



Legislative Update From Representative Bryce Edgmon



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HB 20—Commercial Fishing Energy Efficiency Loans *Heard in Senate Resources Wednesday*

HB 20, my bill to make low-interest loans available to more fishers who want to improve their operations with more energy-efficient engines and equipment, had a successful hearing in the Senate Resources Committee on Wednesday. Several of the committee's members spoke very supportively of the bill, which was heard and held.

It is my hope that HB 20 will be brought up again soon. Assuming the next meeting brings answers to any additional questions members might have about the legislation,

there is a good chance it will move on to Senate Finance. As you may recall, HB 20 passed the House in a unanimous vote last session.



Two Important Education Bills on the Move

HB317 – Forward Funding of Education and Increasing Funding for Vocational Education

The House Education Committee has been considering HB317, which would increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by \$125 for the next three years, increase block grant funding to School Districts by 1.5%, and extend consumer price index increases for pupil transportation funding.

In 2008, the legislature passed a bill that mandated increases to the BSA, implemented district cost factors, and adjusted multiplying factors for students with special and/or intensive needs. HB317 basically extends that concept for an additional three

**Mayor Shirley Marquardt of Unalaska
was in town this week to meet with legis-
lators and other governmental officials.**

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years. The intent of the 1.5% block grant funding increase is to allow school districts to direct funds to career technical or vocational education. The bill is scheduled to be heard again on Wednesday.

Governor's Performance Scholarship Program

The Education Committee held its first hearing on Governor Parnell's Performance Scholarship Program (HB297) on Wednesday and will be bringing the bill back up again next Friday.

While details of his proposal seem likely to change as the bill goes through the legislative process, the goals are laudable. The program would offer scholarships to Alaska residents to be used only at Alaska technical and academic postsecondary institutions and would be available first to graduates of the Class of 2011 who are entering colleges or tech schools in or after the fall of 2011.

The governor proposes four different categories of scholarships; three being geared towards college bound students and one towards career and technical studies. Awards range from \$2,400 to \$4,800 per year. He also proposes appropriating \$400 million into a new scholarship fund income account and using the annual earnings to fund the program.



In Juneau with the Southeast Regional Resource Center's Close Up program, Madison Ayso, center, from Chignik Bay, joined Edgmon staffer Tim Clark, left, and Sen. Hoffman staffer Sandy Burd, right, for lunch on Thursday. Close Up kids come from all over Alaska to learn about state government and the court system. Madison, a sophomore, already has plans to attend UAA and major in substance abuse counseling.

Denali Commission: New Co-Chair Faces New Challenges

I'd like to congratulate Joel Neimeyer on his appointment to the federal co-chairmanship of the Denali Commission. At the same time, we at the Legislature should offer our support for the challenges he faces in his new position. This week I met with Co-Chair Neimeyer, and he painted a troubling picture of the Denali Commission's funding outlook.

The commission's federal funding has shrunk an average of 15% per year since 2006. Also, reauthorization of the commission has been on hold for some time, with its operations lately depending on "continuing resolutions" from Congress.

Along with the other members of the Bush Caucus, I have agreed to support a joint resolution as one component in our efforts to work toward stronger funding for the commission as well as for the commission's federal reauthorization. I also support Governor Parnell's proposed \$3 million appropriation from the state to the commission—to send a message to Washington that Alaska places a high value on the commission's work here.

In fact, I would like to see an even larger contribution from the state to the Denali Commission. Former Sen. Ted Stevens told us for years that the government of Alaska would have to clearly demonstrate its support through real financial commitments. Otherwise, we face growing skepticism from Washington about our level of appreciation for how greatly the commission has improved the lives of so many rural Alaskans. Now is the time to make it clear that we understand the critical importance of the commission.



Rep. Edgmon
met with
St. George Mayor
Pat Pletnikoff
and APICDA's
Larry Cotter on
Tuesday.



Adak Mayor Mike Swetsof was in Juneau this week to discuss his community's needs with lawmakers.

Busy Week Ahead

We're expecting eventful times next week, with many notable organizations in town. The AFN Board convenes in Juneau on Wednesday for three days of meetings, and we expect many from the organization to appear at the House Energy Committee hearing on Thursday.

ANCSA CEOs are also coming together in Juneau for meetings, and I look forward to getting together with many of them.

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