



Budget work remains primary focus



I was glad to see the Republican Caucus show unity for reducing the state operating budget. We sat in the front rows of the House Finance Committee as our finance members brought forth amendments to the operating budget.

As we head into the last leg of the first session, we realize elections have consequences. Some consequences are very subtle while others; not so much.

While the threat of income taxes, increased government spending, gas taxes, PFD tax, and a PFD raid loom over our heads, the Republican caucus has not been able to reduce the need for increasing revenue.

The Republican caucus does not have the votes to stop part of what is going on. Rep. Paul Seaton has stated that without an Income Tax the majority would have to tax the oil industry even harder than the proposed oil and gas tax increases in House Bill 111. Pitting the Industry against the people to correct the House Majority's decision of not reducing spending or the size of government is not good horse sense.

Before any taxes, the people wanted to see reductions in spending and a reduction in the size of government and it did not happen. Out of 138 amendments to reduce the budget on the House Floor and 368 amendments of reduction in committee, less than 3 passed the House vote.

Republicans proposed amendments on the floor that would have reduced state spending by approximately \$400 million this year alone.

House Democrats, and those aligned with them, moved an operating budget that ultimately hurts Alaskans by growing government, lowering the amount of the Permanent Fund Dividend, taking funds from the Earnings Reserve Account, and relies on putting an income tax in place.

Alaska needs a government we can afford, not the government that some want. Government competing with the private sector, is not a good approach. We must realize that government spending does not promote individual prosperity, instead it promotes greater dependence on the state, and decreases overall economic growth.



Enjoyed a good conversation with US Senator Dan Sullivan with members of the Mt-Su Delegation while he was in the Capitol

Holding Line on PFD, Its the Peoples Money

While the House Finance Committee considers legislation to use a portion of the Permanent Fund to pay for government operations, my position remains unchanged.

The Alaska Permanent Fund is meant to be just that, permanent.

The Permanent Fund was established to allow Alaskans to share in the resource wealth of the state, both today and for future generations.

To that end I introduced legislation calling for a vote from the people of Alaska. [House Bill 161](#) does just that.

If the Governor and my fellow legislators believe that tapping into the permanent fund to pay for Government is the will of Alaskans, then what do they have to fear in asking the people what they think. This is Pandora's box. We should be careful if we are contemplating such a drastic change.



Discussing a bill on the floor with Rep. Dan Saddler from Eagle River. I serve on the Community & Regional Affairs, and Military & Veterans Affairs committees with Rep. Saddler.



Working to pass a resolution calling for the opening of ANWR for oil and gas exploration with Rep. Dean Westlake from Kotzebue and Rep. Charisse Millett of Anchorage.

District 9 in the Capitol

I was happy to welcome many visitors from House District 9 to the capitol in the past month. Our district is a great place, with great people.



High school student Nova Payne of Sutton visited the office to discuss issues confronting homeless teens.



Barley farmer Bryce Wrigley from Delta Junction spent time in the Capitol to discuss Ag with legislators.

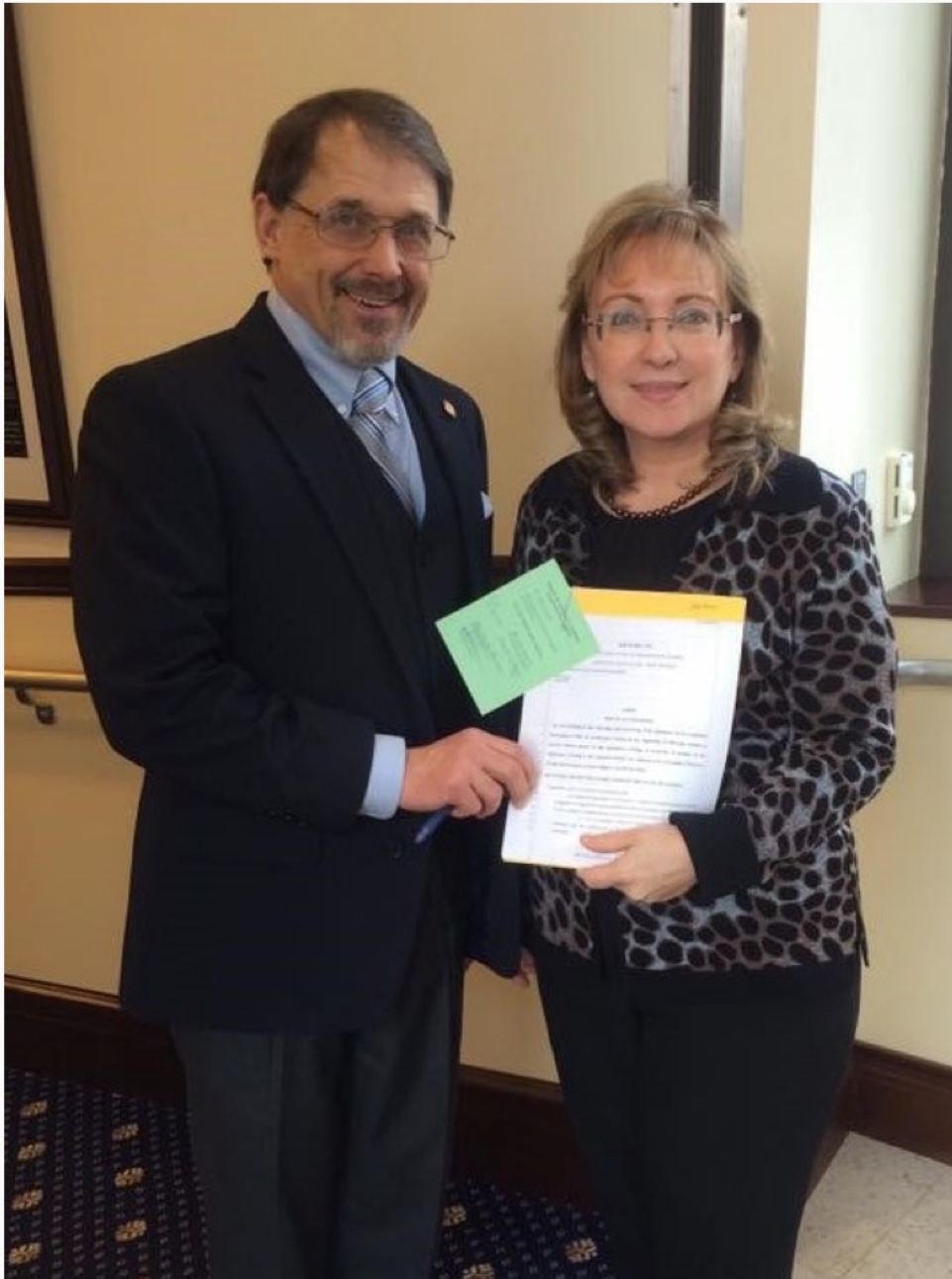
Oil and gas tax re-write frustration

I have been trying to understand how the new Oil and Gas tax bill, [House Bill 111](#), is going to put more oil in the pipeline.

The producers and the state have agreed that we need to end the cashable credits, but this version of the bill from House Resources Committee has too many other moving parts. One of the things the Resource Committee Substitute bill ([CSHB111](#)) does is create another sector within the Department of Natural Resources, which mimics the duties of the Department of Revenue and a large part of the responsibilities already belonging to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

Duplicating, and in some ways tripling, the paperwork to be submitted by the Producers will create more bureaucratic red tape, uncertainty, confusion,, dozens of extra personnel needed and (literally) millions more in state spending.

When we had the bill (CSHB 111) in the Resource Committee, I proposed two amendments. Each would end the cashable credits and dealt with the Net Operating Losses without creating more government, but both amendments were voted down. The bill ([CSHB 111](#)) was voted out of committee 5-4, with our Republican caucus members voting against it, and it now sits in front of Rep. Paul Seaton in House Finance.



New legislation introduced

In addition to staying busy with efforts to reduce the operating budget and bills in committee, Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard and I have introduced new legislation aimed at making Alaska better and government more responsive to the people.

House Bill 185 - Holding the Legislative Session in Anchorage

This legislation. The bill calls for relocating the legislative session to Anchorage. It will result in greater access for the people of Alaska. More transparency in government. And reduce the economics of holding session in Juneau, saving the state a great amount of money. For more information please click [here](#).

More visitors from District 9





(Above) Visitors from the City of Valdez came by the office, Ruth Knight, Mayor, Lon Needles, Council Member, Elke Doom, City Manager, Todd Wegner, Asst. City Manager, Lisa Von Barga, Community Development Director, Sheri Pierce, City Clerk.

(Left) Bill and Viola Amberg stopped in to discuss how we can address local hire issues. My staff is still working on the issue with Viola, we'll keep you updated.

(Right) Krystyn and Kaytlyn Kelly, students from Palmer stopped by while they were in town with Youth for Environmental Action. I was proud to join them in Senate Finance later in the day as they testified on the operating budget.



Enjoyed a moment of laughter with Reps. Delana Johnson of Palmer, and Chris Birch of Anchorage, before we went into a hearing of the House Resource Committee.

Legislation Update

House Bill 65 & 66 - Restoring portion of Permanent Fund vetoed by Governor Walker

This is the House companion legislation to Senator Mike Dunleavy call to reinstate the portion of the Permanent Fund Dividend vetoed by Governor Walker in June. The framers of the PFD wanted the people of Alaska to benefit directly in the mineral wealth of the state and to protect the people against overspending by elected government officials. Find out more about this [legislation](#).

House Joint Resolution 10 - Limiting the Declaration of National Monuments by the President

The resolution supports legislation introduced by Senator Lisa Murkowski that amends the Antiquities Act, and the power of the President from declaring additional National Monuments with approval from Congress and the state government being impacted. The bill was heard in the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee on March 2 and held for a future hearing. For more information click [here](#).



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