

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 13, 2023

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ben Carpenter, Chair
Representative Jamie Allard
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Andrew Gray
Representative Cliff Groh

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Tom McKay
Representative Kevin McCabe

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 45

"An Act relating to contributions from permanent fund dividends to the general and permanent funds."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 45

SHORT TITLE: PFD CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL FUND AND PF

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) PRAX

01/25/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/25/23	(H)	W&M, FIN
02/08/23	(H)	W&M AT 6:00 PM DAVIS 106
02/08/23	(H)	Heard & Held
02/08/23	(H)	MINUTE (W&M)
02/13/23	(H)	W&M AT 6:00 PM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

RANDY GRIFFIN, representing self
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 45.

BERT HOUGHTALING, representing self
Big Lake, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

JOEL SIGMAN, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 45.

MICHAEL GARHART, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

KRISTIN MCBRIDE, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

JANEL DOCKENDORF, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

BARBARA TYNDALL, representing self
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 45.

DONALD THOMPSON, representing self
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 45.

ED MARTIN, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

KATHLEEN SHOOP, representing self
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 45.

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE PRAX
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, answered questions during the hearing on HB 45.

GENEVIEVE WOJUSIK, Director
Permanent Fund Dividend Division
Department of Revenue
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to a question during the hearing on HB 45.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[6:00:25 PM](#)

CHAIR BEN CARPENTER called the House Special Committee on Ways and Means meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Representatives Tilton, Allard, Gray, and Carpenter were present at the call to order. Representative Groh arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 45-PFD CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL FUND AND PF

[6:01:25 PM](#)

CHAIR CARPENTER announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 45, "An Act relating to contributions from permanent fund dividends to the general and permanent funds."

CHAIR CARPENTER noted that no amendments were received, and he would entertain questions from the committee and hear public testimony. In response to a question from Representative Gray, he said answers posed to previous questions are on the legislature's Bill Action & Status Inquiry System (BASIS).

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CHAIR CARPENTER opened public testimony on HB 45.

[6:03:09 PM](#)

RANDY GRIFFIN, representing self, testified in support of HB 45. He shared that he has been "sending back" his permanent fund dividend (PFD) check to the state since 2015, and his reason has been the state's deficit resulting from the crash in the price of oil. He said he thinks the \$25 increments proposed under HB 45 are a good idea; each recipient can choose how much of the PFD he/she/they would like to keep.

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BERT HOUGHTALING, representing self, stated that he is "kind of for HB 45" but thinks the proposed legislation "does not go far enough." He recommended the repeal of Senate Bill 21 [passed during the Thirtieth Alaska State Legislature] and remarked on the number of Alaskans living without enough money.

[6:09:24 PM](#)

JOEL SIGMAN, representing self, talked about lacking money, the different perspective of rich people, and a lack of trust of legislators. Regarding HB 45, he opined that the committee should "drop it."

[6:12:42 PM](#)

MICHAEL GARHART, representing self, testified he opposes the government taking any PFD money from Alaskans. He explained the reason is that his brother has tracked money related to the permanent fund and has related to him that it is not all getting deposited. He opined the state needs to return to the original 50/50 PFD plan as in statute.

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KRISTIN MCBRIDE, representing self, emphasized her support of "a full PFD" and remarked on the adverse effects of inflation.

[6:16:58 PM](#)

JANEL DOCKENDORF, representing self, stated her support of "the full PFD" and echoed the concerns of previous testifiers about inflation and money stolen by legislators.

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BARBARA TYNDALL, representing self, testified in support of HB 45, because it would satisfy the concerns of those who think the government needs the people's money and, thus, could choose to make the donation of their PFD. She added her understanding that about 10 people did that last year; the rest, she surmised, want their PFD. She asked the legislature to have compassion for the people in Alaska who are struggling.

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DONALD THOMPSON, representing self, testified in support of HB 45, because although he wants to keep his PFD, he thinks it should be an option for people to check off how much, if any, in various increments, they would like to return.

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ED MARTIN, representing self, commented that currently anyone who wishes can give back his/her/their PFD can do so. He pointed to the fiscal note and observed that it would cost the

state well over \$100,000 to administer the provisions of HB 45. Further, he called it insanity to charge people to give the money back. He emphasized the state needs to pay the full dividend amount.

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KATHLEEN SHOOP, representing self, testified that she needs her PFD, and asked the legislature to give the people their money to keep the economy going, because it is currently failing.

[6:26:17 PM](#)

CHAIR CARPENTER, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 45.

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REPRESENTATIVE TILTON asked about an opportunity for Alaskans to choose to return their PFD checks to the state's general fund (GF) or to the earnings reserve account (ERA).

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REPRESENTATIVE MIKE PRAX, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 45, responded that that option wouldn't be his choice for HB 45, but would be something for the committee to decide.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON noted the fiscal note seems high for this program, and she questioned whether "those additional buttons add more cost." She further questioned whether this work could be done at the same time as other maintenance is done on the fund, in order to save on cost.

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GENEVIEVE WOJUSIK, Director, Permanent Fund Dividend Division, Department of Revenue, responded to Representative Tilton's query by stating that she does not think the directives under HB 45 could be included under general maintenance. She said this would be a programming and coding change, as well as requiring security verification.

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REPRESENTATIVE PRAX, regarding future cost, said the [the legislature] would have to determine the success of the program and revisit it in a year or two.

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CHAIR CARPENTER extended deadline for amendments to 2/17/23.

[HB 45 was held over.]

[6:32:47 PM](#)

CHAIR CARPENTER talked about upcoming topics for discussion by the House Special Committee on Ways and Means.

[6:34:15 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Ways and Means meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.