

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 22, 2023

1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Matt Claman, Chair
Senator James Kaufman
Senator Löki Tobin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator Jesse Kiehl, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: ALASKA POLICE POLICY PROJECT

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

CHIEF STEVE DUTRA, President
Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the Alaska Police Policy Project presentation.

CHIEF ED MERCER, Vice President
Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the Alaska Police Policy Project presentation.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:32:30 PM](#)

CHAIR MATT CLAMAN called the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kaufman, Giessel, Tobin, Kiehl and Chair Claman.

PRESENTATION: Alaska Police Policy Project

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CHAIR CLAMAN announced the consideration of the Alaska Police Policy Project presentation.

[1:33:42 PM](#)

CHIEF STEVE DUTRA, President, Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police, North Pole, Alaska, introduced himself.

[1:33:48 PM](#)

CHIEF ED MERCER, Vice President, Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police, Juneau, Alaska, introduced himself.

CHIEF DUTRA began with the presentation titled, Alaska Police Policy Project. He remarked that the project partnered with the Alaska Municipal League. He began with slide 2, "What is it."

- It is a way to ensure fair, equitable, safe, consistent access to policies for ALL police departments at a price small villages, cities, and communities can afford.
- It is a way to help safeguard the civil liberties of Alaskan citizens.
- It is a way to help pave the course to accreditation for all police departments in Alaska.
- It is a way for everyone to play a part in best policing practices.

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CHIEF DUTRA continued with slide 3, "Why do we need it?"

IT IS TIME!

Accountability, Public trust, Standards, & Training.

CONSISTENCY!

Liability reduction for everyone!

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CHIEF DUTRA continued with slide 4, "Benefits to Alaska."

60 ~ PLUS AGENCIES

Approximately 38 police agencies

Approximately 30 villages

ACCREDITATION

Currently only 2 (Kenai, Juneau)

REDUCE LIABILITY

Less mistakes less liability, saving Alaskans
across

the state in all communities.

No Guarantee how many will use.

Allow all agencies access to model policies

Save Lives

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked about Kenai and Juneau as the only two accredited communities. He wondered why Anchorage was not listed.

CHIEF MERCER responded that Anchorage is not accredited. The communities listed are accurate. Juneau was first accredited in 2009. He explained that Juneau, Kenai and Soldotna were accredited through the Oregon Accreditation Alliance (OAA). He added that the Anchorage Airport Police were accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). He explained that CALEA offered police agencies national and international accreditation.

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CHIEF DUTRA moved to slide 5, "Why do we care about accreditation?"

1. Increased Community Advocacy
2. Support from government
3. Defense against lawsuits
4. Reduce Risk and Liability Exposure
5. Greater Accountability

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SENATOR TOBIN requested examples of the OAA accreditation. She asked to view the document highlighted on slide 5 more closely.

She requested a larger copy of the document titled "Benefits of Participation in CALEA Accreditation," shown on slide 5.

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CHIEF MERCER agreed to provide the document to the committee chair's office.

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SENATOR TOBIN queried policy creation. She wondered who evaluated the policies for implicit or subconscious bias. She asked how policies are responding to the unique needs of different populations, surmising that Oregon communities differ greatly from Alaska communities.

CHIEF MERCER replied that OAA had 105 standards to meet for accreditation. He explained that policies are created for individual communities considering their unique needs. He spoke to the value of community involvement when screening for implicit bias. He acknowledged that the state was in the early stages of exploration related to accreditation and uniform policy for all law enforcement officers.

SENATOR TOBIN experienced difficulty hearing Chief Mercer due to audio difficulties over teleconference. She requested additional information about the intersectionality between law enforcement in different parts of Alaska. She asked about differing rules for tribal government and law enforcement. She spoke about the unique nature of Alaska.

CHIEF DUTRA replied that the policies differed from the procedures. The policies are objective and consistent. The procedures can vary from community to community.

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CHIEF DUTRA moved to slide 6, "Project Phases."

The Policy Project is the first step in a multi-year project that will:

1. Create a Statewide police policy manual.
2. Start the implementation phase.
3. Training phase.
4. Accreditation phase (optional)
5. Ongoing monthly training and updates.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked about the proposed multi-year project and its timeline. *Audio difficulties observed during transcription, Chair Claman offered technical solutions to the audio issue.*

CHIEF DUTRA replied that he would report back to the legislature about the project timeline.

CHIEF DUTRA moved to slide 7, "Proven Results." He explained that the data were taken from Lexipol.

Pre and Post-implementation Comparison:

After implementing Lexipol, member law enforcement agencies experienced a 48 percent reduction in severity of claims paid out and 45 percent reduction in frequency of litigated claims. Agencies that implemented Lexipol also had no personnel or employment claims in the 5-year study period.

Lexipol vs Non-Lexipol Agency Comparison

Member law enforcement agencies using Lexipol's policies and daily training incurred 67 percent lower costs and had 37 percent fewer claims than those that did not.

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CHIEF DUTRA moved to slide 8 depicting snapshots of lawsuit news articles related to paid settlements. He highlighted the significant settlements, which he opined could be prevented with good policies.

[1:50:14 PM](#)

CHIEF DUTRA continued with slide 9, "Why State Money."

- Initial policy draft costs too much for any one group to bear.
- Small villages, towns and cities can't afford the steep costs for startup.
- Policy benefits ALL Alaskans and those who visit us.
- Inexpensive way to help maintain policing standards across the entire state.
 - Cannot affect policing on such a grand scale as something of this magnitude.

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CHIEF DUTRA MOVED TO SLIDE 10, "Agencies using policy services." The graph depicted various agencies using policy services from Lexipol. Standardized policies provide consistency among different state agencies.

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CHIEF DUTRA continued with slide 11, "Example Cost Breakdown." The spreadsheet lists anticipated costs broken down by Alaska agencies. Prices increase with the number of sworn officers in an agency. Funding from the legislature will reduce program implementation and policy manual development costs.

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SENATOR TOBIN asked about the ongoing subscription cost. She assumed that the policy manual is routinely revised and updated.

CHIEF DUTRA concurred that the policy manual will be updated monthly with national standards.

CHAIR CLAMAN queried the policy manual price shown in slide 11. He wondered if the amount depicted in the column titled "Pricing Manual Only" included the subscription price allocated to each department after the state provided capital funding of \$550 thousand for development of the original policy manual.

CHIEF DUTRA replied yes.

CHAIR CLAMAN referred to slide 11 assuming that the column titled, "List Price for Full Implementation (Manual Development)" showed the department share with full implementation, while the column listed, "Pricing Manual Only" displays the annual fee.

CHIEF DUTRA replied that the estimates will be revised with the approval of legislative funding.

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CHIEF DUTRA moved to slide 12, "How Much is This Going to Cost."

Legislative request = \$550,000.00

Estimate for project completion = \$1,250,000.00
approx.

Future Legislative costs = \$0

All active participants will bear the cost of participating based on size of community.
(Project estimates based on 70% participation)

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SENATOR KAUFMAN asked about slide 11 and the agencies listed. He wondered what percentage of Alaska law enforcement was represented on the slide's first column. He asked about communities absent from the list.

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CHIEF DUTRA responded that Juneau and Anchorage are not listed on slide 11's agency name column. He acknowledged that some communities were omitted with the cut and paste slide preparation as the document was too long for the presentation slide. He expected many of the small and medium-sized agencies to elect to participate. He remarked that agency participation was optional. He assumed that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) would decline to participate.

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SENATOR KAUFMAN asked for an inventory of the total agencies interested. He requested a more accurate cost breakdown.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked about coordination between the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police and DPS for development of a policy manual. He mentioned that the Alaska Troopers Academy provides training for the smaller agencies. He suggested coordination between the state agency and Alaska's law enforcement management.

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CHIEF DUTRA agreed with Senator Claman. He reported speaking with the DPS commissioner who expressed support for the project. He hoped that the department would contribute a position to a project working group.

CHAIR CLAMAN appreciated the presentation. He believed it brought valuable information to the committee as it involves a capital budget request.

1:59:52 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Claman adjourned the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 1:59 PM.