

Representative Bill Williams
2004 Legislative Session
Report from Juneau



Dear Neighbor,

The Legislative session is coming down the home stretch and I want to fill you in on what is happening in Juneau.

The Legislature has been deliberating over many important proposals that will have long-term impacts on all Alaskans. As Co-Chair of the House Finance Committee, my job is to promote fiscal responsibility while providing funding for constitutional priorities such as education, transportation and public safety. To say the least, the focus of this legislative session has been on the fiscal gap and education funding.

In talking with you, I am keenly aware of your concerns over the fiscal gap and its looming impact on our state's economic stability.

As a member of the Republican Majority, my colleagues and I have been working hard to revitalize our economy, balance our state's budget and create a sense of hope in the future of our state.

We have also been working on the proposed natural gas pipeline and other resource development issues that will foster economic growth in our state.

I will continue working hard to address these and other important issues that will impact our future.

Remember that my door is always open and I want to hear from you on issues affecting you and our community.

I look forward to seeing you this summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill".

**Historic Increase
in Education Funding**

As Co-Chairs of the House Finance committee, Representative John Harris (R-Valdez) and I successfully shepherded legislation that will increase funding for education in Ketchikan and throughout Alaska.

Specifically, House Bill 233 and Senate Bill 283, if adopted by the Senate, will:

- * Provide \$1.5 million in additional funding for the Ketchikan School District
- * Increase and fund the per student base allocation in the foundation formula
- * Ensure a higher level of education funding for many years to come
- * Help cover shortfalls in the Teachers' Retirement System
- * Mitigate the inflationary toll that has been slowly eroding our education dollars
- * Include a \$15.8 million increase for the University of Alaska

**SeniorCare Program Adopted
Prescription Drug Cost
Help on the Way**

I was happy to support House Bill 374 that establishes the SeniorCare program. SeniorCare will provide prescription drug subsidies or cash assistance to low-income seniors until the new Medicare prescription drug subsidy administered by the federal government becomes effective in 2006. SeniorCare also includes a new SeniorCare Information Office and a Preferred Drug List.

Please call the SeniorCare Information Office at 1-800-478-6065 for more information.

Swan/Tyee Intertie Project Update

A proposal transferring the Swan/Tyee Intertie from the City of Ketchikan to the Four Dam Pool is near completion. The Four Dam Pool board of directors has authorized expenditure of up to \$7.5 million for the mobilization and materials requirements for installation of tower foundations in late May or early June.

I have been working towards making the Swan/Tyee Intertie project a reality for many years and I am excited that construction is going to begin this summer.

The project will give us access to affordable and plentiful power for years to come, a crucial ingredient in building a healthy economic base.

Williams' Legislation Saves Consumers Millions

I introduced House Bill 495 to allow the Four Dam Pool to refinance \$74 million in debt service owed to the state. If adopted, ratepayers in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Kodiak and Copper Valley Electric Association will share in the estimated \$1 to \$1.5 million dollar annual savings.

What Do You Think?

The Fiscal Gap - What Should We Do?
Take the poll on-line at www.akrepublic.com

State Spending

1) Do you support continued efforts to reduce state spending?

Yes No Undecided

2) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment that would limit state expenditures?

Yes No Undecided

Permanent Fund

3) Do you favor using some of the earnings of the Permanent Fund to pay for state services such as public education?

Yes No Undecided

4) Do you favor using Permanent Fund earnings to only pay dividends, even if it meant implementing a statewide income or sales tax?

Yes No Undecided

5) Do you favor ending the Permanent Fund dividend program with one final lump sum payment to all eligible Alaskans?

Yes No Undecided

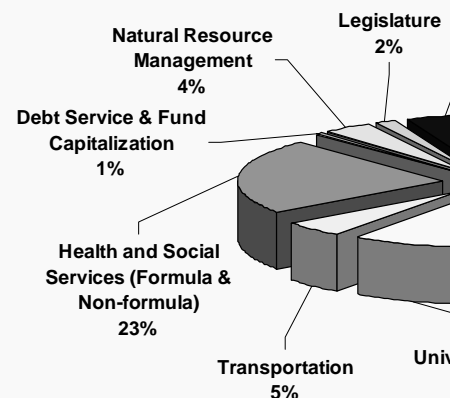
Visit the Web -
www.akrepublic.com



Representative Williams and Majority Leader John Coghill (North Pole) discuss support for our dive fisheries during a recent floor session.

FY05 Appropriations Operating Budget w/Edu

(\$2.3 billion in



You Think?

Resolution(s) Do You Prefer?
alaskarepublicans.org/williams

6) Do you favor capping the dividend (at \$1,000 for example) and using earnings to pay for public education?
Yes No Undecided

Taxes

7) Should the state income tax be reinstated?
Yes No Undecided

8) Should the state adopt a statewide sales tax?
Yes No Undecided

9) Should the state enact a \$100 per wage earner education tax?
Yes No Undecided

10) Should the state use a combination of Permanent Fund earnings and a broad based tax to bridge the fiscal gap?
Yes No Undecided

11) Should tobacco taxes be increased by \$1 per pack?
Yes No Undecided



Governor Frank Murkowski and Bill discuss the Gravina Bridge project during a break in floor action.

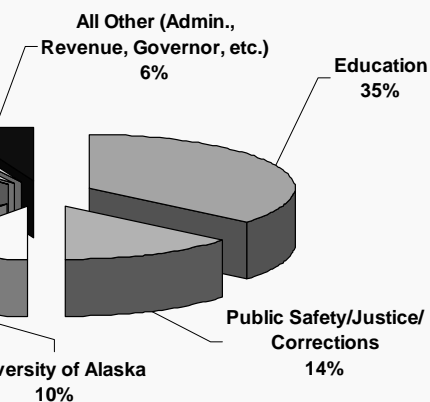
Veterans' Home to become a Reality

I am happy to report the Governor is requesting funds to convert the Palmer Pioneer Home into a Veterans' Home. I support this request that will leverage federal funds to convert the home into an upgraded 82-bed facility.

I helped fund the feasibility study that recommended the Palmer facility conversion. I am pleased that its completion will assist those who have given so much for our country.

alaskarepublicans.org/williams

in the proposed House
Education Funding Increase
(General Funds)



Williams secures additional funds for the Alaska Marine Highway System

As your Representative, I have always been a strong advocate for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) and have fought hard to protect its funding. This year, I sponsored the amendment in the House Finance Committee that increased AMHS funding by \$8 million over the Governor's proposed budget request.

I applaud the Governor and the Department of Transportation (DOT) for moving forward with the planned move of AMHS administrative jobs to Ketchikan. I worked closely with the DOT and the Borough to help facilitate this move that will be a boost to our economy.

I have been a strong proponent for a long-term plan that would establish Ketchikan as a maritime center in our state. Shipyard completion, Ward Cove redevelopment, the AMHS headquarters move to Ketchikan and maintained harbors are key elements in making this vision a reality.

The ferries are our highways in Southeast Alaska and for the benefit of the system we must all work together to make them as user friendly and efficient as possible.

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Legislation Ledger - A look at some of Bill's legislation this year

House Joint Resolution 5 - proposes a constitutional amendment to ensure that initiatives and referendums have broad-based statewide support.

House Bill 341 - allows Southeast Alaska Dive Fisheries members more flexibility in assessing themselves to manage the successful, new and developing commercial dive fisheries. The industry this year will be worth nearly \$6 million for Southeast Alaska.

House Bill 378 - allows DEC to require food-handling operators to become trained and certified.



Bill and Finance Vice-Chair Kevin Meyer (Anchorage) grab a quick bite during a House Finance Committee break.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Session (January - Mid-May)
(800) 301-2455 or 465-3424

Interim (Mid-May - January)

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