

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 2, 2023

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Kevin McCabe, Chair
Representative Sarah Vance, Vice Chair
Representative Tom McKay
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Jesse Sumner
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Genevieve Mina

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11 AM

Recognizing the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 and the importance of certain provisions intended to enhance oil spill response capabilities in Western Alaska and the United States Arctic to promote improved safety in shipping commerce, protection of communities in the state, and the health of critical marine resources; urging the United States Coast Guard to consider the unique challenges of the state when developing oil spill response requirements for Western Alaska and the United States Arctic; and urging the deployment of individualized oil spill response resources for the state that use modern technologies to track the operation of large vessels in the region and local service providers with knowledge of the region and local wildlife.

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SJR 11

SHORT TITLE: WESTERN AK/ARCTIC OIL SPILL RESPONSE

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) KIEHL

03/24/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/24/23	(S)	TRA
03/30/23	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

03/30/23 (S) Moved SJR 11 Out of Committee
03/30/23 (S) MINUTE(TRA)
03/31/23 (S) TRA RPT 2DP 3NR
03/31/23 (S) NR: KAUFMAN, MYERS, WILSON
03/31/23 (S) DP: TOBIN, KIEHL
04/28/23 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
04/28/23 (S) VERSION: SJR 11 AM
05/01/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/01/23 (H) TRA
05/02/23 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

CALEB YABES, Intern
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave the sectional analysis on SJR 11 on behalf of Senator Kiehl, prime sponsor.

SENATOR JESSE KIEHL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced SJR 11.

JIM BUTLER, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 11.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:01:12 PM](#)

CHAIR KEVIN MCCABE called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Representatives McKay, Vance, Stutes, Mina, and McCabe were present at the call to order. Representatives Sumner and C. Johnson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SJR 11-WESTERN AK/ARCTIC OIL SPILL RESPONSE

[1:01:45 PM](#)

CHAIR MCCABE announced that the only order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11 am, Recognizing the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 and the importance of certain provisions intended to enhance oil spill response

capabilities in Western Alaska and the United States Arctic to promote improved safety in shipping commerce, protection of communities in the state, and the health of critical marine resources; urging the United States Coast Guard to consider the unique challenges of the state when developing oil spill response requirements for Western Alaska and the United States Arctic; and urging the deployment of individualized oil spill response resources for the state that use modern technologies to track the operation of large vessels in the region and local service providers with knowledge of the region and local wildlife.

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SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented SJR 11 am. He said the joint resolution was inspired by the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022. Regulations were put in place in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, but many places in Alaska do not have the infrastructure to comply with all of those regulations. He said that there are ways to get alternative plans approved, but those plans are approved in Washington D.C., not by members of the U.S. Coast Guard that are stationed in and familiar with Alaska. The result of this has been regulations that have at times been inconsistent.

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CALEB YABES, Intern, Senator Jesse Kiehl, Alaska State Legislature, gave a brief analysis of SJR 11 am, on behalf of Senator Kiehl, prime sponsor. He said that the proposed joint resolution would call on the Coast Guard to give serious consideration to Alaska in matters regarding oil spill regulations. It would request the use of Alaskan-owned equipment to respond to a spill for the purpose of response time.

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SENATOR KIEHL stated that an amendment added on the Senate floor clarified that the resolution does not request the Coast Guard to make any changes in regulations for Cook Inlet or Prince William Sound. He said that a committee substitute was in progress that would add a statement against the creation of new sub-zones in Western Alaska and take out a technical clause dealing with equipment.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked why the clause allowing dual use would be removed if it is not critical to the resolution, and stated her concern that it could give an unfair advantage to one company over another.

SENATOR KIEHL answered that there is some middle ground of the uses for different equipment. He said that the resolution would not tilt the regulatory playing field in favor of any particular organization. He added that the clause ultimately became a "distraction."

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES expressed her concern over making changes to SJR 11 am when it had already been passed unanimously in the Senate.

SENATOR KIEHL responded that the issues were raised to him after the resolution had already left its final committee, and he committed to doing further work to address those issues.

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CHAIR MCCABE opened public testimony on SJR 11 am.

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JIM BUTLER, representing self, noted that he is an attorney. He stated that Senator Kiehl did a good job in explaining a "complex issue." He said that it is important for Alaska industries and state government agencies to provide input to the federal government in regard to these regulations.

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REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked whether Mr. Butler represents any oil response companies.

MR. BUTLER answered that he represents Alaska Chadux Network, and additionally some salvage companies that do work in Western Alaska and the Lower 48.

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CHAIR MCCABE, after ascertaining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on SJR 11 am.

[SJR 11 am was held over.]

[1:19:54 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.