

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 24, 2023

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel, Co-Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski, Vice Chair
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Senator James Kaufman
Senator Forrest Dunbar
Senator Matt Claman

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 90

"An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Minerals Commission."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 34

"An Act reestablishing the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 87

"An Act relating to a lumber grading training program and lumber grading certificates; relating to use of lumber graded and certified by a person holding a lumber grading training program certificate; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

Disapproving the proposed rule by the National Park Service limiting non-subsistence hunting methods; and urging the National Park Service to withdraw the rule.

- MOVED HJR 10 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 68

"An Act relating to public notice for a sale, appropriation, or removal of water, or for filing a declaration of a right of water; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

SENATE BILL NO. 72

"An Act relating to public notice for a sale, appropriation, or removal of water, or for filing a declaration of a right of water; and providing for an effective date."

-BILL HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 90

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND ALASKA MINERALS COMMISSION

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BISHOP

03/06/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/06/23	(S)	RES, FIN
03/22/23	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/22/23	(S)	Heard & Held
03/22/23	(S)	MINUTE(RES)
03/24/23	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 34

SHORT TITLE: CITIZEN ADVISORY COMM ON FEDERAL AREAS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KAUFMAN

01/18/23	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/13/23
01/18/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/23	(S)	RES, FIN
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

BILL: SB 87

SHORT TITLE: LUMBER GRADING PROGRAM

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BJORKMAN

03/01/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
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03/01/23 (S) RES, FIN
 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

BILL: HJR 10

SHORT TITLE: NAT'L PARK SERVICE; HUNTING IN PRESERVES
 SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CRONK

03/06/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/06/23 (H) RES
 03/13/23 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 03/13/23 (H) Moved HJR 10 Out of Committee
 03/13/23 (H) MINUTE (RES)
 03/15/23 (H) RES RPT 9DP
 03/15/23 (H) DP: MEARS, ARMSTRONG, DIBERT, MCCABE,
 RAUSCHER, PATKOTAK, WRIGHT, SADDLER,
 MCKAY
 03/17/23 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 03/17/23 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
 03/20/23 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 03/20/23 (H) VERSION: HJR 10
 03/20/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 03/20/23 (S) <Pending Referral>
 03/22/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/22/23 (S) RES
 03/24/23 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

RANDY ZARNKE, President
 Alaska Trappers Association
 Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 34.

ED MARTIN, representing self
 Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 87.

RODNEY DIAL, Mayor
 Ketchikan Gateway Borough
 Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 87.

JOE YOUNG, Owner
 Young's Timber Inc.

Tok, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 87.

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CRONK, District 36
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 10.

NANCY BALE, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 10.

NICOLE SCHMITT, Executive Director
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HJR 10.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:31 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLICK BISHOP called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dunbar, Wielechowski, Kawasaki, Co-Chair Giessel, and Co-Chair Bishop. Senators Kaufman and Claman arrived soon thereafter.

SB 90-EXTEND ALASKA MINERALS COMMISSION

[3:31:31 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 90 "An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Minerals Commission."

[3:32:04 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on SB 90; finding none, he closed public testimony.

SENATOR KAUFMAN joined the committee.

[3:32:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP held SB 90 in committee.

SB 34-CITIZEN ADVISORY COMM ON FEDERAL AREAS

[3:32:24 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 34 "An Act reestablishing the Citizens' Advisory Commission on

Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

[3:32:29 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on SB 34.

[3:32:58 PM](#)

RANDY ZARNKE, President, Alaska Trappers Association, Fairbanks, Alaska, stated support for SB 34 to reauthorize the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska (CACFA). He relayed that when Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Alaska Legislature recognized that federal agencies could impact the lives of individual Alaskans and that they would need help defending their rights. He said CACFA staff had knowledge of ANILCA and knew how to interact with federal agencies.

MR. ZARNKE shared a personal story from 25 years ago when he needed help from CAFCA to get a permit for a trapper cabin on BLM land. ANILCA obligates BLM to allow this, but the agency made the process as difficult as possible. He asked CACFA for help and they responded immediately. He emphasized that there are many individual Alaskans that need help defending their rights from federal overreach. He opined that the cost to the state treasury to reauthorize CACFA would be minimal, but the impact on individual Alaskans would be huge.

[3:35:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP closed public testimony on SB 34 and held the bill in committee.

[3:34:20 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN joined the committee.

SB 87-LUMBER GRADING PROGRAM

[3:35:40 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 87 "An Act relating to a lumber grading training program and lumber grading certificates; relating to use of lumber graded and certified by a person holding a lumber grading training program certificate; and providing for an effective date."

[3:35:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on SB 87.

[3:36:14 PM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, Kenai, Alaska, testified in support of SB 87. He opined that a timber grading program should have been implemented years ago. His belief is that it is the legislature's duty to work with or create a program that gets timber resources into the market by whatever means industry standards require. He said he supports SB 87 but suggests amending the bill to allow the private sector to offer this service instead of relying solely to the University of Alaska. This may save money.

3:38:46 PM

RODNEY DIAL, Mayor, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Ketchikan, Alaska, testified in support of SB 87. He paraphrased the following prepared testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

I am writing this letter in support of SB 87; The Lumber Grading Program. Areas within the Ketchikan Gateway borough and Southeast Alaska have a long history of logging and small sawmills. Many of our oldest homes were produced with locally made lumber; that many are still standing today is a testament to the quality.

During the pandemic we witnessed how fragile the supply chain is and saw dramatic increases in the cost to import lumber. Locally we have paid as much as \$12 for a 2x4 and \$150 for sheets of plywood. In early 2021, we conducted a community wide risk assessment on how the pandemic was affecting our economy. That assessment revealed that increased lumber costs added roughly \$30,000 extra to the construction of a new home. This was in addition to sharply rising shipping costs for our remote communities.

SB 87 is important to us, because like many other regions, we are facing a housing crisis. Access to affordable housing is a major problem, only getting worse as time moves on.

We see this bill as a way to facilitate local access to locally produced lumber; supporting affordable housing and hopefully creating new jobs in the process. This is not going to solve our housing problems by itself, but it is supportive and I would

encourage your consideration of this important legislation.

[3:41:07 PM](#)

JOE YOUNG, Owner, Young's Timber Inc., Tok, Alaska, testified in support of SB 87. He read the following prepared testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

My name is Joe Young, Owner of Young's Timber Inc in Tok and a big supporter of SB 87.

Thank you, Co-Chairs Senator Bishop & Senator Giessel and the rest of the Senate Resources Committee Members, for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 87.

Young's Timber Inc has been in business since 1993 and has 4 different types of Sawmills producing a wide range of value-added products and has 12 employees.

Quality, white spruce lumber is one of those value-added products.

Young's Timber Inc gets a lot of positive comments from its customers on the quality of lumber it produces compared to the lumber quality that's imported from the lower 48 & Canada into the State of Alaska.

Yet, Young's Timber Inc's lumber isn't graded or certified and to be certified it is now cost prohibitive to bring a Lumber Grader from the lower 48 States.

Alaskan Spruce is comparative to Douglas Fir in test loads, compression strength, and elasticity.

Senate Bill 87 lumber grading training program, lumber grading certificates and use of graded and certified lumber will not only greatly increase Young's Timber Inc's lumber sales but the lumber sales of all Alaskan's Lumber Producers.

Senate Bill 87 will create timber industry jobs and affordable rural housing.

I recommend to the Senate Resources Committee to pass Senate Bill 87

Another note I have is that Alaskan Value-Added Producers need access to a reliable, steady, and long term supply of Alaskan State Timber for success.

[3:42:48 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked how many board feet his Alaska mills collectively produce in a year.

MR. YOUNG answered that they collectively produce about 500,000 board feet.

[3:43:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP closed public testimony on SB 87 and held the bill in committee.

HJR 10-NAT'L PARK SERVICE; HUNTING IN PRESERVES

[3:43:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10 Disapproving the proposed rule by the National Park Service limiting non-subsistence hunting methods; and urging the National Park Service to withdraw the rule.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP noted that HJR 10 was the companion to SJR 8 that the committee heard on 3/20/23. He invited Representative Cronk to introduce the legislation.

[3:44:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CRONK, District 36, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HJR 10, stated that this resolution lays out the history of Alaska's right to manage its fish and wildlife resources, including the most recent erosion of those rights. HJR 10 expresses strong objection to the National Park Service prohibition of long-standing hunting practices that are allowed under state law. He opined that regardless of differing opinions on management practices, there should be no disagreement about the state's right to manage its own fish and wildlife resources.

[3:45:08 PM](#)

At ease

[3:45:15 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP reconvened the meeting and opened public testimony on HJR 10.

3:45:29 PM

NANCY BALE, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to HJR 10. She relayed that she and her husband built their cabin in the Bush and lived there for 20 years. They were among the last Alaskans to obtain their land under the Homestead Act. Based on her experience, she supports the proposed National Park Service rule for preserves and believes it is fair. She asked the committee to consider what she believes would happen under the rule.

1) The state would continue to manage hunting on preserves. Just some activities such as bear-baiting, hunting wolves in summer, hunting bear sows and cubs together, and hunting certain caribou would be outlawed. The federal government would manage subsistence hunting in preserves as it does now.

2) Case law shows that the federal government can reasonably regulate on federal land. She believes the proposed rule is reasonable. It doesn't ban close to 50 percent of activities that currently occur on preserves, which represent just six percent of Alaska's landmass.

3) Alaskans will still have plenty of opportunity to hunt on preserves. An identical rule that was in place from 2015 to 2020 created no serious conflicts.

MS. BALE concluded that she is an Alaskan who likes the proposed NPS rule. She urged the committee not to forward either SJR 8 or HJR 10.

3:48:09 PM

NICOLE SCHMITT, Executive Director, Alaska Wildlife Alliance (AWA), Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to HJR 10. She cautioned that resolutions like HJR 10 take biologically informed rule-making processes and elevate them to political grounds. The issues in the rule are nuanced and specific and they should be considered. She agreed with the previous testimony that the NPS rule will still allow predator hunting. She pointed out that predator control and predator hunting are very different in both statute and regulation.

MS. SCHMITT stated that the rule does not change the ability for Alaskans to present the Board of Game and federal Subsistence Board with proposals for different hunting practices. The rule

makes certain practices unlawful on preserves, but there will still be ample opportunities for Alaskans to hunt. Federally qualified subsistence hunters will continue to be able to hunt on preserves and non-federally qualified users don't have that ability under current regulations. She encouraged the committee to look dispassionately at the details of the National Park Service concerns about bearbaiting stations and public safety and how the agency came to its conclusions. She opined that the rule is based on years of biological and agency review. She urged the committee not to support HJR 10 and instead address any concern about the proposed NPS rule during the public comment period that closes next Monday.

[3:51:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP closed public testimony on HJR 10. Finding no questions or comments, he solicited a motion.

[3:51:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL moved to report HJR 10, work order 33-LS0562\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:51:33 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP found no objection and HJR 10 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[3:51:52 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Bishop adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 3:51 p.m.