

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 11, 2025

1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kelly Merrick, Chair
Senator Forrest Dunbar, Vice Chair
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Senator Robert Yundt

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donald Olson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 50

"An Act relating to the comprehensive plans of first and second class boroughs."

- MOVED CSSB 50(CRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 63

"An Act relating to the Local Boundary Commission; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 50

SHORT TITLE: MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS: HOUSING

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DUNBAR

01/17/25	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25
01/22/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(S)	CRA, L&C
02/04/25	(S)	CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/04/25	(S)	Heard & Held
02/04/25	(S)	MINUTE(CRA)
02/11/25	(S)	CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 63

SHORT TITLE: LOCAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

SPONSOR(s) : SENATOR(s) CRONK

01/24/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/24/25 (S) CRA, STA
02/11/25 (S) CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR MIKE CRONK, District R
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 63.

PAUL MENKE, Staff
Senator Mike Cronk
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for SB 63 on behalf of the sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:30:35 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK called the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Yundt, Dunbar, and Chair Merrick.

SB 50-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS: HOUSING

[1:31:08 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 50 "An Act relating to the comprehensive plans of first and second class boroughs."

CHAIR MERRICK said this is the second hearing on SB 50. She invited the bill sponsor to give a brief recap of the bill.

[1:31:18 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR gave a recap of SB 50, stating the bill adds a housing plan element that may be included in comprehensive plans for municipal governments. He said SB 50 does not require existing plans to be updated; rather, it applies prospectively, meaning the State asks that future comprehensive plans include housing.

[1:31:54 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 50, work order 34-LS0356\N, as the working document.

[1:32:05 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK objected for purposes of discussion.

SENATOR DUNBAR presented the summary of changes. He explained that Legislative Legal Services made a technical change to clean up statutory language. Although the technical change had no legal effect, it caused confusion among stakeholders. For clarity, this CS reverses the technical change, restoring the original statutory language.

[1:32:40 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK removed her objection.

CHAIR MERRICK found no further objection and CSSB 50 was adopted as the working document.

[1:32:51 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK opened public testimony on SB 50; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[1:33:14 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK solicited the will of the committee.

[1:33:16 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR moved to report CSSB 50, work order 34-LS0356\N, from committee with individual recommendations, attached fiscal note(s), and authorization for Legislative Legal Services to make conforming changes.

[1:33:32 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK found no objection and CSSB 50(CRA) was reported from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

[1:33:37 PM](#)

At ease.

SB 63-LOCAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

[1:34:55 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 63 "An Act relating to the Local Boundary Commission; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR MERRICK invited the bill sponsor and his staff to put themselves on record and introduce the bill.

[1:35:16 PM](#)

SENATOR MIKE CRONK, District R, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 63, paraphrased the following sponsor summary:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 63 is the final product of last session's HB 279, which passed the House unanimously, made it through the Senate committee process and was calendared for Senate Floor vote, but the clock ran out before it could be voted on. SB 63 is adding language to exiting statute to accomplish three goals:

- 1.) To ensure commissioners appointed from each of the four Judicial Districts actually live in and vote in the Judicial District from which they are appointed.
- 2.) To create an additional seat on the Commission and ensure that at least one of the six Commissioners come from the Unorganized Borough.
- 3.) To change statute regarding the selection of the Commission chair. Instead of the chair automatically being the member from the state at-large, the chair of the commission will be elected from amongst its members.

Note: The effective date of January 31, 2026 is selected so the present Local Boundary Commission (LBC) makeup will be retained until the next LBC seat becomes open. At that time a person from the Unorganized Borough will be selected.

[1:36:19 PM](#)

PAUL MENKE, Staff, Senator Mike Cronk, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the sectional analysis for SB 63 on behalf of the sponsor:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Section 1:

- Changes the number of seats on the Local Boundary Commission from 5 seats to 6 seats.
- Changes the terms for the commissioner seats from 5 years to 6 years.
- Establishes that at least one Commissioner be from the Unorganized Borough.
- Requires a commissioner appointed from a Judicial District to be domiciled and registered to vote in that District.
- Establishes that the Chair of the Local Boundary Commission be elected from among its members, rather than the Chair being the member at-large by default.

Section 2:

Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska to state that members appointed to the Local Boundary Commission will serve six-year terms, and this act will not affect the term of a member appointed prior to January 31, 2026.

Section 3:

Establishes an effective date of January 31, 2026.

MR. MENKE emphasized that the effective date of the bill ensures this act will not affect the terms of currently seated members.

[1:37:28 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked whether SB 63 is identical to the bill that was reported from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee last year.

SENATOR CRONK replied that SB 63 is identical and deferred to his staff for confirmation.

MR. MENKE confirmed that SB 63 is identical to the version reported from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee last year, which was Senate Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill 279(CRA).

[1:38:27 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK opened public testimony on SB 63; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[1:38:49 PM](#)

SENATOR CRONK expressed appreciation to the committee for hearing SB 63 early in the session.

[1:39:00 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK held SB 63 in committee.

[1:39:14 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Merrick adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 1:39 p.m.