

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 6, 2025

4:01 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Vice Chair  
Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Senator Robert Yundt

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 104

"An Act relating to the transfer of a title on the death of the owner; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 152

"An Act renaming Ruby Airport as Harold Esmailka Airport; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 121

"An Act relating to the practice of accounting; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 104

SHORT TITLE: VEHICLES/BOATS: TRANSFER ON DEATH TITLE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KAWASAKI

02/19/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/19/25	(S)	TRA, STA
03/20/25	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/20/25	(S)	Heard & Held

03/20/25 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/10/25 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/10/25 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/24/25 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/24/25 (S) Moved SB 104 Out of Committee  
04/24/25 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/25/25 (S) TRA RPT 3DP  
04/25/25 (S) DP: TOBIN, STEDMAN, KIEHL  
05/01/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
05/01/25 (S) Heard & Held  
05/01/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)  
05/06/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 152

SHORT TITLE: HAROLD ESMAILKA AIRPORT AT RUBY  
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) CRONK

03/31/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/31/25 (S) TRA, STA  
04/10/25 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/10/25 (S) Heard & Held  
04/10/25 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/15/25 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/15/25 (S) Moved SB 152 Out of Committee  
04/15/25 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/18/25 (S) TRA RPT 3DP 2NR  
04/18/25 (S) DP: BJORKMAN, TOBIN, KIEHL  
04/18/25 (S) NR: STEDMAN, SHOWER  
05/06/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 121

SHORT TITLE: ACCOUNTING; PRACTICE PRIVILEGE  
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) SCHRAGE

02/28/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/28/25 (H) L&C  
03/10/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124  
03/10/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --  
03/12/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124  
03/12/25 (H) Heard & Held  
03/12/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/14/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124  
03/14/25 (H) Moved HB 121 Out of Committee  
03/14/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/17/25 (H) L&C RPT 5DP 1NR  
03/17/25 (H) DP: COULOMBE, BURKE, NELSON, HALL,  
FIELDS

03/17/25	(H)	NR: CARRICK
03/17/25	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
03/17/25	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
03/24/25	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/24/25	(H)	VERSION: HB 121
03/26/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/26/25	(S)	EDC, L&C
04/09/25	(S)	EDC REFERRAL REMOVED
04/09/25	(S)	STA REFERRAL ADDED
04/22/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/22/25	(S)	Heard & Held
04/22/25	(S)	MINUTE (STA)
05/06/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JENNA COLQUHOUN, Staff  
 Senator Scott Kawasaki  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a brief recap and sectional analysis for SB 104.

SENATOR MIKE CRONK, District R  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 152.

CYNTHIA ERIKSON, representing self  
 Ruby, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on SB 152.

KATIE KANGAS Mayor  
 City of Ruby  
 Ruby, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on SB 152.

CHARLIE GREEN, Chief  
 Louden Tribe  
 Galena, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on SB 152.

JOE HAYES, Staff  
 Senator Scott Kawasaki  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the summary of changes from version N to version G of HB 121.

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, District 12  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of HB 121.

BETH STUART, Member  
State Board of Accountants  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered question regarding HB 121.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[4:01:32 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wielechowski, Gray-Jackson, Yundt and Vice-Chair Bjorkman.

#### **SB 104-VEHICLES/BOATS: TRANSFER ON DEATH TITLE**

[4:02:30 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 104 "An Act relating to the transfer of a title on the death of the owner; and providing for an effective date."

[4:02:54 PM](#)

JENNA COLQUHOUN, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief recap of SB 104 and stated that the legislation would extend transfer-on-death (TOD) deeds, established under the Uniform Real Property Transfer on Death Act of 2014, to boats and other vehicles licensed by the DMV.

MS. COLQUHOUN read the sectional analysis for SB 104:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### **Sectional Analysis**

##### **Section 1:**

Adds a new section under AS 05.25 that allows owners of boats, for which the Department of Administration

(DOA) issues titles, to obtain a transfer on death (TOD) title.

[4:03:40 PM](#)

MS. COLQUHOUN continued with the sectional analysis for SB 104:

**Section 2:**

Amends AS 13.33.101(a) to add a transfer of boat or vehicle by a TOD title to the existing list of acceptable nonprobate transferable property.

**Section 3:**

Creates a provision under AS 13.33 for a transfer on death title for boats and vehicles. Creates and defines the mechanism through the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), by which individuals will obtain, revoke, or change their transfer on death title and defines the parameters of the transfer on death title.

**(a) - (c) Obtaining a TOD Title**

- Creates a provision under AS 13.33 for a transfer on death title for vehicles and boats for which DoA issues titles.
  - This includes some manufactured homes for which the DMV issues titles under AS 45.29.102(66). These homes are without a permanent foundation and transportable in one or more sections.
  - Requires that the transfer of title to the designated beneficiary occurs when the sole owner or last surviving joint owner of the vehicle dies.
  - Requires that owners of the boats or vehicles file a form through the DMV and pay associated fees to apply for a TOD title.
  - Limits the TOD titles to two beneficiaries.

**(d) TOD titles effective without notice or consideration**

- Provides that TOD titles will not require notice or acceptance by the designated beneficiary.
- Provides that TOD titles will not be subject to consideration, the process by which there is an exchange or "quid pro quo" required from the recipient of the assets.

- Language taken from TOD deed statute under AS 13.48.060.

**(e) TOD titles are nontestamentary**

- States that TOD titles are nontestamentary, meaning that the associated vehicles do not need to be provided for in the decedent's will.

[4:05:38 PM](#)

MS. COLQUHOUN continued with the sectional analysis of SB 104:

**(f) - (g) Revocation or Change of TOD titles**

- Provides that the owner may revoke or change the designated beneficiary on the TOD at any time without the beneficiary's consent.
- Explains the process by which owners may revoke or change a TOD title.
  - The owner can either assign and deliver the certificate of the title for the vehicle to another person, thereby revoking the TOD title, or;
  - File with the DMV to reissue the title without a designated beneficiary or with a different designated beneficiary.

**(h) Designated beneficiaries right to disclaim interest**

- Allows designated beneficiaries to refuse the boat or vehicle designated to them in a TOD title.
  - Language taken from TOD deed statute under AS 13.48.100.

**(i) TOD titles subject to decedent's creditors, contracts, etc.**

- Subjects the TOD title to creditor's claims against the owner's estate, as well as to other interests, contracts, liens, encumbrances, assignments, and other interests.
- These interests remain attached to the boat or vehicle after it is transferred to the designated beneficiary.

**(j-m) Enforcing liability upon TOD titles**

- Imposes the same procedures for enforcing liability upon TOD titles that is applied to TOD deeds under AS 13.48.110 and AS 13.48.088.

- Provides that the estate may enforce liability against boats or vehicles with TOD titles if the owner's estate does not cover an allowed claim.
- States that if there are multiple vehicles and/or boats, and a liability exists in the deceased's estate, the liability will be apportioned to each asset in proportion to its net value.
- Requires that a proceeding to enforce a liability must begin within 12 months of the owner's passing and can only begin once proper notification to beneficiaries has occurred.
- Stipulates that TOD titles do not affect rights of ownership before the owner's death, and do not affect rights of the designated beneficiary or creditors of the owner(s).
- TOD titles do not give legal or equitable preference to the designated beneficiary.
- TOD titles do not affect designated beneficiaries' eligibility for state public assistance.

[4:07:47 PM](#)

MS. COLQUHOUN continued with the sectional analysis for SB 104:

**(n-p) Uniform standard of survivorship, requirements to receive TOD title**

- Requires that the designated beneficiary survive the previous owner by 120 hours.
- Requires that the designated beneficiary submit proof of the owner's death and an application and associated fees to the DMV.
- If there are two beneficiaries listed on the TOD title, they become joint owners.

**(q) TOD titles may not be changed by other instruments**

- Provides that TOD titles may only be changed by the process outlined in section 3 and not by a will or any other instrument.

(r) Gives the DOA authority to develop regulations to implement the TOD titles, establish necessary forms and fees, etc.

(s) Definitions

**Section 4:**

Amends AS 13.48.110(c) to add a person acting on behalf of the surviving spouse of the decedent to the list of people who may demand to enforce liability against the decedents' property.

[4:08:47 PM](#)

MS. COLQUHOUN continued with the sectional analysis for SB 104:

**Section 5:**

Adds a new section to AS 28.10.275, relating to vehicle titles, to clearly state that owners of vehicles for which the DMV issues titles may obtain at TOD title.

**Section 6:**

Gives the DoA authority to develop necessary regulations.

**Section 7:**

Applies an immediate effective date to section 6 of the bill to allow the department to develop regulations.

**Section 8:**

Applies an effective date of July 1, 2025 to the legislation except for section 7.

[4:09:38 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on SB 104; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:10:11 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN held SB 104 in committee.

[4:10:15 PM](#)

At ease.

**SB 152-HAROLD ESMAILKA AIRPORT AT RUBY**

[4:11:45 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 152 "An Act renaming Ruby

Airport as Harold Esmailka Airport; and providing for an effective date."

4:12:11 PM

SENATOR MIKE CRONK, District R, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska sponsor of SB 152 read the sponsor statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

"An Act renaming the Ruby Airport as Harold Esmailka Airport; and providing for an effective date." One of our most important obligations as a State Legislature is to honor Alaska's community leaders and extraordinary citizens. SB 152 would recognize the contributions of Harold Esmailka to the community of Ruby and Alaska's aviation industry by renaming Ruby Airport to Harold Esmailka Airport.

Harold Esmailka, of Ruby, is a pioneer in Alaskan aviation. Over his lengthy career as a pilot, Harold flew across Alaska and has gotten to know people in dozens of Alaskan communities. In 1954, after concluding his service in the U.S. Army, Harold bought his first airplane - a 65-horsepower Aeronca Chief. Ten years later he and his wife, Florence, settled in Ruby and opened the Ruby Trading Company general store, which provided groceries and goods for the community.

In 1970, Mr. Esmailka opened Harold's Air Service, which grew to service 63 Alaskan villages and had 28 aircraft in its fleet. Harold's Air Service provided medivac services to Alaska's Interior and grew so large that he moved its base to Galena to accommodate its commercial needs. In 1982, Harold sold Harold's Air Service with plans to retire - but his heart called him back to the skies; just four years later he purchased Tanana Air Service and built the company into a small trailblazer for Interior aviation.

Harold based Tanana Air Service out of Fairbanks, where it provided mail, cargo, passenger transportation services to more than 80 communities. While Harold operated Tanana Air Service, he provided free transportation to the brothers, sisters, and clergy in Fairbanks Catholic Diocese as they traveled to local villages.

SB 152 renames the Ruby Airport to the Harold Esmailka Airport, paying homage to an incredible father, husband, veteran, entrepreneur, and Alaskan aviation legend.

[4:14:34 PM](#)

VICE- BJORKMAN announced invited testimony on SB 152.

[4:14:49 PM](#)

CYNTHIA ERIKSON, representing self, Ruby, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 152 shared memories of growing up in Ruby with her father, a bush pilot who provided vital air service to the community for over 60 years. She recalled clearing runways, lighting them with fuel cans, and waiting anxiously for him during storms. Her father delivered supplies, rescued people in extreme weather, and even helped bring babies into the world. He inspired many, including Native pilots, and gave young people opportunities in aviation. Despite having only an eighth-grade education and English as a second language, he succeeded through perseverance and hard work in a field dominated by non-Natives. She said naming the Ruby airport after him would honor not only his legacy, but also the many lives he touched and the path he paved for future generations.

[4:18:38 PM](#)

KATIE KANGAS Mayor, City of Ruby, Ruby, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 152 stated that Harold Esmailk spent more than two-thirds of his life in aviation, growing from flying a two-seater at age 23 to managing a fleet that served many villages. He witnessed the Ruby airport's evolution from a simple landing strip to a modern field and played a vital role in connecting Yukon River communities. Known for his humility and generosity, Harold often went out of his way to help whether transporting injured pets, assisting sick children, or responding to emergencies. She said over 60 letters praised his impact, reflecting the deep gratitude of those he served.

[4:21:31 PM](#)

CHARLIE GREEN, Chief, Louden Tribe, Galena, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 152 stated that at 94, Harold is celebrated as a strong Alaska Native role model who overcame addiction and abuse, inspiring youth and leaders alike. Alongside his wife, he founded Harold's Air Service, which provided vital passenger and mail service to interior Alaska communities. He said despite financial success, Harold continues to live in Ruby, showing his deep commitment to his people. Honoring Harold by naming the

Ruby Airport after him would recognize both his legacy and the pride of Alaska Native people.

[4:24:10 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on SB 152; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:24:54 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN held SB 152 in committee.

[4:25:00 PM](#)

At ease.

### **HB 121-ACCOUNTING; PRACTICE PRIVILEGE**

[4:25:54 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 121 "An Act relating to the practice of accounting; and providing for an effective date."

[4:26:14 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN solicited a motion.

[4:26:17 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the Senate committee substitute (SCS) for HB 121 work order 34-LS0382\G, as the working document.

[4:26:34 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion.

[4:26:48 PM](#)

JOE HAYES, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the summary of changes from version N to version G of HB 121 and read the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Summary of Changes

HB 121 Version N to CS HB 121 (STA) Version G

#### **The following provisions were added to the bill:**

**Page 1 Line 1:** Updates title to reflect changes in the bill.

[4:27:03 PM](#)

MR. HAYES continued with the summary of changes for HB 121:

**Section 14:** New section that adds previous licensing as a CPA under AS 08.04 as an alternative to certification by a national guardianship group in order to become a licensed conservator.

**Section 15:** New section that adds conforming language regarding issuing temporary licenses for private professional guardians.

**Section 16:** New section establishing that a temporary license holder may submit proof of a required guardianship certificate or CPA license to obtain a permanent license.

**Section 17:** Adds a new section authorizing DCCED to issue temporary licenses to eligible individuals seeking a private professional conservator license.

**Section 18:** Adds conforming language stating that failure to maintain either a CPA license or a national guardianship certification is grounds for disciplinary action.

**Section 19:** Amends requirements for conservatorship by adding a mandatory education requirement to be completed within 30 days of being appointed.

**Section 20:** Adds a new section that would revoke conservatorship if an appointee does not complete the mandatory education within 30 days. The court is required to remove an individual under this section and appoint a replacement.

**Section 21:** Conforming changes to rule 17(e) of the Alaska Rules of Probate Procedure. This change will ensure the same education requirements will apply and that they are consistent in both law and court procedure.

**Section 23:** establishes an immediate effective date for sections 14-21.

**The following provisions remain unchanged:**

**Section 1-13:** Unchanged

**Section 24:** Unchanged, former section 15

**Section 22:** Unchanged, former section 14

[4:29:23 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection

[4:29:31 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN found no further objection and SCS HB 121 was adopted as the working document.

[4:30:09 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN asked for a recap of HB 121 and an explanation of how the changes in the committee substitute affect the underlying bill.

[4:30:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, District 12, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HB 121 presented a recap of the bill and stated that the committee substitute does not change the underlying bill. He said the committee substitute adds CPAs to those eligible for conservatorship and requires a one-hour training for conservators. HB 121 reduces the education requirement for CPAs from 150 to 120 credits, eliminating the extra year of school. He said HB 121 also grants out-of-state accounting firms the same mobility as individual CPAs, expanding access to accounting services in Alaska and increasing opportunities for aspiring CPAs.

[4:32:35 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on HB 121; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:33:18 PM](#)

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN asked whether the State Board of Accountants has an opinion on CPAs being automatically considered as conservators without going through the current legal process.

[4:33:52 PM](#)

BETH STUART, CPA, Board of State Accountancy, Anchorage, Alaska, answered a question on HB 121 and answered that the Board of State Accountancy discussed the changes and did not have any concerns.

[4:34:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE stated that HB 121 does not make CPAs automatic conservators; it simply allows CPA certification to substitute for the credentialing process. He said applicants must still apply and be approved.

4:35:09 PM

VICE-CHAIR BJORKMAN held HB 121 in committee.

4:36:06 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Vice Chair Bjorkman adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:36 p.m.