

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 18, 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. 63

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

- MOVED SB 63 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

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)
02/11/25	(S)	Heard & Held
02/11/25	(S)	MINUTE(CRA)
02/18/25	(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 gave a recap of the bill.

PAUL MENKE, Staff
Senator Mike Cronk

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 63.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:30:49 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 Yundt, Dunbar, Gray-Jackson, and Chair Merrick.

SB 63-LOCAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

[1:31:05 PM](#)

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

CHAIR MERRICK said this is the second hearing of SB 63 in the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee. The intention is to hear a recap of the bill and look to the will of the committee. She invited the bill sponsor and his staff to put themselves on record and briefly review SB 63.

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SENATOR MIKE CRONK, District R, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 63 gave a recap of the bill.

[1:31:41 PM](#)

PAUL MENKE, Staff, Senator Mike Cronk, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, answered questions on SB 63.

[1:31:44 PM](#)

SENATOR CRONK gave the following recap of SB 63:

- The bill ensures commissioners appointed from each of the four judicial districts live and vote in the judicial district from which they are appointed.
- The bill creates an additional seat on the commission and ensures that at least one of the six commissioners is from an unorganized borough.
- The bill changes the statute regarding the selection of the commission chair. He explained that the member appointed from the state at-large currently serves as chair; however, SB 63

proposes that the commission select a chair from among its members.

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SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked whether it would be a problem to add one additional member. SB 63 proposes six members. She pointed out that six is an even number and can sometimes result in a tied vote.

SENATOR CRONK deferred to his staff.

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MR. MENKE replied that an important consideration in crafting the bill was maintaining a geographical balance of members on the Local Boundary Commission (LBC). He stated that the intent was not necessarily to fill the commission with members from the unorganized borough. He said that the sponsor is open to adding a seventh seat if it is the will of the committee.

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SENATOR DUNBAR brought up historical insight to frame the discussion. He noted that he chaired the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee last year and, at that time, discussed this topic with the Division [of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA)]. The division emphasized the importance of retaining an at-large member, as it is difficult to find qualified individuals to serve on the commission. DCRA did not want to lose the at-large seat.

SENATOR DUNBAR said that he and the bill sponsor explored ways to add a seat for the unorganized borough without displacing the at-large seat. The end result was an even number of Local Boundary Commission members. He said that while this is not ideal, the Alaska Legislature and the Anchorage Assembly have an even number of members. He noted that even-numbered bodies are inherently more conservative, as a supermajority is required for passage, whereas a tie vote results in failure.

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At ease.

[1:34:45 PM](#)

CHAIR MERRICK reconvened the committee and found no further discussions or questions on SB 63.

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CHAIR MERRICK solicited the will of the committee.

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SENATOR DUNBAR moved to report SB 63, work order 34-LS0422\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s) and further authorize Legislative Legal Services to make conforming changes.

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CHAIR MERRICK found no objection and SB 63 was reported from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Merrick adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 1:35 p.m.