (S) NR: KAWASAKI, CLAMAN, WIELECHOWSKI
03/07/24 (S) PRIME SPONSOR CHANGED - SENATE
RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPLACED GIESSEL

03/11/24 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/11/24 (S) VERSION: CSSB 68 (RES) AM
03/13/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/13/24 (H) STA
04/04/24 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HCR 13.

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 188.

KIMBERLEE IMBERT, Operations Supervisor
Animal Control
Fairbanks North Star Borough
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony and spoke in support of HB 188.

CHRISTOPHER LOSCAR, Animal Care Director
Animal Care and Regulation Shelter
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony and spoke in support of HB 188.

SARAH EVANS, Staff
Representative Maxine Dibert
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 188, on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor.

SENATOR KATHY GEISEL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented SB 68.

CHRISTY COLLES, Director
Central Office
Division of Mining Land and Water

Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 68.

GENE MCCABE, Acting Director
Division of Water
Department of Environmental Conservation
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 68.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:05:12 PM](#)

CHAIR LADDIE SHAW called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Representatives Carrick, Wright, Story, Allard, and Shaw were present at the call to order. Representative Carpenter arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HCR 13-RECOGNIZING NCSL ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY

[3:06:24 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13, Recognizing and commending the National Conference of State Legislatures on its 50th anniversary in 2025.

[3:06:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HCR 13. He provided a sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) was created in 1975 by seven state legislators and two staffers, who had a vision for a single, national non-partisan organization dedicated to supporting, defending and strengthening state legislatures.

NCSL has since grown into the leading national institution for state legislatures. It serves all 50 states and the District of Columbia, providing elected

officials and staff with policy research, training, technical assistance and collaboration opportunities. Every state legislator and staffer is automatically a member of NCSL, and has access to the organization's wide array of services and resources.

Working from its Colorado headquarters and its satellite office in Washington D.C., NCSL works to strengthen the independence, effectiveness and integrity of legislatures, to foster interstate cooperation among legislatures, and to facilitate the exchange of information among legislatures, both within the U.S. and with state-level legislatures in other nations.

NCSL further represents the interest of state legislatures in their relations with the federal government, most notably in support of state sovereignty, state flexibility and protection from unfunded federal mandates and unwarranted federal preemption.

House Concurrent Resolution 13 commends the National Conference of State Legislatures for its 50 years of service to state legislators and staff.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER explained that HCR 13 expresses the Alaska State Legislature's acknowledgement and celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). He explained that NCSL provides training for legislators and their staff members, fosters cooperation among state legislatures, and conducts policy research. He noted his participation in many conferences that have provided valuable perspectives. He said in 2023, 37 legislators and 89 legislative staff participated in NCSL events and training.

[3:10:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked if Representative Saddler is on the board of NCSL.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said he was recently named the Alaska Representative to the Executive Committee of NCSL.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD stated that she does not agree with NCSL and claimed that the organization is partisan.

[3:10:54 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:10 p.m. to 3:11 p.m.

[3:11:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented about her positive experiences utilizing NCSL's resources to conduct research about policies passed in other states.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER mentioned that NCSL has performed research requests in 175 instances for Alaska legislators or staffers in the last three years.

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK commented that she has benefitted from NCSL's training content even when she has not agreed with it. She highlighted that NCSL contributes to legislative staff training. She recollected her previous role as a staffer and explained that she found the training offered to be extremely valuable.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER emphasized the increased value of legislative staff through the work of NCSL. He said that NCSL is a good forum for Alaska legislators and staff to network with lawmakers from the Lower 48 and get new perspectives on Alaska's problems. He said that NCSL prides itself on being nonpartisan.

[3:14:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report HCR 13 from committee, with individual recommendations and the attached fiscal notes. There being no objection, HCR 13 was reported from the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:15:48 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:15 p.m. to 3:17 p.m.

HB 188-ANIMAL ADOPTION RECORDS

[3:17:43 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 188, "An Act relating to animal adoption and foster care records."

[3:18:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 188. She provided a sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

When an animal is impounded in Alaska by animal control or shelters, it may become available for adoption or fostering following the appropriate holding period. The records related to animal adoption and foster care often include personal details such as names, phone numbers, or physical addresses of individuals involved in the process. While several local governments have exemptions for animal adoption records outlined in their municipal codes, not all municipalities offer the same level of public record exemptions for animal adoption or foster care. There has been a recent push to establish statewide privacy protections for individuals adopting or fostering animals from shelters. HB 188 aims to achieve this by exempting the personal identifying information of adopters or foster caregivers from public record requests under Alaska's Public Records Act.

REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT informed the committee that Senator Myers is carrying the Senate's version of the bill. She described issues that arise when the original pet owner comes to a shelter after their found pet has been adopted to another home. Public records requests to find new owners have been made by previous owners for the purpose of harassment. Standard procedure mandates that information be withheld from public records requests only when a safety threat is evident, which requires a thorough analysis of each request to ascertain safety concerns. Municipalities are not permitted to inquire about the specific purpose behind a public records request.

REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT explained that HB 188 seeks to exempt the names and personal information of individuals adopting or fostering animals from public records requests. Implementing this measure at the state level provides blanket protection for all municipalities striving to safeguard animal adopters.

[3:22:16 PM](#)

KIMBERLEE IMBERT, Operations Supervisor, Animal Control, Fairbanks North Star Borough, described her background working at Animal Control. She told stories of people who felt their safety was at stake because of public records availability after

an animal adoption. She mentioned that people are frequently hesitant to adopt out of a fear of harassment.

[3:23:57 PM](#)

CHRISTOPHER LOSCAR, Animal Care Director, Animal Care and Regulation Shelter, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, explained that HB 188 would directly apply to his work. He said that HB 188 is reasonable and necessary legislation that will safeguard members of the community. He discussed safety concerns that are experienced when personal identification information is released related to cases where adopted animals had previously experienced cruelty and are forfeited. Safeguarding personal information will encourage people to adopt and foster animals. He said that increased adoptions will ultimately reduce shelter stay times.

[3:25:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK asked about hold time requirements throughout the state.

SARAH EVANS, Staff, Representative Maxine Dibert, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor, answered that hold times vary throughout the state. She offered to provide a list of hold times for different municipalities throughout the state. She said that the shortest hold time is 72 hours and said that the hold times are usually between three to five days. She noted the efforts put forth by shelter workers who attempt to find original pet owners expediently.

CHAIR SHAW announced that HB 188 was held over.

SB 68-PUBLIC NOTICE FOR STATE ACTIONS/HEARINGS

[3:27:47 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 68(RES) am, "An Act relating to public notice for certain state actions and public hearings; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR SHAW mentioned that the committee heard HB 287, the companion bill to SB 68, on March 14, 2024.

[3:28:34 PM](#)

SENATOR KATHY GEISEL, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented CSSB 68(RES) am. She provided a summary of changes and presented the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Senate Bill 68 proposes changes to certain public notice requirements relating to certain land and water usages. The bill changes the requirement for public notice by allowing an option to use the Alaska Online Public Notice System. This would provide a new means to the current requirement that notices be posted in a newspaper of general circulation in an affected area. The bill would update, but not substantively change, other requirements for notice by the appropriate commissioner to determine the rights of persons regarding related issues.

By allowing for online public notice, it is possible to save applicants money as opposed to newspaper notice. The changes would utilize the state's online public notice system, which is available to most Alaskans to view at no cost. Public notices posted on this system are permanently retained for future reference, whereas newspaper notices are difficult to retrieve. Utilizing the online public notice system ensures that Alaskans have equal access to public notices rather than just newspaper subscribers or residents of certain areas. Finally, online public notice would eliminate coordinating issues with newspaper publications and reduces permit processing timeframes.

The public is encouraged to utilize the "Subscriptions" feature on the Alaska Online Public Notice System (<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>) to tailor what notifications from which departments they wish to receive. The State of Alaska is eager to educate the public on the benefits of using the online notice system. SB 68 enables public notice to be delivered to Alaskans through the Internet.

SENATOR GEISEL indicated that the statute changes were requested by both the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

[3:29:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked about other forms of notification to be utilized in addition to electronic notification and how the departments assess when to utilize a newspaper or other source for public notification.

[3:30:50 PM](#)

CHRISTY COLLES, Director, Central Office, Division of Mining Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), responded that there are a variety of factors that are considered when deciding how to publicly notify a community. She said that the department does its best to take into account public input.

[3:31:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK asked if the Alaska Online Public Notice System is seen as a substitute or duplicative method to inform the public. She mentioned that some of her constituents have expressed concern that the online notices would not reach a wide enough audience.

MS. COLLES said that the department views the bill as creating more opportunities for flexibility to reach as many people as possible. The Alaska Online Public Notice System creates consistency and continuity. Alaskans can sign up for notifications. Postings can also occur at centralized locations within small communities as well.

[3:33:39 PM](#)

GENE MCCABE, Acting Director, Division of Water, Department of Environmental Conservation, explained that not only does the department utilize the Alaska Online Notice System, it also utilizes social media feeds associated with the department to provide information to a broader audience. He said the department annually publishes a list of permits it intends to issue. He further mentioned a tribal coordinator sends out early tribal notification for pending permits prior to going out for public notice. He said DEC finds CSSB 68(RES) am would create more flexibility.

[3:35:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT expressed his support for CSSB 68(RES) am.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented on the importance of public education to inform Alaskans about how the posting will be accomplished. She emphasized the importance of transparency with the public.

[3:36:18 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that amendments would be due by April 9, 2024, and that CSSB 68(RES) am was held over.

[3:36:41 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [3:37] p.m.