

SB

297

Senate Bill 297

An Act moving employees of the Alaska mental health trust land unit of the Department of Natural Resources from the partially exempt service to the exempt service.

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Prepared by Tim Lamkin, staff to Senator Gary Wilken
For the precise impact of the bill, please refer to the actual bill text.

Section	Statute	Existing	Changes
1	AS 39.25.110 (37) Exempt Service	Paragraphs (1) to (36) list positions of state service that are exempt from the provisions of the State Personnel Act.	Adds a new exemption as paragraph (37), employees of the Alaska mental health land unit established under AS 44.37.050
2	AS 44.37.050 Duties of department with respect to management of mental health trust land	(1994) Established a separate unit within DNR with sole responsibility of managing Mental Health land.	Establishes that employees of this unit are exempt under AS 39.25.110
3	AS 39.25.120(c)(17) Partially Exempt Service	Includes employees of MHT land unit as partially exempt from the provisions of the State Personnel Act.	Repeals that employees of this unit are partially exempt.



ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST

TRUST LAND OFFICE

Mental Health Trust Land Disposals:

Year 2001 Land Sale
Years 1999 and 2000 Land Sale

Year 2001 Cook Inlet
Oil & Gas Lease Offering

THE TRUST

The Alaska Mental Health Trust was established by Congress in 1956. The 1956 law included a grant of one million acres of land to be used to generate revenues to meet the expenses of mental health programs in Alaska. In the mid-1980s, a citizen lawsuit was filed, claiming mismanagement of these lands. In 1994, the Alaska Superior Court and Alaska Legislature took actions which effectively settled the litigation. The settlement created the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, whose responsibility is to ensure the creation of a comprehensive, integrated mental health program for Alaska.

TRUST BENEFICIARIES

Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries include Alaskans with mental retardation or similar disabilities, mental illness, chronic alcoholism with psychosis, and Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

TRUST LAND OFFICE

The 1994 settlement reconstituted the Alaska Mental Health Trust, and the related legislation transferred nearly one million acres of land to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. It also required the creation of a separate unit within the Department of Natural Resources, the Trust Land Office. This office was established to manage the lands under contract to the Alaska

Trust Land Office Information

Mental Health Trust Authority. Trust Land Office activities are funded from Alaska Mental Health Trust income, not the General Fund.

TRUST LAND OFFICE MISSION

The mission of the TLO is twofold: (1) to protect and enhance the value of Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands; and (2) to maximize revenues from Trust Lands over time. Revenues generated from Trust Lands are used by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to improve the lives and circumstances of Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries.

TRUST LAND MANAGEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Trust Lands are managed solely in the best interest of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and its beneficiaries, recognizing the significant relationship of Trust land management to Alaskan communities.

Trust land management is conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- loyalty to the Trust and its beneficiaries;
- maximization of long-term revenue from Trust Land;
- protection and enhancement of Trust assets;
- encouragement of a diversity of revenue-generating activities on Trust Land; and
- accountability to the Trust and its beneficiaries.

TRUST LAND OPPORTUNITIES

- a wealth of natural resources including: commercial timber, hard rock minerals, coal, oil and natural gas;
- real estate opportunities uniquely situated for residential and commercial activities, including opportunities for development related to recreation and tourism;
- an enthusiastic Trust Land Office staff, dedicated to generating revenues from Mental Health Trust Land;
- a flexible, business-oriented decision making process that encourages creative and sensible projects;
- the knowledge that revenues generated from Mental Health Trust Lands go to improving the lives and circumstances of Trust beneficiaries.

INFORMATION

Maps and answers to general Mental Health Trust Land questions can be found at the Division of Land Public Information Offices of the Department of Natural Resources.

Public Information Offices:

- * Northern Region, Fairbanks (907) 451-2705
- * Southcentral Region, Anchorage (907) 269-8400
- * Southeast Region, Juneau (907) 465-3400

- * Trust Land Management Regulations: 11AAC 99

Mental Health Trust Land Disposals

<u>Year 2001 Land Sale</u> <u>Years 1999 and 2000 Land Sale</u>	<u>Year 2001 Cook Inlet</u> <u>Oil & Gas Lease Offering</u>
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Trust Land Office:

Robert B. Atwood Building
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1430
Anchorage, AK 99501
Tel: (907) 269-8658
Fax: (907) 269-8905

Questions about the use of revenues should be directed to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority office at (907) 269-7960.



Home Page

GARY WILKEN

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Senate Bill 297

Sponsor Statement

“An Act moving employees of the Alaska Mental Health Trust land unit of the Department of Natural Resources from the partially exempt service to the exempt service.”

Senate Bill 297 was introduced at the request of the Mental Health Trust Authority. It places employees of the Mental Health Trust Authority lands unit into exempt service.

The Mental Health Trust Land Unit is located in the Department of Natural Resources. Its sole purpose is to manage Alaska Mental Health Trust land on behalf of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Its operating costs are funded entirely by income generated from the cash and land assets of the Trust, not by general funds.

The Unit maintains a core operating staff of nine. This legislation will provide the MHTA with the means of retaining trained staff that are being solicited by, and relocating to, other agencies offering better compensation packages not afforded by the current “partially exempt” status of MHTA lands unit employees. Additionally, it will align the Unit with the management framework of the Trust Authority staff, which was converted to fully exempt status for similar reasons last year.

Please support this legislation and thereby allow the AMHTA to more efficiently manage their personnel structure, to reward performance, and establish a long-term fix for their efforts to recruit, train, and retain key staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Wilken".

GARY WILKEN

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 19, 2002

TO: Senator Gene Therriault, Chairperson
Senate State Affairs Committee

FROM: Gary Wilken
Senator, West Fairbanks

RE: Hearing Request for SB 297

I'm writing to respectfully request that Senate Bill 297 be scheduled for a hearing before the Senate State Affairs Committee as soon as conveniently possible.

SB 297, "An Act moving employees of the Alaska mental health trust land unit of the Department of Natural Resources from the partially exempt service to the exempt service." is submitted at the request of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. It will improve AMHT's ability to attract and retain key staff in their lands management unit.

Please help the AMHT see this beneficial legislation continue onward through the Legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary Wilken".