

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 11, 2025
4:03 p.m.

[4:03:34 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Andy Josephson, Co-Chair
Representative Calvin Schrage, Co-Chair
Representative Jamie Allard
Representative Jeremy Bynum
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie
Representative DeLena Johnson
Representative Will Stapp
Representative Frank Tomaszewski

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

John Boyle, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources;
Brent Goodrum, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources;
Bryan Scoresby, Director, Division of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources;
Brodie Anderson, Staff, Representative Neal Foster.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Megan Wallace, Chief Counsel, Legislative Legal Services;
John Dart, President/Owner, Dart-AM Farms LLC, North Pole;
Amy Seitz, Policy Director, Alaska Farm Bureau, Soldotna.

SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE ORDER 136

EO 136 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SSCR 1 DISAPPROVE EO 136

SSCR 1 was REPORTED out of committee with one previously published zero fiscal note: FN1 (S.RES).

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the meeting agenda. He relayed the committee would not hear three other bills originally on the agenda.

^EXECUTIVE ORDER 136

#sscr1

SENATE SPECIAL CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1

Disapproving Executive Order No. 136.

[4:05:14 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster asked the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to come to the committee table to resume a presentation from the previous day. He noted that they had left off on slide 8 of the presentation.

JOHN BOYLE, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, resumed a PowerPoint presentation titled "Executive Order 136 Establishing the Department of Agriculture," dated March 10, 2025 (copy on file). He began on slide 9 titled "Tomorrow's Department of Agriculture" showing what the proposed department of agriculture would look like.

BRENT GOODRUM, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, read from prepared remarks on slide 9:

As envisioned in Executive Order 136, tomorrow's Department of Agriculture is a measured approach... an important next step.

A Commissioner and a lean support services team will be paired with the functional division of agriculture. This will allow for the new Commissioner and leadership of the Department to quickly assess and prioritize policies, necessary programs, and

coordination efforts to better assist Alaska's agricultural sector to grow and thrive in the years ahead. As responsibilities and programs are evaluated and eventually added over time with the consideration and consent of Legislature, the structure can adapt to accommodate.

[4:06:49 PM](#)

Mr. Goodrum moved to slide 10 titled "Reclassifications":

This slide depicts the identified positions that will be reclassified in order to establish the new department. This modified approach was informed by the many insightful and helpful conversations that we have had with legislators particularly with respect to the state's fiscal situation. Our team revisited all options based upon the feedback we received in those meetings to ensure that the establishment of the new Department of Agriculture is both responsive to the fiscal challenges the State is encountering as well as the significant and important opportunities for real growth that await the agriculture industry.

The most recent Governor amendment transmitted by OMB mid last week reflects what we've developed as a cost-neutral, position-neutral department:

Instead of creating 13 new positions, and an associated \$2.7 million dollar increment, the Administration will reclassify three positions within the current Division of Agriculture and transfer two positions and funding from within DNR to also be reclassified. DNR will continue to provide admin services functions in order to support the new Department of Agriculture.

Additionally, the new department will absorb any costs related to the reclassifications.

[4:08:13 PM](#)

Representative Hannan looked at slide 7 showing that the existing Division of Agriculture had 37 positions including 32 permanent full-time and 5 part-time. She looked at slide 9 showing 39 total positions [for the proposed department] with 34 permanent full-time positions. She was thrown off

because of the five transferred positions. She asked what the two additional positions would be that were not reflected in the transferred positions.

Mr. Goodrum pointed to slide 10 showing three positions in the left column identified under the existing Division of Agriculture that would be reclassified. The positions included a director's position that would be reclassified to the commissioner's position, a vacant natural resources technician 3 position that would be reclassified into the HR consultant 3 position, and a vacant agronomist 1 position would be reclassified into the administrative services director position. Additionally, two positions that had been vacant for greater than three years within DNR would be transferred to the proposed department of agriculture and reclassified.

Representative Hannan remarked that in the past two years a number of positions had been added to the Fire Management Section to try to address wildfire management. She was concerned positions had been added and not filled. She anticipated there would be wildfire costs and expenses seen in the coming year. She wondered how many other positions in the wildfire section that had been added were still vacant. She was concerned the legislature had been trying to add to wildfire management, but individuals would be reclassified into administrative duties.

Commissioner Boyle responded that his first question had been whether positions were critical for wildfire response. He relayed that the two positions had been vacant over multiple years. The department's recruitment attempts had been unsuccessful for the positions both based in rural eastern Alaska, which had been historically hard to fill. He stated that the fire management team had assured him it had been managing over multiple years without the positions. He elaborated that there were other capable people able to fulfill the roles. More importantly for DNR's firefighting effort was its ability to retain wildland firefighting crews. He highlighted discussions from a couple of years back when the department had been hemorrhaging firefighter crews because its pay scale had been so disparate from the federal government. He reported that the legislature provided funding to increase pay and the department was now doing a phenomenal job recruiting and retaining firefighters. He noted that the department was very well positioned for fire preparedness in the

current year. The department did not see an issue with transferring the two positions.

[4:12:38 PM](#)

Representative Allard referenced the commissioner's statement that there had been positions vacant for three years. She wondered how many other vacancies there were. She wanted to know what the department had used the funds for.

Commissioner Boyle replied that he would follow up in writing.

Representative Stapp thanked the commissioner for being mindful of the cost associated with setting up a new department and for being upfront about vacant positions that had not been filled. He noted that not all departments were as forthcoming about vacancies.

[4:14:12 PM](#)

Mr. Goodrum moved to slide 11 titled "Costs Comparison":

Working from left to right is a Cost Comparison that displays the Division of Agriculture's current FY2025 Management Plan followed immediately to the right by the FY2026 Governor's Budget. The third column reflects the net outcome of the Governor's Amended budget which transfers two PCNs and funding for those positions from DNR as well as a \$2.2 million request for Federal Receipt authority for Micro Grants for Food Security. The last column contains the FY2026 Total Estimated Budget for the Department of Agriculture.

Commissioner Boyle looked at the timeline on slide 12. He detailed that the legislature had 60 days to disapprove the creation of the new department. Assuming the legislature did not disapprove the EO, DNR would begin to implement transition plans to have the department live on July 1. He concluded the presentation on slide 13 titled "Transition Work Includes." He reported that DNR had already done substantial work engaging with the broader agricultural stakeholder community on what a new department of agriculture would entail. He referenced the administrative functions involved in ensuring the department was

operational. He detailed that because the existing Division of Agriculture was located in Palmer, it would not be necessary to find new office space or deal with challenges setting up a new office. He stated that the physical and technical process of getting the department up and running would be relatively smooth and effective.

[4:16:46 PM](#)

Representative Galvin thanked the presenters for the presentation. She supported ensuring goals were met in terms of food security and opportunities individuals choosing a career in agriculture. She asked what would happen if the EO did not pass. She wondered how the department would arrange things to make sure the work got done.

Commissioner Boyle replied that agriculture was currently one of his priorities and responsibilities at DNR. He relayed that DNR would continue to support the division's initiatives in the support of the agriculture community. He believed the Senate Majority had indicated it may consider introducing a bill that would create a department of agriculture. Based on conversations with legislators, he believed most did not philosophically have any issues with creating a department and raising the awareness of agriculture and food security to a higher level. He shared that DNR would continue to work with the agricultural community and stakeholders and it would continue to advocate for agriculture as a state priority.

Representative Galvin looked at the position reclassifications on slide 10 and asked if it would still be possible for the commissioner to make some of the changes [if the EO did not pass]. She thought it seemed like the work could still happen under a division. She did not know how much flexibility the department had without the EO.

Commissioner Boyle answered that they would see how the session played out. He relayed that it was DNR's intent to continue to be more responsive to the needs of the agricultural community, particularly if there were specific roles or functions that needed to be filled. He relayed there was significant administrative flexibility in terms of how the department was organized to ensure the needs were being met.

4:20:31 PM

Representative Allard asked which other state did not have an agriculture department.

Commissioner Boyle answered, "Rhode Island."

Representative Allard thought that was the case. She referenced a memorandum prepared by DNR [on March 7, 2025] (copy on file) specifying that the EO did not alter statutory responsibilities and authorities related to agriculture. Additionally, she read the first sentence of the EO: "Under the authority of art. III, Section 23, of the Alaska Constitution and in accordance with AS 24.08.210, I order the following..." She surmised that the governor had the constitutional authority to make a department. She would not want to see the governor come into the legislature's lane to tell it what it could and could not do. She pointed out that the governor was the executive branch, and she supported the department of agriculture because she thought it was a good thing. The idea had taken her time to wrap her head around because it was the time of DOGE [Department of Governmental Efficiency] and individuals were trying to cut back government. However, she believed the department would help access the state's natural resources and was good for the state as a whole. She thought it could result in bringing up manufacturing companies to produce products from Alaska farmers. She shared a story about meat packaged in another state with a Palmer stamp on it. She stated [the ability to create the department] was the governor's constitutional right and duty to ensure the state survived in case bad things happened.

4:23:54 PM

Representative Johnson suggested it would be nice to hear from the division director. She asked the director to share his vision for the department with the committee.

BRYAN SCORESBY, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, replied that his vision was for the department of agriculture to continue to grow agriculture. He had heard from farmers in Alaska on the following needs: more land to grow food on, more capital to finance projects, and a market to sell the products. He

believed that a Department of Agriculture would create a strength of government to make those things happen. He did not think the division currently had that ability. He stated that the division had a history of doing what it had done in the past.

Representative Johnson asked how the commissioner position would be different from the division director position. She asked what a commissioner would be able to do that the director could not do currently.

Mr. Scoresby responded that when engaging in the retail sector, the title of the person speaking made a difference to the retail. He highlighted helping the Alaska Range Dairy get its milk into Walmart as an example. He detailed that the division helped the dairy get its inspections lined up with a third party, but he believed the third party called a higher up government head to help encourage Walmart to put the product in its store. He added that the dairy had been dumping quite a bit of milk every week, which had changed when the product got into Walmart. He stated that when he called the director of the USDA it meant something, but when a commissioner called it meant a lot, and when the governor called it meant a whole lot. He noted that title had its strength, which is a benefit that would be brought at the department level.

Representative Johnson asked if other states or the federal government knew if there was a difference pertaining to Alaska's department.

Mr. Scoresby replied that when he spoke to his counterparts in other states, their titles were more like Commissioner Boyle (with the exception of Rhode Island). He remarked that the things his counterparts were doing in their states kept them so occupied that very few of them cared much about Alaska beyond being interested in visiting as a tourism destination. He relayed that the individuals rarely asked questions about the division's work.

Representative Johnson appreciated Mr. Scoresby's work at the division over the years. She asked if he had any other comments.

[4:29:04 PM](#)

Mr. Scoresby answered that he supported the governor in his request to create a department of agriculture. The division looked forward to the strength the creation of a department would bring to the agriculture sector in Alaska. The department would aid in policy development to push and promote for more production and growing food in Alaska to feed Alaskans. He highlighted that if goods did not make it to Alaska at some point in the future, local production would feed people.

Representative Johnson shared that she had a bill to make the giant cabbage a state vegetable. She asked if Mr. Scoresby would support the bill.

Mr. Scoresby responded that he deferred the idea to the legislature.

[4:30:51 PM](#)

Representative Jimmie noted that she would personally vote for the salmon berry. She asked if the department would assist individuals who did not know how to start farming in rural areas.

Commissioner Boyle believed it was the responsibility of the department or division to help Alaskans have the tools they needed to be successful. He noted that states with strong agricultural sectors had departments, cooperative extension services, and a number of other entities including farm bureaus, many of which existed in Alaska and were equipped towards helping people be successful. He stated that most agricultural endeavors were often capital intensive. He elaborated that for people to try to jump into that line of work without a great understanding of what kind of soils they were working with or amendments they many need to improve soils, and without knowledge of what varieties of crops would have more success, state departments of agriculture and cooperative extensions could help provide answers to in order to set people up for success. He remarked that there had been a lot of trial and error in Alaska's agricultural community, which was okay, but not ideal in the long run.

[4:33:11 PM](#)

Representative Jimmie asked if it would also include subsistence grants.

Commissioner Boyle replied that with a commissioner of agriculture and some focused efforts working with the delegation to ensure Alaska's unique characteristics were contemplated (e.g., Congress was working on a Farm Bill designed to increase opportunities for food security), there were opportunities to look at specific funding needs that may be more appropriate for residents in rural Alaska facing unique conditions. One of the key programs currently administered by the Division of Agriculture was microgrants for food security geared towards families or individuals in need of monetary assistance to set up hoop houses, green houses, raised beds, and chicken coops with the anticipation it would help them become more food secure and provide more agricultural output for the state.

[4:34:49 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:35:13 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Josephson directed a remark to Representative Allard. He stated he had not said anything during the hearing the prior day because the commissioner could defend himself; however, he believed she was rude to the commissioner the previous day. He did not want to see the behavior on the record. He remarked that DNR was arguably the most important of Alaska's departments. He stated the department officials were worthy of respect. He asked for patience and noted the individuals were doing their best.

Representative Jimmie asked if a department of agriculture would be supportive of subsistence grants for rural areas.

Commissioner Boyle replied that it was difficult for him to opine without a full understanding of what the grants may be.

[4:36:42 PM](#)

Representative Stapp observed that the Board of Agriculture and Conservation had reporting requirements to the Division of Agriculture. He assumed there was no technical change needed to change the directive of the board to report to a department of agriculture.

Mr. Goodrum replied that it was all accounted for within the EO.

Co-Chair Foster noted there were three things to do. He relayed that his staff would provide a review of SSCR 1. Additionally, the committee would hear public testimony and entertain a motion to show the committee considered the resolution.

[4:37:45 PM](#)

Representative Allard responded to remarks by Co-Chair Josephson. She stated as an elected legislator if things were not clear to her, they were not clear to the public. She wanted the information to be clear to everyone listening. She was trying to be direct. She was not trying to offend or be rude to anyone. She wanted to be candid with the individuals presenting regardless of their experience. She added that she also had significant experience.

Co-Chair Foster asked his staff to review the resolution.

BRODIE ANDERSON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE NEAL FOSTER, reviewed the resolution and attached fiscal note.

Co-Chair Foster directed members to the back of their bill packets. He did not see a fiscal note.

Mr. Anderson directed members to the correct location in the packet for SSCR 1, version 34-LS0452\A, which included two "whereas" clauses and one "be it resolved" clause. The first whereas clause addressed the issuance of the EO by the power of the governor, where it was located, and the purpose of establishing a department of agriculture. The second whereas clause addressed the requirement by the legislature to act within 60 days or the EO would become law. The resolved clause took the required action by disapproving the EO.

Mr. Anderson highlighted an attached zero fiscal note, OMB component and control code sAajg created by the Legislative Finance Division and Senate Resources Committee. He explained that a fiscal note was required to be attached to a resolution. He reviewed the procedural aspect. Uniform Rule 49(a)(4) laid out the requirement of a special concurrent resolution, which was deployed specifically to

disapprove an EO. The rule reinforced that a special concurrent resolution did not require to have three readings in the body. He explained that special concurrent resolutions were often treated like a board and commission appointment where committee members did not make specific recommendations when moving the item from committee. He added that moving the item forward did not reflect members' intent to vote in favor of or against the resolution in joint session.

[4:43:10 PM](#)

Representative Bynum noticed there were two documents in the packets that looked like public comment emails.

Co-Chair Foster observed the subject line labeled public comment. He asked Mr. Anderson to elaborate.

Mr. Anderson replied that there was an opportunity for public testimony. He noted that public comment for the EO was also tracked in the resolution.

[4:44:12 PM](#)

Representative Bynum remarked that there were only two emails in packets labeled public comment. He asked if the committee was expecting additional public comment. He wondered where the two emails originated from.

Mr. Anderson replied that the emails had been submitted as public testimony. He explained that people could send email comments to a committee email address, which were compiled in members' packets.

Co-Chair Foster added that there should be an additional stack of public testimony comment.

Co-Chair Josephson noted that both files should have public comment included; one grouping of comments was in support of the EO and one grouping was opposed. The comments were included in the SSCR 1 packet.

Co-Chair Foster relayed that after discussion, the committee would hear verbal public testimony.

[4:45:51 PM](#)

Representative Hannan elaborated that the public testimony in the SSCR 1 included a subject line specifying support. She stated that if someone had written in opposition, it would also be included in the file. The public comment on the EO was included in the EO file. She added that it was not uncommon for people to comment on both things.

Representative Tomaszewski looked at the constitution, which did not allow the state to have more than 20 principal departments. He asked for verification that the EO would not exceed that number.

Mr. Anderson responded that he did not believe the EO would result in exceeding that number, but he had not counted the number of departments recently. He believed Representative Tomaszewski was correct.

Representative Tomaszewski asked a procedural question. He wondered what would happen if the committee failed to move the resolution forward.

Mr. Anderson answered that the committee could vote on moving the resolution forward and if it did not pass it would remain in committee until there were enough votes to move it forward.

Representative Stapp asked if he could amend the resolution.

Co-Chair Foster suspected the answer was yes. He took an at ease to determine the answer.

[4:48:41 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:54:25 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster asked to hear from Legislative Legal Services.

MEGAN WALLACE, CHIEF COUNSEL, LEGISLATIVE LEGAL SERVICES (via teleconference), introduced herself.

Representative Stapp asked if he could amend the special concurrent resolution.

Ms. Wallace replied that the special concurrent resolution could only be used for the purpose of disapproving the EO. If the legislature wanted to modify the text of an EO, it would be accomplished through separate legislation. She elaborated that if an EO became law because of the passage of time or the disapproval resolution was not approved by the legislature, the legislature would retain the ability to amend those statutes and separately pass a piece of legislation. The EO could not be amended via the special concurrent resolution or the EO itself.

[4:56:09 PM](#)

Representative Stapp asked if he could amend the language in the SSCR 1.

Ms. Wallace replied that he could amend the resolution if the committee discovered a typographical error or to add legislative intent. The uniform rule restricted the use of the language to the disapproval of an EO. She stated it was her opinion that the committee would be constrained in terms of what the resolution could be used for.

Representative Stapp asked for verification that based on Ms. Wallace's interpretation, he would not be able to offer an amendment to change the SSCR 1 from disapproving the EO to approving the EO.

Ms. Wallace advised that it was not the purpose of a disapproval resolution under Uniform Rule [49] (a) (4). She would not go as far to say that a committee member could not offer the amendment; however, she advised that an amendment approving the EO was unnecessary because the legislature only had to take action to disapprove if it did not want the EO to take effect.

[4:57:58 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster referenced Ms. Wallace's statement that the committee could possibly add intent language [to the resolution]. He noted there were currently two "whereas" clauses and one "be it resolved" clause. He asked if Ms. Wallace was saying the committee could add another whereas clause but could not change the "be it resolved" section.

Ms. Wallace responded affirmatively. She explained that if there was a statement of intent the legislature wanted to

express, it could add another whereas clause. She relayed that the language may be able to be amended slightly if someone had a different way to express the same principle to disapprove the resolution. From a technical perspective the resolution could be amended, but under the uniform rules, there were specific guidelines as to what a special concurrent resolution was designed for.

Co-Chair Foster noted that Emily Nauman, director of Legislative Legal Services was also online.

Co-Chair Josephson asked if the convening of a joint session by the legislature was contingent on the adoption of the resolution. He rephrased his question and asked if the joint session could take place if the current hearing did not occur.

[4:59:59 PM](#)

Ms. Wallace replied that Uniform Rule 51 outlined how joint sessions could be convened by the legislature. From a constitutional perspective, all that was required was that a disapproval resolution be adopted by the legislature. She elaborated that if the legislature suspended its rules or disregarded them from a constitutional perspective, if a joint session was held and a resolution was considered and passed by the legislature, a court was not likely to intervene on the procedure the legislature used to get there.

Co-Chair Josephson asked if the resolution was on the desks of the 60 legislative members and a vote was held, the same effect could be had without the current hearing.

Ms. Wallace responded that it was correct from a constitutional standpoint, but it did not necessarily comply with the procedure set out in Uniform Rules.

Co-Chair Foster stated his understanding that Uniform Rule 49(a)(4) specified that a resolution had to be "considered." He wondered about a scenario where there was a motion to send the resolution to the floor that did not pass. He thought that under the scenario the committee would still have considered the resolution. He believed there were numerous gray areas. He asked for comment from Ms. Wallace.

Ms. Wallace confirmed that Uniform Rule 49(a)(4) specified that a resolution needed to be considered, which was different than approved or recommended like the committee typically did with other legislation. All that was required to move the SSCR was a signed report articulating that the committee was moving the resolution on for consideration by the legislature in a potential joint session.

5:03:03 PM

AT EASE

5:06:38 PM

RECONVENED

Representative Stapp stated his understanding that it was necessary to take an action in order to have a joint session. He asked if he would be obligated to go into joint session with the other body to take the resolution up if it left the committee.

Ms. Wallace replied that Uniform Rule 51 dictated the procedure for calling the joint session of the legislature. In her opinion, with respect to EOs, the constitution did not require the legislature to go into joint session. She relayed that a joint session would be required if the legislature wanted to disapprove an executive order before it took effect within 60 days.

Representative Stapp asked if there would be nothing to talk about if SSCR 1 did not leave the committee.

Ms. Wallace remarked that the legislature looked to Mason's Manual in places where Uniform Rules did not specifically prescribe procedure. One of the principles in Mason's Manual was the concept that the body needed to be in possession of legislation before the body acted. She believed the cleanest way to ensure the legislation was available for the legislature to act on it in joint session was to move it from committee. If the legislation did not move from committee, it did not mean there were no other remedies for the body to take to get the resolution out of committee. For example, the resolution could be discharged from the floor. She stated that while the resolution could stay in committee, it ultimately would likely be the will of the body as to whether or not it wanted to act on the resolution in joint session.

5:09:59 PM

Co-Chair Foster OPENED public testimony on EO 136 and SSCR 1.

JOHN DART, PRESIDENT/OWNER, DART-AM FARMS LLC, NORTH POLE (via teleconference), called in support of EO 136. He relayed that his farm was located in Manley Hot Springs. He would like to see a department of agriculture. He had listened to the presentation by Commissioner Boyle the past two days and highlighted that the creation of the department could be done seamlessly without a great expense to the state. He stated it was something Alaskan farmers had wanted for decades. He highlighted that agriculture made money in Alaska. He relayed that there were numerous young individuals entering agriculture on a small scale. He stressed that agriculture needed a voice at the governor's table. He underscored that agriculture developed a community, which could not be measured in dollars and cents. He pointed out the number of steps in growing food and getting it to market that people did not typically think about. He thanked the committee.

5:14:19 PM

MS. AMY SEITZ, POLICY DIRECTOR, ALASKA FARM BUREAU, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), was concerned that keeping the division within DNR would maintain status quo. She stated it meant inconsistent support and an underfunded division that did not have the capacity to realize programs, resources, and support necessary to build an industry. From the farm bureau's standpoint, the goal was to have an agency focused on agriculture, building a strong industry, speaking up for the industry needs at the administrative and legislative levels, helping the industry navigate the difficult larger markets, and having the resources farmers and ranchers needed. She stated there were 65 years of evidence that a division within DNR did not accomplish the goal. The sector was currently lucky because the DNR commissioner saw the value of agriculture and the governor and legislators were talking about the importance of the industry and improving food security. There was still an underfunded division that lacked capacity. Additionally, there was a chance that in the future there would be a commissioner who did not want to think about agriculture, which had happened in the past. A

department of agriculture would mean the state would have an agency focused on building the industry.

Ms. Seitz pointed out that having a higher level office would make a difference, especially when working with larger markets. She noted that a commissioner could provide a quicker response time in an emergency such as a severe weather event impacting farmers. She stressed that the proposal of creating a department of agriculture was not growing government, it was about starting to build the necessary resources for an industry with strong potential for growth. She spoke about the benefits of the agricultural industry including healthy food, contributing to the economy, providing jobs, and making Alaska more self-reliant. She encouraged the committee to support the EO and vote against SSCR 1.

Representative Hannan noted that the EO proposed the creation of a department with zero cost to the state budget. She asked about a scenario where it was three to five years before there was an additional dollar. She asked if under the scenario, a department would fulfill its role of increasing support. Alternatively, she wondered if Ms. Seitz would anticipate there would be a request in the next fiscal year for additional money to fund the department.

Ms. Seitz anticipated there would be requests for additional funding in the upcoming years to build a stronger department. She noted it had occurred in all other industries. She stated that if the budget did not increase, there would still be a commissioner level seat to give agriculture a voice at the table.

[5:19:22 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED public testimony.

[5:19:55 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster emphasized that Uniform Rules did not require the standing committee recommend a do pass; it merely required that the resolution be considered.

Co-Chair Schrage MOVED to REPORT SSCR 1 out of committee the accompanying fiscal note. He noted that a signature on the report did not reflect members' intent to vote for or against the resolution in the future.

Representative Tomaszewski OBJECTED.

Co-Chair Foster clarified that if there had been no objection it would allow the resolution to move forward, or in the event of a motion, a yes vote would allow the resolution to go to the House floor.

Representative Tomaszewski thought they could end the debate on the resolution by not allowing it out of committee. He hoped members would vote with him.

Co-Chair Foster explained that a no vote would be to not send the resolution forward. The effect would be that the department of agriculture would be created because the legislature had to disapprove it within 60 days.

Representative Allard asked for verification that if the legislature did nothing, the EO would automatically go into effect within 60 days.

Co-Chair Foster responded affirmatively.

Co-Chair Josephson stated that he would vote in the affirmative on the resolution, but noted it was no indication of how he would vote on the floor.

Co-Chair Foster remarked that he would also vote to move the resolution forward. He emphasized that the committee was considering the resolution and advancing it for further debate.

Representative Tomaszewski MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Galvin, Hannan, Jimmie, Foster, Schrage, Josephson

OPPOSED: Johnson, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Allard, Bynum

The MOTION PASSED (6/5). There being NO further OBJECTION, SSCR 1 was REPORTED out of committee with one previously published zero fiscal note: FN1 (S.RES).

Co-Chair Foster reiterated that a signature on the report did not reflect an intent by any of the members to vote for or against the resolution during a future floor session.

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the schedule for the following day.

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ADJOURNMENT

5:25:05 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.