

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

April 3, 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

CONSIDERATION OF GOVERNOR APPOINTEES

Board of Fisheries

Stanley Zuray - Tanana

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Big Game Commercial Services Board

Larry Kunder - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 103

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

- MOVED HB 103 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 78

"An Act relating to hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses for certain nonresident postsecondary students; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 103

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND ALASKA MINERALS COMMISSION

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CRONK

03/08/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23	(H)	RES
03/20/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/20/23	(H)	Moved HB 103 Out of Committee
03/20/23	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
03/22/23	(H)	RES RPT 7DP
03/22/23	(H)	DP: MEARS, DIBERT, MCCABE, SADDLER, WRIGHT, RAUSCHER, MCKAY
03/29/23	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/29/23	(H)	VERSION: HB 103
03/31/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/31/23	(S)	RES
04/03/23	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 78

SHORT TITLE: HUNT/FISH LICENSE FOR NONRESIDENT STUDENT

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WILSON

02/24/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/24/23	(S)	RES, FIN
04/03/23	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

STANLEY ZURAY, Appointee
Board of Fisheries
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
Nenana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

MONTE ROBERTS, President
Kenai River Professional Guides Association (KRPGA)
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Stanley Zuray to the Board of Fisheries.

SHANNON MARTIN, Executive Director
Kenai River Sport fishing Association
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Stanley Zuray to the Board of Fisheries.

LARRY KUNDER, Appointee
Big Game Commercial Services Board
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

DAVID STANCLIFF, Staff
Representative Mike Cronk
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 103 on behalf of the sponsor.

SENATOR DAVID WILSON, District N
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 78.

GINA ESKOLA, Staff
Senator David Wilson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for SB 78 on behalf of the sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:19 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, Claman, Co-Chair Giessel, and Co-Chair Bishop. Senators Kaufman and Kawasaki arrived immediately thereafter.

CONSIDERATION OF GOVERNOR APPOINTEES **BOARD OF FISHERIES** **BIG GAME COMMERCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

[3:31:33 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of Governor Appointees to Boards and Commissions. He read the following description:

The board consists of 7 members appointed by Governor on the basis of interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, and ability in the field of action of the board, and with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view in the membership. Members must be residents of the state, appointed without regard to political affiliation or geographical location of residence.

[3:32:31 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI joined the meeting.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP invited Stanley Zuray to testify.

[3:32:56 PM](#)

STANLEY ZURAY, Appointee, Board of Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Nenana, Alaska, stated that he relocated to Alaska in 1973 to live on a salmon spawning stream in the remote Alaska wilderness. His occupations in Alaska include trapping, running an in-stream chum salmon incubation program, subsistence fisherman, commercial fisherman, and fish wheel contractor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In the early 1990s he began looking into the declining size and numbers of chum salmon and the fungal infection ichthyophonosis. He recounted his extensive volunteer work on various boards and advisory committees. He has worked as a mechanic and equipment operator in Tanana since the collapse of the Yukon River salmon runs. He is happily married and has eight grandchildren.

[3:35:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked if he was on the trail or at home.

MR. ZURAY replied that he was home but earlier he was working on the river.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked if there were questions.

[3:36:10 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked how he feels about the trawl industry that is fishing beyond the regulatory range of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Board of Fish.

MR. ZURAY expressed concern about hatcheries, Asian in particular, that compete with wild stocks, the bycatch in the federal pollack fishery, and the small fish numbers in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) area and beyond.

[3:38:07 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on Stanley Zuray.

[3:38:42 PM](#)

MONTE ROBERTS, President, Kenai River Professional Guides Association (KRPGA), Soldotna, Alaska, stated that he met Mr. Zuray at the last BOF meeting and particularly appreciated his remarks related to subsistence issues. He represented a view that isn't seen often on the board. His experience with subsistence fishing was crucial in the deliberations. He concluded his comments stating that KRPGA supports the confirmation of Stanley Zuray to the Board of Fisheries.

[3:39:45 PM](#)

SHANNON MARTIN, Executive Director, Kenai River Sportfishing Association, Soldotna, Alaska, expressed support on behalf of the Kenai River Sportfishing Association for the appointment of Stanley Zuray to the Board of Fisheries. During the recent fin fish meeting he demonstrated a solid understanding of Alaska's diverse fisheries. His judgements were balanced and considered all stakeholders and fishery managers.

[3:40:34 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP closed public testimony.

[3:40:48 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP turned to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and read the following description:

The board consists of 9 members - 8 appointed by Governor: 2 members who are licensed registered guide-outfitters; 2 members who are licensed transporters, 1 member of the Board of Game chosen by the Board of Game and who does not hold a guide or transport license, 2 members who represent private landholders affected by guided hunting or transportation activities/services and who do not hold a license under this board, and 2 public members.

He invited Larry Kunder to testify.

[3:41:50 PM](#)

LARRY KUNDER, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Anchorage, Alaska, stated that he moved to Alaska in 2005 to further his career as an electrician. He enjoys the bountiful outdoors that Alaska offers. He was asked to serve in

the public seat for this board and he was honored to give back in this way. He recounted his extensive memberships and volunteer work to help conservation. What he brings to the board is a care for the animals and commitment to follow the rules and regulations so that the animals always have a "fair shake" and this renewable resource continues. He has two grown children and owns an electrical contracting business.

[3:43:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on Larry Kunder; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[3:43:43 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL stated the Senate Resources Standing Committee has reviewed the qualifications of the following Governor's appointees and recommends that their names be forwarded to a joint session for consideration:

Board of Fisheries

Stanley Zuray - Nenana

Big Game Commercial Services Board

Larry Kunder - Anchorage

Signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP stated that the names would be forwarded to the joint session.

HB 103-EXTEND ALASKA MINERALS COMMISSION

[3:44:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 103 "An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Minerals Commission."

He stated that this is the first hearing but the committee heard the companion, SB 90. He invited Mr. Stancliff to present the bill.

[3:44:45 PM](#)

DAVID STANCLIFF, Staff, Representative Mike Cronk, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated that he began reviewing commissions that were sunseting in 1981, and he was impressed

when he reviewed this one. The commission is dedicated, produces good work product, and is highly thought of. If there's a needle in the haystack, he said he can't find it.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP found no questions.

[3:45:59 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on HB 103; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[3:46:24 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL moved to report HB 103, work order 33-LS0580\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:46:38 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP found no objection and HB 103 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

SB 78-HUNT/FISH LICENSE FOR NONRESIDENT STUDENT

[3:46:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 78 "An Act relating to hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses for certain nonresident postsecondary students; and providing for an effective date."

He invited the sponsor to introduce the bill.

[3:47:05 PM](#)

SENATOR DAVID WILSON, District N, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 78 introduced the legislation speaking to the sponsor statement:

Senate Bill 78 adds a new non-resident student hunting, fishing, and trapping license. Upon passage of this legislation, a non-resident student enrolled in classes part time, as determined by their school, can purchase a license at resident cost. This does not change any regulations or the cost of tags.

Research shows hunting and fishing have declined since the 1960s. As the percentage of the population that hunts, fishes, and traps declines, so does our conservation funding. Conservation funding by federal statutes (Pittman-Robertson Act, Dingell-Johnson Act, Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, etc.) is directly

tied to excise taxes on things like ammunition, firearms, archery and fishing equipment. These taxes are then distributed to the states' fish and game departments for conservation and management efforts. To access these federal dollars, the states must match the funding, Alaska does so by utilizing the revenue from hunting and fishing licenses. The direct correlation between our hunters and our conservation ability cannot be overlooked. It is critical that we encourage younger generations to participate in these wonderful outdoor activities. While COVID saw an uptick in licensees due to indoor activity closures, we cannot rely on a pandemic to increase participation.

Though hunting and fishing may not be easy hobbies to pick up, an additional financial burden may make it even harder. Many younger students who might be interested in learning how to hunt and fish are also trying to pay for college life. Lowering the license cost non-resident students pay may encourage them to go hunting and fishing with their fellow residents.

[3:51:33 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL asked him to clarify that these students would be enrolled in Alaska post-secondary institutions.

SENATOR WILSON confirmed that the students would be enrolled in a postsecondary school in Alaska. He directed attention to the language in Section 2, page 2, line 5 that identifies an individual who is enrolled as a student either half- or full-time at a postsecondary institution described under AS 14.43.830(a). This statute identifies a qualified post-secondary school for purposes of qualifying for a state loan.

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL asked for confirmation that the license program would apply only to students enrolled on the ground in Alaska.

SENATOR WILSON confirmed they would need to be enrolled in Alaska's higher education system.

[3:53:41 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI offered his understanding that if the bill were to pass, a non-resident student who is enrolled at UAF would be entitled to a hunting, fishing, or trapping license at the resident price, so the cost would be less.

SENATOR WILSON said that's correct. A resident hunting and fishing license costs \$60, whereas the cost is \$260 for a non-resident.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked whether these students would be entitled to a fishing and hunting license under the indigent circumstances provision in statute.

SENATOR WILSON offered his understanding that those exceptions only apply to residents.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP suggested he follow up with the specifics.

SENATOR WILSON said the ADF&G webpage that talks about the cost of licenses does not list an income-based hunting and fishing license for non-residents.

[3:55:37 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked whether the proposed license for non-resident students would qualify them to become a personal use fisher in the dipnet fishery.

SENATOR WILSON said no; these individuals would not be eligible for those activities.

SENATOR CLAMAN expressed concern about including half-time students. He said he periodically hears about individuals taking a surprisingly small number of classes and still receiving student status.

SENATOR WILSON said he and the commissioner discussed that possibility and that's the reason half-time student is specified. Somebody couldn't qualify by enrolling in a "quick online class." He paraphrased the definition for financial aid programs for post-secondary students.

[3:58:51 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked how half-time student and fulltime student are defined in AS 14.43.160.

[3:59:39 PM](#)

At ease

[3:59:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP reconvened the meeting.

SENATOR WILSON read the definition of half-time student in AS 14.43.160:

(4) "half-time student" means an undergraduate, graduate, or career education student who, during the semester, is enrolled and is in regular attendance at classes at one or more public or private institutions of higher education for six to 11 semester credit hours or an equivalent of six to 11 semester credit hours, and includes a career education student enrolled and in regular attendance in classes for 15 hours a week or a graduate student who is enrolled and is in regular attendance at classes for the equivalent of six to eight semester hours of credit or the equivalent;

4:00:43 PM

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the intent was to include half-time students who live out-of-state and enroll in online courses or if there's a requirement for the students to live in Alaska while attending school.

SENATOR WILSON referenced the definition that specifies that the individual has to be enrolled in a school or university that is physically located in Alaska.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP observed that that definition didn't say the individual must be domiciled in Alaska.

SENATOR WILSON agreed then added that the idea was that the individual would not live in Alaska fulltime. Maintaining their out-of-state residency may be required for their scholarship or other financial benefit. They are still contributing to this state by living here part-time and going to school.

4:02:21 PM

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked whether a student had to be enrolled in an Alaska post-secondary institution at the time that they apply for a license.

SENATOR WILSON answered that the individual would need to be enrolled at the time they apply for the license.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked whether foreign students would qualify.

SENATOR WILSON said no.

[4:04:06 PM](#)

GINA ESKOLA, Staff, Senator David Wilson, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the sectional analysis for SB 78 on behalf of the sponsor.

Section 1: Amends the section to include the new nonresident postsecondary student license.

Section 2: Adds a new subsection allowing for nonresident students who are enrolled half-time or part-time in postsecondary education to purchase a special nonresident postsecondary student license for sport fishing, hunting, or trapping at the same cost as a resident license.

Section 3: Provides uncodified law that allows the Department of Fish and Game to adopt regulations to implement to the new license.

Section 4: Provides for an effective date.

Section 5: Provides for an effective date.

[4:05:02 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP opened public testimony on SB 78; finding none, he closed public testimony and held the bill in committee.

[4:06:24 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Bishop adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:06 p.m.