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City of Unalaska Legislative Report
2/26/23

We are on 1/3rd of the way through the legislative session in Juneau, time is flying but things in the capital seem to be moving at a slower pace. The increasing number of folks falling ill has not helped.

The finance committees in both chambers are wrapping up the operations finance sub committees and will continue the questioning and analysis of the Governor's budget proposals in more detail. As normal, legislators will make efforts to add their own capital projects over the course of the budget process. As of now, we are potentially facing a \$400 million dollar deficit.

In her annual address to the Alaska Legislature, Sen. Lisa Murkowski urged state lawmakers to avoid spending too much time on the amount of this year's Permanent Fund dividend and to focus on problems causing people to move out of the state. She said folks should be looking at issues such as, childcare, transportation, housing, workforce shortages and economic development.

On Thursday Governor Dunleavy launched a new energy task force to review the state's overall energy policies. His vision is that this group will develop a comprehensive statewide energy plan that will evaluate energy generation, distribution, cost, and transmission for the state of Alaska and its communities.

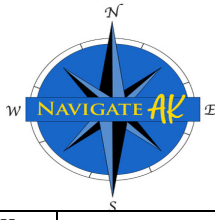
There has been much focus on the State of Alaska's 401(k)-style retirement system for new employees, it is providing significantly smaller benefits than the pension-style retirement system discontinued in 2006, according to a new analysis from the state Division of Retirement and Benefits. A detailed analysis was presented Thursday to the Senate Finance Committee, as legislators are considering whether to revive a pension for new employees as a way to encourage recruitment and retention.



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Upcoming Schedule

Description	Date, Time & Location
<p>GRUENBERG 120 -HOUSE JUDICIARY</p> <p>-- Please Note Time Change --</p> <p>+ = HJR2 CONST. AM: APPROP LIMIT TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ = HB38 APPROPRIATION LIMIT; GOV BUDGET TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>*+ HB66 CONTROLLED SUB.;HOMICIDE;GOOD TIME DEDUC. TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED</p>	<p>Mon 2/27/23 1:30 PM</p>
<p>BARNES 124 -HOUSE TRANSPORTATION</p> <p>-- Testimony --</p> <p>+ Presentation: Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority by Randy Ruaro, Executive Director</p> <p>+ Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>**Streamed live on AKL.tv**</p>	<p>Tue 2/28/23 1:00 PM</p>
<p>DAVIS 106 -HOUSE EDUCATION</p> <p>-- Teleconference --</p> <p>-- Testimony --</p> <p>+ Presentation: Uncovering the Myths of School Choice by Bob Griffin</p> <p>*+ HB69 RECLASSIFICATION OF FIRST CLASS CITIES TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>**Streamed live on AKL.tv**</p>	<p>Wed 3/1/23 8:00 AM</p>
<p>ADAMS 519 -HOUSE FINANCE</p> <p>*+ HB79 APPROP: SUPPLEMENTAL TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ Overview: FY 2023 Governor's Supplemental by Neil Steininger, Director, Office of Management & Budget</p> <p>+ = HB39 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUND; SUPP TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ = HB41 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET TELECONFERENCED</p> <p>+ Overview: FY 2024 Budget by Commissioner Julie Sande; Micaela Fowler, Deputy Commissioner; and Hannah Lager, Administrative Services Director, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development</p> <p>+ Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED</p>	<p>Fri 3/3/23 1:30 PM</p>



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Bill	Title	Prime Sponsor	Status & Upcoming Hearings	Position
HB 18	Fishery Development Assoc.; Assessments	STUTES	(H) REFERRED TO FISHERIES (1/19)	

The state would help create nonprofit regional fishing cooperatives intended to develop new fisheries in the state. These would be funded by fees paid by fishermen in the area.

HB 21	School/university Employee Health Insur	VANCE	(H) REFERRED TO EDUCATION (1/27)	
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Local governments and school districts would be able to join the state's health insurance program.

HB 22	Peace Officer/firefighter Retire Benefits	JOSEPHSON	(H) REFERRED TO STATE AFFAIRS (2/15)	
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The state would create a pension program for police and firefighters.

HB 54	Approp: Supplemental; Reapprop; Amending	RULES	(H) REFERRED TO FINANCE (2/1)	
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HB 63	Repeal Workers' Comp Appeals Commission	RAUSCHER	(H) Heard & Held (2/17)	
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House Bill 63 is suggested to save \$433,000 per year by repealing the Alaska Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission. HB 63 will return jurisdiction over appeals of Workers' Compensation Board decisions to the Superior Court. Currently the Appeals Commission handles these cases, and their decisions can be appealed to the Supreme Court.

HB 69	Reclassification Of First Class Cities	CRONK	(H) -- Teleconference <Listen Only> -- (3/1) 03/01/23 8:00 AM in DAVIS 106	
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1. Notwithstanding AS 29.04.040, a first class city with a population of less than 400 persons based on the most recent decennial census conducted by the United States Bureau of the Census may be reclassified as a second class city if the council submits a written request to the Local Boundary Commission.

HB 70	Municipal Property Tax Exemptions	TO-MASZEWSKI	(H) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (2/13)	
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This bill would include the following to the properties exempt from general taxation:



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(11) a parking lot owned by an organization incorporated under state law that is exempt from taxation and used for parking or another use as long as the parking or other use is permitted without charge;

(12) real and personal property of a store operated by an organization incorporated under state law that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. 501(c) if the store deals exclusively in donated inventory that is distributed without cost as part of a program to provide needy persons with food, shelter, clothing, or health care without charge or sells merchandise below market value to support a literacy program or a program to provide needy persons with food, shelter, clothing, or health care without charge.

HB 74	Geothermal Resources	RULES	(H) -- Public Testimony -- (3/2) 02/28/23 10:15 AM in BARNES 124 03/02/23 10:15 AM in BARNES 124	
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This bill removes obstacles for exploration and development of Alaska's geothermal resources. The bill updates the definition of "geothermal resources" to allow for modern uses. The bill also increases the time available for exploration from three years to five years.

HB 79	Approp: Supplemental	RULES	(H) FINANCE at 01:30 PM ADAMS 519 (3/3) 03/03/23 1:30 PM in ADAMS 519	
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SB 14	Rip For Public Employees/teachers	KAWASAKI	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (2/22)	
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School districts would be able to create incentive programs to encourage employees to retire early in order to cut staff.

SB 35	Peace Officer/firefighter Retire Benefits	KAWASAKI	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (1/18)	
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The state would create a pension program for police and firefighters.

SB 39	Disclosure Of Wage Information	DUNBAR	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (1/18)	
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An employer would be required to post the wage, salary or salary range of a job when they advertise a vacancy and seek to hire someone.



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<u>SB 69</u>	Geothermal Resources	RULES	(S) REFERRED TO RE-SOURCES (2/15)	
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This bill removes obstacles for exploration and development of Alaska's geothermal resources. The bill updates the definition of "geothermal resources" to allow for modern uses. The bill also increases the time available for exploration from three years to five years.

<u>SB 77</u>	Muni Prop Tax Exemption/tax Blighted Prop	DUNBAR	(S) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (2/22)	
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<u>SB 79</u>	Reclassification Of First Class Cities	BISHOP	(S) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (2/24)	
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1. Notwithstanding AS 29.04.040, a first class city with a population of less than 400 persons based on the most recent decennial census conducted by the United States Bureau of the Census may be reclassified as a second class city if the council submits a written request to the Local Boundary Commission.