

# Water, road improvements top priority list

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A \$67 million supplemental appropriation for water and sewer construction for rural Alaska and an appropriation of about \$70 million for school construction tops the Alaska Senate's Legislative priorities for the 1983 legislative year.

The senate's priorities include a supplemental grant to the Bethel Social Services for current-year operation at the Bethel Receiving Home; \$10 million for local service roads and trails in areas that are not eligible for federal-state matching highway funds, and renovation of the Sheldon Jackson Museum and collection in Sitka.

The Senate announced its legislative priority list last week along with the House and Gov. Bill Sheffield.

The three shared only one priority for action for this legislative session, that of appropriating \$4.2 million to the state Department of Revenues to pay for a claims settlement made by the University of Alaska (UA) against the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for mismanagement of UA lands by the DNA.

Other priorities directly affecting rural Alaskans include the joint House-governor priority of setting the loan interest rate for rural housing mortgages at one percent less than the rate for regular housing loans.

Another House-governor priority would increase the state home loan subsidy from the current maximum of \$90,000 per home to \$100,000 per house.

At the urging of Sen. John Sackett of Ruby, the Senate made as a priority the extension of accepting Permanent Fund dividend applications until Oct. 15, 1983. The extension would affect persons who met the six-month filing requirement but did not file before the deadline.

Sackett contends that hundreds of rural Alaskans who are entitled to the Permanent Fund distribution didn't file in time to receive it.

Another Senate priority would allow the Bethel Social Services to conduct a Kusokwim Ice Classic similar to the Nenana and Chena Ice Classic lottery.

## Legislative Priorities

The House has 40 legislative priorities and about 3/5 of these have passed the House and are in the Senate for consideration. The senate listed 39 priorities and about half of these have already gone to the House. The governor has about 43 legislative items that he wants through the session.

Besides the VA-DNR settlement the House has three appropriations bills as priorities. These are \$402,000 to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for design of a statewide crime laboratory facility in Anchorage, \$50 million for design and construction of Knik and Turnagain Arm caseways in Cook Inlet, and \$207,500 to legislative affairs for operation of a Joint Oil and Gas Legislative Committee in 1984.

The Senate has prioritized 10 appropriations bills two of which are reappropriations and appropriations adjustments for fiscal 1983 which won't cost more money. A fiscal 1983 supplement of \$2.5 million for aid to unincorporated communities grants and \$25 million for municipal assistance grants are also listed.

The Senate also has prioritized passage of \$53 million to the University of Alaska for classroom facilities and \$4.5 million to Alaska Power Authority for the Crater Lake portion of the Snettisham power project near Juneau.

The governor has three fund-priorities for the current year — a supplemental to cover pay raises for state employees in collective bargaining units, a supplemental for state housing and other grant and loan programs, and a miscellaneous supplemental appropriations bill for state agencies.

The Senate and the governor both want to require municipalities to employ 95 percent residents where available and qualified on construction projects which they let out to bid.

Both the Senate and the governor have prioritized legislation related to regional resource development and bond-

ing authorities. However, the development of a substitute measure expanding the Alaska Industrial Development Authority by the House instead seems to be gaining support.

The Senate and the governor both listed legislation which would authorize use of the Alaska Permanent Fund to pay longevity bonuses. The governor's legislation includes paying municipal assistance grants out of Permanent Fund earnings.

House priorities include one measure which calls for revocation of drivers' licenses and fines for drunk driving offenses and would allow municipalities to impound vehicles involved in such offenses. Another would require liability insurance or a certificate of self insurance as a condition for motor vehicle registration.

Another priority is the authorization of a statewide advisory vote to raise the drinking age from 19 to 21.

Peremptory disqualification of judges would be repealed, a Superior court judge would be added to the third judicial district, and judicial retention elections would be instituted for Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges under other measures.

The House supports a constitutional amendment to elect the attorney general. Another constitutional amendment would allow the Legislature, by concurrent resolution, to annul regulations of state departments.

The House would require room for write-in candidates on all election ballots while changing the definition of political party to a group of organized voters that nominated a candidate for governor who received at least five percent of the total vote in the last election.

In another priority, the House would establish a new homestead entry program which would allow patents of up to 160 acres on designated state lands.

State grants could be increased under a House priority

measure which would allow state aid to be calculated on the basis of reliable population data besides the latest census.

The Senate supports passage of a resolution requesting the a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights to women. Another Senate priority is the passage of ethics legislation for the Legislature.

The Senate prioritizes passage of a resolution amending the Alaska Constitution to provide that when state land is conveyed as agricultural land, only the agricultural rights in the land may be conveyed. All other interests in the land would remain with the state. Another measure would increase the amount of short-term agricultural loans from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

The Senate proposes establishing a Shuyak Island state park and a Tanana Valley state forest as well as a program for management of state forests and forest lands.

Another measure would require the University of Alaska Board of Regents to establish an endowment for the physical sciences on the University of Alaska campus.

On the topic of fishing, the presence of a permit holder to operate stationary fishing gear would be required except for attending other stationary gear and to selling fish caught in the gear.

One of the governor's priorities is the establishment of a separate Department of Corrections. In a related matter, Sheffield has prioritized passage of legislation that would provide for early release of certain prisoners where a prison overcrowding state of emergency exists.

The governor has prioritized passage of legislation increasing benefits under aid to dependent children, public assistance and low income energy assistance programs.

He also supports changing the computation for fiscal 1984 state revenue sharing and aid to unincorporated communities.

The governor is asking for legislation which establishes a two-year residency for student loans and increases the pay back to the state.

The Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management would take effect on passage of another law. Sheffield also supports legislation requiring more information to purchasers of hazardous and toxic substances by manufacturers and wholesalers.

Because this is the first session of the Legislature, a bill does not die if it does not make it through the legislative process. The next session of the Legislature would be expected to carry on with the bill wherever it is.