

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SESSION

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## SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

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### **Senator Bert Stedman Successfully Concludes First Session** *Legislation addresses fisheries tax, education funding, double taxation*

**(Juneau)**—Sen. Bert Stedman (R-Sitka) wrapped up his first legislative session in Juneau this week with a number of significant accomplishments.

“I came to Juneau intent on raising the Legislature’s understanding of Southeast Alaska and our unique set of challenges,” said Stedman. “I’m returning to the district, confident that there is a renewed statewide sensitivity to them.”

Sen. Stedman sponsored several pieces of legislation important to the Southeast Alaska economy. Senate Bill 286 brings tax fairness to fishermen who catch and market their own fish. It creates a financial incentive for entrepreneurial fishermen who process and market their own catch, by lowering their Fisheries Business Tax from 5% to 3%. They will now be taxed at the same rate as shore processors and pay the tax on grounds price instead of the higher retail price. Senate Bill 300 eliminates double taxation of court awarded attorney’s fees by the Internal Revenue Service and brings Alaska’s lien law into line with the more favorable Oregon statute. Senate Bill 328 makes statutory changes in the way the State disburses federal timber receipts to communities within the Tongass National Forest. These monies fund schools, roads and other special projects within the communities of Southeast Alaska.

“I’m very proud of what the office has accomplished. It’s always difficult for a freshman legislator to garner support for personal legislation, particularly during the second session. There is certainly much more to be done, but having three bills heading to the Governor, is a very respectable start.”

District A schools will see an additional \$3.4 million in ’05 funding as a result of the \$82 million dollar education package approved by a House and Senate Conference Committee on Tuesday.

Stedman commented “The primary concern I heard from the district this year was the urgent need to increase education funding. We delivered a good bi-partisan compromise and the single biggest increase in education in the State’s history.”

#### DISTRICT A

*Ketchikan • Sitka • Petersburg • Wrangell*

*Pelican • Elfin Cove • Port Alexander • Saxman • Meyers Chuck • Thorne Bay • Coffman Cove • Hollis*

Stedman reported that the FY2005 Capital Budget includes \$302 million in federal monies for a variety of large transportation and infrastructure projects in the district, including \$215 million for the Gravina Island crossing, \$51 million for airport improvements, \$9.3 million for Marine Highway terminals, \$17.4 for surface transportation projects and \$6 million for Bradfield Canal road.

Despite limited State funding of capitol projects in this year's budget, District A will receive \$2 million in water & waste treatment matching grants, \$1.2 million in reappropriations and \$0.5 million in new grants for a variety of municipal projects. The Ketchikan Areas Arts & Humanities Council will receive \$250,000 towards the design and development of the Ketchikan community center for the arts. More information and detail on the FY2005 State Capital Budget is available online at [www.legfin.state.ak.us](http://www.legfin.state.ak.us).

Sen. Stedman represents Senate District A, which includes the Southeast communities of Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell and Petersburg.