

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 9, 2025

1:41 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 Dan Saddler
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Julie Coulombe
Representative Bill Elam

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19 (RES)

Urging the United States Congress to honor the terms of the Mineral Leasing Act and the Alaska Statehood Act and provide the state with a 90 percent share of all bonuses, royalties, and rentals received by the federal government from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 191

"An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 191 (RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SJR 19

SHORT TITLE: ANWR & NAT'L PETRO RESERVE: STATE SHARE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BJORKMAN

04/10/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/10/25 (S) RES
 04/11/25 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/11/25 (S) Heard & Held
 04/11/25 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 04/14/25 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/14/25 (S) Heard & Held
 04/14/25 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 04/23/25 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/23/25 (S) Moved CSSJR 19 (RES) Out of Committee
 04/23/25 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 04/25/25 (S) RES RPT CS 7DP SAME TITLE
 04/25/25 (S) DP: GIESSEL, HUGHES, DUNBAR, CLAMAN,
 KAWASAKI, MYERS, WIELECHOWSKI
 05/05/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 05/05/25 (S) VERSION: CSSJR 19 (RES)
 05/07/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/07/25 (H) RES
 05/09/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 191

SHORT TITLE: INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT
 SPONSOR (s): REPRESENTATIVE (s) HIMSCHOOT

04/14/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/14/25 (H) RES, FIN
 05/05/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 05/05/25 (H) Heard & Held
 05/05/25 (H) MINUTE (RES)
 05/09/25 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

LAURA ACHEE, Staff
 Senator Jesse Bjorkman
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Senator Bjorkman, prime sponsor, introduced SJR 19.

REBECCA HIMSCHOOT
 Alaska State Representative
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 191.

JOE FELKL, Legislative Liaison
 Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 191 and answered questions.

TAMMY DAVIS, Invasive Species Coordinator

Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 191 and answered questions.

CODY JACOBSON, Invasive Species Coordinator

Department of Natural Resources

Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 191 and answered questions.

RENA MILLER, Special Assistant to the Commissioner

Department of Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding HB 191.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:41:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:41 p.m. Representatives Burke, Dibert, Hall, Mears, Rauscher, Coulombe, and Elam were present at the call to order. Representatives Fields and Saddler arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SJR 19-ANWR & NAT'L PETRO RESERVE: STATE SHARE

[1:41:59 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the first order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19, Urging the United States Congress to honor the terms of the Mineral Leasing Act and the Alaska Statehood Act and provide the state with a 90 percent share of all bonuses, royalties, and rentals received by the federal government from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

[1:42:27 PM](#)

LAURA ACHEE, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska State Legislature, introduced SJR 19 on behalf of Senator Bjorkman, prime sponsor. She presented the sponsor statement [included in the committee file], summarizing the major points of the resolution. She stated that President Donald Trump's Executive

Order calling for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and building the Alaska liquified natural gas (AKLNG) pipeline has many people excited about seeing increased production of Alaska's petroleum resources. However, U.S. Congress has gone back on the promise it made when Alaska became a state. Alaska should receive 90 percent of the royalty revenues from production on federal land. Senator Bjorkman introduced SJR 19, asking Congress to uphold the 90/10 promise it made in the Statehood Act. If the State of Alaska receives its promised 90 percent share, there will be more revenue to meet the needs of Alaskans including public safety, roads, schools, and the permanent fund dividend (PFD).

[1:43:47 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE spoke regarding mitigation funding for both the state and impacted communities. In current law, Congress has required that 50 percent of all federal lease revenues, including bonuses, rentals, and royalties, must go to the state of Alaska, and that those funds must go to support the most directly impacted communities. She stated that for communities such as Atqasuk, Nuiqsut, Wainwright, and Utqiagvik the funds are not optional but rather are essential. They support the infrastructure and public services needed to live safely and sustainably in a region heavily impacted by industrial activity. Without that support, the communities are left to bear the impacts of oil and gas development on their communities without the resources to respond. In the 1980's when the state diverted these funds elsewhere, the North Slope communities took that matter to court and won. The ruling reaffirmed the state must fund the impacted communities first before allocating money to the permanent fund, school trust, or general fund. She stated that she supported the resolution and would like to see that additional 40 percent for all Alaskans but emphasized the importance of honoring the places where the impacts of the oil industry are most felt. It is not only legal compliance but it is also fair and honors the state's commitment to the people in the North Slope region which has and continues to generate so much wealth for the state and its people.

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced SJR 19 was held over.

HB 191-INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

[1:45:36 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 191, "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; and providing for an effective date."

[1:46:04 PM](#)

REBECCA HIMSCHOOT, Alaska State Representative, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 191. She described the purpose of the council and cited invasive species management councils in Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. She provided context by comparing the threats posed to those states by invasive species to what Alaska faces. She discussed research conducted by Dr. Schwoerer regarding the environmental risks caused by the invasive species Elodea which threatens water bodies. She reviewed the cost of managing invasive species, pointing out that federal funding would pay for 72 percent, non-profit funding would pay 21 percent, leaving the state to fund 7 percent. She completed her introduction with a cautionary story about how requiring double hulls could have prevented the Exxon Valdez oil spill and that Alaska now faces a comparable situation regarding invasive species. She said that HB 191 would be an important first step in facing the slow-moving catastrophe presented by invasive species.

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CO-CHAIR DIBERT moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 191, labeled 34-LS0541\G.1, Bullard, 5/8/25, which read as follows:

Page 3, line 8, following "(c)":

Insert "Members of the council serving under (b)(2) - (4) of this section serve as nonvoting members."

Page 3, line 21:

Delete "council constitutes"

Insert "voting members of the council constitute"

[1:51:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT explained that she welcomed Amendment 1, the purpose of which was to clarify the number of board members needed to conduct business. It also clarified which would be voting members and which would be advisory.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER objected. He expressed concern regarding some members being deprived of the opportunity to provide substantive input into recommendations.

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A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Fields, Hall, Mears, Dibert, and Burke voted in favor of Amendment 1 to HB 191. Representatives Coulombe, Saddler, Elam, and Rauscher voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 1 was adopted by a vote of 5-4.

[1:53:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE moved to adopt Amendment 2 to HB 191, as amended, labeled 34-LS0541\G.2, Bullard, 5/8/25, which read as follows:

Page 5, line 1:
Delete "2035"
Insert "2030"

CO-CHAIR BURKE objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE explained that the purpose of the amendment was to align the date of the fiscal note with sunset date of the council, so both are 2030.

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REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT explained that the 10-year sunset date would give the council sufficient time to "prove up" the work of the council. She did not welcome the amendment.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated his support for Amendment 2, explaining that five years should show whether the council is working. He also expressed his concern that with a longer term, the council would consume resources without check. He saw a sunset of five years as appropriate and generous.

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REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT pointed out that there would be an annual report, so the legislature would have a duty every year to check on the work of the council. She pointed out that two of the people who do the work are available to answer questions.

[1:57:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Elam, Coulombe, Rauscher, and Saddler voted in favor of Amendment 2 to HB 191, as amended. Representatives Fields, Hall, Mears, Dibert, and Burke voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 failed to be adopted by a vote of 4-5.

[1:58:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE moved to adopt Amendment 3 to HB 191, as amended, labeled 34-LS0541\G.3, Bullard, 5/9/25, which read as follows:

Page 1, line 1:
Delete "**Council**"
Insert "**Task Force**"

Page 1, lines 4 - 5:
Delete all material and insert:
"*** Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:"

Page 1, line 6:
Delete "**Sec. 16.20.800. Alaska Invasive Species Council.**"
Insert "ALASKA INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE."

Page 1, line 7:
Delete "Council is an advisory council"
Insert "Task Force is"

Page 2, lines 8 - 12:
Delete all material.

Re-number the following paragraph accordingly.

Page 2, line 15:
Delete "(c)"
Insert "(d)"

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 2, lines 16 - 17:
Delete "to three-year terms"

Page 3, following line 7:
Insert a new subsection to read:
"(c) The governor shall appoint the members of the task force required under (b) of this section within 60 days after the effective date of this Act."

Reletter the following subsections accordingly.

Page 3, lines 8 - 9:
Delete "The council may, as the council finds necessary, invite additional persons to be nonvoting advisory members of the council. The council"
Insert "The task force"

Page 3, line 12:
Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 3, line 13:
Delete "council" in both places
Insert "task force" in both places

Page 3, line 15:
Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 3, line 19:
Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 3, lines 20 - 21:
Delete "The council shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the chair."
Insert "The task force shall hold its first meeting within 90 days after the appointment of members under (c) of this section. The task force shall meet at least four times in the 12 months following the appointment of members under (c) of this section and quarterly thereafter at the call of the chair."

Page 3, line 21:

Delete the first occurrence of "council"
Insert "task force"
Delete the second occurrence of "council"

Page 3, line 23:

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 3, line 26:

Delete "of each odd-numbered year"
Insert ", 2027"
Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 3, line 27:

Delete "an updated"
Insert "a"

Page 3, line 28:

Delete "council's"
Insert "task force's"

Page 3, line 30:

Delete "council's"
Insert "task force's'"
Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 4, line 2:

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 4, line 5:

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 4, line 6:

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 4, lines 11 - 12:

Delete "Council members appointed under (b)(1) of this section serve staggered three-year terms and until a successor is appointed."

Page 4, line 12:

Delete "council"
Insert "task force"

Page 4, lines 16 - 20:
Delete all material.

Page 4, lines 21 - 22:
Delete all material and insert:
"(k) In this section,"

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 4, line 31:
Delete "."
Insert ";"

Page 4, following line 31:
Insert a new paragraph to read:
"(5) "task force" means the Alaska Invasive
Species Task Force."

Page 5, lines 1 - 17:
Delete all material and insert:
"*** Sec. 2.** Section 1 of this Act is repealed
July 1, 2027."

Renumber the following bill section accordingly.

CO-CHAIR BURKE objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE described her amendment as a "creative amendment," comparing her work on a childcare task force with the proposed invasive species council. She explained that the childcare task force worked with compressed time constraints, and it accomplished a lot that way. Changing a ten-year council into a two-year task force addresses her concerns regarding the fiscal note. The two-year task force would come up with a five-year strategic plan and help coordinate resources. She explained how the funding would work under with the amendment.

[2:00:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT explained that a council would have ongoing and changing work, versus setting up policies through a task force. The distinction is that a task force would accomplish a mission, whereas a council would have evolving and ongoing work as well as having an advisory role with the Alaska

Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). She described that initially there would be no request for funding but when funds are set up, they would act an emergency response fund for an invasive species threat.

[2:01:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER expressed appreciation for the amendment, explaining that a task force would be structured to get things done and would cost less money.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated that he liked the amendment and that it would remove potentially duplicative functions between the invasive species partnership and the departments. He posited that the work of a task force would be more focused and could suggest the best way to implement invasive species responses.

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REPRESENTATIVE MEARS explained that she appreciated the goals of a task force but also appreciated that a council would have a different mission. She compared it to the work of an office of emergency management which would coordinate resources. She said the work of a task force could be valuable, but the council would be a better option.

[2:05:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE reiterated her concern regarding the fiscal note and the budget crunch they were facing. pointing out the lower costs of a task force. She drew a parallel to how mental health was coordinated in the state by means of a five-year comprehensive plan with the mental health trust and the department of health. She suggested such an approach to dealing with invasive species. The task force could offer strategic plans, but ultimately, it would be up to the departments to get the work done.

[2:07:13 PM](#)

JOE FELKL, Legislative Liaison, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, described the department's position regarding HB 191. He explained that regardless of whether the legislature decided to use a task force or a longer-term advisory body, the department

would still need additional staffing to support that work. However, the department was neutral on the amendment and would implement and support the work of a council or a task force regardless of how it is established.

[2:08:16 PM](#)

TAMMY DAVIS, Invasive Species Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, explained that the question regarding whether a council or a task force would best serve was out of her area of expertise.

[2:08:43 PM](#)

CODY JACOBSON, Invasive Species Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources, answered a question regarding whether a council or a task force would work better by referring the question to Rena Miller.

[2:09:19 PM](#)

RENA MILLER, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, responded to the question regarding whether a task force or a council would be the better model for dealing with invasive species. She said it would be a policy call for the legislature, and the department would work with the legislature whatever they decided.

[2:09:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE maintained her objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Elam, Coulombe, Rauscher, and Saddler voted in favor of Amendment 3 to HB 191, as amended. Representatives Mears, Fields, Hall, Dibert, and Burke voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 3 failed to be adopted by a vote of 4-5.

[2:11:31 PM](#)

MS. DAVIS, in response to questions by Representative Saddler, described her role as invasive species coordinator at ADF&G, explaining that she facilitated, developed, and implemented all aspects of invasive species management statewide. She explained what entities on the state, tribal, and federal level they worked with and concerns regarding rodents, marine species, and other deleterious, exotic, and abusive wildlife. She pointed

out that invasive species are a threat to the environment, economies, health, fish, and wildlife. She described steps that are taken including raising awareness; investigating potential pathways for species threat; partnering on detection and risk assessment; and providing information to the public. She discussed early detection monitoring networks and coordinating with the University of Alaska. She mentioned water body mapping and how water body vulnerabilities were ranked. She pointed out what actions would take place prior to an invasive species threat. She described early detection and rapid response plans for the European green crab and other aquatic threats. She discussed national and international organizations which address threats from invasive species.

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MS. DAVIS responded to a question from Representative Saddler regarding the work being done to meet the threats of invasive species by pointing out the work done to eradicate northern pike.

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MR. JACOBSON answered a series of questions from Representative Saddler regarding meeting the threat of invasive species. He described the statutory responsibilities for managing terrestrial and freshwater plant species for pests and disease. He discussed coordinating the work with other departments such as ADF&G, transportation, and conservation as well as tribal entities and federal partnerships such as Bureau of Land Management and the park service. Efforts have been coordinated through an invasive species hotline as well as soil and conservation districts, communities, working groups, and task forces. He described the work of Elodia task forces in Alaska and their rapid response to new infestations. He gave an example of the rapid response to Six-Mile Lake which took place in a one-year period from infestation to full-lake treatment. He discussed DNR's seed regulations which help the division of agriculture's plant material center regulate the import or spread of invasive species through seed.

[2:28:03 PM](#)

JOE FELKL responded to a question from Representative Saddler regarding which department is best suited to deal with invasive species by describing ADF&G's responsibilities. However, he

suggested that the question is actually a policy question for the legislature.

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REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT commented that she was not sure it mattered where it was housed. The most important point would be that the work needs to be done and that not enough was being done. She posited that the proposed council was a cost-effective approach to the issue.

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REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS suggested that ADF&G would seem a good match for responding to the potential threat of invasive species.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER reiterated his concern that the council would create another layer of coordination rather than using resources for the actual work.

[2:31:35 PM](#)

MS. DAVIS addressed a question posed by Co-Chair Dibert regarding how goldfish became an invasive species. She explained that they are a carp species which grow quite large and are very invasive.

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CO-CHAIR DIBERT moved to report HB 191, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE objected, noting that it was too expensive.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER agreed with the objection.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Hall, Mears, Fields, Dibert, and Burke voted in favor of moving HB 191, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. Representatives Elam, Coulombe, Raucher, and Saddler voted against it. Therefore, CSHB 191(RES)

was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee by a vote of 5-4.

[2:36:10 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.