

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION

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SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

Senator Stedman Calls Legislative Session a Success

\$3.1 Billion Added to State Savings – Energy and Infrastructure Priorities Advanced

JUNEAU – The 27th Alaska Legislature adjourned early this morning, marking an end to a productive legislative session and another successful two-year Legislature. Senator Bert Stedman applauded his colleagues and the accomplishments made this session: “I am proud of the progress made this year toward addressing a range of energy, education, public health and safety, and transportation needs in Southeast Alaska as well as the rest of the state.”

This year the Senate continued its goal of ensuring state government saves before it spends. The Senate took the lead by setting aside \$3.1 billion in savings in the Operating Budget, including \$50 million for the Alaska Marine Highway System Vessel Replacement Fund, helping advance modernization of Alaska’s ferry system.

Today the Senate concurred on the House’s changes to the fiscal year 2013 Capital Budget. Senator Stedman was responsible for starting this year’s Capital Budget process and leading the Senate’s thorough and public review of that budget. For every dollar spent in the Capital Budget, four dollars were added to savings through the Operating Budget. The FY2013 Capital Budget appropriates \$2.9 billion, including:

- \$870 million for transportation
- \$370 million to improve schools and education
- \$210 million to reduce energy costs statewide
- \$90 million to improve health care

“The budget strikes a good balance between building our economy and meeting community needs through capital projects and keeping state spending in check,” said Senator Stedman.

The Legislature also appropriated \$50 million in assistance to school districts and \$46 million in community revenue sharing to help address the high costs of energy and heating oil.

Throughout the session, the Senate led a thorough, detailed review of Alaska’s oil and gas tax fiscal system. The Senate’s work progressed the public debate on this issue and sets the stage for making reasoned changes to the state’s oil tax regime. As a member of

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the Senate Resources Committee and as Co-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Stedman engaged state agencies, oil companies, and oil and gas tax consultants in an effort to make Alaska's fiscal regime more competitive while safeguarding state revenues.

Notable pieces of legislation passed this session:

- Senate Bill 130 – Establishes a state council to preserve Alaska Native languages.
- House Bill 121 – Creates new loan funds for small businesses, mariculture, commercial charter fisheries and community quota entities.
- House Bill 60 – Expands geoduck farming.
- House Bill 246 – Names a bridge in Petersburg after fallen Vietnam Marine, Harry Kito.
- House Bill 261 – Enhances the commercial Fishing Revolving Loan Fund.
- House Bill 250 – Reauthorizes the Renewable Energy Fund grant program until 2018.
- House Concurrent Resolution 18 –Facilitates young Alaskans starting commercial fisheries careers.
- House Joint Resolution 20 – Opposes the “roadless rule” in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

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