



Rep. Austerman's Legislative Newsletter

April 14, 2010 – There are four days left in the session. My schedule over the last few weeks has been nothing short of busy. House Finance meetings and House Floor Sessions have been back to back and often very late into the evening. There are many pieces of legislation waiting to be heard in House and Senate Finance, and many legislators are pushing hard to get their bills passed this session, otherwise they will die.

Capital Budget Update

Last week the Senate version of the Capital Budget, [SB 230](#) was debuted for the first time. The Senate has been making numerous tweaks to the bill, and it finally passed to the House on April 13th. The capital budget will now go to the House Finance Committee, who will offer a committee substitute to make changes. Once the capital budget passes the legislature, it will be put before the Governor and we will have to wait and see if the projects in District 36 survive the Governor's veto pen.

Conference Committee

Due to differences in the House and Senate versions of the Governor's operating budget, a conference committee made up of three House members and three Senate members has been established to flesh out the differences between the two versions. The committee has met twice and will continue until the six members agree on one version. All legislative committees are now under the *24-Hour Rule* which means bills and resolutions may receive a committee hearing with a twenty-four hour notice as opposed to a five-day notice. With this change, bills and resolutions have the potential to advance quickly to the floor for a vote.

Bills On The Move

HB 20: A bill I have co-sponsored which provides technical fixes to the Commercial Fishing Loan Act in order to make low-interest loans for energy efficiency upgrades available to a larger number of Alaska's commercial fishers, has passed the House. Subsequently, it was heard and passed out of Senate Finance. Once this bill passes the Senate, it will come back to the House for concurrence.

HCR 21: Another bill I have co-sponsored which creates the Economic Development Planning Commission whose responsibility is to develop and recommend to the Governor and the Legislature, visions and strategies that encourage economic development in Alaska. The bill was heard in House Finance and is waiting for a vote on the House floor.

HB 344: I have also co-sponsored this bill, which extends a program that allows salmon processors in Alaska to receive a salmon product development tax credit for 50% of the purchase costs of eligible equipment. An excellent amendment was added in House Fisheries which adds ice machines to the equipment eligible for tax credits. HB 344 has passed the House and moved out of Senate Finance, and is now waiting for a vote on the Senate floor.

HB 363: This bill restructures the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) board to seven members, and decreases the number of Governor's Commissioners on the board. I have been partnering with Rep. Bob Herron on this bill and it has been an important priority for me.

Track bills and resolutions online at: www.legis.state.ak.us/basis.

2010 Legislative Photo

Last week, amidst all the activity in the building, everyone managed to spare a few moments to line up and pose for the biennial Legislative Panoramic Photo. Below are two photos of all the legislators and their staff posing on the steps of the Capitol Building.



Photo courtesy of the Juneau Empire



Photo courtesy of the Alaska State Legislative House Majority Press Office

Next week I will be headed home to Kodiak. I am in the process of planning a trip out to the Iliamna Lake region in late May to visit several communities in the northern region of District 36. I look forward to visiting these communities and meeting with constituents from this area of my district. It will be my first visit to many of these communities.

As always, my office door is open to any inquiries or questions you may have. You can either contact my office or the Kodiak Legislative Information Office (LIO) with questions. The Kodiak LIO can be reached at 486-8116 and my office number is (800) 865-2487.

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