

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 14, 2025

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Robyn Niayuq Burke, Co-Chair
Representative Maxine Dibert, Co-Chair
Representative Carolyn Hall
Representative Donna Mears
Representative Zack Fields
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Julie Coulombe
Representative Bill Elam

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Dan Saddler

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Recognizing and honoring the relationship between Canada and Alaska.

- MOVED CSHJR 11(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 79

"An Act naming the Vic Fischer Shoup Bay State Marine Park."

- MOVED 79 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 93

"An Act changing the residency requirements for hunting, trapping, and sport fishing privileges; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PRESENTATION(S) : FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 11

SHORT TITLE: RECOGNIZING ALASKA/CANADA RELATIONSHIP
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) KOPP

02/26/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/26/25 (H) RES
03/10/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/10/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
03/14/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 93

SHORT TITLE: RESIDENCY REQ: HUNTING, TRAPPING, FISHING
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HIMSCHOOT

02/10/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/10/25 (H) FSH, RES
02/18/25 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
02/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/18/25 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
02/22/25 (H) FSH AT 11:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
02/22/25 (H) Moved HB 93 Out of Committee
02/22/25 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
02/24/25 (H) FSH RPT 4DP 1NR
02/24/25 (H) DP: KOPP, EDGMON, HIMSCHOOT, STUTES
02/24/25 (H) NR: VANCE
03/12/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/12/25 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
03/14/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE CHUCK KOPP
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HJR 11.

JULIA OCONNOR, Staff
Representative Chuck Kopp
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Kopp, prime sponsor, described the committee substitute and answered questions.

ORION HANSON, Assembly Member
Skagway, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

HONORARY RANJ PILLAI, Premier of Yukon
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

STEPHEN JOHNSON, Mayor
City of Dawson
Dawson City, Yukon
Canada

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

JOHN RODDA, President
Arctic Winter Games International Committee
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

MARY ANN PEASE, Alaska's Honorary Consul for Canada
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

MATT MORRISON, Executive Director
Pacific Northwest Economic Region
Seattle, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

DEB POTTER, Vice-Mayor
Municipality of Skagway
Skagway, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

KIRK CAMERON, Mayor
City of Whitehorse
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

KAREN MATTHIAS, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 11.

REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 79.

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA HIMSCHOOT
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 93.

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Himschoot, prime sponsor, presented the sectional analysis of HB 93.

JILL WEITZ, Government Affairs Staff
Office of the President
Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the Tlingit & Haida Central Council, testified in favor of HB 93.

KURT WHITEHEAD, Secretary
East Prince of Wales Island Advisory Committee
Treasure Hunter Lodge
Klawock, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 93.

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced the Wildland Fire Protection Program presentation.

NORM MCDONALD, Deputy Director
Division of Forestry and Fire Protection
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint regarding Alaska's fire protection program.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:05:53 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ROBYN NIAYUQ BURKE called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Representatives Dibert, Hall, Mears, Fields, Rauscher, Coulombe, Elam, and Burke were present at the call to order.

HJR 11-RECOGNIZING ALASKA/CANADA RELATIONSHIP

[1:06:55 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11 Recognizing and honoring the relationship between Canada and Alaska.

[1:06:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR DIBERT moved to adopt the Committee Substitute for HJR 11, work order number 34-LS0532\H as a working document.

CO-CHAIR BURKE objected for the purpose of discussion.

[1:07:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CHUCK KOPP, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HJR 11.

[1:07:54 PM](#)

JULIA OCONNOR, Staff, Representative Chuck Kopp, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Kopp, prime sponsor, described the changes from version I to version H of HJR 11. [included in the committee file] which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The House Resources Committee adopted the following changes:

- Added emphasis to Alaska's unique relationship with Canada as our only neighbor.
- Reinforced support for Canada's sovereignty.
- Added recognition to the historic trade and cultural ties of Indigenous peoples across the border.
- References were updated for accuracy, and redundant wording was removed for clarity

[1:08:38 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE removed her objection.

[1:08:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE objected for the purpose of discussion and asked about the original wording regarding Canadian sovereignty and the purpose of that language.

MS. OCONNOR referenced language on page 2, lines 18 through 20.

[1:09:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP explained that the wording regarding Canadian sovereignty was in response to U.S. leadership referring to Canada as the fifty-first state.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE removed her objection.

[1:10:15 PM](#)

There being no objection, the committee substitute to HJR 11 was adopted.

[1:10:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP stated that Alaska was experiencing a time of global uncertainty. He referenced global trade and economic frictions and described HJR 11 as an affirmation of the strong bonds of friendship, shared history, mutual defense, and support that have bound Alaska and Canada over centuries. He posited that the friendship and trust should extend to a recognition of Canada as a sovereign nation. He reminded the committee that Alaska and Canada share a peaceful border of over 11 hundred miles as well as investment opportunities, emergency support, tourism, cultural ties, resource development, economic benefits, and defense networks. He pointed out that transportation links by road and sea travel through Canada, connecting Alaska to the Lower 48. He explained that the Alaska State Legislature opposed restrictive tariffs and honored its alliance with Canada.

[1:17:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP responded to several questions posed by Representative Coulombe regarding the tariffs, Canadian leadership, and illegal drugs crossing the border. He quoted statistics from the U.S. Border Patrol which stated that less than one percent of all fentanyl entering the United States came from Canada. He suggested that the tariffs were about economic positioning. He emphasized the importance of a relationship that goes back thousands of years, noting that mutual support and trust are more important than monetary values. He pointed out that the resolution was not about the leadership of the United States and Canada but rather about the people of the two countries standing together.

[1:22:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP addressed a question from Representative Rauscher regarding the mining industries of Alaska and Canada, explaining that the tariffs are a significant concern.

[1:23:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS commented on the detrimental effects of the tariffs, positing that they harm Alaska's economy while giving an advantage to China and Russia.

[1:24:34 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE opened public testimony on HJR 11.

[1:25:05 PM](#)

ORION HANSON, Assembly Member, testified in support of HJR 11, speaking both for himself and as a Skagway public official. He described the mining industries, tourism, and economic connections between Skagway and Canada. He described the types of goods purchased in Whitehorse by Skagway residents, the mining agreements, and the memorandum of understanding which would connect Skagway to the British Columbia power grid. He pointed out the effects the tariffs would have on Skagway's cost of living. He encouraged the committee to support the resolution.

[1:30:43 PM](#)

HONORARY RANJ PILLAI, Premier of Yukon, testified in support of HJR 11, explaining that Canada is not and will never be the 51st state. He described the strong and historic cross-border relationship between Alaska and Canada as well as Alaska and Yukon. He emphasized the strategic importance of the Alcan Highway and other transportation systems shared by Canada and Alaska and provided specific examples of cross-border trade, agreements, and activities. He encouraged the committee to support the resolution.

[1:39:14 PM](#)

STEPHEN JOHNSON, Mayor, City of Dawson, testified in support of HJR 11. He explained that all members of the Dawson City Council agree with the well-crafted and well-intended

resolution. He emphasized the valued relationship between Alaska and Yukon, providing specific examples of tourism activities and cross-border events.

[1:42:15 PM](#)

JOHN RODDA, President, Arctic Winter Games International Committee, testified in support of HJR 11. He described the Arctic Winter Games and explained Alaska's role in the founding of the circumpolar event. He discussed the involvement of other nations and the importance of the relationship between Alaska and Canada. He encouraged passage of the resolution.

[1:45:06 PM](#)

MARY ANN PEASE, Alaska's Honorary Consul for Canada, testified in support of HJR 11. She pointed out the long-standing and vital relationship between Alaska and Canada and described the deeply rooted history, economy, culture, and shared geography which transcends national boundaries. She stated that the economic relationship between Alaska and Canada is indispensable, providing jobs, business opportunities, and clear economic benefits. She encouraged the legislature to endorse the resolution.

[1:47:17 PM](#)

MATT MORRISON, Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Economic Region, testified in support of HJR 11. He stressed the importance of the relationship between Alaska and Canada and gave examples of economic ties. He urged the committee members to support HJR 11.

[1:49:00 PM](#)

DEB POTTER, Vice-Mayor, Municipality of Skagway, testified in support of HJR 11. She explained that traveling to Whitehorse and Canada is very important for Skagway residents. She rebutted the statements that fentanyl was being shipped to the United States from Canada, observing that there were two fentanyl deaths in Skagway, but the drugs came through the U.S. Postal Service rather than from Canada.

[1:52:12 PM](#)

KIRK CAMERON, Mayor, City of Whitehorse, testified in support of HJR 11. He reminded the committee that Juneau has been a sister

city to Whitehorse for 30 years. He discussed the Border Mayors Alliance which includes over 40 communities along the border of United States and Canada and described cross-border activities.

[1:54:54 PM](#)

KAREN MATTHIAS, representing self, testified in support of HJR 11. She spoke of the depth, breadth, and warmth of the Alaska-Canada relationship, describing her personal history and explaining the deeply woven cross-boundary lands and traditions.

[1:56:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE closed public testimony.

[1:56:52 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR DIBERT moved to adopt the Committee Substitute for HJR 11, work order number 34-LS0532\H with individual recommendations and accompanying fiscal notes.

[1:57:06 PM](#)

There being no objection, CSHJR 11(Res) was reported from the House Resources Standing Committee.

[1:57:15 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:57 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

HB 79 - NAMING VIC FISCHER SHOUP BAY MARINE PARK

[2:00:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 79 "An Act naming the Vic Fischer Shoup Bay State Marine Park."

[2:01:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 79.

[2:01:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR DIBERT moved to adopt HB 79, work order 34-LS0495\A from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note.

[2:01:49 PM](#)

There being no objection, HB 79 was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

[2:01:58 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:02 p.m. to 2:05 p.m.

[2:05:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE called the committee back to order.

HB 93-RESIDENCY REQ: HUNTING, TRAPPING, FISHING

[2:05:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 93 "An Act changing the residency requirements for hunting, trapping, and sport fishing privileges; and providing for an effective date."

[2:05:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA HIMSCHOOT, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 93.

[2:06:03 PM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff, Representative Himschoot, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Himschoot, prime sponsor, presented the sectional analysis of HB 93, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1 amends AS 16.05.400 by adding a new subsection that requires a permanent identification card holder to meet the updated residency requirements in the bill.

Section 2 amends AS 16.05.415(a) bringing up to date the requirements for an individual to qualify for a resident sport fishing, hunting, or trapping license. A new subsection, AS 16.05.415(a)(3), is added which

stipulates an individual must be physically present at all times in Alaska during the 12 months preceding the application for a resident license, or if absent, only absent as allowed for someone who is eligible for a permanent fund dividend (AS 43.23.0008).

Section 3 amends AS 16.05.415(e) specifying an alien must meet the same residency requirements in section 2 of the bill to qualify for a resident sport fishing, hunting or trapping license.

Section 4 adds a new subsection to AS 16.05.415 directing the commissioner to adopt regulations under AS 44.62 for determining eligibility of a person to receive a resident sport fishing, hunting or trapping license.

Section 5 establishes a delayed effective date of January 1, 2027, for the bill.

[2:08:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT presented a PowerPoint highlighting HB 93 and the issues addressed by the bill [hard copy included in the committee file]. She showed slide 1, which reiterated the title of the bill and moved to slide 2, which stated that HB 93 "closely aligns the requirements to get a resident sport fishing, hunting, or trapping license with the requirements to get a permanent fund dividend." She proceeded to slide 3 which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

THE CURRENT RESIDENT REQUIREMENTS ARE DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE

- This allows individuals who are only here a few months of the year to take advantage of our generous resident bag limits and reduced license fees.
- This impacts Alaskans who live here year-round and depend the most on our fish and game resources.

[2:09:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT moved to slide 4, titled "Current Requirements to Qualify for A Resident License," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

1. Physical presence in the state with the intent to remain in the state indefinitely and to make a home in the state.

2. Maintenance of a domicile in the state for the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the application for a license.

3. No claim of residency in another state, territory, or country.

AS 16.05.940 (11) "domicile" means the true and permanent home of a person from which the person has no present intention of moving and to which the person intends to return whenever the person is away.

[2:10:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT advanced to slide 6, titled "Summary of Allowable Absences," followed by slide 7, titled "Permanent Fund Dividend Requirements You Will Not Need to Meet to Get a Resident License with Hb 93," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- General: Absences up to 180 days (subject to certain limits based on other allowable absences claimed) consistent with the individual's intent to remain an Alaska resident.
- Education-Related: Full-time secondary or post-secondary education or other full-time education program not available in Alaska.
- Military Service: Serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces or accompanying a family member who is serving and is eligible for a dividend.
- Merchant Marine Service: Serving under foreign or coastal articles of employment aboard a U.S. oceangoing vessel.
- Medical Treatment: Receiving continuous medical treatment recommended by a licensed physician or convalescing as recommended by the physician.
- Caregiving: Providing care for a critically ill family member, or for a terminally ill family member.
- Settling an Estate: Managing the estate of a deceased family member, as long as the absence doesn't exceed 220 cumulative days.

- Congressional Service: Serving as a member of the U.S. Congress or on the staff of an Alaskan member of Congress.
- State Employment: Working as a state employee in a field office or another location outside Alaska.
- Accompanying a Minor or Eligible Resident: Accompanying a minor or another eligible resident who is absent for certain allowable reasons.
- Peace Corps and Olympic Training: Serving in the federal Peace Corps or training or competing as a member of the U.S. Olympic Team.
- Student Fellowships with U.S. Department of Education or Department of State: Participating for educational purposes.

PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND REQUIREMENTS YOU WILL NOT NEED TO MEET TO GET A RESIDENT LICENSE WITH HB 93

1. Physically present in the state at all times during the entire qualifying year or, if absent, the absence was an allowable absence (AS 43.23.008).
2. Physically present in the state for at least 72 consecutive hours at some time during the prior two years before the current dividend year.
3. Compliance with military selective service registration requirements.
4. Not sentenced as a result of a state felony conviction during the qualifying year.
5. Not incarcerated as a result of the conviction in this state of:
 - (A) felony; or
 - (B) misdemeanor if the individual has been convicted of
 - (i) a prior felony as defined in AS 11.81.900; or
 - (ii) two or more prior misdemeanors as defined in AS 11.81.900.

[2:12:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT explained the differences between requirements for a permanent fund dividend (PFD) and the requirements for a resident license with HB 93. She discussed the charts on slide 8 and slide 9 which gave examples of differences between sport fishing and hunting regulations for residents and non-residents. She showed slide 10 which compared differences in fees for residents and non-residents. She pointed out that people who live outside Alaska for more than six months have access to a lower cost of living. She

emphasized the importance of prioritizing the fish and game resources of the state for those who are in Alaska, raising their families and need access to a full freezer.

[2:14:19 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT discussed the similarities between HB 201 from the 33rd legislature and the current bill (HB 93), noting the on-going support from Alaska communities, organizations, and fish and game advisory committees.

[2:15:01 PM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER summarized letters of support for HB 93.

[2:15:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT moved to slide 12, titled "HB 93 Will Ensure Our Fish and Game Resources Go to Those Who Need Them the Most," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Residency requirements will be clear and enforceable.
- Generous bag limits will be preserved for year-round residents who depend on our fish and game resources to put food on the table.
- Residents will continue to enjoy reduced cost licenses and tags.
- Bag limits and hunting and fishing opportunities for non-residents will not be impacted.

[2:16:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT responded to a question from Representative Rauscher by explaining that the charts on slides 8, 9, and 10 were used as examples and did not represent changes in fees and bag limits.

[2:17:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT, in response to a question from Representative Coulombe, described how HB 93 simplifies the process of verifying residency, so it is easier to determine whether a person who spends a month in a community harvesting resources is an Alaskan resident.

[2:18:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT and Representative Rauscher engaged in a discussion regarding permanent identification cards and the definition of "permanent." She explained that she was open to discussing amendments.

[2:20:15 PM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER discussed the qualifications for permanent identification cards for hunting, sports fishing, and trapping.

[2:21:27 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE opened invited testimony on HB 93.

[2:21:41 PM](#)

JILL WEITZ, Government Affairs Staff, Office of the President, Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, on behalf of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, testified in favor of HB 93. She explained that the management of resources in Alaska must be improved, especially when it comes to ensuring a rural subsistence priority for Alaska residents. She stated that the legislation would be instrumental in protecting local resources for those who lived in the state year-round and contributed to conservation efforts through taxes and other means. It would also help reduce the number of out-of-state individuals who disproportionately benefited from local resources without necessarily contributing to their preservation. She emphasized the importance of harvesting fish and game to offset the exorbitant costs and limited availability of groceries in rural areas. She also described the deep cultural ties of rural communities to hunting and fishing. She explained that HB 93 is a necessary step in ensuring that state residency requirements for fish and game licensing are enforced properly. It would play a vital role in protecting resources, supporting subsistence priorities, and ensuring the sustainable management of wildlife populations and ecosystems.

[2:25:31 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:25 p.m. to 2:27 p.m.

[2:27:23 PM](#)

KURT WHITEHEAD, Secretary, East Prince of Wales Island Advisory Committee, Treasure Hunter Lodge, testified in support of HB 93. He explained that he was the secretary of the East Prince of Wales Island Advisory Committee, the Klawock Advisory Committee, and the Craig Advisory Committee. He gave examples of individuals from the Lower 48 who used illegal means to avoid paying fees for fishing and hunting licenses. He described how people would "whack and stack" fish, taking valuable local resources, and shipping them south. He said that some seasonal residents had obtained permanent identification licenses. He asked the committee to support HB 93.

[2:32:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that HB 93 would be held over.

[2:32:51 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 2:32 p.m.

[2:33:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE called the meeting back to order.

PRESENTATION(S): Fire Protection Program Overview

[2:33:54 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the final order of business would be a presentation by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the topic of Alaska's fire protection program.

[2:34:09 PM](#)

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, introduced a presentation titled "Wildland Fire Protection Program Overview" [hard copy included in the committee file].

[2:35:16 PM](#)

NORM MCDONALD, Deputy Director, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, showed slide 2 of the overview of Alaska's wildland fire protection program, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission and Vision

Alaska's Fire Protection Program Mission:

- Safely manage wildland fires that pose a threat to life, property, and critical infrastructure on 150 million acres of land throughout the State of Alaska

Alaska's Fire Protection Program Essential Functions:

- Investments in the program's employees, equipment, facilities, and partnerships are the top priorities
 - Preparedness: Well trained, well-equipped, and available workforce
 - Prevention: Public education, enforcement, and community outreach
 - Mitigation: Resilient landscapes and fire-adapted communities
 - Suppression: Safe and effective wildfire response

[2:38:36 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD advanced to slide 3, and described the chart titled, "Fire Program: Organizational Structure." He moved to slide 4, titled "Interagency Cooperation," which showed maps of protection agencies and jurisdictional agencies in Alaska. He explained that the maps illustrated the complexity and uniqueness of protecting Alaska's wildlife resources and pointed to the slide's caption which stated that the "Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DOF) protects 154 million acres - includes almost all the roadside areas of the state (where most Alaskans live)."

[2:41:47 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD proceeded to slide 5, titled "Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan," which showed a map and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Critical: The highest priority for suppression actions; includes Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas and other locations where there is an immediate threat to human life, primary residences, and critical infrastructure
- Full: High priority, but below critical; encompasses cultural sites, administrative sites, cabins, and high-value natural resources

- Modified: Designed to balance acres burned with suppression costs and to accomplish land and resource management objectives when conditions are favorable
- Limited: The lowest priority for fire-related resource assignments; intended for broad, landscape-scale areas where fire best performs its ecological role

He explained the color coding of the map, pointing out several critical areas.

[2:43:06 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD moved to slide 6, titled "Alaska's Changing Wildfire Environment," which showed charts comparing wildfire acreage over time, increasing summer temperatures, and the lengthening fire season. He continued with slide 7, titled "Alaska's Growing Wildland Urban Interface," which graphed growth in population, areas, and housing over time. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- 73.5% of Alaska's total housing units located in WUI zones
- 85% of newly constructed housing units are being built in WUI zones
- 16.4%: Alaska's population increase from 2000 (627,963) to 2020 (731,158)
- 5th: Alaska ranks fifth nationally for state with highest percentage of housing units in WUI zones

[2:45:19 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD showed slide 8, titled "Agreements and Compacts," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

When importing firefighting resources, the State can utilize three different agreements/compacts that outlines billing methods and procedures.

- State to State Agreements: When utilizing "state to state" agreements, Alaska and the other states bill each other for firefighting effort expenses
- Northwest Compact (NWC): When utilizing the NWC agreement, parties bill each other for fire suppression efforts

- Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Yukon Territories, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii

- Alaska Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement: When utilizing the master agreement, the national ordering system is used

- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Fire Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs

[2:47:17 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD described the information on slide 9, titled "Cost of Using Lower-48 Resources," which outlined the expenses of firefighter staffing. He proceeded to slide 10, titled "State vs. Federal Fiscal Responsibility" and explained how the two charts depicted costs over time. He summarized the information on slides 11 through 13, which detailed four aspects of preparedness: planning, grants, training, and workforce development.

[2:53:24 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD moved to slide 15, titled "Prevention: Reducing Human Caused Fires," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Enforcement

- In 2024, 98 percent of the 122 fires in "critical protection" were human caused and preventable
- 55 enforcement actions
- 127 documented warnings

Community Outreach and Education

- Staffed over 80 events in 2024; engagement with 196,390 people
- Developed Alaska-specific wildland prevention comic book to educate young Alaskans
- Produced two public service announcements featuring Spruce the Moose, focusing on Firewise practices and campfire safety

[2:54:19 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD touched briefly on information presented on slide 16, titled "Mitigation: Resilient Landscapes" and moved on to slide 17 titled, "Mitigation: Fire Adapted Communities," which showed photos of fuel breaks. These breaks resulted in reduced fire costs and damage to communities. He skipped slide 18, titled "2024 Wildfires Across Alaska" and continued with slide 19, titled "2024 Montana Creek Fire," describing the values at risk, the public safety concerns, and the resources deployed. He discussed the coordination involved and noted the importance of investing in fire preparedness.

[2:57:12 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD showed slide 20, "2025 Seasonal Projections," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Above average wildland fire potential predicted for Coastal Region in April and May
- Engaging with boroughs, municipalities, and local fire departments on preparedness and planning; focus on recruitment, hiring, and training of wildland fire staff in the winter and early spring
- Early fire season declaration - public order issued, effective March 17, 2025

He described the map which showed significant wildland fire potential and discussed the photos of Homer and Pilot Point.

[2:59:33 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD responded to a question from Representative Mears regarding outreach, describing public messaging, social media, meetings with fire departments, and the Anchorage wildfire town hall.

[3:00:36 PM](#)

MR. MCDONALD, in response to a question from Representative Coulombe regarding slide 13, explained that the three days of virtual training were entry level. The online work was followed by hands-on training.

[3:01:53 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.