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SENATOR KIM ELTON

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Linda Menard, State Affairs Chair
FROM: Senator Kim Elton
SUBJECT: SB 94 Hearing Request
DATE: 2/24/2009

I respectfully request a hearing on SB 94, "An Act relating to employment in certain facilities maintained by the United States Antarctic Program as allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."

SB 94 would create a Permanent Fund Dividend allowable absence for Alaskans who are employed in Antarctica through the United States Antarctic Program.

I have heard from Alaskans who are employed in Antarctica and maintain their primary residence in Anchorage, Denali Park, Hope, Juneau, McKinley Village, Moose Pass, Soldonta, Sutton, and Talkeetna.

With the current state of the economy, we should do our part to encourage Alaskans to keep good jobs.

Thank you for considering a hearing on SB 94. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.



SENATOR KIM ELTON

SB 94

"An Act relating to employment in certain facilities maintained by the United States Antarctic Program as allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement

SB 94 would create a Permanent Fund Dividend allowable absence for Alaskans who are employed in Antarctica through the United States Antarctic Program. This small group of Alaskans works seasonally in Antarctica and returns to Alaska where they maintain their primary residence. The income they earn in Antarctica is predominantly spent here in Alaska.

I have heard from Alaskans who are employed in Antarctica and maintain their primary residence in Anchorage, Denali Park, Hope, Juneau, McKinley Village, Moose Pass, Soldonta, Sutton, and Talkeetna.

This bill does include a provision that workers must return to Alaska within 30 days of leaving Antarctica.

With the current state of the economy, we should do our part to encourage Alaskans to keep good jobs.

26-LS0371VE
Cook
3/11/09

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 94()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

Offered: .
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATOR ELTON

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to employment in certain facilities maintained by the United States**
2 **Antarctic Program as allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for**
3 **permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 *** Section 1.** AS 43.23.008(a) is amended to read:

6 (a) Subject to (b) and (c) of this section, an otherwise eligible individual who
7 is absent from the state during the qualifying year remains eligible for a current year
8 permanent fund dividend if the individual was absent

9 (1) receiving secondary or postsecondary education on a full-time
10 basis;

11 (2) receiving vocational, professional, or other specific education on a
12 full-time basis for which, as determined by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary
13 Education, a comparable program is not reasonably available in the state;

14 (3) serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the

1 United States or accompanying, as that individual's spouse, minor dependent, or
2 disabled dependent, an individual who is

3 (A) serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of
4 the United States; and

5 (B) eligible for a current year dividend;

6 (4) serving under foreign or coastal articles of employment aboard an
7 oceangoing vessel of the United States merchant marine;

8 (5) receiving continuous medical treatment recommended by a
9 licensed physician or convalescing as recommended by the physician who treated the
10 illness if the treatment or convalescence is not based on a need for climatic change;

11 (6) providing care for a parent, spouse, sibling, child, or stepchild with
12 a critical life-threatening illness whose treatment plan, as recommended by the
13 attending physician, requires travel outside the state for treatment at a medical
14 specialty complex;

15 (7) providing care for the individual's terminally ill family member;

16 (8) settling the estate of the individual's deceased parent, spouse,
17 sibling, child, or stepchild, provided the absence does not exceed 220 cumulative days;

18 (9) serving as a member of the United States Congress;

19 (10) serving on the staff of a member from this state of the United
20 States Congress;

21 (11) serving as an employee of the state in a field office or other
22 location;

23 (12) accompanying a minor who is absent under (5) of this subsection;

24 (13) accompanying another eligible resident who is absent for a reason
25 permitted under (1), (2), (5) - (12), (16), or (18) [(17)] of this subsection as the spouse,
26 minor dependent, or disabled dependent of the eligible resident;

27 (14) serving as a volunteer in the federal peace corps program;

28 (15) because of training or competing as a member of the United States
29 Olympic Team;

30 (16) participating for educational purposes in a student fellowship
31 sponsored by the United States Department of Education or by the United States

1 Department of State;

2 (17) servicing as an employee in a facility maintained by the United
3 States Antarctic Program that is a research station in Antarctica, a field camp in
4 Antarctica, or a research vessel in Antarctic water if the individual returns to the
5 state within 30 days after leaving the facility;

6 (18) for any reason consistent with the individual's intent to remain a
7 state resident, provided the absence or cumulative absences do not exceed

8 (A) 180 days in addition to any absence or cumulative absences
9 claimed under (3) of this subsection if the individual is not claiming an absence
10 under (1), (2), or (4) - (17) [(4) - (16)] of this subsection;

11 (B) 120 days in addition to any absence or cumulative absences
12 claimed under (1) - (3) of this subsection if the individual is not claiming an
13 absence under (4) - (17) [(4) - (16)] of this subsection but is claiming an
14 absence under (1) or (2) of this subsection; or

15 (C) 45 days in addition to any absence or cumulative absences
16 claimed under (1) - (17) [(1) - (16)] of this subsection if the individual is
17 claiming an absence under (4) - (17) [(4) - (16)] of this subsection.

18 * Sec. 2. AS 43.23.008(b) is amended to read:

19 (b) An individual may not claim an allowable absence under (a)(1) - (17)
20 [(a)(1) - (16)] of this section unless the individual was a resident of the state for at
21 least six consecutive months immediately before leaving the state.

22 * Sec. 3. This Act takes effect January 1, 2010.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: 26-LS0371A
 () Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): SB94-DOR-PFD-03-02-09 Dept. Affected: DOR
 Title: PFD Allowable Absence - Antarctic Research RDU: Taxation and Treasury (510)
 Component: Permanent Fund Dividend Division
 Sponsor: Senator Elton
 Requester: State Affairs Component Number: 981

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services	10.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Travel								
Contractual	5.0		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	15.0	0.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts	15.0		3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
TOTAL	15.0	0.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Adding allowable absence to PFD applications requires reprogramming both the online and paper applications, PFD's website and eligibility database. There will be substantial Dept. of Law time involved in research and development of regulations to administer the law as written as expertise in maritime issues will be required.

The issue of "intent to return and remain" may cause denials for individuals claiming this absence. The result would likely be increased appeals which result in increased contractual cost.

Prepared by: Deborah M. Bitney
 Division: Permanent Fund Dividend
 Approved by: Ginger Blaisdell, Director
Administrative Services Division

Phone 465-4785
 Date/Time 2/27/09 12:00 AM
 Date 3/2/2009

Kristen Bressette

From: William Henriksen [num1mcmarshall@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2009 11:06 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: Bill to authorize PFD for Alaskans serving in the USAP

Kristen,

Please include me on your mailing list regarding the Bill Senator Elton is sponsoring (to authorize PFDs for Alaskans serving in the USAP)sympathize.

I have been an Alaskan resident for 43 years and have deployed with the USAP for over 60 months within the last ten years. I'll be deploying again in February for another 6 months, so will likely need to provide testimony via e-mail or phone. While I intend to make this my last deployment this is a subject that is near and dear to me. The majority of my income is spent in Alaska, I've owned a home and paid taxes during much of the time I've been deployed. I'm currently looking at purchasing another home in Eagle River. I find it demeaning to be excluded and in essence having my Alaska residency questioned due to the fact that I don't qualify for the PFD.

I will likely make this deployment my last, but at the same time I sympathize with other Alaskans in this similar situation. We are a very small number effected by this exclusion. Many of the Alaskans who go to the Ice work only the shorter summer seasons and are not out of State longer than the 180 days. Those of us who do spend a significant amount of the year in Antarctic have made large sacrifices both personally and financially to support a program we are passionate about.

My history of deployment started while working for RSA Engineering Co. in Anchorage. I deployed with them under contract with the National Science Foundation in the Austral summer 1998-1999, the entire 1999-2000 year (less 1.5 months). I worked for Raytheon Polar Services as the South Pole Winter Manager during the 2002-2003 year and 2004-2005 year and I've worked for the National Science foundations as the NSF Station Manager, doing 7 month deployments in McMurdo for the last three winter seasons, 2006, 2007 and 2008 winters.

Please feel free to contact me at this e-mail address or at (907) 632-3730 (until February 10th).

Please express my thanks to Senator Elton for agreeing to sponsor this Bill.

Bill

William Henriksen
6200 Andover Cir
Anchorage, Ak. 99517

Kristen Bressette

From: Tom Soltis [earthdog402@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2009 6:00 PM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: PFD for USAP

Dear Kristen Bressette:

I am a fellow Alaskan working for the United States Antarctic Program at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. I support your bill regarding the PFD for Alaskans working in Antarctica. I would like to be put on your mailing list.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Soltis, 229 Crest Dr. #B, Soldotna, AK 99669

Currently working at McMurdo Station Antarctica. Will be off the ice by the end of Feb.

Kristen Bressette

From: Terry Smales [akiceman13@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2009 9:32 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: Currently serving in Antarctica...

Kristen, please consider me as a contact in regards to the bill that may need help getting through. We as Alaskans get to live in a very special place and call it home. We come together when needed in good times and in bad. This, however could be one of those good times that can have a benefit to those Alaskans who go off and serve in the interest of science in yet another very special place, Antarctica. I have thought about this place for a few years and decided last year to throw my name in the hat to come to this special place and work. I did not get chosen last year (07-08) but I did this year (08-09) and I am currently speaking to you from McMurdo Station. I have had the time of my life here for work, learning, friendships, recreation and adventure. I have gone to some of the most remote places you can go here, South Pole Station being one of them. When I signed up for this I did have hesitation because it might have affected my PFD. My family uses the check to make ends meet in the middle once in a while, which nowadays is a blurry line. If an Alaskan is serving in Antarctica not only are they serving the U. S. A. P. but they are serving the world science community as well. Yes we do volunteer, or some have been asked. Then again, what about the absentee student's, the military personnel, the merchant marine's, the Olympic athlete's and the Peace Corps volunteers. All volunteers and they have no worry about their P F D. Why should Alaskans serving the world science community be any different? They should not be. Alaska is one of the three most represented states that come to Antarctica. What does that say about us? Well yes we are acclimated to the climate but that we are here to help and want to help. We are adventurous and thrill seekers. I am here to tell you, this is the place for all the above. When I came to Antarctica I brought three flags with me, the U. S. flag, the Antarctica flag (non-official), and the Alaskan flag. I have flown them on special occasions and in special places and flown them proudly. Everywhere I break out the flags to fly there is an Alaskan there asking if they could get their picture taking with our state flag. We are proud of state, our flag and tradition of being one of the three most represented states to have residents down here from. Make me continue to be proud of Alaska by making what should be right, be right.

Kristen Bressette

From: Bluestein, Sheri [sheri.bluestein@usap.gov]
Sent: Monday, January 19, 2009 11:05 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Cc: smbluest@yahoo.com; mgitzels@gmail.com
Subject: Support for PFD for Alaskans serving in the USAP program

Hi, Kristen,

I have worked five seasons for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) and wish to be included in the testimony in favor of granting the PFD to those who have served in the USAP Program. My husband, Michiel Gitzels, has also deployed with me since 2005. Neither one of us has ever qualified to receive a PFD.

We live in Hope, Alaska and I have done 5 summer seasons in Antarctica (2000-1, 2005-6, 2006-7, 2007-8, 2008-9). Michiel started working for the USAP in 2005. We returned to Alaska after three of those seasons but lived in Alaska prior to all of those deployments. Our normal work pattern has been May - October in Alaska and October - February in Antarctica. We normally visit family and travel in March and April.

Both of us did our medical testing in Alaska and spent quite a bit of money supporting dentists, gynecologists, x-ray technicians and medical centers in order to medically qualify for our jobs. Furthermore, we spent money earned in Antarctica at Costco on Dimond in Anchorage and Carr's on Huffman to stock up on health and beauty supplies, medications, vitamins, and snacks and at REI, Value Village and the shopping malls to buy clothing to send back down to Antarctica.

If my husband and I did not work in Antarctica, we would not have enough money to live in Hope year-round as there are not sufficient employment opportunities to keep us both gainfully employed. Money earned in Antarctica allow us to live comfortably in a town with minimal employment opportunities. Our Antarctic salaries enable us to pay for auto insurance, medical insurance, gasoline and rent, as well as food (purchased at Costco and Carr's). Furthermore, having a little extra cash enable me and my husband to patronize local restaurants and bars in Hope that we would otherwise not be able to afford.

It is difficult to say what percentage of our earnings were spent in Alaska, but if asked to prepare testimony, we can refer back to bank statements, if needed.

Many of us Alaskans in Antarctica have felt it unfair that Alaskan military personnel stationed elsewhere receive their PFD, but those of us who are committed to serving the advancement of science, do not merit the same consideration. We very much appreciate your interest in this issue and hope that we can rectify the inequity.

Kind regards,

Sheri Bluestein
McMurdo IT Instructor
Off-ice email as of 2/20: smbluest@yahoo.com

Kristen Bressette

From: glgk@gci.net on behalf of Lisa Kramer [glgk@gci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2009 11:01 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Cc: leep_ak@yahoo.cm
Subject: PFDs for Alaskans serving in the USAP

I am a business owner writing in support of the people serving in the USAP receiving their PFDs. I only know one person, Lee Parker, who is currently serving, but I feel very strongly that she and the others deserve the PFD. Even though Lee is away from Juneau for a good part of the year, she continues to spend money here----much of it at the veterinary hospital I co-own. Lee owns several pets and every year that she has been in Antartica, her pet-sitters have brought these pets in for care. Last year alone, Lee spent \$4589 on her pets, as one suffered a severe knee injury. Lee wasn't even in town, yet spent her money here. I'm sure it is the same with all her home utilities, yet she did not get the energy help either since that was tied into the PFD.

Hopefully, these workers, who really have nowhere in Antartica to spend much money and so spend it in Alaska, not only will get PFDs in the future, but could get the 2008 PFD as well.

Thank you,
Lisa Kramer
789-7551

Kristen Bressette

From: Mahovlic, Wendy [Wendy.Mahovlic@usap.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2009 9:29 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: Support for PFD for Alaskans serving the USAP program

Hi Kristen,

I have worked 10 seasons for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) and wish to be included in the testimony in favor of granting the PFD to those who have served in the USAP Program. I have received the PFD just once - in 2008 (my check was just sent to me recently).

I live in Denali Park, Alaska, and have worked 10 summer seasons (Southern Hemisphere) here at McMurdo Station in Antarctica (1999 - present). I have returned to Alaska after all of those seasons in Antarctica and have worked in Denali National Park for Park Service during the Northern Hemisphere summer. My normal work schedule has been: April - September working in Denali National Park and October- February working at McMurdo Station in Antarctica for USAP. A few years I have just missed qualifying for the PFD by a week. I have traveled in March and in the recent past have helped my family (end of Feb. - March) in Ohio take care of my father who recently died of Alzheimer's.

I did my medical testing in Fairbanks and spent quite a bit of money supporting dentists, doctors, gynecologists, x-ray technicians and medical centers in order to medically qualify for my job in Antarctica. Furthermore, I spent money earned in Antarctica in Fairbanks at Fred Meyer and Sam's Club to stock up on health and beauty supplies, medications, vitamins, and snacks. I also shopped at Value Village and the shopping malls to buy clothing to send back down to Antarctica.

I bought land near Denali National Park in 2004 and have built a house which was finished in Sept. 2007. I spent ALOT of money building the house - paying a local contractor who used local labor to build the house; buying supplies, appliances, lighting fixture, etc. in Fairbanks at Spenards Builders Supply, Lowe's, and Home Depot. I am now paying a monthly mortgage to Mt. McKinley Bank as well as paying MTA a phone bill and GVEA an electric bill. I buy groceries in the spring/summer/fall months in Fairbanks at Fred Meyer and I have a car which gets fueled at the local gas station in Healy or at Denali Park (whose prices are higher than anywhere in the U.S.).

If I did not work in Antarctica, I would not have enough money to live in Denali year-round as there are not sufficient employment opportunities to keep me gainfully employed in the Northern Hemisphere winter. Money earned in Antarctica allows me to live comfortably in an area with minimal employment opportunities in the Northern Hemisphere winter. My Antarctic salary enables me to pay for auto insurance, medical insurance, gasoline, my mortgage, phone and electric bills as well as food (purchased in Fairbanks at Fred Meyer) and other miscellaneous items that one needs for a house (I still have to buy furniture which I will purchase in Alaska). Furthermore, having a little extra cash enables me to patronize local restaurants and bars in Denali and Fairbanks that I would otherwise not be able to afford.

I would say that I spend 80% of my earnings in Alaska and if asked to prepare testimony, I can refer back to bank and credit card statements, if needed.

Many of us Alaskans in Antarctica have felt it unfair that Alaskan military personnel stationed elsewhere receive their PFD, but those of us who are committed to serving the advancement of science, do not merit the same consideration. We very much appreciate your interest in this issue and hope that we can rectify the inequity.

Kind regards,
Wendy Mahovlic

wmahovlic@yahoo.com (when I'm not in Antarctica)

 **WELLSPRING**
Integrative Medical Center

January 21, 2009

Kristen Bressette
Legislative Aide to Senator Kim Elton
kristen.bressette@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Kim,

I write this letter in support of Lee Parker's endeavors to obtain the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) for/ as Alaskans who work in Antarctica in the U.S. Antarctica Program (USAP).

My business, Wellspring, has repeatedly benefited from Lee's employment because her PQ (medical exam) prior to deployment has been completed at Wellspring.

Personally, I know that Lee is an Alaskan. She lives across the street from me and loves her home and state and spends her income here which benefits our local community.

I believe that Lee and other Alaskans working in the USAP should receive the PFD.

Thank you for considering this point of view.

Sincerely,

C. Trollan, ANP
Owner

Kristen Bressette

From: Sheeley, Tracy [Tracy.Sheeley@usap.gov]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2009 1:06 PM
To: Kristen Bressette
Cc: tjsheeley@yahoo.com
Subject: PFD for Alaskans serving in the USAP

Hello Kristen,

I have been an Alaska resident since 1995 and started deploying to Antarctica in 1998. Since then I have the past eleven consecutive northern winters/austral summers working for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP). I've spent 10 years at South Pole Station, working in Communications, and one year at McMurdo Station working as an Aviation Operations Coordinator. Please include me in the testimony in favor of granting the PFD to those who have served in the USAP. I'd also appreciate being added to your mailing list - my contact information is at the bottom of this email.

I own a home in Talkeetna, Alaska, which is my permanent residence. My work in Antarctica enables me to live in Talkeetna and participate as a member of that community. As you may know, Talkeetna's economy is largely tourism-based, with limited winter opportunities for employment. I support local businesses, pay property taxes, maintain my vehicles, heat my home and contribute to the local economy with my income earned in Antarctica.

Working in Antarctica also requires medical testing to physically qualify for deployment. I pay for these medical tests in Alaska out of pocket, and am reimbursed by my employer, so that is an additional contribution to Alaska's economy. That annual cost is between \$800 and \$1500.

While employed "on the ice", housing and meals are provided by the company I work for, so the only money I spend in Antarctica is on souvenirs and/or consumables. The remainder of my earnings stay with me, and return to Alaska.

I do travel after my deployments, for varying lengths of time. In 2007 I returned to Alaska in mid-March, and in 2008, I returned to Alaska in late February.

My absence from the state generally hovers around the 180-day timeframe, so I have received the PFD in some years, and have not in others. Each year my application has been denied, I have been asked for and provided supplementary information regarding my status as an Alaska resident. As I mentioned above, Alaska is my permanent home - I own a home, and have not lived anywhere else since 1995. Many Alaskans do work seasonally, receive the PFD, and spend that money elsewhere.

I have always believed that service in the USAP should be considered an allowable absence. Alaskans working here are supporting the goals of the National Science Foundation, a United States government program. Members of military services are also serving the U.S. government and do qualify to receive the PFD.

I am proud of my service in the U.S. Antarctic Program, and thank you for your efforts to authorize USAP Alaskans to receive the PFD.

My contact information follows:

Tracy Sheeley
PO Box 216
Talkeetna, AK 99676
tjsheeley@yahoo.com

Best regards,

Tracy

Tracy Sheeley
Aviation Ops Coordinator/Helo Ops
Ext. 2344 / Pager 837 / Bldg 129
McMurdo Station

Kristen Bressette

From: Greg Campbell [greg.campbell@usap.gov]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2009 10:03 PM
To: Kristen Bressette; Sen. Kim Elton; Greg J Campbell
Subject: PFD allowable absence for USAP

Thanks so much for sponsoring the bill to make service in the United States Antarctic Program an allowable absence for the PFD.

The scientific work done here in Antarctica is vitally important to our nation's future, and could only be done with the support of those of us who work here. The science being done here is on the cutting edge in such areas as climate change, ozone depletion, astronomy, biology and earth sciences.

I live in Talkeetna, Alaska and have been working at the Amundsen-Scott South-Pole Station for the past 4 austral summer seasons (October-February). At the end of each season I spend a month or so traveling internationally and visiting family, then return to Alaska for the remainder of the year. All of my income is earned from my work in Antarctica (other than interest and dividends from the bank and investments). I spend at most \$10 a week in Antarctica (less than 1% of income, room and board are included in my contract), perhaps 10% in international travel and visiting family after the Antarctic season, and the remaining 89% is spent in Alaska on living expenses, maintaining my home, etc.. I live in a small town with an economy based in seasonal tourism, so good paying full time jobs are hard to come by. Working outside the community means that I am not competing with other locals for the few good paying, full time jobs; this also means that I am able to inject cash earned outside the state into the local and state economy. In our small town I can think of at least 10 people who currently work or have worked in the United States Antarctic Program. In addition, any money that I would give from the PFD I would spend in Alaska.

I liken those of us who work in the Antarctic Program to that iconic Alaskan species, salmon. The salmon leave their homes to make their living out at sea, and we leave our homes to make our living on a continent governed by no nation. Upon returning home the salmon nourish the animals, plants and humans with the energy they gained from the open ocean, just as we nourish our communities and states with the money earned from outside. Like the salmon we give more to our home state than we take.

Thank you so much for considering this issue.

Sincerely,

Greg Campbell
P.O. Box 354
Talkeetna, AK 99676
(907) 733-3690
xgcampbell@hotmail.com

23 January, 2009

To: Kristen Bressette
Office of Senator Kim Elton
State Capitol, Room 506
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 465-4920
Fax: (907) 465-2108
Kristen.bressette@legis.state.ak.us

From: Candy FitzPatrick
P.O. Box 193
Moose Pass, AK 99631
Phone: (907) 288-5106
Email address: hangarhobbit@yahoo.com

Dear Madame,

Please accept this testimonial in support of the bill which would facilitate an allowable absence category for Alaskan residents who are employed by the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) in Antarctica and whom apply to receive the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD).

Testimonial:

My name is Candy FitzPatrick. I voluntarily relocated myself to Alaska after traveling to all 50 states and Puerto Rico with intentions of selecting the state I felt motivated, enthused, and excited about, in short, the state I loved most to make my home in. No question about it, Alaska was for me. Therefore, I independently moved to Alaska in 1991. I first lived in Anchorage, followed by a ski season in Girdwood, and then back to Anchorage. In 1994, I moved to Petersburg to accept a permanent seasonal position with the United States Forest Service (USFS). After many wonderful years there, where I met my husband who was also employed permanent seasonally with the USFS, we decided to transfer employment to the Kenai Lake Work Center, on the road system, in Moose Pass, where we have resided since January 2002. I have no intentions, nor does my husband, of ever having our permanent residence be anywhere other than Alaska.

I point out our seasonal employment in Alaska in the above paragraph as one aspect pertaining to the benefits of working in Antarctica. Of the main reasons for seasonal employment in Alaska for many people is a great percentage of jobs available in certain parts of the state are only offered as seasonal positions. This leaves those people needing another seasonal job in the off season to keep money coming in. Since seasonal work in Alaska is typically during the summer months, this leaves the winter open when there are fewer jobs available. The temptation to use the State Unemployment Insurance coffers is high and many take this route and in previous years, I have been among that number. With that benefit and the dividend, in some cases, one can earn as much (or potentially more) money by not seeking work out for those months without a contract. The winter in Alaska is the summer season in Antarctica, a time when most of the seasonal employees travel down to work on their individual contracts with various companies. These two

places, Alaska and Antarctica, work perfectly together for a seasonal employee wanting to work the whole year.

To date I have worked five seasons at McMurdo Station in Antarctica: August of 2004-February 2005, October of 2005-February 2006, October 2006-February 2007, October 2007-April 2008, and October 2008-current (February 2009). I have returned to Alaska after each contract. The longest amount of time I have traveled after completing an Antarctic contract and before returning to home is roughly six weeks. During the time I was/am absent from the state, I have not moved my primary and only residence. I continued and do still pay the bills (along with my husband), including rent to a local individual and utilities to local city government and business, the whole year round. My husband does not work in Antarctica; he now has a year round position with the USFS in Moose Pass. In short, I remain an Alaska resident during the entire time I am at work in Antarctica or traveling.

In two very recent Anchorage Daily News online version articles, the economy for Alaska has been stated in terms of jobs and job losses. In one, Economist Pat Burden states that the recession will catch up to Alaska in 2009. His firm's economic forecast for Alaska predicts that the state will end up with 3,400 fewer jobs this year, a 0.6 percent decline. And in the other, The State Department of Labor said the seasonally adjusted State Unemployment December rate was 7.5 percent, up sharply over the previous three months. The jobless rate was that high last in March 2004. The rate was 6.7 percent in September.

The people who have secured employment contracts to work in Antarctica are actually helping Alaska by obtaining those jobs in Antarctica, staying off the dole, and bringing a large percentage of their money back to spend in the state. Yet, we are penalized by the PFD for doing so because our absence is not allowable.

As I am in Antarctica as I write this testimonial, I cannot refer to records for exact information but I have been receiving the PFD since I became a resident regarding the PFD guidelines for residency. Perhaps the first time I was granted the PFD was 1993. I had received the PFD every year since then until 2007, when I was denied due to absences incurred in 2006. I denied the PFD in 2008 again because of absences incurred in 2007. The lion's share of both those years absences were from my time employed by the USAP in McMurdo.

After filling out the entire 2008 PFD package and additional forms needed to regain my proof of residency in the eyes of the PFD program after being denied the 2007 PFD, I found I was one day over the allowed absences of 180 days. Just one day. The majority of my time away from Alaska in 2007 was for employment in Antarctica. Ten of the days of absence were because my Brother-in-Law died in Wyoming. Two of those days were spent helping my friend drive her truck from Montana through Canada to Cooper Landing. These sorts of absences from the state are typical reasons for any Alaskan to be away. Though I am absent for the months I am working for the USAP, I should still be allowed the freedom to travel to comfort a sister or help a friend or even holiday travel

without being penalized by the PFD program for it. I was told I could appeal this decision but according to my husband, I have not received the paperwork to do this.

Adding fuel to the fire for the 2008 PFD was the Governor's announcement that the 'Energy Rebate' would be tacked onto the PFD payout. These two seemingly non-related pay out funds were merged for the purpose of easy disbursement? And so, even though I am a resident who pays bills at the increased rates of everything the 'Energy Rebate' was to offset for the whole year, I was denied this too because I chose to work in Antarctica and my time away is not an allowable absence.

I estimate I spend about .05% of my net income in Antarctica, roughly 9.95% of my income on internet purchases (which are shipped to Alaska) and traveling in state, out of state, and out of the country, and the remaining roughly 90% of the money I earn in Antarctica is spent in Alaska. My husband and I are saving to buy a home in Cooper Landing.

We live a simple life in Moose Pass. My only job now is my position in Antarctica leaving me with summers off at home where I utilize my resident hunting/fishing license, drive my Alaska bought and registered truck, pay no state income tax to any other state because I am a resident of Alaska, not collecting unemployment from any state including Alaska, and spending almost all of my money in local businesses in Alaska. I have an Alaska driver's license, I am registered to vote in Alaska, and I sometimes get called to jury duty as an Alaskan resident. I am truly an Alaskan resident and I, and the other deserving USAP participant Alaskan residents (there are six of us at McMurdo station who live in Moose Pass!) should be considered as such for the purposes of allowable absences for the privilege of collecting the Permanent Fund Dividend.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimonial. I am grateful for the opportunity to write for the approval of an allowable absence category for residents who spend time in the USAP. Thank you, Senator Kim Elton, Kristen Bressette, and fellow USAP participant Lee Parker for bringing this to attention. It is a topic very close to my heart. Please do feel free to contact me, the best way is through email, regarding this bill. Thank you again, it is very nice to have someone represent our cause after all these years!

Kristen Bressette

From: Gullingsrud, Larry [Larry.Gullingsrud@usap.gov]
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2009 10:53 AM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: PFD for Alaskans working in the USAP program

Hello Kristen,

I have worked in the United States Antarctic Program for the last six years. I'm a foreman for field science support.

I lived in Skagway as a construction worker and commercial fisherman for years and now live in Sutton. I spend all my extra time, and a great deal of the money I earn, in Alaska in the summer. I also work at the Toolik field camp in the summer.

I feel I shouldn't be left out of the PFD program because I choose to work seasonally in Antarctica supporting the science work here. I've been an Alaskan resident since 1983 as a schoolteacher, retail store manager, construction worker and commercial fisherman and my permanent home will continue to be Alaska.

Thank you for your work on this.

Larry Gullingsrud
29819 Glacier Point Drive
Sutton Ak 99674

907-854-0275

Kristen Bressette

From: Speidel Charles [chiachuck@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2009 5:58 PM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: PFD for Alaskans serving in the USAP

Hello Kristen,

I have been an Alaskan Resident since 2000 and live in a cabin with my life partner in Talkeetna Alaska.

I have worked for the United States Antarctic Program for 15 years. I had a wide range of jobs, settling in on Science Carpenter Foreman at the South Pole. I had only worked the Austral Summers since moving to Alaska. I would leave the state in September and return in early April at the latest. I work in Alaska during the summer in the Northern Hemisphere.

My partner and I have spent a lot of money at our local hardware store, and local mechanics as well as the restaurants in our town. We also have the usual, year round payments for our post office box and telephone, property taxes and we make donations to our local radio station as well as donations for the Denali Foundation.

While in Antarctica I hardly spend a few hundred dollars a year. Travelling for a month after the contract is complete does eat some money, but the rest is all spent in Alaska.

Since moving to Alaska I have enticed many friends to also come up and travel throughout the state, taking scenic flights, boat cruises or the train, which I also buy tickets for.

I have only received the PFD about two or three times since becoming a resident.. missing the quota of days by a small amount.

This is my first year not working for the Antarctic Program in 15 years. I am attending the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding and can be reached at this email account or by my cel phone (406)-223-7177. We also still have our voicemail on at our cabin in Talkeetna.. (907) 733-3791 which I check periodically.

Thank you for your time and considering us,

Charles G. Speidel

Hello Kristen,

My name is Steve Mikel; I have lived in the Denali National Park area since 1988. For several seasons since that time, I worked summers at the Denali Park Hotel, and either worked outside for the winter or stayed around the park area living on unemployment compensation. My brief testimony is as follows:

I have worked twelve seasons for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) and wish to be included in the testimony in favor of granting the PFD to those who have served in the USAP Program. I qualified/received the PFD in 1994 and 1995. I then worked several long term contracts 12-16 months in length in 1999, 2000 and 2002, and was consequently ineligible to qualify to receive any additional PFD during that timeframe. Since 2002, I have only worked Austral summer seasons in Antarctica for 5 months at a time, then travelling for about 6 weeks before returning to Alaska.

I have lived between Healy and Cantwell since 1992 in what we call the McKinley Village area, at mile 228.8 on the Parks Hwy. I rent a cabin there and own some acreage about 8 miles north of Healy which I am in the process of improving. I moved to Alaska in the summer of 1988 after spending the previous summer working for Aramark in the Denali Park area. I worked there for a total of 14 summers and eventually secured a seasonal position with the National Park Service. I worked winters outside until 1992 when I went to trade school and then returned to Alaska in the spring of 93. On the side, I have a small appliance service business; small primarily due to the limited demographics of the area. My clients are local businesses in the area.

I have worked seasonally for the Antarctic program for the last 13 years, spending the rest of my time either overseas traveling or in Alaska. I have worked 10 Austral summer-(Boreal winter-Alaska) seasons in Antarctica and 3 Austral winters-(Boreal summer-Alaska). My normal work pattern is Mar/April - October in Alaska and October - February in Antarctica.

I complete my predeployment medical testing in Fairbanks, and spend a fair sum (\$1500.00-2500.00 a year) supporting dentists, x-ray technicians and medical centers in order to medically qualify for my job. Furthermore, I spend a large percentage of money earned in Antarctica at Fairbanks businesses such as:

- NAPA and CARQUEST auto supply stores
- AIH, Samson's, and up until recently, Ace Hardware/OK lumber, and Sentry hardware stores
- The Prospector, and Big Ray's for clothing and shoes
- many local restaurants,
- Northland wood and Spenard builders' supply -lumber yards,
- Gulliver's book stores.
- As well as some local auto repair places.
- Fred Meyer, for food

Wages spent in Antarctica- \$300.00-400.00 alcohol and sundries

If I did not work in Antarctica, I would still be able to pursue my dream of living locally and building a house on my property north of Healy although at a much slower pace. There are not sufficient year-round employment opportunities that would pay enough to cover living expenses, let alone commuting. The cost of commuting 20 to 30 miles one way demands that employment pay enough to cover it. This is just not available in the winter months.

Money earned in Antarctica allows me to live in some comfort in area near my property and be able to afford materials for improvements to my property such as grid electrical power and eventually a driveway. My Antarctic salary is about half of my total income, and it enables me to pay for auto insurance, medical insurance, fuel, rent, and food as well as supporting local businesses, which are also customers of mine. Having a little extra cash would enable me to patronize local restaurants and bars in the area that make up a base of local small businesses. I would have a difficult time saying exactly what percentage of my Antarctic salary is spent in Alaska, but I should imagine it would be easily over 70%.

While I have no problem with Alaskan military personnel stationed outside Alaska receiving their PFD, I have often wondered why the same type of privilege was not extended to contract workers that commit to serving the advancement of science down in the Antarctic. It is government work after all; the government just saves money by not hiring full time employees. To be somehow penalized for trying to better our standard of living in a state that we love is inequitable. Antarctic contract employees should merit similar consideration to that extended to military personnel. I appreciate your interest on this issue and hope that we can get a positive result from this action.

Thank you,

Steve Mikel

Kristen Bressette

From: clasylas@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 12:42 PM
To: Kristen Bressette
Subject: PFD for Alaskans serving in the USAP

Kristen

I would like to support the cause for USAP people working outside Alaska on the icecaps of Antarctic. I am a business owner and work with several of the people.

They spend their money here(Juneau) , pay their taxes(city, state and fed) and the whole time they are out of state they are still financially supporting our communities ; which is more than most military, let alone some of our not so desirable residents.

Please ask Senator Elton to stand up for this cause.

Thank You

Sally L Burnham

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United States Antarctic Program

Without interruption since 1956, Americans have been studying the Antarctic and its interactions with the rest of the planet. These investigators and supporting personnel make up the U.S. Antarctic Program, which carries forward the Nation's goals of supporting the Antarctic Treaty, fostering cooperative research with other nations, protecting the Antarctic environment, and developing measures to ensure only equitable and wise use of resources. The program comprises research by scientists selected from universities and other research institutions and operations and support by a contractor and other agencies of the U.S. Government. The National Science Foundation (the U.S. Government agency that promotes the progress of science) funds and manages the program. Approximately, 3,000 Americans are involved each year.

The research has three goals: to understand the region and its ecosystems; to understand its effects on (and responses to) global processes such as climate; and to use the region as a platform to study the upper atmosphere and space. Antarctica's remoteness and extreme climate make field science more expensive than in most places. Research is done in the Antarctic only when it cannot be performed at more convenient locations.

The program has three year-round research stations. In summer (the period of extensive sunlight and comparative warmth that lasts roughly October through February) additional camps are established for glaciologists, earth scientists, biologists, and others. Large, ski-equipped LC-130 airplanes, which only the United States has, provide air logistics. Air National Guard crews operate these planes. Helicopters, flown by a contractor, provide close support for many research teams. Tracked or wheeled vehicles provide transport over land and snow; small boats are used in coastal areas.

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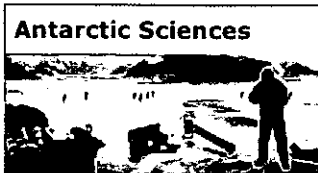
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SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral

DATE: 2/4/09

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: _____
 (in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
 IN TO OFFICE: 3/12/09

State Affairs Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 94

SB 94 PFD ALLOWABLE ABSENCE: ANTARCTIC PROGRAM

"An Act relating to employment in certain facilities maintained by the United States Antarctic Program as allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- [] be replaced with [] SCS or [] CS SB94 (STA)
- [] adopt previous [] SCS or [] CS _____ (_____)
- [] attached amendment(s)
- [] adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- [] further referral to _____ Committee

SENATE BILL:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
<hr/>	
HOUSE BILL:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#
DOR	3/2/09	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#

[] APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
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	Meyer			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	PASKVAN			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	KOOKESH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
CHAIR:	MENARD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			