

Alejandro R. Tungul

Juneau Trip Report – Lobbying Trip March 18-20, 2019

My trip schedule to start Saturday March 16th, but for some unexpected circumstances all flights are cancelled on that day, due to the eruption of volcano in Russia. Got on the standby the next day, thanks to the Mayor after making some phone calls we are able to make it on the noon flight leaving Dutch Harbor to Anchorage, once we arrived in Anchorage we all rush to the Alaska airline counter to see if we can change our flight and catch the last flight for the day going to Juneau, we are fortunate there are seats available and got on the last flight to Juneau arriving at 10:30 pm March 27th.

We began our business on March 18th at 7:30 a.m. having breakfast with Diane Blumer our lobbyist, where we went over on our schedule for the day. Our first meeting of the day was at 8:30 a.m. with Representative Louise Stutes who chair the Fisheries and co-chair on the Transportation Committee, She indicated that HB 65, Fisheries tax would not be passed there is no support from the fisheries committee. She has always been a big supporter of Unalaska and knows how much we are going to be impacted if HB 65 will passed, she promised to stand up and fight for us. At 9:a.m. most of us went on a capital tour leading by a college student intern, it was pretty interesting to learn a little bit of story in the capital. Then followed at 11:a.m. we were introduced on the floor of the House of Representative by Representative Louise Stutes, Speaker of the House Bryce Edgmon who is the Representative of Unalaska won't be able to so. We thank Representative Stutes for introducing the Unalaska delegation. The next meeting is at 1:30p.m.with Commissioner Vincent Lang from the Department of Fish and game. We went over our concern with him and he was very understanding and open minded especially on their budget. We talked to him regarding our concern on shortage in their presence in our community and the lack of enforcement on our Subsistence and Sport Fishing issues. We told him we use our Police officers on duty when they have the time for enforcement especially on sports fishing. The next meeting at 2:00 p.m. we all went to the House of Finance meeting, were we all sat and listen to our Mayor Frank Kelty testified on all the issues facing our community regarding the budget. Our mayor did a heck of a job on his testimony laying out everything that is concerning not just to our community but our other neighboring communities. Unalaska will be impacted heavily if the proposed budget by the governor is not amended. The next meeting at 3:00 p.m. we met with Senator Gary Stevens who chair the Education committee, we discussed our concern about the base student allocation reduction, we told him that we are already funding the school at the maximum amount allowed, he assured us he will work hard and fight to make sure they decrease the student allocation for the schools. We also discussed the concern about the reversal of the School Bond Debit Reimbursement. At 4:00 p.m. our next meeting is with Representative Neal Foster – Co Chair of

Finance, Operating Budget, we met with his staff who are very receptive on listening with our concern, we discussed the negative impacts on the funding level of the Governor proposed budget especially the elimination of the shared fisheries tax that will be a big impact to our community and also the concern on the M/V Tustumena. And evening comes, we had a dinner reception for our Senator, Representative and several commissioners where we had a long interaction talking about what is all happening in Unalaska and all the changes and improvement that have happen from the good old days.

On the second Day March 19th- Once again we began our business for the day, meeting at 7:30 a.m. with our lobbyist Diane Blumer to go over on our schedule for the second day. Our first meeting of the day is at 9:15 a.m. with DOT Commissioner Mackinnon where we expressed our concern regarding a few numbers of issues, we did not get to far with the commissioner in regards with the Alaska Marine Highway System, also our former Mayor Shirley Marquardt join us on our meeting by telephone, she was not given much of a chance to say anything by the commissioner, at this point the governor is pushing to privatize the system that will pretty much saying the end of the service of the Ferry System in our community and the Governor also want to keep the funds replacement for M/V Tustumena and placed it to the general fund, this will put the replacement of the M/V Tustumena hold for a long time. Our next is at 10:00 a.m. with LT. Governor, we discussed the elimination of the shared fish tax we let him know the impact will be devastating to our community, we told him how we provide for the community on our own, from funding the nonprofit that the state stop funding, to funding the school to the max. We also discussed the repeal of the funds owed on the Carl Moses boat harbor and the School bond Debit Reimbursement. We suggested that the Governor consider other new revenues to limit the impact on all places especially small communities. Our next Meeting is at 10:30 a.m. with Deputy Commissioner Goode for the Department of Corrections. We discussed the Work Release program we asked what happen to the Program that Unisea sign, Commissioner Goode did not know much about the program and said she will look into it. We are told that the new administration has identified some concerns with some of the programs and continuing to look for a safer ways in continuing the program to move forward. Next meeting is at 11:00 a.m. with Senator Lyman Hoffman the Senator for Unalaska who is a Finance member, It is always a pleasure to visit our senator has he always provide every information we asked and more. We discussed the elimination of the shared fish tax and he knows how much our community will be impacted if the governor have his way, we also talked to him about the School Bond Debit Reimbursement and the fund owed on the Carl Moses Boat harbor, he is very optimistic that the governor budget was going to be amended and put back most of the cuts he made, but the senator concerned in amending the budget is the governor might do a Veto. Next meeting at 2:00 p.m. with Commissioner Johnson - Commissioner of Education, we stop by at his office and discussed our concerns about the base student allocation and told him that the city already fund the school at the maximum amount allowed

and we also mentioned that our school is one of the top in the state, he said he understood our concern but he is hesitant to tell us how difficult things are going to be. With his Boss!! Next meeting at 2:30 p.m. with James Balsinger- Federal building NMFS- We discussed our concerns on what we are facing especially the BSAI trawl cod fisheries that is causing our community to lose cod fish deliveries, he is optimistic that the council will take their final action at the April meeting to close any loop hole that has allowed this happen in the past. Next we proceed to the U.S Coast Guard Office at 3:15 p.m. on the same building. We met with Admiral Bell at his office together with half a dozen officers of the Coast Guard who are familiar and have been to Unalaska in the past. They are all happy to see us, we had a good conversation, we told them how much we appreciate what they do and the support they provided to our community. The last agenda for the day is at 5:30 p.m. We hosted the Unalaska Seafood Reception for the Legislature. We had a very good turnout, most of the Senator, Representative, Commissioners and some of their staff showed up at the reception including Congressman Don Young. It is nice to for everybody to show their appreciation in doing this event they all said this is something they look forward to every year.

On the third day March 20th – We started at 8:00 a.m., discussed our schedule for day, First schedule meeting at 9:30 a.m. We met with the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety Commissioner Price. We discussed our concerns about being under Staff and underserved in the Fish and Game especially in the enforcement area during summer months when sport fishing is at the peak of the season, Commissioner Price informed us that she will be looking into it and see if they can come up with the plan to help Unalaska. They will consider our request and get back with us by April 15th. Next meeting is at 1:30 p.m. with Ben Stevens and Tuckerman Bobcock of the governor office. We discussed our concern in regards to the proposed budget of the Governor in eliminating the shared fish tax and how it would be affect our community, we told them it will have a devastating impact on our community. We also discussed the AMHS, the school bond debit reimbursement and the repeal of the funds owed on the Carl Moses boat Harbor. But they don't seem to care much on what we have to say. They even got into a big argument with our Mayor regarding the Governor's budget especially Ben Stevens, when the mayor told him that this is the worse budget he ever witnessed in the last 40 plus years. The next meeting is at 3:00 p.m. with Representative Bryce Edgmon. Speaker of the House, We discussed overall budget and shared with us his position and did a presentation on the impact if the Governor will go ahead on his plan to pay \$3,000 each resident on the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. Representative Bryce has been good for Unalaska, he has a lot of good things to say about our community and we all know he will stand up for what we are doing to better served our community. The last one on our schedule is at 3:30 p.m. We went to the Fish Hatchery in Downtown Juneau where we took a tour at their fish hatchery, it was amazing to see all the little silver salmon swimming around in their holding tanks about 2.5 million on four holding tanks.

This is where our day ended, we then went back to our Hotel and got our luggage and went to the Airport to check in for our flight back to Anchorage.

This has been a good trip overall, a chance to voice our concerns to the Legislative and the Executive Branch, there is still a lot of work to be done, we need a lot of support especially with the budget, I encourage everybody who want to voice their opinion to contact our Legislature.