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Referred: Resources and
Finance

BY THE RULES COMMITTEE BY
REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

1 IN THE HOUSE

2 HOUSE BILL NO. 413

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to establishment of the Alaska State
7 Climate Program and Alaska State Climate Center."

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 * Section 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds the following:

10 (1) Weather and climate changes affect all of man's activi-
11 ties and general welfare.

12 (2) An understanding of weather and climate patterns is
13 essential to agricultural and energy production; natural resource
14 development and management; determinations of land use; improvement of
15 communities, transportation, and communication facilities; use of
16 water resources; and the secure well-being of the people of Alaska.

17 (3) Programs of basic and applied climatic research have
18 been important functions of several University of Alaska institutes
19 and centers since their establishment. These research units include
20 the Agricultural Experiment Station; the Arctic Environmental Informa-
21 tion and Data Center; the Geophysical Institute; the Institutes of
22 Arctic Biology, Marine Science, and Water Resources; and the Alaska
23 Sea Grant Program.

24 (4) Weather and climate information is essential to the
25 missions of several agencies, particularly the Alaska Departments of
26 Environmental Conservation, Fish and Game, Natural Resources, Public
27 Safety, and Transportation and Public Facilities.

28 (5) The tasks of providing regional climatic record keeping
29 and other climate-related services, including the storage, retrieval,

1 and dissemination of climatic information, were assumed on July 1,
2 1973 by the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center on behalf
3 of the state and the University of Alaska. The assumption was made by
4 agreement with the National Weather Service and the National Climatic
5 Center.

6 (6) The National Climate Program Act, Public Law 95-367, 92
7 Stat. 601, 603, 604, and 605, was enacted September 17, 1978. That
8 Act, in part, provides for the establishment of a program for federal
9 and state cooperative activities in climate studies and advisory
10 services. The Act also provides for annual grants to states for these
11 purposes if the state has adopted a state climate program in accordance
12 with the provisions of the National Climate Program Act, has integrated
13 its program with the national program, and has established an effective
14 mechanism for consultation and coordination with federal and local
15 government officials and users within the state.

16 (7) By virtue of the passage of the National Climate
17 Program Act and the benefits to the State of Alaska obtainable through
18 climate program coordination involving the University of Alaska, state
19 agencies, and the United States Secretary of Commerce, it would be
20 highly beneficial for the State of Alaska to formally establish a
21 state climate program by recognition and designation of existing
22 program arrangements.

23 * Sec. 2. AS 14.40 is amended by adding a new section to read:

24 Sec. 14.40.085. ESTABLISHMENT OF ALASKA STATE CLIMATE CENTER. (a)

25 The university shall establish an Alaska state climate center, the
26 purposes of which are to:

- 27 (1) store weather records;
28 (2) conduct research on weather-related problems; and
29 (3) provide information and technical advisory services

1 about weather and climatic conditions to government, businesses,
2 individuals, and the general public.

3 (b) The Alaska state climate center may be established within an
4 appropriate unit of the university, and its administration and manage-
5 ment may be under the direction of a university employee designated
6 the "state climatologist."

7 (c) The Alaska state climate center shall:

8 (1) prepare and update on a biennial basis a plan for the
9 systematic acquisition and dissemination of climate-related information;
10 the plan must include an assessment of climate information needs in
11 Alaska, a reasonable basis for setting priorities among these needs,
12 and a program for coordinating the activities of all available climate-
13 related information sources in order to meet the needs of highest
14 priority and to carry out the provisions of this section;

15 (2) establish a state climate planning advisory group
16 composed of not less than three members from organizations who provide
17 climate-related information and not less than three members from the
18 public sector and organizations who use climate-related information on
19 a regular basis; the state climate center shall solicit and consider
20 the advice and recommendations of the state climate planning advisory
21 group in preparing and updating the biennial plan for acquisition and
22 dissemination of climate-related information;

23 (3) operate and maintain a central repository and archive
24 for reports, books, maps and other records, and publications relating
25 to the weather and climate of Alaska;

26 (4) provide for public access to weather and climatological
27 information and technical advisory services; and

28 (5) enter into cooperative agreements, on behalf of the
29 State of Alaska and the University of Alaska, in order to achieve inter-

1 governmental climate program participation by the United States and
2 the state; these agreements must be consistent with the objectives of
3 this section and with the provisions of the National Climate Program
4 Act.

5 (d) The Alaska state climate center may:

6 (1) investigate, describe, and interpret the character-
7 istics of the climate of the State of Alaska, including its natural
8 hazards and limitations and its natural attributes;

9 (2) conduct research activities concerning the availability
10 of solar, wind, and water resources and assessing the impact of climate
11 fluctuations on these resources;

12 (3) publish, in the form of bulletins, circulars, maps, and
13 reports, or otherwise make available to state agencies, government
14 officials, industry, and the public the results of all research and
15 investigations undertaken by the climate center;

16 (4) provide lectures, talks, displays, and exhibits for the
17 general education of the public on the climate of the state; and

18 (5) enter into cooperative arrangements with local, state,
19 and federal government agencies; foundations; universities; businesses;
20 and other organizations engaged in climate-related research.
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