

SCOMM

#46:26

STATE OF ALASKA 1986 LEGISLATIVE SESSION FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST

HB 572

Bill/Resolution No.: Law File #377-023-86
 Title: Dealing with the State's underground injection well program.
 Sponsor: Governor
 Requestor: Governor
 Date of Request: 1-21-86

Revision Date: _____

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: Natural Resources
 BRU: Petroleum Management
 Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES : (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING : (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS :

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : Attach a separate page if necessary

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 Division: Management

Phone: 465-2424
 Date: 1-22-86

Approved by Commissioner: Ned Fong
 Agency: Natural Resources

Date: 1-23

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

February 12, 1986

The Honorable Ben Grussendorf
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Grussendorf:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (commission). This bill offers revisions to improve the state's proposed underground injection control (UIC) program for injection wells related to the recovery and production of oil and natural gas (Class II wells). It also reinstates statutory authority for affiliation with the Interstate Oil Compact Commission, and conforms certain sections of AS 31.05 to the revised criminal code.

In 1984, CSHB 680 (L&C) was enacted (ch. 91, SLA 1984), which authorized the commission to "take all actions necessary to allow the state to acquire primary enforcement responsibility under 42 U.S.C. 300h-4 (Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 300f-300j), for the control of underground injection related to the recovery and production of oil and natural gas." AS 31.05.030(h). Under this authority, the commission prepared an application for a state UIC program for Class II wells, which has been submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval.

In the context of their review, EPA staff identified certain provisions in AS 31.05 which could be amended to improve the state's proposed program. The amendments were proposed under the terms of a memorandum of agreement between the commission and EPA, Region 10.

Amendment of the criminal provisions of AS 31.05 is recommended by the criminal division of the Department of Law. When the comprehensive rewrite of AS 11 and AS 12 was undertaken in 1981-82, it was determined to be too great a task to attempt amendment of the state's other criminal provisions, scattered throughout the Alaska statutes, at the same time. As this bill amends AS 31.05 for other reasons, I believe it appropriate to take advantage of this opportunity to "clean up" the criminal provisions of AS 31.05 as well, in order to make them consistent with AS 11 and AS 12, as revised.

The amendments to AS 31.05 in the bill are as follows:

Section 1. AS 31.05.027 is amended to eliminate state statutory limitations on the commission's jurisdiction over land of the United States.

Federal law requires that state UIC programs apply to underground injection occurring on property leased or owned by the United States. 42 U.S.C. 300h(b)(1)(D) and 300j-6. However, AS 31.05.027 presently provides in part:

The authority of the commission. . . applies to land of the United States or to land subject to the jurisdiction of the United States only to the extent that control and supervision of conservation of oil and gas and prevention of waste by the United States on its land fails to carry out the intent and purposes of AS 31.05.005 -- 31.05.170, and otherwise applies to federal land so far as an officer of the United States having jurisdiction, or an authorized representative, shall approve any of the provisions of AS 31.05.005 -- 31.05.170 or orders of the commission which affect land.

The jurisdictional limitations of AS 31.05.027 first appeared as territorial legislation enacted in 1955, when Alaska's relationship to the federal government was far more subservient than after Alaska's acceptance into the Union. As a state, Alaska's potential jurisdiction over oil and gas activities on federal land is limited only by constitutional restrictions on the exercise of state police powers. See Myers, The Law of Pooling and Unitization, sec. 11.04 (2d Ed. 1984). AS 31.05.027 asserts less jurisdiction than is now constitutionally permissible, and would be amended by the bill to remove this potential impediment to the commission's regulation of oil and gas activities on federal land.

Section 2. AS 31.05.070(a) is amended to eliminate the transactional immunity provided as a result of a person

being compelled to testify or produce documents before the commission or a court, and to make its provisions consistent with the revised criminal code.

As it now reads, AS 31.05.070(a) affords a person transactional immunity if compelled to appear as a witness under that statute. This provision could preclude effective enforcement of the state's UIC requirements if it were to be applied to compel testimony of a witness, and consequently foreclosed subsequent prosecution of that witness for violating a requirement of the state's UIC program. The provision is also inconsistent with the immunity provision of AS 12.50.101. The amendments eliminate the immunity provision. Under new language added to AS 31.05.070(a), a witness who asserts his or her privilege against self-incrimination may be granted immunity under AS 12.50.101 -- that is, immunity from the use of his or her testimony and any evidence derived from it. Language that disallows self-incrimination as a ground for excusing attendance, testimony, or production of books and records, is also deleted. That language is potentially unconstitutional, and is unnecessary.

AS 31.05.070(a) also provides that a compelled witness is not exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed while testifying. This provision would also be repealed because it duplicates provisions of the criminal code.

Section 3. New AS 31.05.141 would be placed in a "miscellaneous provisions" article in AS 31.05, to reinstate express authority to affiliate with the Interstate Oil Compact Commission (IOCC). The new statute is patterned after Vt. Stat. Ann., tit. 29, sec. 565 (1983). Section 15, ch. 40, SLA 1955, which created the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, authorized affiliation with the IOCC. After statehood, sec. 15 became AS 31.05.130 and 31.05.140. Section 2, ch. 247, SLA 1970, repealed AS 31.05.130 and 31.05.140, purging AS 31.05 of that authorization. Of note is the fact that the state is still a dues-paying member of the IOCC.

Sections 4 and 5. AS 31.05.150(a) and (b) are amended to eliminate the "wilful" standard from consideration in the imposition and recovery of civil penalties; to increase imposable civil penalties; to make its provisions consistent with the provisions of the revised criminal code; and to institute criminal liability for violations of the commission's regulations and orders.

AS 31.05.150(a) imposes civil penalties for wilful violations of AS 31.05 or regulations or orders of the commission. However, there is no indication of the type of wilfulness required.

Use of the term "wilfully" in criminal statutes has traditionally required a showing of bad intent. Although evidence of bad intent is generally not required to impose civil penalties, amendment of the statute to eliminate the term would remove any doubt as to the ability of the state to impose civil penalties in the absence of evidence of bad intent.

The amendments would increase the amount of civil penalties imposable under AS 31.05.150(a) from "not more than \$1,000" to "no more than \$5,000 per day for each day of violation." The \$1,000 amount, which was first established in 1955, is now inadequate to deter violations. The increased penalty would more effectively accomplish that.

The bill would amend AS 31.05.150(b), which imposes criminal liability for falsifying records and committing similar offenses, to make the description of those offenses consistent with AS 11.46.630(a)(1)--(4). The class A misdemeanor penalty classification raises the possible maximum term of imprisonment to one year but the amount of the fine is unaffected.

Section 6. AS 31.05.150 is amended by adding a new subsection (f), imposing criminal liability on a person who knowingly violates a regulation or order of the commission. I urge your prompt action on this measure to strengthen the state's UIC program, to reinstate authority to affiliate with the IOCC, and to update AS 31.05.

Sincerely,


Bill Sheffield
Governor