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Referred: Health, Education &
Social Services and Finance

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE RULES COMMITTEE BY
REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

2 HOUSE BILL NO. 196

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 TWELFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to establishment of the Alaska State
7 Center and a state weather and climate program."

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

9 * Section 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that:

10 (1) weather and climate changes affect all human activities and
11 general welfare;

12 (2) an understanding of weather and climate patterns is essential
13 to food and energy production; construction; natural resource development
14 and management; determinations of land use; community development; improve-
15 ment of transportation, communications, and use of water resources; and the
16 well-being of the people of Alaska;

17 (3) programs of basic and applied climatic research are important
18 functions of several University of Alaska institutes and centers, including
19 the Agricultural Experiment Station; the Arctic Environmental Information
20 and Data Center; the Geophysical Institute; the Institutes of Arctic Bio-
21 logy, Marine Science, and Water Resources; and the Alaska Sea Grant Program;

22 (4) weather and climate information is essential to the programs
23 of several agencies, especially the Departments of Commerce and Economic
24 Development, Environmental Conservation, Fish and Game, Natural Resources,
25 Public Safety, and Transportation and Public Facilities;

26 (5) the National Climate Program Act, 15 U.S.C. 2901-2908, pro-
27 vides for the establishment of a program for federal and state cooperative
28 activities in climate studies and advisory services, and for annual grants
29 to states for these activities if the state has adopted a state climate

1 program in accordance with the provisions of the National Climate Program
2 Act;

3 (6) the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center present-
4 ly provides climatological services for the state under agreement between
5 the University of Alaska and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
6 tration; and

7 (7) by virtue of the National Climate Program Act, it would be
8 highly beneficial for the State of Alaska to establish a state weather and
9 climate program to recognize and improve the existing program, and to de-
10 velop additional programs as required.

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

12 Sec. 14.40.085. ESTABLISHMENT OF ALASKA STATE CLIMATE CENTER.

13 (a) The university shall establish an Alaska State Climate Center
14 within an appropriate unit of the university. The administration and
15 management of the center is under the direction of a university em-
16 ployee designated the "state climatologist."

17 (b) The Alaska State Climate Center shall:

18 (1) prepare and update on a biennial basis a plan for the
19 systematic acquisition and dissemination of climate-related informa-
20 tion; the plan must include:

21 (A) an assessment of weather and climate information
22 needs in Alaska;

23 (B) a reasonable basis for setting priorities among
24 these needs; and

25 (C) a program for coordinating the activities of all
26 available sources of weather- and climate-related information
27 sources in order to meet the highest priority needs and to carry
28 out the provisions of this section;

29 (2) establish a state climate planning advisory group com-

1 posed of at least three members from organizations which provide
2 climate-related information, and at least three members from organi-
3 zations which use climate-related information on a regular basis or
4 from the general public;

5 (3) solicit and consider the advice and recommendations of
6 the state climate planning advisory group in preparing and updating the
7 biennial plan for acquisition and dissemination of climate-related
8 information;

9 (4) operate and maintain a central repository and archive
10 for reports, books, maps and other records, and publications relating
11 to weather and climatological information;

12 (5) provide for public access to weather and climatological
13 information and technical advisory services; and

14 (6) enter into cooperative agreements, on behalf of the
15 state and the university, in order to achieve intergovernmental climate
16 program participation by the United States and the state; these agree-
17 ments must be consistent with the provisions of the National Climate
18 Program Act, 15 U.S.C. 2901 -- 2908.

19 (c) The Alaska State Climate Center may:

20 (1) investigate, describe, and interpret the characteristics
21 of the weather and climate of the state, including its hazards and
22 limitations;

23 (2) coordinate with state and federal agencies in matters
24 concerning weather data acquisition, collection, integration and stor-
25 age;

26 (3) monitor federal weather-related activities to assure
27 that the interests of the state are being served;

28 (4) conduct research activities on the availability of
29 solar, wind, and water resources which assess the impact of climate

1 fluctuations on these resources;

2 (5) publish bulletins, circulars, maps, or reports of the
3 results of all research and investigations undertaken by the climate
4 center, and distribute them to state agencies, government officials,
5 industry, and the public;

6 (6) provide lectures, talks, displays, and exhibits on the
7 climate of the state for the general education of the public; and

8 (7) enter into cooperative arrangements with local, state,
9 and federal government agencies; foundations; universities; businesses;
10 and other organizations engaged in climate-related research and ser-
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