

COMMITTEE REPORT  
SENATE

4/8/83

FURTHER:

Date: 5/6/83

Mr. President:

The Committee on FINANCE has had SB 80

Amending ch. 157, SLA 1980, to extend the life of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control; eff. date

under consideration and (a majority of the committee) (the committee) reports it back with the following recommendations:

- do pass  do not pass
- do pass with attached amendments(s)
- replace with CS for \_\_\_\_\_  same title  
 new title
- and recommends \_\_\_\_\_
- AND attaches a "Letter of Intent"  New Fiscal Note
- reports it back without recommendation
- referred to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

MEMBERS SIGNING  
DO PASS

MEMBERS HAVING  
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

John Scott  
Al Cooper  
Bob Mulcahy  
James

John L. Nolan

[Signature]

CHAIRMAN

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MEMBERS SIGNING  
DO PASS

MEMBERS HAVING  
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*John Sargent*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
*Richard ...*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
*Bob ...*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*John ...*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*[Signature]*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 CHAIRMAN

Introduced: 1/27/83  
Referred: Resources and  
Finance

1 IN THE SENATE

BY ZIEGLER BY REQUEST

2

SENATE BILL NO. 80

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

A BILL

6

For an Act entitled: "An Act amending ch. 157, SLA 1980 to extend the life  
of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control; and  
providing for an effective date."

7

8

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

10

\* Section 1. Section 8(5), ch. 157, SLA 1980 is amended to read:

11

(5) by January 1, 1985 [1983], submit to the governor and

12

the legislature its final report which shall identify those interim

13

report recommendations which have been implemented, evaluate the

14

practical effects of the implementation of the recommendations, and

15

make further recommendations on the improvement of fire prevention and

16

control.

17

\* Sec. 2. Section 9, ch. 157, SLA 1980 is amended to read:

18

Sec. 9. This Act terminates on June 30, 1985 [1983].

19

\* Sec. 3. This Act takes effect immediately in accordance with AS 01.-

20

10.070(c).

SB 80

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# Fire!

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Thousands of times a year, that shout reverberates down hallways or the inner recesses of the mind, as Alaskans come face to face with one of the most dreaded causes of death and disfigurement. Ironically, for every Alaskan who will confront flames or choking smoke this year, there are hundreds who give the threat of fire not a moment's thought, who will continue to take only the slightest precautions to guard against fire.

Appallingly, the richest and most technologically advanced nation in the world, our country, leads *all* the major industrialized countries in per capita deaths and property loss from fire.

The fact that the United States reports a death rate nearly twice that of second-ranking Canada creates a grim perspective on Alaska. Our fire record exceeds the rest of the United States in losses, and thus is one of the worst in the world!

Alaska's death rate is the most horrible of all the states, ten times greater than that of Hawaii, five times greater than California's.

Similarly, in the category of economic loss per capita, the United States exceeds second worst Canada by one-third. The price of destructive fire in the United States amounts, by conservative estimates, to at least \$21 billion a year (see Table 1).

Direct loss of property in Alaska for 1980 totaled more than \$26 million. On a national per capita basis, Alaskans lose more than twice as much as other Americans to destructive fire. Beyond calculation are the losses from business that must close and from jobs that are interrupted or destroyed.

Most of fire's victims die by inhaling smoke or toxic gases well before the flames have reached them. The scars and terrifying memories live on with the hundreds of Alaskans who are injured by fire every year. Of these, nearly one sixth lie in hospitals for a period ranging from 6 weeks to 2 years. Many of them must return, over and over again, for plastic and reconstructive surgery. Many never resume normal lives.

TABLE 1

1979 TOTAL U.S. FIRE PROBLEMS

FIRES	2,600,000 Reported to Fire Service
	<u>30,000,000 Not Reported to Fire Service</u>
TOTAL	32,600,000
DEATHS	7,800
INJURIES	31,000 Reported to Fire Service
	<u>200,000 Not Reported to Fire Service</u>
TOTAL	231,000
DOLLAR LOSS	\$ 5 + Billion Direct Property
	<u>\$16 + Billion Other Costs</u>
TOTAL	\$21 + Billion

SOURCE: NFIRS, NCHS, and NFPA, reported in "State Policies and Initiatives in Fire Prevention Management", National Governors' Association and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

*Alaska Fire Chiefs' Association*  
 656 7th Avenue  
 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701



DR82-02

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES TO ADMINISTER  
 GRANT FUNDS TO THE ALASKA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

WHEREAS The Board of Directors of the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association has selected three (3) members to administer grant funds received for the continued operation of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control, and

WHEREAS The three members have been directed to establish proper accounting procedures for the handling of any funds received, and

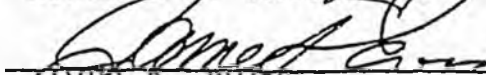
WHEREAS These three members shall be known as the GRANT FUND ADMINISTRATORS, and are, by name: Robert W. Howell, Russell J. Bagley, and James R. Evans, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the GRANT FUND ADMINISTRATORS be empowered by the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association to receive, administer, disburse and account for any and all funds that are used for the continued work of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control,

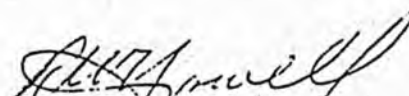
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that signatures of any two of the three members of the GRANT FUND ADMINISTRATORS be sufficient and proper for any transaction relative to these funds. Signatures of the GRANT FUND ADMINISTRATORS are as follows:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 ROBERT W. HOWELL

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 RUSSELL J. BAGLEY

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 JAMES R. EVANS

APPROVED IN SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING November 30, 1982,  
 in ANCHORAGE ALASKA.

  
 for \_\_\_\_\_  
 BASIL J. SANDS Jr., President

## *Alaska Fire Chiefs' Association*

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION:

The Alaska Fire Chief's Association (AFCA) formed in 1972, as an "off-shoot" of the Alaska State Firefighters Association. The first president of the Association was Chief Dan Coben of the Fairbanks Fire Department.

Presidents following have been Chiefs: Eugene Benett, Anchorage Fire Department; Russell Bagley, Anchorage Borough Fire Department; Jack Mason, Glacier Fire Department; Robert Lewis, Nome Fire Department; Marty Fredrickson, Sitka Fire Department; Andre Schalk, State Fire Marshal's Office; James Evans, Anchorage Fire Department; and Basil Sands, Fairbanks Fire Department. As can be noted the Association leadership has come from all parts of the State and all sizes of Fire Departments.

Membership includes all of the ethnic groups of Alaska, as well as black and female chiefs. The membership of the Association is truly representative of the senior Chief Officers of the Alaska Fire Service. Additionally, the Association is representative of the various types of fire services in Alaska. Members are from the cities, towns, rural villages, federal agencies, state agencies, wildland agencies, and Airport fire departments.

The Association advocates better fire protection to all Alaskans, to better the fire prevention efforts, to improve the public fire education programs, to improve arson investigation and apprehension, to improving the fire and life-safety codes as well as building codes and code enforcement in this State.

As an organization this Association has worked to better inform the public about fire related matters; to provide an advisory role for the legislature and other state or local governments; to train and to advise the many fire chiefs of Alaska in any way possible; and to serve the State as the source for advise or information in all fire and rescue related matters. With the cooperative efforts of the Alaska State Firefighter's Association, the Firefighter's unions, and our affiliation with the International Association of Fire Chiefs this Association provides a wide range of fire related services to all of Alaska.

During the last years the Association led the way to get legislation passed to provide low interest loans for business owners to install fire protection equipment and to get a reduction in the assessed taxes on such fire protection equipment (this legislation has received national attention and is considered the model for other states); to create a State Task Force to study the total fire protection picture in the State; to pass the arson information act to try to stop the terrible Alaskan arson problem; to fund a position of Fire Education Specialist in the State Fire Marshal's office; for additional Regional Fire Training officers in the Fire Service Training Program of the Department of Education, and many other important statewide issues.

Members of the AFCA always stand ready to provide expert advise on fire, rescue, life-safety etc. to anyone in the state who may request assistance. The Alaska Fire Chief's Association will continue to be the primary force for better fire protection in Alaska by assisting the nearly 200 fire Chiefs in the State to do an even better job of serving their local citizens.

# Recommendations

**A. In order to systematically reduce the loss of life and property due to fire, the State should undertake master planning for fire protection. Participants of master planning should include:**

- a. representatives of each department and/or division whose responsibilities include fire;
- b. a director and staff housed in the Governor's Office;
- c. representatives from the fire service;
- d. representatives from industry;
- e. representatives from the public;
- f. representatives from local civil defense groups;
- g. representatives of Emergency Medical Service.

The present State system is a conglomeration of isolated programs. Master planning is essential to develop a more effective and efficient approach to fire protection. Broad representation is necessary so that planning policy reflects the actual needs of the state and its communities.

**B. Master planning should be a function of the Governor's Office.**

Almost every department of State administration has some fire protection programs or concerns. Therefore, master planning must be undertaken with a high level of authority. Leadership from the Governor will be an important factor in solving Alaska's fire problem.

**C. The three major responsibilities of the Division of Fire Prevention are public education, code enforcement, and fire investigation, and should all have parity in the priority given them by the Division.**

Education plays a key role in Alaska's fight against fire. Countries which have better fire records than ours emphasize fire prevention. Education is undoubtedly the most effective way to prevent fires from starting and to reduce injuries and suffering.

Arson investigation is an absolute necessity. Losses from arson alone in this country are higher than the total losses for all other crimes combined! Alaska's response to this problem has been negligent.

Public education and investigations are currently taking a back seat to code enforcement. The battle against fire must be advanced on all possible fronts!

**D. The Department of Law and the Department of Public Safety must be compelled to fulfill their statutory mission in arson investigation and prosecution.**

These two departments combined have only one position devoted to arson; this is not enough.

**E. An Assistant Attorney General should be appointed to assume the responsibility for the prosecution of arson.**

Assistant Attorneys General are appointed for criminal and other civil problems. The magnitude of arson and our failure to curb it warrant an arson section in the Department of Law.

**F. When arson investigations are made by the Department of Public Safety, by local authorities, or by both, the State Fire Marshal must maintain an active involvement throughout the case.**

Ultimate responsibility for fire investigation rests with the Fire Marshal by statute. When other authorities become involved in the case, the Fire Marshal is still concerned with the problems, development, success or failure of the investigation. This ensures continuity in the progress of an investigation from the initial identification of arson, through criminal investigation, to prosecution by the Department of Law. Furthermore, the details of each case are pertinent to the Fire Marshal's overall task of fire protection and prevention.

**G. The Division of Fire Prevention should implement an arson prevention program.**

Such a program has been demonstrated elsewhere in the country, and has been shown to successfully reduce the incidence of arson in targeted high risk areas.

**H. Electrical and mechanical inspections conducted by the Department of Labor which are closely related to State fire inspections should be conducted by a code**

enforcement section of the Division of Fire Prevention.

Multiple inspections presently done by more than one department result in duplication of effort and in confusion and resentment on the part of the public. Consolidated fire and safety inspections will improve protection and public awareness.

- I. **The Alaska National Fire Incident Reporting System (ANFIRS) should receive sufficient personnel and funding to provide fire incident information in a timely and reliable manner. The RAMIS system for selective information retrieval needs to be integrated into the ANFIRS as soon as possible.**

ANFIRS plays an important part in identifying and managing the many aspects of Alaska's fire problem areas. An accurate and comprehensive data base is essential to understanding and solving the problem.

- J. **The State Fire Marshal should enforce 13 AAC 52.020, requiring fire insurance companies to report all necessary information on fire losses to the Division of Fire Prevention.**

This is equally important as ANFIRS in developing an accurate data base on fire in Alaska.

- K. **To assure the proper coordination of training statewide, all State agencies scheduling training for fire prevention or suppression should advise the Department of Education's Fire Service Training Program of their plans.**

This will enable the Fire Service Training Program to better fulfill its role as information clearing house for the Alaska fire service.

- L. **The Fire Service Training Program should develop comprehensive training and certification programs for State and local personnel involved in fire investigation, public fire education, and fire inspections.**

These three areas are the most underdeveloped in terms of training. If the State is to improve its fire protection, skilled personnel are essential.

- M. **A fire protection grant program should be established by statute. The two phase program would include on-site needs assessment, development of specifications, and certified training in the first phase. The second phase would be for purchase of equipment and facilities.**

The first phase would be administered by the Department of Education, Fire Service Training and the second phase by the appropriate agency.

Such a two phase program would do a great deal towards solving some of the problems recently seen in state fire protection grants. The first phase of this program is the most important. If funds are available prior to formulation of legislative grants, the necessary needs assessment and identification of the funds required could be used to determine the size of grant necessary to give the community what they want.

In the event that this type of program is not instituted, we encourage communities and legislators to consider the following recommendations.

- N. **Communities and Legislators should consider a package concept for equipment grants. The package would include funds for the Fire Service Training Program to provide onsite needs assessment, development of specifications, and certified training.**

This type of a comprehensive grant will assure that the community will get the best possible protection for the money spent. Larger departments which have all the necessary expertise, need not use this type of a grant. However, communities with small or new departments would benefit from having the appropriate equipment and training.

When a package concept is used, the total grant should be administered by the Fire Service Training Program.

- O. **Insurance companies should be required to give a minimum of 5% credit on premiums for recognized fire survey inspections of dwellings. The enforcement of this regulation should be the responsibility of the Division of Insurance.**

The 5% credit would be an encouragement for owners of the highest risk dwelling category (triplexes, duplexes, and single-family homes) to

benefit from a fire survey. Everything that can be done to lower the losses for this category should be considered. It is our intent that local fire departments provide these surveys free of charge, time permitting. This would encourage the public and the firefighters themselves to think of the fire service in terms of prevention as well as suppression.

**P. The State Board of Education should issue an official statement of support for public fire education in the schools.**

**Q. The Task Force urges local school boards and private schools to adopt the National Fire Protection Association "Learn Not to Burn" program.**

**R. The State of Alaska should support the national campaign for the marketing of a self-extinguishing cigarette.**

A great number of lethal fires in Alaska, and around the nation, are caused by smoldering cigarettes which continue to burn when left unattended, or accidentally dropped when the smoker falls asleep. A cigarette which goes out when it is not smoked would considerably reduce the life and property losses in the United States.

**S. The State Attorney General should determine the Federal, State, Borough, Municipal, and Fire Service District wildlands fire suppression responsibilities, for wildlands which fall within Fire Service District and Borough boundaries.**

**T. The Division of Forestry should improve their emergency communications system to allow direct communication with local fire agencies.**

**U. A fire system improvement loan program was established by Chapter 45, SLA 1980 (HB 648), to provide low interest loans to businesses wanting to improve their fire protection systems. The legislation should be revised to reinstate the low interest loan program specifically for fire protection system improvement.**

Through an apparent oversight, this legislation was superceded in 1981 and this program has no present authority. AIDA (Alaska Industrial Development Authority) can write such loans, but

have not written any so far. Most of the loans AIDA is involved with are for significantly more money than the fire protection improvement loans tend to be, so, in the view of many fire officials, the loan requests tend to "fall between the cracks". AIDA's interest rate is also higher than that of the old program.

## STATEMENT OF WORK

The work to be performed under this contract is completion of the objectives set for the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control in Section 3 of Chapter 157, SLA 1980. It is understood that progress toward these objectives was made by the Task Force and set out in the "Report of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control" issued June 30, 1982. These objectives were set out in the Act as:

- (1) Identify and provide a detailed account of the fire loss problem in the state, including causal factors;
- (2) Identify and define the present roles and relationships of the agencies in the state which are involved in fire protection activities at the local, regional, state and federal levels;
- (3) Recommend organizational or operational modifications to improve the effectiveness of the state's fire protection system;
- (4) Provide documentation that will assist all government agencies and fire fighting services in effectively meeting their fire protection responsibilities.

Specifically the work under this contract will include:

- (1) Completion of the research and analysis of federal and state programs relating to fire.
- (2) Preparation of recommendations to improve federal and state programs with specific attention to the possibility of improvement through reorganization of state programs.
- (3) Study of the wildlands fire problem, the delivery mechanism for combating these problems and the relationship between agencies involved in the wildlands fire problem.
- (4) Preparation of recommendations to alleviate the wildlands fire problems and to clarify the relationships between the agencies involved.
- (5) Study the problem of arson in Alaska and prepare recommendations for alleviation of the problems.
- (6) Further study the recommendations made in the "Report of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control" and recommend improvements or clarifications where needed.

(7) Prepare a final report showing the results of the studies and containing the recommendations.