

Session Wrap-up

JUNEAU REPORT

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REPRESENTATIVE FATE'S BILLS

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| <i>Permanent Fund Allowable absences</i> | HB 14 Passed |
| <i>Coal Leases</i> | HB 283 Passed |
| <i>Stranded Gas Development Act Amendments</i> | HB 16 Passed |
| <i>Injunctions against Permitting Projects</i> | HB 86 Passed |
| <i>Same Day Airborne Hunting SB 155</i> | HB 208 Passed |

Co-Sponsored Legislation

- HB 51-Labeling of Prescribed Drugs
- HB 80-Prohibit Soft Drinks in School
- HCR 1-Congratulate Governor/Lt. Governor
- HCR 2-Extend Alaska Railroad to Ft. Greeley
- HCR 3-Support Roads/Hot Springs Loop Rd.
- HJR 7 Repeal Federal Estate Tax



FATE'S SESSION ENDS WITH SEVERAL VICTORIES

With the ending gavel of the first session of the 23rd Alaska Legislature, Representative Fate was working hard to the very end. Important legislation that he had promised to move headed to the Governor's desk for his signature.

The bills included language that reopens negotiations for a natural gas pipeline. A bill that will decrease the number of malicious and bad faith lawsuits against already permitted projects. An increase in the amount of land that coal development companies can lease for exploration, and an opportunity for a person to take care of a terminally – ill family member.

Fate began this session with clear goals to begin the process of economic development by get-

ting the state resource industries back to work.

Fate says, "When we came to Juneau this year, the new Administration had already asked us to find ways to develop our resources. I had the privilege of Chairing the Committee directly assigned to that task. That, combined with legislation that I wanted to pass, made this first 120 days quite successful.

In addition to working on his own legislation Representative Fate took the lead in the House on several important Administration bills aimed at restoring eight years of lackluster resource development. Those included extensive work and revisions to the Coastal Management plan. The change will streamline the process of how development takes

place along Alaska's coasts and refine the permitting process. It eliminates some of the bureaucracy that has repeatedly stood in the way of progress.

"With every bill we reviewed this year we had to carefully scrutinize what it was going to cost. The aim was for zero increases and the goal was a saving or increasing revenues to the state. We strived to send bills to the next committee with a minimum or a Zero Fiscal note." Fate said.

While the work for this session is over, the process will continue through the interim. Several important pieces of the puzzle must be ready to move forward in January. Fate adds, "I'm happy to say that we will finish that job next year."

Fate Aims for a Decline in Lawsuits

For many developers, the process of getting a project going includes many days, weeks, and months just to get the proper permits in place. Once that is done, it's time to hire the sub-contractors, buy the materials, and go to work.

But in many cases that is not what happens.

There is another step that has become as common as the permitting, process and can sometime delay a project for years.

Lawsuits that result in injunctions can cost a contractor and the state millions of dollars and countless hours of court time just to prove that the permits were properly is-

sued. HB 86, which passed the legislature on the final day, will eliminate the malicious and bad faith suits.

The bill requires a plaintiff that files this type of suit to pay all of the lost funds associated with delay, should the court determine it was without merit.

(see lawsuits page 2)



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FATE'S LEGISLATION

Lawsuits

The bill means that those who file frivolous lawsuits just to stop a project may have to pay the true costs rather than just partial court and attorney fees.

Coal Fields get equal shake from the state

With a pro-development administration in Washington, Alaska found itself behind the push for new coal expansion.

Midway through this session Representative Fate began working with members of the industry to level the field by introducing HB 283.

The bill is a simple change to existing language that essentially doubles the amount of acre-

age coal developers can lease for exploration.

In the lower 48 most of the land available for coal exploration belongs to the federal government; in Alaska it belongs to the state.

By expanding the amount of land available, Alaska is providing opportunities for both existing and new coal companies. The expanded coal leases will provide new revenue to the state and the potential new jobs for Alaskans.

"This bill is a perfect example of how government and industry can work together towards a common good. Our goals are very similar, we both want Alaska to prosper," Fate said.

Family Values

Not all of Representative Fate's legislation was aimed at resources. HB 14, while not designed to specifically accomplish it, succeeded in bringing the definition of family into law.

The bill allows a person to tend to the needs of a terminally-ill family member and not be penalized by losing their Permanent Fund Dividend.

As the bill made it through the legislative process, other members asked the important question, What is a family member? As a result, not only does the bill help a family that is facing a personal crisis, it clearly defines who is or is not a family member.

NEW STAFF MAKES THE MOVE WITH REPRESENTATIVE FATE

When you call Representative Fate's Office this summer you will hear a different voice on the line. That's because two members of the Juneau staff are coming to Fairbanks for the interim. Both Jim Pound and Derek Bringhurst will be in the office from now until we return to Juneau in January.

For Derek it will be back from just a short departure during this year's session. For Jim it is a chance for him to finally come home after a four year absence.

Both will be working in the new Fairbanks office during regular business hours.

Looking forward to coming home

What a year this has been in the Legislature. We came to Juneau with lots of ideas on how to get the economy going. Some were great, others, were to say the least interesting. But we prevailed with the cooperation of the new administration and the positive leadership in both Houses.

Now its time to come home and get the true report card from each and every one of you in District 7. I will be spending time in my office in the Denali Bank building and when I'm not there my staff will know where I am and be able to find me. I look forward to the opportunity to talk with you about the issues we must face together in the coming year.

We both know that there is still a lot of work to be done and we need to take advantage of the opportunity we have to get Alaska and the Interior back on the road to a prosperous future.

My new Fairbanks phone number is on this newsletter and we will be there to answer your questions. Give me a call so we can get together and prepare for next years work.

Thank you again, for your support.