

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News From The House Majority

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CONTACT: Renee Limoge (907) 465-5446

Alaska House Passes Operating Budget

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska House of Representatives today passed HB 375, the Operating Budget for FY05, based on the Governor’s funding requests.

The operating budget, which will now move to the Senate for consideration, contains funding for numerous departments and projects including: funding above the Governor’s request for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game; 10 new investigators and 10 new Alaska State Troopers; over \$200,000 above FY04 levels to fund public defenders in Alaska; full funding for disabled and senior services; full funding for women’s shelters in Alaska; full funding for the Marine Highway System; and no cuts to the Department of Transportation.

House Finance Committee Co-Chair John Harris (R-Valdez) was pleased that the House passed the Operating Budget, but cautioned that it still must pass the Senate. “After months of working with House Leadership and Majority Finance Committee members, in cooperation with Minority Finance Committee members, the House has passed a good operating budget that addresses the needs of the state, social services, public safety and transportation.” He went on to say, “The House has passed both the education budget and the operating budget which now move to the Senate for concurrence.”

Co-Chair of the House Finance Committee, Bill Williams (R-Saxman) also applauded the House’s work on the Operating Budget. “The House has taken another important step in establishing Alaska’s fiscal future. I am especially pleased to have increased funding for the Marine Highway System and that we were able to keep Alaska’s State parks open. Both are important to Alaska’s tourism industry as well as those of us who live here and use the Marine Highway System and these park facilities regularly.”

In addition to the Operating Budget, the House of Representatives also passed an Education Budget that provided \$84.5 million in additional funding for K-12 education, \$15.8 million for University education and full funding for Power Cost Equalization (PCE).

The Operating Budget now awaits action in the Senate.

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