

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 12, 2024

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

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Kelly Merrick

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 125 (RES)

"An Act relating to trapping cabins on state land; and relating to trapping cabin permit fees."

- MOVED SCS CSHB 125 (RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 118

"An Act relating to critical and essential minerals and the global energy transition."

- HEARD & HELD

EO 124 Prohibiting by Regulation Live Capture, Possession, Transport, or Release of Native/Exotic Game or Eggs

- HEARD

EO 126 Eliminating the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council

- HEARD

EO 134 Eliminating the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board

- HEARD

EO 128 Separating the Board of Directors of the Alaska Energy Authority from the Board of Directors of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 125

SHORT TITLE: TRAPPING CABINS ON STATE LAND

SPONSOR(s): RESOURCES

03/20/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/20/23	(H)	RES, FIN
03/27/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/27/23	(H)	Heard & Held
03/27/23	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
03/29/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/29/23	(H)	Heard & Held
03/29/23	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
04/03/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/03/23	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/05/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/05/23	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/12/23	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/12/23	(H)	Moved CSHB 125(RES) Out of Committee
04/12/23	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
04/14/23	(H)	RES RPT CS(RES) 7DP 2NR
04/14/23	(H)	DP: MEARS, ARMSTRONG, DIBERT, SADDLER, WRIGHT, RAUSCHER, MCKAY
04/14/23	(H)	NR: MCCABE, PATKOTAK
04/27/23	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
04/27/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/27/23	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)
05/04/23	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
05/04/23	(H)	Moved CSHB 125(RES) Out of Committee
05/04/23	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)
05/08/23	(H)	FIN RPT CS(RES) 8DP 1AM
05/08/23	(H)	DP: TOMASZEWSKI, CRONK, ORTIZ, GALVIN, STAPP, EDGMON, D.JOHNSON, FOSTER
05/08/23	(H)	AM: JOSEPHSON
05/13/23	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)

05/13/23 (H) VERSION: CSHB 125 (RES)
 05/15/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/15/23 (S) RES, FIN
 01/24/24 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 01/24/24 (S) Heard & Held
 01/24/24 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 01/31/24 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 01/31/24 (S) Heard & Held
 01/31/24 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 02/12/24 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 18

SHORT TITLE: ALLOW ELECTRONIC DRIVERS' LICENSES AND ID
 SPONSOR(s): KAWASAKI

01/18/23 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
 01/18/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/18/23 (S) STA, FIN

WITNESS REGISTER

DIANNA LEINBERGER, Natural Resources Manager
 Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW)
 Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
 Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Amendment 1 for HB 125 on behalf of Division of Mining, Land and Water.

DOUG LARSEN, representing self
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 124.

MICHAEL SPINDLER, representing self
 Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 124.

KATIE ROOKS, representing self
 Prince of Wales, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 124.

CODY LARSON, Member
 Wood-Tikchik Management Council
 Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Invited testimony for EO 126.

DANIEL CHEYETTE, Senior Vice President
 Lands and Natural Resources

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

KATIE ROOKS, representing self
Prince of Wales, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

ROBIN SAMUELSEN, representing self
Dillingham, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

DAN DUNAWAY, representing self
Dillingham, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

MARILYN ROSENE, representing self
Dillingham, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

RICK HALFORD, representing self
Chugiak, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

DAN DUNN, representing self
Sitka, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

DELORES LARSON, representing self
Koliganek, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

MARIA DOSAL, representing self
Dillingham, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

CADE WOODS, representing self
Dillingham, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

CASEY COUPTHIAK, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

GARVIN FEDERENKO, President and CEO
Bristol Bay Native Association
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 126.

KATIE ROOKS, representing self
Prince of Wales, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 134.

GABE KITTER, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 134.

DANIEL CHEYETTE, Senior Vice President
Lands and Resources Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to EO 134.

MARGARET STERN, Susitna River Association
Talkeetna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of EO 134.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:42 PM](#)

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

HB 125-TRAPPING CABINS ON STATE LAND

[3:31:45 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 125(RES) "An Act relating to trapping cabins on state land; and relating to trapping cabin permit fees."

[3:32:01 PM](#)

At ease

[3:32:21 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN joined the meeting.

[3:32:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL reconvened the meeting.

[3:32:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 33-LS0497\P, to CSHB 125.

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: CSHB 125 (RES)

Page 1, line 1:
Delete "**and**"

Page 1, line 2, following "fees":
Insert "; **and providing for an effective date**"

Page 4, following line 29:
Insert a new bill section to read:
"* **Sec. 9.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c)."

[3:33:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP objected for purposes of discussion.

[3:33:23 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL asked a representative from Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) whether the department has any concerns with the effective date under Amendment 1.

[3:33:39 PM](#)

DIANNA LEINBERGER, Natural Resources Manager, Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of Amendment 1.

[3:34:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP removed his objection.

[3:34:12 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL found no further objection and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[3:34:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP moved to report CSHB 125(RES), work order 33-LS0497\P, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:34:40 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL found no objection and SCS CSHB 125(RES) was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

SB 118-CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES; REPORTS

[3:34:48 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 118 "An Act relating to critical and essential minerals and the global energy transition."

[3:35:04 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony on SB 118; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[3:35:56 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL held SB 118 in committee.

EO 124 PROHIBITING BY REGULATION LIVE CAPTURE, POSSESSION, TRANSPORT, OR RELEASE OF NATIVE/EXOTIC GAME OR EGGS

[3:36:03 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of Executive Order 124 Prohibiting by Regulation Live Capture, Possession, Transport, or Release of Native/Exotic Game or Eggs. She reminded members that the Governor can make changes to the organization of the executive branch unless disapproved by a majority of members in joint session.

[3:36:39 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony.

[3:37:20 PM](#)

DOUG LARSEN, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 124. He stated he respects the extensive public process that has been used for decades to develop Alaska's wildlife regulations. This time-tested process, which involves professional biologists with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), seven members of the governor-appointed Alaska Board of Game, and the public, is considered the envy of most states and has served Alaska for decades to conserve the state's wildlife and avoid the introduction of deleterious diseases and parasites. Parting from this proven process for the sake of efficiency is illogical and ill-advised. Alaska's wildlife is far too valuable and important to cut corners under such a guise. EO 124 is unnecessarily broad given the Board of Game already delegates authorities for specific actions to the commissioner under AS 16.05.270. The proposed transfer of

authority represents an expedited process for the importation of exotic species that is unrestricted to new species not currently approved under statute. The introduction of exotic species will pose an increased risk of disease or parasite transmission to native wildlife, domestic livestock, and would challenge public safety. The change would unnecessarily exclude the public from the long-established, effective process for wildlife regulations. As a former ADFG biologist and administrator, he interacted with many wildlife professionals from other states. In these discussions, many expressed admiration for the public process in Alaska, but voiced concerns about foreign parasites coming into their states under this type of provision.

[3:40:45 PM](#)

MICHAEL SPINDLER, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 124. He said he is a longtime hunter, fisherman, and lives a subsistence lifestyle. For 41 years, he worked in Wildlife research and holds a master's in wildlife from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). He added that he is also a certified wildlife biologist. Based on his experience and education, he expressed an understanding of the dangers of improperly researched introductions and the importations of flora and fauna. Without proper research a newly introduced species could threaten native habitats with excessive competition, disease, or parasites. The current Board of Game process involves multiple individuals who have varying perspectives and in-depth qualifications. The three-year cycle in which the Board of Game considers these proposals allows sufficient time for detailed research and deliberations before permitting the importation and introduction of a new species to Alaska. EO 124 seeks to shorten the current process by transferring decisions to a single person, the commissioner of ADFG, which could undermine efforts for careful analysis and research. Other states and nations have demonstrated the risks of improper importations and introductions of exotic species to native fish and wildlife that have done millions of dollars in damage and could risk endangerment. Once a non-native species is introduced, there are irreversible impacts. He urged the committee to vote in opposition to EO 124 so the process remains open, transparent, and well-researched.

[3:43:26 PM](#)

KATIE ROOKS, representing self, Prince of Wales, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 124. She said she has been a resident of Southeast Alaska for 20 years. Over the past several years, she noticed a state trend within state government that has removed public and bipartisan input from several bodies. EO

124 would eliminate Board of Game input when deciding whether to allow non-native game species into the state. It would also eliminate opportunities for informed public comment and robust scientific research.

[3:45:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony and held EO 124 in committee.

[3:45:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL noted that the committee received a high volume of public feedback through email on these executive orders.

**EO 126 ELIMINATING THE WOOD-TIKCHIK STATE
PARK MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

[3:45:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of Executive Order 126 Eliminating the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council.

[3:46:15 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced invited testimony.

[3:46:46 PM](#)

CODY LARSON, Member, Wood-Tikchik Management Council, Dillingham, Alaska, invited testimony for EO 126. He expressed appreciation for past leadership for their foresight in planning for today. These management plans have assisted immensely in navigating complex scenarios while providing comprehensible guidelines for the public. Over the past few weeks, he has received an overwhelming number of responses from the public and small business owners on EO 126, with most expressing a desire to maintain the cooperative management of the land. This cooperative management has been the mechanism that bridges boundaries between each branch of government and private land ownership. Fish and wildlife are the needle and thread which stitch the landscape and common interest of park users together. Cooperative agreements with adjacent land managers were developed with the implicit understanding that the management council is in statute to ensure these arrangements are honored, maintained, and leave room for adjustments. These agreements volunteered public easements on 26 thousand acres of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporation lands and the neighboring wildlife refuge in ensuring values and uses remain consistent between neighbors.

[3:48:46 PM](#)

MR. LARSON said human activities and stewardship of these lands have been managed for thousands of years. Temporarily, there is ownership of about one thousand acres of roughly one hundred individual private native allotments within the park. In its formation, negotiations were made to exchange allotments, which were originally selected within the park boundary for lands outside the park. Settlements were made with the explicit knowledge that the management council was in place for planning and assures subsistence and recreational uses remain primary best use values on the park. He stated his belief that people desire to be on the landscape without the distractions of prohibitions and land boundaries. The management plan seeks to preserve traditional activities and maintain those freedoms for all park users alike. However, agreements take time and are dependent on trust. The management council has a legacy of honoring valuable input from community leaders, the public, past council members, and is culminated in the cooperative spirit of park operations. Tenure on the council should be arranged between council representatives and the public. While the public process can be messy, it is entirely necessary when garnering buy in from the public. True efficiencies are found in consistent and long-term planning with the representation of everyone at the table. It is the position of the council to maintain the current management structure that was approved by the legislature 48 years ago and is outlined in statute. The typical process for changing statute is robust, fair, fosters public trust, and creates an efficient administration for long-term planning.

[3:51:53 PM](#)

DANIEL CHEYETTE, Senior Vice President, Lands and Resources, Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He provided that BBNC is the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (ANCSA) for the Bristol Bay region that includes 12 thousand shareholders. Part of that mission is to reflect shareholders' cultural, economic, and subsistence interests. The Bristol Bay region has been populated for thousands of years due to its abundant salmon runs and wildlife. The people of the region historically and currently rely on those resources for food security and cultural necessity. Wood-Tikchik State Park is the largest state park in the country and covers 1.6 million acres. The legislature created the park in 1978 to help protect vital subsistence resources and habitat for the people of the region and state. At the same time, the legislature created the park management council to recognize the importance of the park to local residents for subsistence. The enshrined purpose of the council

remains to provide local input and expertise to DNR and ADFG on management issues related to the park and its fish and wildlife resources. By all accounts, council members have effectively fulfilled that purpose and helped draft the park management plan as well as a recent management plan provision.

[3:53:50 PM](#)

MR. CHEYETTE said the council continues to meet regularly and to provide input to DNR and ADFG. Last week, a DNR representative testified that he was unaware of any operational problems and one committee member questioned the elimination of the well-operating council. Council management is fulfilling the purposes for which it was created. Given the importance of the state park to the people of the region and subsistence interests, the park management council is extremely valuable and should continue to be utilized. He opined that the administration is trying to eliminate the council to remove the burden of having to vet council nominations and appoint members. The legislature could address that burden by amending input and procedures. EO 126 goes too far in attempting to correct the administration's perception of inefficiencies, which is a mistake. There are other ways to address the Governor's concerns without eliminating the council. Wood-Tikchik State Park is vitally important to the Bristol Bay region and its residents. The park management council is a useful vehicle for local voices and concerns about park management through which important local and traditional knowledge from experience can be shared with DNR and ADFG. It needs to remain. BBNC urges the committee to support Senate Special Concurrent Resolution 3 that disapproves EO 126 and would retain the management council.

[3:55:31 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL concluded invited testimony and opened public testimony on EO 126.

[3:55:53 PM](#)

KATIE ROOKS, representing self, Prince of Wales, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. She said EO 126 would eliminate the public advisory board of the nation's largest national park and suggested that people might consider keeping this board a priority considering Wood-Tikchik Park is only managed by one state employee. This public management resource needs the knowledge, support, and input of the local residents who treasure it and better understand challenges associated with the park. Those who participate on these types of boards understand the importance of this mechanism for quality of life and the promotion of a sense of ownership of special places. The

council has been functioning well and should remain in place, but EO 126 would silence passionate voices for public resource management. She urged the legislature to vote no on EO 126 and other executive orders, as well as ban government control that remove public decisions that affect Alaska's residents and the place they call home.

[3:57:31 PM](#)

ROBIN SAMUELSEN, representing self, Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He said he is a 73-year resident of Dillingham and has been on the Wood-Tikchik Management Council for 15 years, primarily as Chairman. Tomorrow, the Dillingham Tribal Council will submit a resolution in opposition to EO 126. He recalled a discussion with former Senator Jay Hammond, who advocated support for the park when others were opposed. Once the state park garnered support, Senator Nels Anderson Jr. introduced legislation to create the park. He said he read the governor's statement on EO 126 three times and felt continually frustrated. There is currently a part-time manager who oversees the park. The Wood-Tikchik Management Council is unpaid but has successfully managed the park for years and fosters input from villages. He said he inquired with the city of Dillingham about the Governor's claim that the park board has been vacant of a representative. However, the governor has not selected any of the names that have been submitted for his consideration.

[4:00:23 PM](#)

MR. SAMUELSEN opined that the people in the region are comfortable keeping the foundation of the park as is. He conveyed that the local community is weary of the governor since he neglected to consult with residents about the previous proposal for the Pebble Mine project. EO 126 would open the state land to mining development, which would be a disaster.

[4:01:32 PM](#)

DAN DUNAWAY, representing self, Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He said he is a 34-year resident of Dillingham and has been involved with state and federal fish and wildlife advisory committees, served as a sport fish biologist, and served on the Wood-Tikchik Advisory Council. He expressed dismay with the Governor's desire to make unnecessary changes to the current management system to improve efficiency. It would be a mistake to disenfranchise local users of the park and the surrounding community. The park has been successful as a result of its inclusion of local participation. Many residents have allotment holdings within the park and the council has

facilitated mutually beneficial changes. Sometimes democracy requires discussions and time, so the process is not always time efficient. He stated he is uncertain the park would function as well as it currently does without local support. As of now, there is only one staffer who manages the biggest state park in the nation. He stated that when he worked for ADFG, resources were often provided to residents who acted as volunteers to complete projects that benefited all users of the park. Removing the council would make the park open to manipulation from large state and out-of-state population centers. The legislature previously made an unwise decision to fund a study on the Allen River hydro power project as a result of misguided politics. Studies show it was not viable. Any proposed changes should be done through the appropriate channels as opposed to using a backdoor approach.

4:05:17 PM

MARILYN ROSENE, representing self, Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. She stated she has been a resident of Dillingham since 1982 and her family has long enjoyed the vastness of the Wood-Tikchik State Park area. It is a legacy of the future to maintain the richness of the park for generations to come.

4:06:17 PM

RICK HALFORD, representing self, Chugiak, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He said he was shocked at the degree in which the Governor was acting against the separation of powers. He expressed his agreeance with the other testifiers who voiced opposition. The park was created amidst the D2 battle in the 1970s when the state fought against major legislation at the federal level. Simultaneously, the state passed legislation to create the largest park in the nation which created a small degree of co-management and made people a part of the solution. It has survived and functioned very well for 45 years. As an advocate for the legislative branch and the separation of powers, he said he hopes the legislature reviews all proposed executive orders. EO 126 would reverse existing law that works well for the sake of convenience and efficiency. He stated his belief that these reasons are indications of dictatorship and authoritarian control. The management council is a working piece of a democratic system that should be upheld as a prime example of efficiency. He urged the passing of Concurrent Resolution 3 to reject EO 126 and noted this is the only time you can reverse this executive order without the necessary two-thirds vote to override a veto.

[4:09:26 PM](#)

DAN DUNN, representing self, Sitka, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He asked the committee to overturn the unfortunate order and stated that seeking to remove important local input is shameful. An effective administration is not possible without the management council. Wood-Tikchik State Park is too valuable for the state to remove stakeholder with an off-the-cuff executive decision.

[4:10:49 PM](#)

DELORES LARSON, representing self, Koliganek, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. She noted she is a lifelong subsistence user and gather, serves as Deputy Director for the United Tribes of Bristol Bay, and sits on the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council as a representative for Koliganek. The removal of the council is a step in the wrong direction for the future of the park and would disrupt the ability for people to have their voices heard in the management of shared natural resources. The council is comprised of Tribal and local community members who work directly with DNR to manage the park. Current local and Tribal representation on the council play a vital role in the management of the state park that reflects cultural and traditional values, and the protection of valuable resources. The governor proposed EO 126 in an effort to reduce inefficiencies, but it would instead remove citizen management from the local people in the Bristol Bay region. DNR's proposed citizen advisory council would streamline important processes regarding the park, but local and tribal representation would not be included under statute if transferred to the department. An advisory board differs from a management council whereas advice can be ignored while authority cannot. The legislature created the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council nearly five decades ago to ensure people would have a voice in the management of shared natural resources. She said EO 126 would silence the voices of the people.

[4:13:57 PM](#)

MARIA DOSAL, representing self, Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. She stated she is the Indigenous Knowledge Liaison for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Her family are avid visitors to the park for its beauty and for the sustenance it provides. Like many others in the area, her family relies on a subsistence lifestyle on the sacred, ancestral Yupik land. The Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council has stood for 48 years. The Indigenous stewards, the Yupik people of this land, have stewarded these sacred lands for thousands of years and generations. Currently, the management council sets a great

example of co-stewardship, checks and balances, and transparency with local representation. The elimination of the council would open up the park to development and leave crucial decisions in the hands of those who are disconnected from the area. It is unfair for the people in the Bristol Bay area to always keep their guard up and fight for what is right, which is to protect the sacred lands, people, and animals in the area. It is well known that the area is mineral rich and opens the door to outside corporate entities that prioritize profit and development without any regard for consequences and destruction. The people are continually fighting for what is just and to protect the sacred. EO 126 would disregard current co-stewardship of the management council.

[4:16:50 PM](#)

CADE WOODS, representing self, Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He reiterated points about the importance of rural input, checks and balances, and ensuring smaller communities have a voice. People in rural areas often feel the need to protect themselves. The park management council involves rural input for subsistence use for tribal communities, new residents, local guides, and others who share a similar lifestyle. EO 126 would take the state backwards, create a stronger sense of disconnect in rural Alaska, and hurt the people living in the Dillingham area.

[4:18:56 PM](#)

CASEY COUPTHIAK, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. She stated she was originally from Togiak and is currently a boat captain and commercial fisherwoman for 14 years. She added that she grew up subsistence fishing with her grandmother and is also a landowner in the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge that borders the largest state park in the nation. EO 126 would allocate complete power to the governor without consideration for locals in villages that reside in and around the state park. She opined that it seems like a ploy to develop Pebble Mine or a way to fast-track other development plans that locals have expressed concerns about. This is an important issue because Alaskans and local Bristol Bay residents do not want Pebble Mine to move forward. EO 126 would give power to the governor who made it clear he does not have the people's best interests at heart.

[4:20:57 PM](#)

GARVIN FEDERENKO, President and CEO, Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), Dillingham, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 126. He said BBNA is opposed to EO 126. Since its

inception, BBNA has fully committed to cooperation in regional planning efforts. A critical function of the organization's role is to ensure that the subsistence economy remains reciprocal with sectors of the cash economy, such as tourism. BBNA spearheaded the efforts to coordinate the park structure by working with local Tribal governments and holding public meetings in the surrounding communities, in addition to facilitating local representation at legislative hearings in 1976. The efforts didn't end there, and the production of the plan was the result of input from hundreds of individuals with traditional knowledge of the land, waters, and wildlife. The results born from this effort have directed resolution to resource use conflicts to maintain a relative public consensus. These uses are not static, nor should management be dormant as subsistence and recreational activities are adaptive to technological and societal changes.

[4:22:32 PM](#)

MR. FEDERENKO said the continuation of the council is essential to provide a consistent and frequent forum for public input, and of equal or paramount value, to steadily build the public record which steers future management plan amendments. Development of public use cabins, boat and aircraft safety, wildlife research, cooperative agreements with adjacent federal land managers and ANCSA village corporation, trail development, and volunteerism are a mere part of all council functions for the remote yet robustly utilized area of wilderness. There are over one hundred native allotment parcels located in the Wood-Tikchik State Park area. Native allotments are primarily used for subsistence activities, and the landowners should be aware of any change in the management and have an opportunity to voice their concerns. The management council serves as a voice to consider people's comments and concerns. The representative Tribes of these lands and waters have maintained perpetual stewardship for traditional resource management. For the past fifty years, the BBNA Board of Directors has actively engaged with contemporary management and promoted a cooperative approach to the wide range of park users.

[4:24:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony on EO 126.

[4:24:14 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL held EO 126 in committee.

EO 134 ELIMINATING THE RECREATION RIVERS ADVISORY BOARD

[4:24:51 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of Executive Order 134 Eliminating the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board.

[4:25:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony on EO 134.

[4:25:21 PM](#)

KATIE ROOKS, representing self, Prince of Wales, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 134. She said the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board was created under statute nearly 40 years ago and allows for residents of the Susitna area to participate in discussions about recreation river management. Elimination of this body subtracts local knowledge from management decisions that affect subsistence users, recreation users, and visitors. EO 134 would silence the most informed and passionate voices with regard to public resource management. Despite messages from the administration that assert support for Alaskans for Alaska, EO 134 and several other executive orders would eliminate bipartisan voices from the board entirely. In many cases, the executive orders designate decisions to one individual appointed by the governor. She urged the committee to reject EO 134 and other executive orders that affect Alaskan residents and state resource management.

[4:26:52 PM](#)

MARGARET STERN, Susitna River Coalition, Talkeetna, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 134. She said she is commenting on behalf of the Susitna River Coalition and the 14 thousand individuals, groups, and businesses that support its work. The Susitna River Association advocates for communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems that are sustained by the resources of the Susitna River Watershed, from the head waters to the mouth. The Susitna Bay Recreation River plan was a forward thinking and valuable management plan that was established in 1981 following a robust public process. The management plan mitigates user groups on six waterways within Susitna Basin. The concerns and continuance of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board plays an important role in informing plan changes and keeps the comprehensive plan relevant to all waterway users. For unknown reasons, the governor has been targeting local authority's management of waterways and the opportunity for citizens to engage in the process since 2021.

[4:28:01 PM](#)

MS. STERN said the Susitna River Coalition has been heavily involved with the management plan and advisory board since the potential appeal of the plan during the 2021 legislative

session. In the spring of 2021, Senate Bill 97 was introduced in the legislature which would have repealed the establishment of recreation rivers and all recreation corridors. However, strong opposition was voiced and the bill failed. In 2022, the house version of the bill, HB 120, was rejected due to strong public opposition to the proposals. The language concerning recreation rivers was later removed thereby eliminating the threat of losing the recreation river designation. In November of 2021, the governor appointed thirteen members to represent a diverse range of stakeholder groups that utilize the waterways. These advisory members provide a crucial role as informed consultants for the commissioner. They prepare, adopt, and revise the Recreation Rivers Management Plan and regulations affecting youth and management of the recreation rivers. Currently, the Susitna Recreation Rivers Management Plan is undergoing revision after 20 years in use. The Susitna River Association disagrees with the Governor's statement that disbanding the advisory board midway through its work is beneficial to the state. The input from user groups to the advisory board is invaluable to adequately inform the interest of those who utilize these waterways in the state. Removing input from those with experience, insight, and areas of expertise are contrary to the intention of the proposal. The concerns and opinions of the advisory board play an important role in informing plan changes and keeping the plan relevant into the future. A significant amount of time, energy, and expense has been put into this plan by the state, so keeping the plan is important to the six rivers represented. An attempt to remove the advisory board is an attempt to lessen the effectiveness of this plan. The Susitna River Coalition urges the legislature to keep the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board in place.

[4:30:38 PM](#)

GABE KITTER, representing self, Wasilla, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 134. He stated his belief that the elimination of the board would be contrary to the administration's objective to improve efficiency. He stated he asked DNR whether the department could have revised the plan as efficiently without the experts in the different categories the board represents, but did not receive a straightforward answer. The board is a vital portion of the Susitna Recreation Rivers Plan. He said it is bad enough the governor appointed the board members. He was not considered for a seat on the board despite his qualifications. He expressed hope that the legislature will reject EO 134.

[4:32:25 PM](#)

DAN DUNN, representing self, Sitka, Alaska, testified in opposition to EO 134. He said transfer of the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board to DNR is not in the best interest of the state. Off-handed executive decisions that remove local voices and stakeholder input are unfortunate and unwise. The state should not characterize the insight and direction that the advisory board provides as inefficient. The governor should not use his power to disenfranchise local voices.

[4:33:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony and held EO 134 in committee.

**EO 128 SEPARATING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ALASKA ENERGY
AUTHORITY FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ALASKA
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT AUTHORITY**

[4:33:45 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of Executive Order 128 Separating the Board of Directors of the Alaska Energy Authority from the Board of Directors of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority.

[4:34:01 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony on EO 128.

[4:34:36 PM](#)

MARGARET STERN, Susitna River Association, Talkeetna, Alaska, testified in support of EO 128. She said the Susitna River Association is a public group that has regularly tried to engage with and attend Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and Alaska Energy Association (AEA) meetings over the past year. She stated she fully supports the separation of the boards. Having two distinct boards with different start times would allow for greater public participation, better understanding, and improved access to both organizations. This is a critical step that would help correct the secretive and inaccessible operations. These changes should be made in conjunction with the creation of two separate boards. The boards should be created at the requirement for the legislative approval of the five public members and director; should require the board's public members to come from different sectors involving one tribal government representative, one member with experience in socially responsible investing, and one member with experience in renewable energy project development; should stagger in four-year terms rather than allowing the board to serve at the pleasure of the governor; and should increase

stakeholder and public involvement in all projects that cost more than ten million dollars, including adding more time for public testimony.

[4:35:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony on EO 128.

[4:36:35 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP moved that EO 128 be reported from committee with individual recommendations.

[4:36:53 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL found no objection and EO 128 was reported from the Senate Resources Standing Committee with individual recommendations.

[4:37:36 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:37 p.m.