

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 8, 2025

8:04 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Rebecca Himschoot, Co-Chair  
Representative Donna Mears, Co-Chair  
Representative Carolyn Hall  
Representative Ky Holland  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Justin Ruffridge

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Senator Forrest Dunbar

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 162

"An Act relating to the diagnosis, maintenance, and repair of products that use digital electronics to operate; adding an unlawful act to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 133

"An Act establishing a 30-day deadline for the payment of contracts under the State Procurement Code; establishing deadlines for the payment of grants, contracts, and reimbursement agreements to nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and Alaska Native organizations; relating to payment of grants to named recipients that are not municipalities; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Establishing the Joint Legislative Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

Urging the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of forestry and fire protection, the Department of Public Safety, municipalities of the state and relevant wildfire planning and response agencies, and the Alaska delegation in Congress to prepare for the 2025 wildfire season.

- MOVED CSHJR 15(CRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 162

SHORT TITLE: DIGITAL PRODUCT REPAIR

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) DIBERT

03/28/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/28/25	(H)	CRA, L&C
04/08/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 133

SHORT TITLE: PAYMENT OF CONTRACTS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HIMSCHOOT

03/12/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/12/25	(H)	CRA, STA
03/25/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/25/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/25/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
03/27/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/27/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/27/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
04/03/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/03/25	(H)	Heard & Held
04/03/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
04/08/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HCR 3

SHORT TITLE: AI LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAUSCHER

02/26/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/26/25	(H)	CRA, STA
03/27/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

03/27/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/27/25	(H)	MINUTE (CRA)
04/01/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/01/25	(H)	Heard & Held
04/01/25	(H)	MINUTE (CRA)
04/03/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/03/25	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
04/08/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HJR 15

SHORT TITLE: WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS  
 SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HOLLAND

03/24/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/24/25	(H)	CRA
04/01/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/01/25	(H)	Heard & Held
04/01/25	(H)	MINUTE (CRA)
04/03/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/03/25	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
04/08/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

KIP ANGAIK, Staff  
 Representative Maxine Dibert  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HB 162, on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor.

JOE TORMA, General Manager  
 Green Star of Interior Alaska  
 Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 162.

BENJAMIN HEDGES, Reuse Specialist  
 Green Star of Interior Alaska  
 Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 162.

HOWARD MAXWELL, Staff  
 Representative Maxine Dibert  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 162.

ELLA LUBIN, Staff  
Representative Rebecca Himschoot  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a summary of HB 133 on behalf of Representative Himschoot, prime sponsor.

PAM HALLORAN, Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Health  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Reviewed the fiscal notes for HB 133.

JASON GROVE, Procurement Manager  
Department of Health  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 133.

ZOE OLSON  
Grants Administration Manager  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 133.

BONNIE JENSEN, Administrative Services Director  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 133.

HANNAH LAGER, Director  
Division of Administrative Services  
Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 133.

ANGELA LAFLAMME, Legislative Liaison  
Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 133.

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff

Representative Rebecca Himschoot  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave an explanation of changes to HCR 3, on behalf of Representative Himschoot.

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, answered questions during the hearing on HCR 3.

CORBIN MORRISON, Staff  
Representative Ky Holland  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave an explanation of changes to HJR 15, on behalf of Representative Holland, prime sponsor.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:04:07 AM](#)

**CHAIR REBECCA HIMSCHOOT** called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Hall, Holland, Mears, and Himschoot were present at the call to order. Representatives Prax and Ruffridge arrived as the meeting was in progress. Also present was Senator Forrest Dunbar.

^#hb162

#### **HB 162-DIGITAL PRODUCT REPAIR**

[8:05:18 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 162, "An Act relating to the diagnosis, maintenance, and repair of products that use digital electronics to operate; adding an unlawful act to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act; and providing for an effective date."

[8:06:13 AM](#)

KIP ANGAIK, Staff, Representative Maxine Dibert, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 162 on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor. He shared the sponsor statement

[included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The inclusion of digital components in modern equipment has allowed manufacturers to limit consumer repair opportunities at the expense of Alaskans. House Bill 162 offers a balanced solution, ensuring fair access to the information and tools needed to repair digital equipment including consumer electronics, household appliances, ATVs, as well as small snow removal, lawn care, and farm equipment.

Manufacturers have made repairs difficult—if not impossible—by withholding repair documentation and restricting specialized tools from public access. This forces Alaskan consumers to replace rather than repair their equipment, adding unnecessary costs and inconveniences. These burdens are even greater in Alaska, where authorized service providers are scarce, and shipping to out-of-state repair centers is often unfeasible. In rural and remote areas, equipment like ATVs, snow machines, and small tractors are critical to daily life. The barriers to self-repair created by manufacturers are not only costly but can also be dangerous.

HB 162 will ensure Alaskans have access to essential documentation, tools, and parts at fair market prices. This will empower consumers to repair rather than replace their equipment, saving money and reducing waste. Additionally, it will foster a competitive marketplace for independent repair businesses, keeping jobs and resources in-state.

Alaskans are known for self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. We don't just like to make things work—we need to. HB 162 supports this tradition by keeping repair options accessible, reducing waste, and helping Alaskans maintain the equipment they rely on.

I strongly urge you to support HB 162.

[8:08:43 AM](#)

MR. ANGAIK presented the sectional analysis for HB 162 [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1. Establishes the short title.

Section 2. Amends AS 45.45 Trade Practices by adding Article 12A. Digital Product Repair and the following sections:

Sec. 45.45.800 requires that digital product manufacturers:

- Make documentation, parts, and tools necessary for diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of digital products available to independent service providers or owners their products.
- Include changes to documentation, parts and tools made through updates, improvements, or repairs.

Sec. 45.45.810 requires digital product manufacturers to make available documentation, tools, and parts needed to reset security-related features that may be disabled during the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of the product.

Sec. 45.45.820 states that digital product manufacturers don't have to make parts available if they no longer have access to the parts.

Sec. 45.45.830 requires digital product manufacturers to make documentation, parts, and tools available to independent service providers or owners of the products at a reasonable price. Manufacturers cannot charge independent service providers or owners a price higher than what they charge authorized service providers for the same documentation, parts, or tools.

- Farm equipment is exempted from the independent service provider requirement.

Sec. 45.45.840 states that an independent service provider:

- Works in the business of diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of digital products in Alaska
- Is not a digital product manufacturer, doesn't have a contract or license with, and isn't affiliated with anyone who has a contract or a license with a digital product manufacturer.

Sec. 45.45.850 states that a person is an authorized service provider under AS 45.45.800-45.45.890 if they have:

- A license to offer digital product diagnosis, repair, or maintenance under the manufacturer's name, or
- A contract with a digital product manufacturer to provide diagnosis, repair, or maintenance of the manufacturer's products.

A digital product manufacturer who offers diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of its own products is considered an authorized service provider for the purposes of AS 45.45.800-45.45.890.

Sec. 45.45.860 states that digital product manufacturers don't have to disclose trade secrets to independent service providers or owners unless necessary to make documentation, parts, and tools available.

Sec. 45.45.870 states that:

- Agreements that waive, restrict, or limit obligations of digital product manufacturers are not enforceable.
- Digital product manufacturers cannot be held liable for injuries or damages that occur during diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of products by independent service providers or owners.
- This act does not apply to the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of motor vehicles

Sec. 45.45.880 states that information other than product documentation in a license or contract between digital product manufacturers and authorized service providers isn't required to be made available to independent service providers or owners.

Sec. 45.45.890 provides definitions.

Section 3. Amends AS 45.50.471(b) by adding violations of SB 111 Digital Product Repair statutes AS 45.45.800-45.45.890 to the list of unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices declared to be unlawful.

Section 4. Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a section describing the applicability of this Act.

Section 5. Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a section stating the Act cannot change the terms of a license or contract that is in effect before the effective date of this Act.

Section 6. Provides the effective date of January 1, 2026.

[8:13:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether subparagraph (B) on page 5, line 6 of the bill includes offroad vehicles or whether it strictly applies to motor vehicles.

MR. ANGAIK said the bill sponsor is working on a carveout for all automobiles and most farm equipment dealers.

[8:15:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT opened invited testimony.

[8:15:47 AM](#)

JOE TORMA, General Manager, Green Star of Interior Alaska, gave background information on Green Star of Interior Alaska ("Green Star"), a company that handles almost all the electronic waste ("e-waste") in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Interior with a mission to encourage communities to reduce waste and increase recycling. The amount of e-waste is exacerbated by many of the issues the bill seeks to address. He elaborated on Green Star's triage system for repurposing certain parts, noting that they make low-cost systems available, such as computers or electronic devices, which are made available to low-income Alaskans and nonprofits through a technology grant program. He detailed the difficulties of consistent, reliable device repair in the state and urged Alaska to grant manufacturers access to the documentation, tools, parts, and necessary authorizations that allow repairs to be written to keep these devices in service.

[8:21:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND inquired about the warranty implications, the value of those warranties, and how to determine which devices to fix.

MR. TORMA said most of the devices they see are not under warranty; nonetheless, in almost all warranty cases, shipping is prohibited from an organization like Green Star. He shared an example of a laptop they attempted to fix.

[8:24:52 AM](#)

BENJAMIN HEDGES, Reuse Specialist, Green Star of Interior Alaska, said often times, manufacturers won't honor the warranty unless the request is submitted by the original owner.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX shared his understanding that many product manufacturers are concerned about copyright to safeguard their intellectual property.

MR. TORMA said if a manufacturer is determined to persist in exclusive ownership, there still needs to be a path for users to device users make returns and honor the warranty. Many times consumers are not aware that the device can be repaired, and if it can be, buying a new product is the easier solution. Without extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws, the gaps would continue to exist, he said.

[8:28:02 AM](#)

HOWARD MAXWELL, Staff, Representative Maxine Dibert, Alaska State Legislature, noted that often times, intellectual license and trade secrets are protected by federal legislation. He stated that the bill makes some protections for trade secrets and emphasized that the goal is to help everyday Alaskans repair their products.

[8:29:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL asked how many companies in Alaska do this type of work.

MR. TORMA responded only Green Star.

[8:30:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether a manufacturer would honor the warranty on a device that the user attempted to repair.

MR. MAXWELL offered to follow up with the requested information. In response to a series of follow up questions, he clarified that the bill would make some allowances for software but not code. There would also be carveouts for advanced medical devices. He offered to follow up on a question about protecting access to security functions and how to avoid creating security vulnerabilities.

[8:37:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX opined that defining "intellectual property" would be important.

MR. MAXWELL pointed out that without an actual service provider in the state, it's easier and cheaper for users to buy a new one than repair it, which may be intentional on the manufacturers part.

[8:40:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked what happens with e-waste right now.

MR. ANGAIK offered to follow up with the requested information.

[8:42:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE inquired about the broad definition of "digital equipment" and how it would include offroad vehicles, for example.

MR. ANGAIK reiterated that the sponsor is working in proximity with Senator Dunbar's office to create a carveout for all automobiles, most farm equipment, and other offroad vehicles.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked whether "carveout" means exempting or including them in the bill.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT pointed out that most modern vehicles are computerized.

MR. MAXWELL said currently, anything with a digital element would be included in the bill. All automobiles are completely exempt, but the idea is to empower local dealers to sell parts, software, and allow people in remote areas to make repairs.

[8:46:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE sought to better understand the carveouts.

MR. MAXWELL clarified that the intent is not to exclude them. Dealers are worried that they would be "side stepped" if people obtained wholesale parts. The goal is to find a compromise that allows dealers to make profit while enabling the everyday person to make repairs to their equipment without shipping to an authorized dealer.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE pointed out that there would be no benefit to being an authorized service provider if the bill were to pass.

MR. MAXWELL said there's a lot of warranty work and repair services that would still be offered by the authorized service provider. He pointed out that in rural Alaska, many people go without critical devices because they're not empowered to make a repair.

[8:52:38 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT shared a personal anecdote and announced that the bill was held over.

^#hb133

**HB 133-PAYMENT OF CONTRACTS**

[8:53:36 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 133, "An Act establishing a 30-day deadline for the payment of contracts under the State Procurement Code; establishing deadlines for the payment of grants, contracts, and reimbursement agreements to nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and Alaska Native organizations; relating to payment of grants to named recipients that are not municipalities; and providing for an effective date."

[8:54:13 AM](#)

ELLA LUBIN, Staff, Representative Rebecca Himschoot, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Himschoot, prime sponsor, said HB 133 would bring parity to nonprofits, Alaska Native organizations, and municipalities for prompt payment from

the state that extends to contracts, grants, and reimbursements. The issue is longstanding and systemic.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT requested an explanation of the Department of Health (DOH) fiscal notes.

[8:56:33 AM](#)

PAM HALLORAN, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health (DOH), explained that a number of factors are contributing to the delays: the high volume of grants; the division's capacity to produce quality invoices and documentation in a high turnover environment; and budgetary issues that take time, such as the RPL process. She reported that in an effort to improve timelines, new leadership has been hired in the grants and contracts section who are committed to providing training and additional resources to staff to speed up time, identify gaps, and improve the situation. When calculating the fiscal note, the 10.5 percent annualized interest rate was applied to the number of late days resulting in over \$1.5 million in interest owed by the department from unrestricted general funds (UGF). She said DOH has requested one position within each division to allow the federal funding sources to be properly allocated, ensure compliance with federal guidelines, and make sure that contractors and grantees are paid on time.

[9:01:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether the department has a performance standard for paying contracts.

MS. HALLORAN responded in the affirmative, adding that the department's current standards could be improved upon particularly within the grants and contracts section.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is a standard timeline for paying bills or whether it varies by contract.

[9:04:06 AM](#)

JASON GROVE, Procurement Manager, Department of Health (DOH), said the standard is payment within 30 days receipt of a proper invoice.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is a late payment penalty established in each contract.

MR. GROVE answered generally, no.

[9:06:21 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS opined that many of the state's systems are too complex. She added that she is broadly supportive of investing to improve the state's systems in the short-term to ensure that there is more money for programs in the long term and less money spent on administering money.

[9:07:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE questioned the total dollar amount of grants [in 2025].

[9:08:13 AM](#)

ZOE OLSON, Grants Administration Manager, Department of Health (DOH), said the department is administering \$140 million in grants in fiscal year 2025 (FY 25). In response to a series of follow up questions, she said the department employs eight fulltime employees to administer those grants. Typically, grants are made on a 3-year cycle and renewed on an annual basis that follows the state fiscal year. The department aims to issue the grant awards on July 1 and within the following month, fully execute the grant agreement and issue the initial payments.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked how many grants are applied for in a fiscal year.

MS. OLSON said on a given fiscal year, the department processes the applications for grants in either a continuation year or at the start of a new 3-year cycle. Currently, this year, there are approximately 440 awards spread across 80 grant programs.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE questioned what's causing the delay.

MS. OLSON said the proposed PCNs would help build out the accounting staff's capacity. She shared her belief that there are two primary reasons for delays: logistics and communication.

[9:15:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE said the fiscal notes seem to indicate that it's the accounting, not logistics or communication, that's

causing the delays. He asked how hiring 6 new accountants would help with the logistics and communication.

MS. HALLORAN said current staff are "maxed out" and have too many things to balance. She shared an example and said accounting staff is needed to more effectively manage the department's budget so payments can be timely. She added that efficiencies are needed to effectively anticipate forthcoming costs that the department has obligated itself to.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT reiterated tha the goal is not to generate interest, but to bring payments in on time and lesser the impact on operations.

[9:19:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND sought to clarify whether the new accounting positions are to supplement an accounting section that is fully staffed or vacant positions.

MS. HALLORAN said turnover impacts DOH greatly and vacancies vary by division.

MS. OLSON conveyed that there are open positions in the grant team; however, they play a different role than the accountants.

[9:23:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether the bill is asking the department to do something that can't be done and whether there is an alternative way to do this aside from putting it in statute.

MS. HALLORAN answered yes, the department is looking at other solutions, such as the launch of the Parascope system, which helps procurement on the front end by standing up and tracking grants. The end goal is to integrate the system with the IRIS accounting system to streamline the work and link the contracts and grants sections. The department is also in collaboration with two other departments to purchase a new grant system with the hope of integrating it with the accounting system to help streamline processes and improvements.

[9:27:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT inquired about Alaska Department of Fish & Game's (ADF&G's) zero fiscal note.

[9:28:18 AM](#)

BONNIE JENSEN, Administrative Services Director, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), said the department submitted a zero fiscal note because it's difficult to determine why contract payments were late. She further noted that ADF&G does not have granting authority, so payments are strictly for contractual agreements.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Lager to explain the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED) fiscal note.

[9:29:31 AM](#)

HANNAH LAGER, Director, said the DCCED fiscal note is indeterminate at this time because it's hard to determine future impact and how to resolve it. The change in revenue reflects the advances in Section 3 of the bill, which discusses the advances of grants to named recipients resulting in a small loss of interest to the general fund (GF).

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is an internal standard for paying on time.

MS. LAGER answered yes, the goal is to pay invoices within 30 days based on both statutory and Alaska Administrative Manual guidance. In response to a series of follow up questions, she explained that DCCED has made some shifts to ensure that invoices come to shared inboxes where multiple people can access them, and a shift to procurement cards so that payments are made on the front end and reconciled on the back end.

[9:32:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX posed the same questions to Ms. Jensen, asking whether ADF&G has performance measures for timely payments and whether the percentage of late payments are tracked.

MS. JENSEN agreed that invoices should be paid within 30 days of receipt and that invoices are difficult to track.

[9:34:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked for the total grant dollar amount in contracts within Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs

(DMVA), how its administered, and how four new positions would help.

[9:35:28 AM](#)

ANGELA LAFLAMME, Legislative Liaison, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, explained that outside of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Office of Veterans Affairs manages grants with no late payment issues. For regular contracting and bill pay, the same 30-day procurement standard is followed per the Alaska Administrative Manual with established inboxes for invoices and procurement cards for timely payments of utility bills and reconciliation. She discussed the administration of federal and state disaster declaration funding, which is managed by a small team of seven in the grant administration section. In response to a follow up question from Representative Ruffridge, she confirmed that the new positions would be proactive rather than reactive and would allow the department to process payments on the front end more timely.

[9:40:34 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that HB 133 was held over.

^#hcr3

**HCR 3-AI LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE**

[9:40:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3, Establishing the Joint Legislative Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

[9:41:09 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS moved to adopt the proposed Committee Substitute (CS) for HRC 3, Version 34-LS0603\G, Walsh, 4/5/25, as the working document.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX objected.

[9:41:35 AM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff, Representative Rebecca Himschoot, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Co-Chair Himschoot, gave an explanation of the three primary changes in Version G:

including "generated images" as part of artificial intelligence; creating a common set of terms and definitions as a foundation of the task force work in future legislation; and creating a zero-cost task force to bring the fiscal note to zero by removing the per diem allowance and allowing virtual attendance.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked to hear from the bill sponsor on Version G.

[9:44:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HCR 3, said he would not oppose any of the changes in Version G and anticipated the bill moving forward with their inclusion.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX expressed concern about the zero fiscal note because "you get what you pay for" and asked whether it sets a realistic expectation for the task force.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER pointed out that past task forces have operated on zero dollars.

[9:46:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked who paid for the hard copies of the final report for the [Alaska Food Strategy Task Force].

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER said it was printed through the legislative print shop.

[9:47:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX removed his objection. There being no further objection, Version G was before the committee.

[9:47:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that CSHCR 3, Version G, was held over.

^#hjr15

**HJR 15-WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS**

[9:48:05 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15, Urging the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of forestry and fire protection, the Department of Public Safety, municipalities of the state and relevant wildfire planning and response agencies, and the Alaska delegation in Congress to prepare for the 2025 wildfire season.

9:48:30 AM

CO-CHAIR MEARS moved to adopt the proposed Committee Substitute (CS) to HJR 15, Version 34-LS0726\G, Dunmire, 4/6/25, as the working document.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX objected.

9:49:01 AM

CORBIN MORRISON, Staff, Representative Ky Holland, Alaska State Legislature, summarized the explanation of changes to HJR 15 from a written explanation of changes [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Page 1, line 9: Deleted "immediate and severe." and added "Increased" to better fit the tone of Resolution.

Page 1, line 10: Added "Southeast Alaska" to list of high-risk places.

Page 1, lines 13-15: Deleted "whereas" language.

Page 2, lines 7-8: Deleted "a demonstrated need for...additional and added "community concern about there being sufficient...adoption of."

Page 2, line 10: Deleted "effective" and added "broad."

Page 2, line 11: Deleted "which could include expansion of public education programs" and added "engaging the public to learn about and take action through programs."

Page 2, line 12: Deleted "engaging residents in annual inspections and preparation through a program like."

Page 2, line 13: Deleted "coordinating" and added "and other local agencies."

Page 2, line 14: Deleted "other interagency coordination efforts" and added "agencies."

Page 2, lines 27-31: Deleted "; conducting full reviews of available response equipment, joint response agreements, ad water resources; identifying opportunities for additional water storage and access points; and inspecting and treating aircraft landing zones and roadways, especially those that are single-access routes to large." and added ", with special attention to single-access routes to isolated" to better encompass firefighting response goals.

Page 3, line 1: Deleted "clear road and" and added "evaluating and removing."

Page 3, lines 5-10: Deleted "the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of 6 forestry and fire protection, and relevant municipal and local agencies to expand public 7 outreach and education by implementing a statewide public awareness campaign on wildfire risks and prevention strategies, which may include engaging residents and local fire departments in a program like Firewise USA, inspections, and to be prepared for and evacuation preparedness using the ; and promoting wildfire preparedness by launching an early detection campaign, promoting the program" and added " local and state public information officers, in collaboration 5 with state and federal agencies, to assist and encourage all Alaskans to learn about the potential for wildfires and changing exposure in their community including areas in designated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas and to urge residents to learn about and take action to protect their homes and property through home defense programs including the Firewise USA program, and to be prepared for evacuation using the Ready, Set, Go! Program, and learn about and enroll in."

Page 3, lines 16-17: Deleted "by organizing and fundi multi agency tabletop exercises and live wildfire evacuation drills before May 1, 2025."

Page 3, line 23: Deleted "securing additional" and added "stationing."

Page 3, line 23-25: Deleted "and stationing those assets...establishing new water reservoirs...existing."

[9:51:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND, as prime sponsor, thanked Representatives Hall and Ruffridge, as well as their staff, for their support and involvement on Version G.

[9:52:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked about tabletop drills and whether there is adequate time to accomplish this.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND said the new language attempts to accommodate that point by removing the May 1, 2025, deadline.

[9:55:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented on the importance of increasing preparedness in each member's respective district. He removed his objection. There being no further objection, Version G was adopted.

[9:56:51 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 9:57 a.m.

[9:57:01 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS moved to report CSHJR 15, Version 34-LS0726\G, Dunmire, 4/6/25, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHJR 15(CRA) was reported out of the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

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[9:58:08 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.