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Subject: The latest news for you
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To: d29@mtaonline.net



The 34th Alaska State Legislative Session May 2026 Update

**Sutton/ Valdez / Chickaloon / Eureka / Greater Farm Loop / Fishhook/
Sheep Mountain / Glacier View / Kings Lake / Anderson-Clear / Big Lake/
Cantwell/ Denali Park / East Schrock / Healy / Houston / Knik Goose Bay
No. 4 / Trapper Creek / Susitna / Talkeetna / Willow**



Today marks the 109th Day of the legislative session. Earlier this week, the Senate took up the operating budget on the floor, during which I moved three amendments for consideration. The first amendment allocated \$2 million to the Department of Public Safety to establish a state trooper post in Talkeetna, an area that has been experiencing increased activity along the Parks Highway corridor, including the communities of Willow, Talkeetna, and Trapper Creek. My second amendment was to fund a park ranger position in Valdez to support public safety, resource protection, and visitor management in one of Alaska's busiest and most heavily visited

outdoor recreation regions - a position that has remained vacant since 2015. Lastly, I offered an amendment pertaining to community assistance intent language that provided clear legislative direction to ensure that community funding is utilized in a manner consistent with Article VIII of the Constitution regarding Natural Resources.

Regrettably, all three amendments failed to pass. The operating budget passed by a vote of 17 yeas to 3 nays. I was a no vote, including on the CBR vote. The House took up the operating budget today and failed to concur with the Senate version.

Resources

This week in Senate Resources, CSSB 280 continued to dominate committee discussion as members worked through the latest version of the Governor's oil and gas tax proposal tied to the Alaska LNG project. On Monday, the committee rolled out a new committee substitute, Version H, making several significant changes from Version G. Among the most notable revisions were additional restructuring of the Alternative Volumetric Tax (AVT) framework, modifications to how revenues are distributed between the state and municipalities, and expanded authority and responsibilities for the Department of Revenue to administer and enforce the new tax system. Version H further refines provisions on taxpayer disclosure requirements, project agreements, and reporting obligations, while continuing the shift away from the more municipality-driven structure in the original SB 280 toward a more state-administered framework. Concerns remain regarding the overall complexity of the system, implementation costs to the state, impacts on existing municipal taxing authority, and whether some disclosure provisions could create practical or competitive concerns for project participants.

Looking ahead, the committee calendar has expanded significantly, with six additional meetings added next week, meaning Senate Resources will meet twice daily, Tuesday through Friday. The primary focus will remain on CSSB 280, with committee amendments scheduled for Tuesday morning. Several of the amendments I'm offering are intended to improve certainty for Alaskans, municipalities, and existing energy producers while making the legislation more workable in practice. One amendment would restore the original municipal allocation structure for the AVT closer to what existed in prior versions of the bill, rather than routing distributions through legislative appropriation. Another amendment would ensure Cook Inlet suppliers continue to be prioritized for in-state gas demand for as long as economically viable gas remains available in the basin, helping protect Southcentral Alaska energy security during the transition to a larger statewide gas line project. Additional amendments address the Community Impact Fee and the approval requirement for foreign relationships.

In addition to SB 280, the committee will also hear HB 93, which relates to residency requirements for hunting and trapping, and HB 79, which names the Vic Fischer Shoup Bay Marine Park.

Transportation

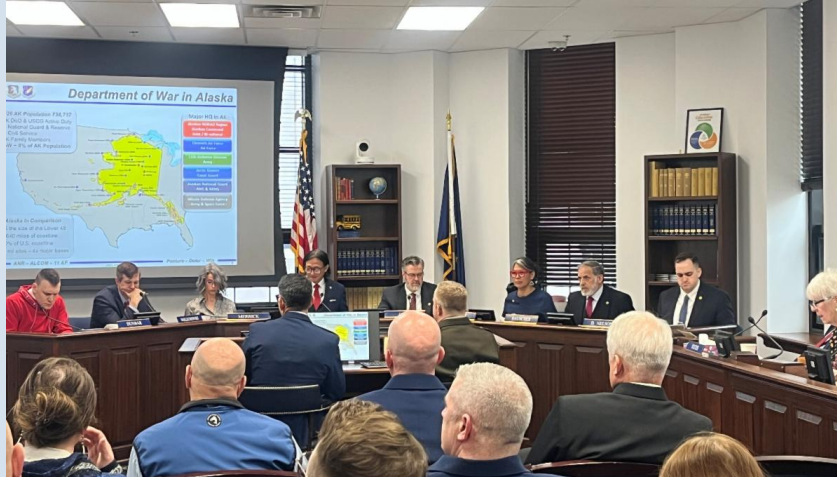
This week in Senate Transportation, the committee heard two important pieces of legislation focused on emerging transportation issues and consumer protections: HB 302, relating to travel insurance, and HB 217, relating to autonomous vehicles. HB 302 updates and modernizes Alaska's travel insurance statutes by establishing clearer regulations for travel protection plans, travel retailers, and insurance producers, while also strengthening consumer disclosure requirements and oversight standards within the industry. The bill is intended to bring Alaska more in line with national standards as the travel insurance market continues to evolve.

The committee also heard HB 217, legislation establishing a legal and regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles operating in Alaska. The bill addresses definitions, operational requirements, safety standards, insurance obligations, and oversight authority for autonomous vehicle technology as it continues to develop nationwide. Discussion in committee focused on balancing innovation and future transportation opportunities with public safety, liability, and regulatory clarity.

Both HB 302 and HB 217 are scheduled to return before the committee next Tuesday as members continue reviewing the legislation and hearing additional testimony and questions from

members continue reviewing the legislation and hearing additional testimony and questions from stakeholders and the administration. There's a tentative meeting scheduled for Thursday, but only if the committee feels like it's needed.

Joint Armed Services Committee



The Joint Armed Services Committee met today and heard presentations from various branches of the military. These briefings allow legislators to maintain informed oversight of defense operations and budgetary requirements critical to both state and national security interests.

My Bills

SB 230 Jonesville PUA is currently in House Rules. The bill was amended by the House Resources Committee to incorporate eight boundary corrections to state refuges and critical habitat areas that were inadvertently omitted from prior legislation. While these amendments do not directly pertain to the Jonesville Public Use Area, they remain consistent with the underlying intent of the bill.

Read the bill here:
[SB0230C](#)

SB 228 the Opioid Awareness Program bill is currently in the Senate Finance Committee awaiting a hearing.

Read the bill here:
[SB0228B](#)

HB 17 the Disabled Veterans and Retirement Benefits bill is currently in the Senate Finance Committee awaiting a hearing. Comments to the committee can be emailed to Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov.

Read the bill here:
[HB0017A](#)

National Day of Prayer





Yesterday, in front of the Capitol, I led the National Day of Prayer event beginning with the reading of the Governor's Executive Proclamation. The Alaska State Legislature joined fellow Alaskans and millions across our nation in observing the National Day of Prayer. Since 1952, this day has brought people of all faiths together on the first Thursday of May to pray for our families, communities, state, and nation. As the Senator for District O, I'm mindful that faith and prayer provide strength and wisdom for the important decisions we make on behalf of all Alaskans.

Together, through prayer and service, we can continue working toward a brighter future for all Alaskans.

As always, my door is always open if you have any questions, concerns, or comments. If you want to set up a meeting, please contact my office at 907-465-4859 or send me an email to sen.george.rauscher@akleg.gov.

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