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52

1/31/75

COMMITTEE REPORT

HOUSE

Mr. Speaker:

Date 2-11-75

The Committee on Resources has had SR 52

under consideration. A Majority of the members of the Committee

recommends it DO PASS

recommends it DO NOT PASS

recommends it DO PASS WITH ATTACHED AMENDMENT(S)

recommends it BE REPLACED WITH CS FOR _____ AND THAT

CS FOR _____ DO PASS

"and" recommends it BE REFERRED TO THE _____

COMMITTEE

reports it back WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

"other"

Members signing the Majority report:

<u>[Signature]</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Members NOT concurring in the Majority report:

_____ recommends:

_____ recommends:

_____ recommends:

_____ recommends:

_____ recommends:

[Signature] Chairman

File

The budget breakdown I discussed with you concerning Senate Bill 22 is based on the following assumptions:

1. The bill calls for collection of plant materials in subarctic and subantarctic regions. Examination of the world map shows that at greater than 50° south latitude (an area comparable to Alaska for collection purposes) there is only the southern tip of South America and a series of islands. Although there may be materials of considerable interest to Alaska to be found in these regions, the time and financial scale spelled out in the bill would make it advisable not to collect at this time south of the equator. In the future possibly yes. At present, no.
2. The northern hemisphere north of the 50th parallel contains tremendous expanses of land, a great deal of it possibly fruitful for plant exploration. In fact, there is so much area that it is an absolute impossibility to explore more than a fraction of it within the time and financial limitations. It would appear advisable in this first go round to sample very broadly within this area, and to concentrate in only a few locations.
3. During the time of seed production of the plants, which may occur at virtually the same time over broad areas, it would be impossible for two people to be present throughout the collection area at the right time to collect the desired materials as seed.
4. In order to achieve the most of value to Alaska for money spent within the time limitations specified by the bill, I believe we should concentrate on plant materials already partially screened by scientists in the countries of interest except on those areas where concentrated collection is possible. The contacts established with these people should make it possible to extend collection through plant-materials-exchange in the future. The collection of people's names, kinds of plants they are working with, and development of congenial working relationships may be more important to this project than the actual plant materials initially collected. Those people will be on the spot when plants are in the best condition to collect.

PLEASE REPLY BY AIRMAIL

On this basis, therefore, I have visualized a collection trip which would concentrate in the Scandinavian countries for a period of one month and would extend to a general collection trip in the USSR over a period of two months. A tentative itinerary for this trip would be as follows:

Anchorage to Washington, D. C. (more will be said about this later) to New York - Iceland - Copenhagen - Oslo - Vollebekk - Trondheim - Tromso - Northern Sweden - Umeå - Luleå - Northern Finland - Tikkurila - Helsinki - Stockholm - Svalof - Leningrad - Kola - As many of the 22 experiment stations of the Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture of the Far North as permitted - Novosibirsk - Yakutsk - Kamchatka - Hokkaido - Tokyo - Anchorage. I have estimated that travel within Scandinavia would be by rented vehicle and travel within the USSR would be by plane, train, bus, horse, and by boat. Naturally the exact itinerary in the USSR would probably be determined by the Russian government and might depend on the good graces of our State department and the strict exchange agreements already extant. This would have to be determined and would undoubtedly involve beginning the trip in Washington, D. C. after detailed correspondence with our State department, Foreign Agriculture Service, and our Congressional delegation.

The trip outlined above would be the responsibility of one of the two botanists specified in the bill. I have included the services of an interpreter for that portion of the trip where I think it might be necessary. It would not be absolutely necessary in the Scandinavian countries where English is widely spoken except when in some of the out-of-the-way-places. If adequate groundwork is laid prior to the trip, there probably would be no difficulty. Strict protocol is important to the Europeans. Also, July is the month of vacation for most of the professional people in Europe. Appointments must be made with people ahead of time.

For the other botanist, I propose a similar collecting trip in northwest Canada which would include the Alaska Highway as far as Edmonton, with side trips to Inuvik, Ft. Simpson, Ft. Vermillion, the Peace River country, and possibly other specific areas. This trip could be combined with collection in Southeastern Alaska.

More concentrated collections are envisioned within the state by this same individual, although even here, the amount of territory to be covered within the time span of the project means that collections will just be a first sampling of plant materials that might be useful. I have broken the state down by areas, and it appears that collection would entail at least eleven separate excursions within the state.

Since the Institute of Agricultural Sciences has been collecting grasses throughout the state since 1956, we have a fair sampling of these important species. I would presume that the botanist collecting in Alaska under the auspices of Senate Bill 22 would therefore want to concentrate on native small fruits such as currants, blueberries, raspberries, lingonberries, etc. and on plants suitable for use as ornamentals. Collection of this type of

material might entail collection of the whole plant or cuttings rather than seed. Revival and establishment of this material would entail special growing techniques such as the use of a mist chamber.

All materials collected need to be cataloged and in condition to be stored for further use or established in nurseries. This will require constant attention to avoid losing valuable material once it has been returned to this area.

An item closely related to collections of materials from areas outside of Alaska is the question of quarantines. Existing federal quarantine regulations prohibits the introduction of certain kinds of plant materials. Seeds are usually admitted providing they are properly handled and sometimes treated. If vegetatively propagated materials are allowed into the U.S., they are generally kept in strict quarantine for as much as a year or two in quarantine nurseries. There is no doubt that quarantines are necessary and highly desirable. Certainly we would not want to introduce serious plant pest problems into Alaska if it could be avoided. On the other hand, if materials from northern regions, adapted to conditions found only in northern regions, are quarantined at southerly locations, we might lose a great deal of materials that would be valuable in Alaska. I think we should work very closely with the federal quarantine people and try to establish a quarantine area as a part of the Plant Materials Center perhaps even under the strict supervision of the federal plant quarantine people.

Even materials allowed entry into the U.S. should be planted in quarantine for at least a year, which again means establishing a separate area within the Center for quarantine plantings of anything imported into Alaska. I think the present Center location would be excellent for quarantine purposes since it is isolated from other farming activities by trees and distance. Development of isolated quarantine block would add certain unanticipated expenditures to the Plant Materials Center, but I believe it is closely enough related to the collections project that certain funds could be used from those under Senate Bill 22.

I hope this will show you the direction of my thinking in relation to the budget breakdown I discussed with you.

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

State of Alaska

TO: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DATE: January 16, 1975

FILE NO:

TELEPHONE NO: 465-2420

FROM: F. S. Honsinger, D.V.M.
Acting Director

SUBJECT: Proposals for the
Division of Agriculture

The Alaska Division of Agriculture is usually identified as a regulatory and service agency working with the agricultural industry, however, the public interest might better be served by calling attention to the fact that food is the product of agriculture and that one of the Division's primary missions is to assure consumers a reliable supply of wholesome, high quality food.

Some of the basic functions of the Division of Agriculture are aimed at improving, facilitating, and developing the production, processing, and marketing of food and food products. Unfortunately, in today's largely urban society, there is a general lack of understanding of the role of agriculture and the Division in providing the foods that the consumer takes for granted will always be available at the supermarket.

To many people, the term "agriculture" connotes subsidies, pesticides, large corporate holdings, and other points of controversy. Almost never mentioned is the most important fact about agriculture: that it provides people with food, an absolute essential for human existence.

Perhaps a name change to "Division of Food and Agriculture" (State of California now has a Department of Food and Agriculture) or "Division of Agriculture and Consumer Services" (State of Florida has Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) would more clearly define the basic goals and programs of the Division and would help create a more realistic and appreciative image of agriculture in the public mind.

The following information and comments pertain to the present food inspection programs within the State of Alaska. Some comments are hereby suggested as to possible future directions the State may want to take as the demand for consumer protection in foods continues, and Congressional actions in this field places additional responsibilities at the State level.

As you are aware, over the years there has been some adjustments made within the State government for food inspection programs. Presently, the Department of Natural Resources through the Division of Agriculture handles meat and poultry inspections, milk and frozen desserts, produce, and eggs. The milk and frozen desserts programs were at one time under the Department of Health and Social Services, but were subsequently transferred to the Division of Agriculture.

Passage by Congress in 1967 of the Wholesome Meat Act followed by the Wholesome Poultry Act, the Egg Products Inspection Act, and others has placed an ever increasing demand on the food industry. At both the national and state level,

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to remain competitive and to meet requirements of these acts, it has been necessary for the food industry, at all levels, producer, processor, wholesaler and retailer to upgrade facilities and improve quality control.

Of the various consumer protection acts pertaining to foods passed by Congress, none has had a larger impact in Alaska than the Wholesome Meat Act of 1967. A requirement of this act was for states to upgrade their meat inspection programs within three years to "equal to" Federal standards. This necessitated a reorganization of the Division of Agriculture, establishment of a chemistry laboratory, and locating inspector positions in several locations throughout the State. The Alaska meat inspection program was certified as "equal to" Federal standards by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in December, 1970.

The 1972 session of the State Legislature extended meat inspection to include retailers within Alaska handling meats and poultry products. Since this extension of inspection, our inspection program has been approached on several occasions by the seafood industry in the State as to the possibility of expanding the program to bring their facilities and products under a combined inspection program. You might be interested in the comments contained in Attachments 1 and 2 along these same lines. Presently, seafood inspection is handled by the Department of Health and Social Services.

The last session of Congress had three different Wholesome Fish Acts under consideration, all were along similar formats as the Wholesome Meat Act. Two of the bills were to extend fish and fish products inspection under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the third was to include the inspection under a similar arrangement as the Wholesome Meat and Poultry Acts. If, a Wholesome Fish Act is passed by Congress, the State of Alaska will feel the impact as hard as any in the nation. Because of this inevitable inspection, it might be wise for the State to look seriously at the recommendations made by Mr. W. S. Miller, President of Alaskan Seafoods, Inc. in Attachment 2.

A unified state food inspection program perhaps should be considered at this time. Presently, at least four State agencies are involved in some facet of food inspection, the Department of Natural Resources, through the meats, poultry, milk and frozen desserts, produce and eggs, the Department of Health and Social Services through enforcement of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (includes seafood inspection), the Department of Commerce through the Division of Weights and Measures, and the most recent, the Department of Law, Division of Consumer Protection.

Under the present set up, a food wholesaler or retailer is subject to several inspections by several state agencies on any given business day. In fact, we have been confronted by store-owners complaining of just such a thing happening to them.

The cross-training of inspectors to handle State responsibilities for food industry inspections is certainly within the realm of technology. A class of food inspectors could be trained to handle the basic facility and product inspections with the necessary professional and laboratory assistance to compliment a very complete State Food Inspection Program. This could resolve the multiple inspection the food industry presently faces, provide a more uniform inspection program, and consolidate State responsibilities.

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Various states have already proceeded to unify their consumer protection responsibilities under new agency formats, or have consolidated fragmented responsibilities under an existing agency already having a primary function in the field such as the previously mentioned newly created State of Florida, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Some states have placed consumer services under Commerce, and others under their Health Departments.

As we have upgraded and expanded our various food inspection programs the last four years to meet federal standards, it has become evident that there are areas where consolidation of fragmented agency responsibilities would be in the best interest of both the State and industry. With the possibility of a Federal Wholesome Fish Act being passed, and the resultant impact in Alaska, it might be well to take the initial steps at the state level for consolidation of seafoods with existing food inspection programs, and look seriously at training a level of food inspectors capable of providing uniform sanitation, facility, and product inspection to all facets of the food industry in the State.

Comments would be appreciated, and our administrative and inspection staff would be glad to discuss the subject with interested government or industry people.

FSH:hh