

**SB**

**351**



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Sen. Robin Taylor, Chair  
Sen. Dave Donley, Vice-Chair  
Sen. John Cowdery  
Sen. Gene Therriault  
Sen. Johnny Ellis



State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3717  
Fax: 465-3922

## Senate Judiciary Committee

### **SPONSOR STATEMENT SB 351**

**"An Act relating to conveyance of tide and submerged land to municipalities."**

For too long, coastal municipalities have been denied control of the land within its own boundaries. SB 351 will correct problems in existing law, giving communities more control over some of its more valuable property.

SB 351 makes the transfer of tide and submerged lands to municipalities much easier than is in current law. It requires the Commissioner to identify specific land the state may reserve in the public interest or access and transfer the balance to the municipality. From there, local government and the local public can determine how that land is of the most value. In some cases, it will remain wild for its scenic value; in others, it may be developed. In either case, the final decision will be made at the local level. Residents who actually have to live with the results will have easy access and input in the decision making process.

SB 351 also allows the municipality to make selections and receive an answer within an acceptable timeline. For many communities, the selection process has been brought to a "hurry up and wait" status because the Department has not made a determination. Often, that is because of the Department's workload. This bill corrects that problem by providing for a 90-day timeline for response. This time frame gives the Department 90 days to review the request. If there is no objection based on the reasons stated in Section 1, the land is conveyed to the municipality.

Making decisions for local communities on how they conduct their business should not be up to state government. Communities make the best decisions for communities. The public process always works best on a local level. SB 351 will give local governments the ability to best determine how land within its boundaries can and will be used for its residents.