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City of Unalaska Legislative Report

2/23/25

Unless you are primarily focused on education funding , things seem to be moving a bit slower this year.

The Governor submitted his amended budget by the February 19 deadline, the slight decrease in supplemental requests was overshadowed by the looming \$1.6 million deficit. Key changes in the budget highlights include the removal of \$50 million for the Alaska Gasline Project, which will now rely on AIDEA's corporate funds. Also, the updated Medicaid budget reflects an increase of \$19.6 million in UGF, acknowledging the rising healthcare costs.

The formation of the new Department of Agriculture, as highlighted in the budget, demonstrates the administration's preparedness to expand governmental functions despite fiscal pressures. This new department will utilize \$2.4 million for the establishment of its office and administrative positions, signifying the state's intention to enhance agricultural oversight.

The introduction of SB 92 targeting oil and gas companies represents a targeted path forward in generating revenue amidst declining state resources. However, the perceived discrimination against a singular company, like Hilcorp, raises concerns about future oil and gas development in Alaska. The implications of such a tax proposal will be closely monitored as the legislature continues to evaluate innovative solutions to the state's economic dilemmas.

The ongoing discussions among community leaders and legislators in Juneau underscore the pressing fiscal challenges facing Alaska, particularly as municipalities present their capital project priorities. The anticipated budget deficit of \$563 million for FY25 and FY26, as projected, adds urgency to these deliberations. The challenge for lawmakers will be to address critical areas such as education funding, deferred maintenance, and pension reform against a backdrop of limited financial resources.

As community leaders continue advocating for local priorities, the interplay between fiscal responsibility and funding essential services will remain central to discussions in the Alaska State Legislature. The outcome of these negotiations will ultimately shape the state's economic trajectory as it navigates the complexities of fiscal management in the coming years.

Upcoming Schedule

Description	Date, Time & Location
BARNES 124 -HOUSE TRANSPORTATION -- Please Note Time Change -- + Presentation: Ports and Harbors of Alaska by TELECONFERENCED Bryan Hawkins, President, Alaska Association of Harbormasters & Port Administrators + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED	Tue 2/25/25 1:30 PM



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Description	Date, Time & Location
<p>BARNES 124 -HOUSE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS += HB35 PRISONERS: ELECTRONIC DEVICE ACCESS/USE TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- *+ HB26 STATEWIDE PUBLIC & COMMUNITY TRANSIT PLAN TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- + Presentation: Department of Corrections TELECONFERENCED Overview by Commissioner Jen Winkelman -- Testimony -- + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED</p>	<p>Thu 2/27/25 8:00 AM</p>
<p>SENATE FINANCE 532 -SENATE FINANCE</p> <p>For Nome, Bethel, Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, Unalaska, Dillingham, Offnets Sign up by 10:15am += SB56 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET; CAP; SUPP TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- += SB57 APPROP: CAPITAL/SUPPLEMENTAL/FUNDS TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- += SB58 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- += SB59 APPROP: SUPPLEMENTAL; FUND CAP TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled **Streamed live on AKL.tv**</p>	<p>Thu 2/27/25 9:00 AM</p>
<p>BUTROVICH 205 -SENATE TRANSPORTATION + Overview: Metropolitan Planning Organizations TELECONFERENCED Aaron Jongenelen, Executive Director/MPO Coordinator, AMATS Jackson C. Fox, Executive Director, FAST Planning Kim Sollien, Executive Director, MVP **Streamed live on AKL.tv**</p>	<p>Thu 2/27/25 1:30 PM</p>
<p>BARNES 124 -HOUSE LABOR & COMMERCE</p> <p>-- Please Note Time Change -- + HOUSE BILL: SMALL BUSINESS TAX CREDIT TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>-- Testimony -- + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED **Streamed live on AKL.tv**</p>	<p>Fri 2/28/25 9:00 AM</p>



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Description	Date, Time & Location
BARNES 124 -HOUSE RESOURCES + Presentation: Alaska Department of Transportation TELECONFERENCED and Public Facilities Update by Leslie Daughtery, Chief Bridge Engineer; Jason Sakalaskas, Maintenance and Operations Chief, Northern Region; and Dan Smith, Director, Measurement Standards/Commercial Vehicle Compliance + HB33 CONFLICT OF INTEREST: BD FISHERIES/GAME TELECONFERENCED -- Invited & Public Testimony --	Fri 2/28/25 1:00 PM

Bill	Title	Prime Sponsor	Status & Upcoming Hearings	Position
HB 1	Specie As Legal Tender	MCCABE	(H) REFERRED TO STATE AFFAIRS (1/22)	

HB 1, titled "Specie As Legal Tender," aims to establish gold and silver specie as legal tender in Alaska. The bill prohibits boroughs and cities from levying sales and use taxes on the sale or exchange of specie. It defines specie as gold or silver valued primarily based on its metal content, in the form of coins or bullion stamped with its weight and purity. The bill also authorizes the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to study the possibility of establishing additional forms of legal tender.

HB 13	Municipal Property Tax Exemptions	GRAY	(H) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (1/22)	
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HB 18	Vehicles/boats: Transfer On Death Title	RAUSCHER	(H) Heard & Held (2/13)	
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HB 26	Statewide Public & Community Transit Plan	MINA	(H) -- Testimony <Invitation Only> -- (2/27) 02/27/25 8:00 AM in BARNES 124	
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HB 31	Vessels: Registration/delict Fund	STUTES	(H) REFERRED TO FINANCE (2/12)	
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HB 78	Retirement Systems; Defined Benefit Opt.	HOUSE FINANCE	(H) Heard & Held (2/18)	
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HB 78 is a bill that allows certain employees to opt-in to the defined benefit retirement plan. The bill impacts municipalities as it affects the retirement plans of their employees. The legislation applies to teachers and public employees who first became members of the defined contribution retirement plan after June 30, 2006, and before July 1, 2025.



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<u>SB 10</u>	Paid Family Leave/wage Replacement Insur.	DUNBAR	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (1/22)	
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<u>SB 50</u>	Municipal Comprehensive Plans: Housing	DUNBAR	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (2/12)	
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SB 50 amends Alaska Statute 29.40.030(a) to require first and second-class boroughs to include a housing plan in their comprehensive plans. The bill aims to guide physical, social, and economic development in these boroughs, addressing housing needs and providing recommendations for implementation of the comprehensive plan.

<u>SB 79</u>	Payment Of Wages; Payroll Card Account	SENATE LABOR & COMMERCE	(S) ADVANCED TO THIRD READING 2/24 CAL (2/20)	
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SB 79 is a bill that relates to wage payments in Alaska. The bill amends existing law to allow employers to pay employees' wages by crediting a payroll card account, but only if the employee has voluntarily authorized the credit or has not authorized deposit of their wages. The bill requires employers to notify employees of their wage payment options, payroll card terms and conditions, and fees associated with the payroll card.

The bill aims to provide employees with greater flexibility and protection in receiving their wages, while also allowing employers to use payroll card accounts as a convenient and cost-effective way to pay employees.