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## **City of Unalaska Legislative Report** **3/12/23**

This week the legislature still has not picked up much steam. Several more hearings were held on the Governors bills related to carbon storage and carbon offset in addition to bills related to temporary professional licensing, increases to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and repealing the Certificate of Need (CON) for medical facilities.

House Joint Resolution 9 was introduced this week, the proposed constitutional amendment would combine the Permanent Fund Principal and the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve Account into a single constitutionally protected account. Under this proposed amendment, the Legislature would be allowed to appropriate each year a maximum of five percent (5%) of the market value of that new constitutionally safeguarded account as calculated over the first five of the preceding six fiscal years.

It looks like the Biden Administration is close to making a final decision about the Willow Project—an oil and gas development project in the National Petroleum Reserve that promises thousands of jobs for Alaskans and years of critically needed economic growth for Alaska. This would demonstrate a commitment to responsible energy development and a recognition of the importance of projects like Willow to the country's future.

A pay raise for Alaska's executive branch leaders was unanimously rejected by the legislative branch, with some lawmakers saying paychecks for both branches should be considered. Had it not been rejected, the recommendation would have raised the the governor's salary from the current \$145,000 per year to \$176,000, based on a 2% annual increase since the last raise in 2011. Similar increases would raise the lieutenant governor's salary to about \$140,000 and department commissioners — whose last increase was in 2015 — to \$168,000. The commission recommended no changes to legislative pay, which has remained the same since 2010.

### **Interesting read:**

Alaska's working-age population peaked 10 years ago, and the rate of loss since then has been nearly the highest among all U.S. states, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The details are described in the lead article in the [March issue of Alaska Economic Trends](#), the monthly magazine produced by the department's research and analysis section.

The number of Alaskans between 18 and 64 years old reached its peak in 2013 at 479,000 but by 2022 had fallen to 449,000, according to the article. Alaska's 5.4% loss in working-age adults from 2013 to 2021 is eclipsed only by the 8% loss in West Virginia and the 6% loss in Wyoming.



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There are three reasons for Alaska’s decline, according to the article: outmigration, the aging nature of Alaska’s population and the large number of deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alaska has had 10 consecutive years of more people leaving the state than moving into it, the longest stretch since such records began after World War II.

### Upcoming Schedule

Description	Date, Time & Location
DAVIS 106 -HOUSE EDUCATION  -- Testimony -- -- Teleconference -- *+ HB105 SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS TELECONFERENCED *+ HB106 TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT TELECONFERENCED += HB69 RECLASSIFICATION OF FIRST CLASS CITIES TELECONFERENCED *+ HB21 SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSUR TELECONFERENCED + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED **Streamed live on AKL.tv**	Mon 3/13/23 8:00 AM
BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) -SENATE LABOR & COMMERCE *+ SB88 RETIREMENT SYSTEMS; DEFINED BENEFIT OPT. TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- **Streamed live on AKL.tv**	Mon 3/13/23 1:30 PM
BUTROVICH 205 -SENATE RESOURCES *+ HJR5 ALASKA FISHERIES; TROLL FISHERIES TELECONFERENCED -- Invited & Public Testimony -- Amy Daugherty, Executive Director, Alaska Trollers Association; Tim O'Connor, Craig Mayor; Dani Evenson, ADF&G, Alaska Treaty Coordinator += SB67 PFAS USE FIREFIGHTING TELECONFERENCED -- Public Testimony -- += SB49 CARBON STORAGE TELECONFERENCED Kevin Connors, Assistant Director for Regulatory Compliance and Energy Policy with the Energy and Environmental Research Center (EERC) + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED **Streamed live on AKL.tv**	Mon 3/13/23 3:30 PM



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Description	Date, Time & Location
BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) -SENATE LABOR & COMMERCE *+ SB88 RETIREMENT SYSTEMS; DEFINED BENEFIT OPT. TELECONFERENCED -- Testimony -- **Streamed live on AKL.tv**	Wed 3/15/23 1:30 PM
ADAMS 519 -HOUSE FINANCE + Presentation: School Bond Debt Reimbursementand TELECONFERENCED Regional Educational Attendance Area by Department of Education and Early Development + Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled TELECONFERENCED	Fri 3/17/23 1:30 PM

Bill	Title	Prime Sponsor	Status & Upcoming Hearings	Position
<a href="#">HB 18</a>	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.

<a href="#">HB 21</a>	School/university Employee Health Insur	VANCE	(H) -- Testimony <Invitation Only> -- (3/13) 03/13/23 8:00 AM in DAVIS 106	
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Local governments and school districts would be able to join the state's health insurance program.

<a href="#">HB 22</a>	Peace Officer/firefighter Retire Benefits	JOSEPH-SON	(H) Heard & Held; Assigned to Subcommittee (3/7)	
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The state would create a pension program for police and firefighters.

<a href="#">HB 54</a>	Approp: Supplemental; Reapprop; Amending	RULES	(H) REFERRED TO FINANCE (2/1)	
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<a href="#">HB 63</a>	Repeal Workers' Comp Appeals Commission	RAUSCHER	(H) Heard & Held (3/3)	
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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.



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<a href="#">HB 69</a>	Reclassification Of First Class Cities	CRONK	(H) -- Testimony <Invitation Only> -- (3/13) 03/13/23 8:00 AM in DAVIS 106	
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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.

<a href="#">HB 70</a>	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:

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;

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.

<a href="#">HB 74</a>	Geothermal Resources	RULES	(H) REFERRED TO RESOURCES (3/8)	
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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.

<a href="#">HB 79</a>	Approp: Supplemental	RULES	(H) Heard & Held (3/7)	
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<a href="#">HB 84</a>	Muni Prop Tax Exemption/tax Blighted Prop	SUMNER	(H) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (2/27)	
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A city or borough would be able to tax properties that it deems "blighted."

<a href="#">HJR 5</a>	Alaska Fisheries; Troll Fisheries	HIM-SCHOOT	(S) -- Invited & Public Testimony -- (3/13) 03/13/23 3:30 PM in BUTROVICH 205	
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<a href="#">SB 11</a>	Teachers & Pub Employee Retirement Plans	KIEHL	(S) REFERRED TO LABOR & COMMERCE (1/18)	
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All public employees would be enabled to choose between the state's existing 401k-style retirement program or a new pension program.

<a href="#">SB 14</a>	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.

<a href="#">SB 35</a>	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.

<a href="#">SB 39</a>	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.

<a href="#">SB 69</a>	Geothermal Resources	RULES	(S) REFERRED TO RESOURCES (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.

<a href="#">SB 77</a>	Muni Prop Tax Exemption/tax Blighted Prop	DUNBAR	(S) -- Invited & Public Testimony -- (3/16) 03/16/23 1:30 PM in BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)	
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<a href="#">SB 79</a>	Reclassification Of First Class Cities	BISHOP	(S) REFERRED TO COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS (2/24)	
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be reclassified as a second class city if the council submits a written request to the Local Boundary Commission.

<a href="#">SB 88</a>	Retirement Systems; Defined Benefit Opt.	GIESSEL	(S) LABOR & COMMERCE at 01:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) (3/17) 03/13/23 1:30 PM in BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) 03/15/23 1:30 PM in BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) 03/17/23 1:30 PM in BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)	
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