

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 4, 2026
1:31 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 211

"An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Professional Counselors; extending the termination date of the Board of Marital and Family Therapy; extending the termination date of the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners; extending the termination date of the Real Estate Commission; extending the termination date of the Board of Social Work Examiners; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 150

"An Act relating to a net metering program; relating to reduced rates in the form of credits for consumer-generators; establishing a net metering reimbursement fund; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

SENATE BILL NO. 218

"An Act relating to a net metering program; relating to reduced rates in the form of credits for consumer-generators; establishing a net metering reimbursement fund; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 211

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS
SPONSOR(s): LABOR & COMMERCE

01/21/26	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/26	(S)	L&C, FIN
02/02/26	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/02/26	(S)	Heard & Held
02/02/26	(S)	MINUTE(L&C)
02/04/26	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 211.

SYLVAN ROBB, Director
Division of Corporations, Business and
Professional Licensing
Department of Commerce, Community and
Economic Development (DCCED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 211.

BRADLEY MCCONNELL, Vice-Chair
Board of Psychologist and Psychological
Associate Examiners
Department of Commerce, Community and
Economic Development (DCCED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 211.

MAE HAYES, Chair
Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers
Department of Commerce, Community and
Economic Development (DCCED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 211.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:31:23 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MERRICK called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dunbar, Yundt and Vice-Chair Merrick. Senator Gray-Jackson arrived immediately thereafter.

SB 211-EXTEND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS

[1:32:21 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MERRICK announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 211 "An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Professional Counselors; extending the termination date of the Board of Marital and Family Therapy; extending the termination date of the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners; extending the termination date of the Real Estate Commission; extending the termination date of the Board of Social Work Examiners; and providing for an effective date."

[1:32:32 PM](#)

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 211 and read the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers

The board served the public's interest by conducting meetings in an effective manner, actively amending regulations, and effectively licensing real estate appraisers and appraisal management companies. The audit also concluded that one board position had been vacant for 56 months as of January 2025, statute changes may be necessary to address federal oversight findings, and board related investigations were not consistently conducted in a timely manner. We recommend a six year extension.

If you turn to page 8, you will find our discussion about board statutes that may not fully comply with federal law. This board is subject to oversight by the federal appraisal subcommittee which reviews states appraiser and appraisal management company regulatory programs for compliance with federal requirements at least every two years. Exhibit 2 shows the federal findings issued in 2024. The findings indicate that statutory changes are needed. According to the board chair, curative legislation addressing the findings have not been introduced because the board has been unable to find a legislative sponsor.

The schedule of license activity is on page 10. As of January 2025, there were 362 active licenses, registrations and certificates. On page 12 is the

schedule of revenues and expenditures showing a surplus of 86,000 as of January 2025.

We have three recommendations starting on page 13. We recommend office of the governor boards and commissions director continue to work with the board to identify potential applicants to fill board seats in a timely manner.

Rec 2 the board should continue to seek a statutory change to address the federal Appraisal subcommittee findings.

And rec #3 the DCCED commissioner should work with policy makers to improve the recruitment and retention of investigators. Auditors reviewed five board related cases that had been opened for over 180 days and found unjustified periods of inactivity in all five. Periods of inactivity ranged from 165 days to 575 days. Turnover and vacancies contributed to the delays. Additionally, one period of 575 days was due to untimely board member review.

Management response to the audit begins on page 25. The Office of the Governor, DCCED's commissioner, and the board chair concur with the conclusions and recommendations.

[1:35:05 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked why the Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers needs a legislative sponsor and what is the board aiming to fix.

[1:35:12 PM](#)

MS. CURTIS replied that the Federal Appraisal Subcommittee is a federal agency that reviews state appraisal and appraisal management company licensing programs every two years. The subcommittee's 2024 review identified state statutes that do not fully align with federal requirements for appraisal management companies, indicating that statutory changes are needed.

SENATOR DUNBAR asked for clarification on what aligning with federal requirements means and identify the specific ways in which the Legislature is out of compliance with federal law.

MS. CURTIS replied that in the Board of Certified Real Estate audit report on page 9, exhibit 2 identifies two federal findings. First, state statutes require federally regulated appraisal management companies to report information that is not

consistent with the federal AMC rule. Second, state statutes on ownership limitations for individuals whose appraisal licenses or certificates were refused, denied, canceled, surrendered in lieu of revocation, or revoked for substantive cause in any state are not consistent with the AMC rule.

[1:36:56 PM](#)

SYLVAN ROBB, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Juneau, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 211. She stated that a broader explanation of how the division operates fiscally would have made the discussion at the last meeting easier to follow. She said that the division carries forward professional licensing revenues because licenses are issued on a 2-year cycle with staggered expiration dates. She noted that most revenue is generated during renewal years, when significantly more licensees renew than obtain new licenses; the following year typically generates substantially less revenue. She said the division operates as a single budget allocation and account. She said the division uses detailed cost accounting to equitably allocate expenses, so licensees pay only the costs of regulating their specific program. She stated that overall, the division administers 45 programs covering 125 professions. For example, dental is one program that licenses dentists, dental hygienists, and certain certified dental assistants.

[1:39:39 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR MERRICK announced invited testimony on SB 211.

[1:39:57 PM](#)

BRADLEY MCCONNELL, Vice-Chair, Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Juneau, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 211 and read the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

For the record, my name is Bradley McConnell, and I serve as the Vice Chair of the Alaska Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of SB 211, which would extend the Board following its sunset review.

The Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners exists to protect the health, safety, and

welfare of Alaskans. Our mission statement, read into the record at the beginning of each meeting is:

"The Board continues with the goals and purposes of protection of the public; ensuring the public of continued competency of licensed psychology professionals; ensuring psychological care is offered by professionally qualified persons; and ensuring qualified psychology practitioners are available. The Board has approved applicants for licensure as Psychologists and Psychological Associates, as well as monitored continuing education requirements."

By reading this at the beginning of each meeting, the Board is reminded of our goals and objectives, and stays focused on our duties to the licensees, the public, and the safety of all Alaskans. The decisions and regulations we make as a Board directly affect the professionals delivering these critical services across the state. Licensure through the Board ensures that individuals practicing psychology in Alaska meet consistent standards. This oversight provides the function of preventing unqualified or unethical practice, and ensures licensees are accountable to a set of standards.

Eliminating or allowing the Board to lapse would remove the specific oversight necessary from professionals in this program. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of SB 211 to extend the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners.

1:42:16 PM

MAE HAYES, Chair, Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Juneau, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 211. She explained that most federally related real estate loan transactions require appraisals performed by state-licensed appraisers who meet minimum state criteria. She said state appraisal boards are federally monitored by the Appraisal Subcommittee, which relies on them to certify appraiser qualifications, oversee appraisal management companies, and ensure compliance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). She stated that the board's existence is therefore required to meet federal regulations and ensure Alaskans can continue to obtain conventional, FHA, VA, and other real estate loans.

1:43:48 PM

At ease.

1:44:08 PM

VICE-CHAIR MERRICK reconvened the meeting and held SB 211 in committee.

1:44:50 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Vice-Chair Merrick adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 1:44 p.m.