

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 20, 2023

9:06 a.m.

9:06:59 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stedman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Kelly Merrick

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator David Wilson

ALSO PRESENT

Joe Nelson, President, Alaska Legal Services, Juneau; Jen Griffis, Public Policy Manager, THREAD, Juneau; Blue Shibler, Executive Director, AEYC, Juneau; Kati Capozzi, President and CEO, Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Juneau; Tamar Ben-Yosef, Executive Director, All Alaska Pediatric Partnership, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Heidi Young, Island Care Services, Prince of Wales; Jeff Good, City Manager, City and Borough of Wrangell, Wrangell; Tyler McNeil, Community Connections, Ketchikan; Kathy Bolling, Self, Ketchikan; Kasey Kinsman, Council Member, City of Cordova, Cordova; Jamie Loan, Self, Whittier; Nick Olzenak, Self, Anchorage; Jenee Flanigan, Self, Ketchikan; John Lamb, Self, Alaska Library Association, Juneau; Elise Tomlinson, Self, Douglas; Tom Brice, Self, University of Alaska Alumni Association, Juneau; Jim Ayers, Self, Juneau; Rita Menzies, Self, Juneau; Gershon Cohen, Self, Haines; Brenda Stanfill, Executive Director, AK Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Ketchikan; Scott Arndt, Kodiak

Island Borough Assembly, Kodiak; Janis Johnson, Board Treasurer, Advocates for Victims of Violence, Valdez; Angela Smith, Advocates for Victims of Violence, Valdez; Matthew Jackson, Self, Sitka; Cliff Richter, Executive Director, Baranof Island Housing Authority, Sitka; Kristen Carpenter, Self, Cordova; Tiffany Mills, Executive Director, Helping Ourselves Prevent Emergencies, Craig; Jon Erickson, City Manager, Yakutat; Mindy Pruitt, Executive Director, Kodiak Island Housing Authority, Kodiak; Penny Lample, Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center, Kodiak; April Counciller, Alutiiq Heritage Foundation, Kodiak; Helen Howarth, City Manager, City of Cordova, Cordova; Phyllis Clough, Self, Old Harbor; Elizabeth Figus, Self, Juneau; Aaron Brakel, Self, Juneau.

SUMMARY

SB 41 APPROP: CAPITAL/SUPPLEMENTAL

SB 41 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 39(FIN) am(brf sup maj fld)(efd fld)

 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUND; SUPP

CSHB 39(FIN)) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 41(FIN) am

 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

CSHB 41(FIN) am was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: JUNEAU, SOUTHEAST, PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND, and KODIAK

Co-Chair Stedman discussed the agenda. He relayed that the committee would consider public testimony for the three bills on the agenda simultaneously. He asked testifiers to limit comments to two minutes in length. He requested that testifiers confine comments to the subject matter of the bills.

#hb39
#hb41
#sb41

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 39(FIN) am(brf sup maj fld)(efd fld)

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; repealing appropriations; amending appropriations; making reappropriations; and making supplemental appropriations."

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 41(FIN) am

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; and providing for an effective date."

SENATE BILL NO. 41

"An Act making appropriations, including capital appropriations and other appropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making appropriations to capitalize funds; and providing for an effective date."

[9:09:39 AM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: JUNEAU, SOUTHEAST, PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND, and KODIAK

[9:09:39 AM](#)

HEIDI YOUNG, ISLAND CARE SERVICES, PRINCE OF WALES (via teleconference), relayed that she was the owner of Island Care Services and that she had been a care coordinator for fifteen years. She thanked the department for directing the development of making a five-year to eliminate the waitlist for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) waivers. She asserted that the services were critical in supporting families in Alaska, and helped the state saved money. She asserted that "waivers are savers" and that the services helped the state save money and got people out of hospitals and back to home communities. She cited that the waivers allowed people to remain in their homes and one-third the cost of hospitalization. She cited that it was statistically proven that individuals had better physical and mental outcomes when in their own homes. She discussed

a waitlist of as much as 12 years for families with a child with a disability.

[9:12:03 AM](#)

JEFF GOOD, CITY MANAGER, CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, WRANGELL (via teleconference), mentioned a 401 permit for a wastewater treatment plant and 301-h waiver that was associated with the project. He cited that the permit and project affected 9 communities. He recounted an engineer's estimate that had gone from \$3 million to \$5 million up to \$12.5 million, which was unaffordable for rate-payers. He supported increased school funding and funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). He relayed that AMHS was vital for Wrangell's economic development.

Co-Chair Stedman commented that the cost escalation for the water disinfection and thought other cities would be facing the same problem. He thought an earlier estimate for Anchorage had been \$1 billion. He thought it was a significant problem.

[9:14:10 AM](#)

TYLER MCNEIL, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Division of Senior and Disability Support Services. He worked in human services for 14 years supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He thanked the legislature for directing the Division of Senior and Disability Services to develop a five-year plan to eliminate the IDD Medicaid waitlist. He encouraged funding for making the plan a reality and making services accessible. He mentioned the length of the waitlist and the crisis nature of the program. He supported the elimination of the waitlist and providing needed support for individuals. He supported home and community-based services for individuals to live as independently as possible in their own communities.

[9:16:38 AM](#)

KATHY BOLLING, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of a \$635,000 request for funding for the University of Alaska (UA) budget. She discussed meeting committee members and the members' knowledge of rural Alaska. She mentioned the importance of access to library

services. She mentioned students, parents, families, researchers, writers, business owners, and the many people that used the Alaska Library Catalog and the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED). She supported efficient equitable access to the world of information, and thought it was vital in a democracy.

Co-Chair Olson thanked Ms. Bolling for her testimony.

[9:19:01 AM](#)

KASEY KINSMAN, COUNCIL MEMBER, CITY OF CORDOVA, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in favor of a funding request of \$165,000 for a pool lining replacement. He discussed the importance of the pool to the schools and local students, including water rescue skills.

[9:21:02 AM](#)

JAMIE LOAN, SELF, WHITTIER (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the Whittier harbor. She noted that the city was chosen for a possible municipal harbor matching grant. She reminded that Whittier saw over 550,000 vehicles entering the area annually including tour buses, trailered boats and many people utilizing Prince William Sound. She discussed the aging and disrepair of the harbor. She mentioned the small tax base in Whittier, which did not allow for funding the harbor.

[9:23:03 AM](#)

NICK OLZENAK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the harbor matching grant for Whittier. He was a business owner and berth-holder in Whittier Harbor. He relayed that he was a part-time resident of Whittier and chair of the Whittier Port and Harbor Commission. He urged the committee to fund the matching grant. He asserted that the harbor floats in disrepair would likely be decommissioned without repair and would adversely affect access to Prince William Sound. He discussed the users of Whittier Harbor. He thought the harbor grant was funded for \$8.2 million, all three projects would be approved. He commented on the adverse economic impact if the harbor grant was not funded.

[9:24:39 AM](#)

JENEE FLANIGAN, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), supported funding for the IDD waiver waitlist. She referenced her two children that experienced autism and received the waiver. There had been a three-year wait for her family to receive services. She emphasized the importance of services for individuals with disabilities in order to participate in the community. She reiterated that the waiver program saved the state money.

Co-Chair Stedman asked Ms. Flanigan to introduce herself.

Co-Chair Stedman handed the gavel to Senator Kiehl.

[9:26:36 AM](#)

JOHN LAMB, SELF, ALASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU (via teleconference), supported \$635,000 in funding for the UA budget for the SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog. He was the parent of two school-age children that had benefitted from using the systems, including borrowing materials from library collections across the state. He emphasized the systems' importance to rural and small libraries in the state by increasing access and equity. He cited that absent the funding, school districts and families could not afford to provide the services.

[9:29:08 AM](#)

ELISE TOMLINSON, SELF, DOUGLAS (via teleconference), supported \$635,000 in funding for Alaska statewide libraries. She shared that she was the Dean of Libraries for the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and had also worked in Alaska libraries since 1988. She mentioned previous speakers. She had worked closely with other UA librarians in order to be fiscally responsible and to expand access while reducing costs. She mentioned previous budget cuts that had made it increasingly difficult. She used the example of purchasing licenses at greater cost when not purchased within the joint catalog system. She noted that the Juneau public libraries and the UAS library were the first to join with the University of Alaska Anchorage consortium at the start of the Alaska Library Network.

[9:32:13 AM](#)

JOE NELSON, PRESIDENT, ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES, JUNEAU, spoke in support of a one-time request of \$500,000 in funding for Alaska Legal Services (ALS). He relayed that he was an attorney. He worked with ALS on a volunteer basis as president of the board. He mentioned the Community Justice Worker Program, which had national attention. He discussed the justice gap and mentioned the importance of access to justice. He described the program as the first of its kind, and noted that the past summer the Alaska Supreme Court approved the ability for a layperson to go into a courtroom as an advocate on specific items under the supervision of ALS. He thought the program would transform justice in the state. He cited that 200 people had already received training in the program.

[9:34:32 AM](#)

TOM BRICE, SELF, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of UA funding, and adequate funding for state highways and airports. He advocated for an adequate number of equipment operators to keep roads and airports clear. He thought the committee was very supportive of UA. He asserted that UA's academic and research programs were critical to the state's economic recovery. He emphasized the need for meaningful advancement of UA's deferred maintenance.

[9:36:11 AM](#)

JIM AYERS, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in opposition to \$5 million in funding for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) taking over primacy for Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. He recalled that thirty years ago a few legislators had come to the administration with a similar idea to take over water quality and downgrading criteria for some items such as mining mixing zones. He thought the idea had been to relax standards that were essential to protecting waterways and fish. He recalled that former Governor Wally Hickel and former Speaker of the House Ben Grussendorf had, together with the Senate, agreed at the time that it was a dangerous move and not necessary. He asserted that the state's well-being was inextricably linked to the health of its ecosystem, which included water quality. He emphasized that Alaska's fisheries, particularly salmon, were dependent upon water quality. He mentioned the role salmon played in the habitat. He discussed the importance of water quality in

the economy. He encouraged additional funding for education.

[9:39:14 AM](#)

RITA MENZIES, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of \$15 million in funding for the Division of Senior and Disability Services to develop a sustainability plan. She relayed that she had a son that experienced disabilities and required round-the-clock care. She emphasized the impact funding would have on lives of those with disabilities. She discussed the importance of supporting staff that cared for her son. She thanked the committee for its work. Her family had waited for six to eight years on a waitlist for services. She asserted that the funding would make a difference in the lives of many.

[9:41:37 AM](#)

GERSHON COHEN, SELF, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in opposition of \$5 million in funding for the state taking over the 404 Program from the Army Corps of Engineers. He was a 40-year resident of Southeast Alaska and had been working on water quality issues for 30 years. He mentioned He thought the funding had many far better uses. He mentioned DEC having taken over the 402 Program, and felt that the department had never fulfilled the promised responsibilities. He asserted that implementation of the 404 program would be far more costly than what was proposed to be allocated, and that the state did not have the staff or training to implement the program. He suggested the funding could be better used elsewhere for education or another use.

[9:43:40 AM](#)

BRENDA STANFILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AK NETWORK ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Department of Public Safety's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) Victim's Services Grant. She noted that the network was made of 23 regional programs that provided emergency shelter and other services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. She noted that many programs addressed root causes of violence and batterers' intervention. She asserted that the victim's services programs were a core component of the

justice system. The programs had been flat-funded for five years, while costs had increased. The programs provided educational services for families learning new skills.

Ms. Stanfill remarked that the funding in CDVSA's grant line was a mix including federal funds, one-time General Fund increments, Covid-19 relief funds, and other sources. She hoped for a more consistent way to fund victims' services and requested a move of \$3 million one-time funds in the CDVSA grants line to \$3 million in general funds in CDVSA's base line. She also requested a one-time increment to assist with the increased cost of operating a building. She referenced a one-time increment of \$300,000 from the previous year. She thanked the governor for the inclusion of funds for prevention and batterer's intervention programs in the original budget. She mentioned the importance of working on three critical areas of prevention, accountability, and direct services.

9:46:30 AM

JEN GRIFFIS, PUBLIC POLICY MANAGER, THREAD, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the early childhood sector including funding for Head Start, Best Beginnings, Help Me Grow, and Parents as Teachers. She explained that THREAD was Alaska's childcare resource and referral organization, and was a private non-profit that was statewide and had served the state for 35 years. She thanked the committee for supporting post-partem access to expanded Medicaid, which she thought was important for young children and families. She asserted that a robust, high-quality childcare system supported the development of young children. She emphasized that childcare was also an economic driver and essential support for working families and businesses. She asserted that increased investment in childcare was needed, and that childcare in the state was struggling.

Ms. Griffis discussed the effects of a shortage of childcare. She mentioned the positive effect of relief funding in the childcare sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. She asserted that an additional targeted funding amount of \$15 million would increase wages for early childhood educators during FY 24 and would provide critical support. Without the bridge funding, she thought the state would face a continued decline in the number of early educators and additional closures of childcare programs, and workforce challenges across multiple sectors.

[9:49:01 AM](#)

BLUE SHIBLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AEYC, JUNEAU, supported funding for the early education sector. She referenced the testimony of the previous speaker. She cited that as a 25-year resident of the state, she would happily give up her Permanent Fund Dividend and pay an income tax as a trade-off for a budget that supported children, families, educators, childcare providers, and other Alaskans that needed social supports.

Co-Chair Olson asked if Ms. Shibler could emphasize more about the childcare needs in the state.

Ms. Schibler relayed that in the past several years, childcare programs in the state had been closing. She cited that the state had lost 20 percent of its childcare programs since 2018, previous to which Alaska was considered a "childcare desert." She mentioned pandemic-era funding that had helped to stabilize programs and helped to increase wages for providers. The funds were now gone and wages were starting to drop. She shared a concern that without action in the current budget to address wages specifically, more childcare programs would close.

Senator Kiehl handed the gavel back to Co-Chair Stedman.

[9:51:21 AM](#)

KATI CAPOZZI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALASKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for the state to assume primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. She discussed the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1953 and had the mission of promoting a healthy business environment in Alaska. The chamber had more than 700 members and represented 58,000 Alaskan workers with \$4.6 billion in wages. She contended that the chamber had a longstanding position in support of increasing responsible, natural resource development by improving the efficiencies of the permitting process and gaining access to resources.

Ms. Capozzi mentioned a letter from a bipartisan coalition sent to the state's Congressional delegation urging efficiencies in the federal review process. She asserted that state primacy of Section 404 would result in timelier

and better coordinated permitting processes without compromising current regulatory standards and requirements. She thought assuming primacy would also help allow the state to tailor policies and procedures to the state's unique conditions. She contended that there had been significant federal administrative and legislative actions that had negatively impacted Alaska's businesses and overall business climate.

[9:53:48 AM](#)

SCOTT ARNDT, KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH ASSEMBLY, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of the proposed \$1000 Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase instead of a one-tie appropriation. He supported proposed funding for the AMHS. He supported Community Assistance funding. He referenced testimony by Mr. Ayers and did not support funding for the 404 Program takeover and clarified that he was not speaking on behalf of the borough assembly on the matter. He asserted that DEC could not currently fulfill its obligations.

[9:55:19 AM](#)

JANIS JOHNSON, BOARD TREASURER, ADVOCATES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, VALDEZ (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for CDVSA within DPS. She thought the budget currently included a \$3 million one-time increment of general funds, and a \$3.5 federal appropriation secured by Senator Lisa Murkowski. She asserted that without the increments, services for victims would be \$6.5 million below the previous year's funding. She supported added funding for the base funding of CDVSA. She discussed inflationary impacts on the operation of shelters, due to increased costs for food, fuel, and utilities. She gave examples of increased costs.

Ms. Johnson stressed that providing a safe shelter to victims and survivors was one of the primary services that her organization provided, and it would not be able to provide its services without the additional funding. She reminded that Alaska had the third highest per capita rate of domestic violence and sexual assault in the country. She asserted that providing victim's services was an integral part of an appropriate criminal justice response.

[9:57:50 AM](#)

ANGELA SMITH, ADVOCATES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, VALDEZ (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for domestic violence services. She shared that she was a survivor of domestic violence and had used the services of Advocates for Victims of Violence in Valdez (AVV). She discussed the challenge of finding affordable housing in Valdez. She mentioned the many supports she had received from AVV.

[9:59:48 AM](#)

MATTHEW JACKSON, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in opposition of \$5 million in funding for DEC take over implementation of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. He mentioned a group petition he had submitted on behalf of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. He thought the issue of Section 404 had been considered many times and that there was no reason to pay for what the state was already getting for free. He mentioned funding for education, ferries, and funding for victims of domestic violence. He supported funding for the Renewable Energy Fund. He cited savings from renewable energy projects from the fund. He cited that the budget that came from the other body had only \$1.4 million, which he considered to be insufficient. The recommended project list for the Alaska Energy Authority included \$25 million in projects that would save money for communities and the state. He listed benefits of the projects.

[10:02:44 AM](#)

CLIFF RICHTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BARANOF ISLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) Supplemental Housing Grant Program, which was currently not funded in the capital budget. He explained that the grant program provided up to 20 percent of development for the Baranof Island Housing Authority's HUD-funded affordable housing project in Sitka. He discussed how the funding of about \$250,000 per year had contributed to single and multi-family housing in Sitka.

Mr. Richter cited that 40 housing units had been constructed in the last two decades. He noted that BIHA was applying for competitive federal grants for a much larger housing project. He mentioned anticipated population growth

in Sitka. He discussed housing strains, which was more difficult for lower income families.

[10:05:50 AM](#)

KRISTEN CARPENTER, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in opposition to funding for DEC to assume Section 404 program primacy. She was a member of the Cordova City Council. She referenced testimony by Jim Ayers. She thought clean water was essential for the state's economy and did not think the state had the capacity to take on the program. She supported increased BSA funding. She supported critical funding for AMHS, which was important to Prince William Sound's economy. She supported funding for a pool liner in Cordova. She discussed the importance of the pool to the community in Cordova. She urged the committee to keep in mind that funding a full statutory PFD would signify sacrificing things that could be funded in small communities. She mentioned outmigration due to quality of life and the expense of living.

[10:08:25 AM](#)

TIFFANY MILLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HELPING OURSELVES PREVENT EMERGENCIES, CRAIG (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for CDVSA victim's services in the Department of Public Safety (DPS). She mentioned that Helping Ourselves Prevent Emergencies (HOPE) provided domestic violence and sexual abuse advocacy, food and legal assistance, transportation, and other services. She thanked Co-Chair Stedman for his support of victim's services. She discussed services provided in 2022, which was twice the amount provided in 2018, with fewer staff. She asserted that without the one-time increment of \$3 million, there would be a shortage. She discussed higher costs in rural areas. She mentioned staffing shortages and the expense of insurance. She hoped for more available funds for victim's services.

[10:10:37 AM](#)

JON ERICKSON, CITY MANAGER, YAKUTAT (via teleconference), spoke in support of construction funding and mentioned challenges with matching funds. He mentioned a lack of ferries running. He spoke in support of funding for AMHS. He discussed funding for the port in Yakutat.

[10:12:35 AM](#)

MINDY PRUITT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KODIAK ISLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY, KODIAK (via teleconference), supported funding for AHFC Supplemental Housing Development Program. She noted that the authority was the tribally designated housing entity for nine tribes on Kodiak Island. She mentioned the Senior Housing Development Program. She urged the committee to fund vital housing programs through AHFC.

[10:13:45 AM](#)

PENNY LAMPLE, KODIAK WOMEN'S RESOURCE AND CRISIS CENTER, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of CDVSA funding for victim's services. She supported a \$3 million one-time increment and the \$3.5 million federal funds to be moved into the CDVSA grant line. She relayed that Kodiak was a rural island and the center provided services to seven villages. She mentioned increased cost of food and other necessities.

[10:16:01 AM](#)

APRIL COUNCELLER, ALUTIIQ HERITAGE FOUNDATION, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of funding a renovation project for the Alutiiq Museum. She mentioned increased costs. She cited that the project had been planned for 15 years. She noted that collections had reached capacity. The Alutiiq Museum was state certified and nationally accredited. She discussed the museum's functions.

[10:17:35 AM](#)

HELEN HOWARTH, CITY MANAGER, CITY OF CORDOVA, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in support funding for infrastructure, the Community Assistance Program, school bond debt reimbursement, and school district funding. She asserted that the budget passed by the House, which included a large dividend and cuts to state services, was folly. She emphasized that the community of Cordova would benefit more from investments in capital requests, revenue sharing, and other funding in the budget.

[10:19:26 AM](#)

PHYLLIS CLOUGH, SELF, OLD HARBOR (via teleconference), spoke in support of an increase to the BSA. She recounted struggling with cuts to education. She emphasized that rural education was the heart of the state. She thanked the committee for its work.

Co-Chair Stedman handled the gavel to Senator Kiehl.

[10:20:39 AM](#)

ELIZABETH FIGUS, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in opposition to funding for DEC to take over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. She did not think it made sense for the state to take on the program at additional expense and lead to negative impacts on water quality. She supported funding for the AMHS as it was in previous years. She was frustrated at having to take small airplanes for her job rather than utilize the ferry. She stressed the importance of using resources available from the federal government, such as clean water management. She supported the Clean Water Act. She was a commercial fisher and emphasized the need for clean water for salmon fisheries.

[10:23:01 AM](#)

AARON BRAKEL, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in opposition of \$5 million in funding for the state to take over Section 404 permitting. He thought other states had found the program implementation to be more costly than anticipated, and he believed the funding was needed elsewhere. He addressed concerns about DEC's 402 permitting and the Niblack mining project on Prince of Wales Island. He emphasized concerns with waste rock piles that leached toxic metals. He did not support the decisions made by DEC and did not believe the agency should receive expanded decision-making authority.

Senator Kiehl handed the gavel to Co-Chair Stedman.

Co-Chair Stedman relayed that the committee would take a recess before returning to address more public testimony.

[10:25:35 AM](#)

RECESSED

[10:43:54 AM](#)

RECONVENED

TAMAR BEN-YOSEF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALL ALASKA PEDIATRIC PARTNERSHIP, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for expenses related to health and behavioral health. She referenced the partnership's Help Me Grow Program, which provided referral services for families with kids. She mentioned challenges for families such as new medical diagnoses and housing. She read an example of the work the partnership did towards a continuum of care. She mentioned a call center that helped with services for communities. She shared a story about a family in a rural area. She conveyed that the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership supported funding for childcare, education, and a continuum of care to address the needs of a child throughout its life.

CSHB 39(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 41(FIN) am was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 41 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Stedman discussed the agenda for the afternoon meeting.

#

ADJOURNMENT

10:49:36 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.