



CONSERVATION VOTER



Alaska Conservation Voters

www.acvoters.org

Summer 2008

Energy Victory!

We have great reason to celebrate this year! During the 25th Legislative Session, ACV was involved in the passage of 17 pro-conservation bills and helped to stop several bills that would have had a negative impact on conservation in the state. Undoubtedly our greatest victories were in the passage of HB152 and SB289 and the subsequent investment of funds in energy efficiency and renewable energy for Alaska.



Rep. Thomas (left) and Speaker Harris (right), Sponsors of HB152

Introduced by Rep. Thomas and Speaker Harris, HB152 has been ACV's #1 priority bill since its introduction two years ago. The bill recognizes that Alaska's energy future depends on "an adequate, reliable, reasonably priced, and safe supply of energy," and seeks to implement this through greater use of renewables as a fuel source. HB152 appropriates \$50 million in grants to renewable energy projects recommended by the Alaska Energy Authority for this year, with intent language that an additional \$50 million be appropriated each of the next 4 years for a total of \$250 million.

This level of investment in renewable energy is

unprecedented in the US and would not have happened without an exceptional level of support and cooperation. Co-sponsored by 28 Representatives and 11 Senators, HB152 also had the support of the Governor and countless citizens who responded to our phone calls, postcards, letters and emails urging them to contact their legislators in support of HB152. Everyone involved in this historic piece of legislation deserves a warm 'thank you', and it is our hope that we can build on this cooperation for future conservation priorities.

The second big win on the energy front was the passage of SB289, a bill to increase the money available from the Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation (AHFC) for home weatherization and efficiency. This bill gives the AHFC an additional \$200 million for weatherization help for low to median income Alaskans and \$100 million for home energy efficiency for all income levels. Home weatherization can save a homeowner 30% on their energy bills and dramatically decrease energy consumption across the state.

Together these bills will start Alaska on the path towards reduced energy demand and increased use of sustainable, steady-priced and renewable energy. ☑



Sen. Hoffman, sponsor of SB289

April Elections bring Anchorage Re-Direction!

Despite having an election on April fool's day, Anchorage voters certainly were not fools! Instead, voters elected several new pro-conservation members to the Anchorage Assembly, netting a pro-conservation majority on the Assembly. With several key quality of life issues set to come before the Assembly, including recycling, the port expansion and land-use issues, these new members will keep Anchorage moving in the right direction. Four out of five of ACV's endorsed candidates won, including Patrick Flynn in downtown, Harriet Drummond in West Anchorage, Mike Gutierrez in East Anchorage and Elvi Gray-Jackson in Midtown. We look forward to seeing them in action. ☑

Power Up!

Most of us only think about our electrical co-ops when it comes time to pay the monthly electric bill. But ACV and its sister organization, Alaska Conservation Alliance, have been thinking about these member-owned utilities a lot, especially how to encourage them to utilize Alaska's vast renewable energy sources for our growing power needs. To help Alaska develop more clean energy sources, ACA and ACV supported several pro-renewable candidates in three co-op elections, and were pleased to report that your power may soon be cleaner and greener! In the Valley, pro-renewable energy candidates Janet Kincaid and Peter Burchell were elected to the MEA board of directors. Once these new MEA board members are seated there will be a new majority supportive of renewable energy. In Homer, alternative energy ally David Thomas picked up a board seat. In Anchorage, Fire Island supporter Janet Reiser was elected to the CEA co-op board. Results from more co-ops to come! While these new appointments will certainly make a difference in the future of our power supply, it is up to us as consumers and as member co-owners to advocate for more power from clean energy sources. Thanks to all of you who voted in these important utility elections. ☑



Logos for Matanuska Electric Association (top) and Chugach Electric Association (bottom), electric co-ops that recently held board elections

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Alaska Conservation Voters protects Alaska's environment through public education and advocacy, and supports pro-conservation candidates for public office.

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Letter from the Director >>

Setting a High Mark for Conservation

According to statewide polling, Alaskans view energy as the top issue facing the state; surpassing even economy, taxes, health care, education and crime. And as noted in this newsletter, ACV, the Alaska Legislature and others indeed delivered on 'energy legislation' this last session. For the past two years, ACV has been at the core of a coordinated campaign to pass and fund HB 152 targeting Renewable Energy and has played a significant role in positively responding to Alaskan's top issue – energy. This is a huge step for the conservation community and every group associated with this effort, particularly the Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP), deserves a rousing round of gratitude and high fives.



While 'habitat protection' may not rate among the list of top Alaskan issues, it still rates high as a conservation concern. To this end, Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACV's sister organization) delivered another win. Since the first days of the Palin Administration, we began making the case for moving the Division of Habitat back to where it belongs - the Department of Fish and Game. We then formed alliances with other organizations and lobbied at every opportunity that came our way. In March, the Palin Administration, after conducting a thorough and thoughtful internal review, concurred and issued an Executive Order to effect the transfer back to ADF&G on July 1st of this year.

Following ACV's early efforts to get climate change addressed by Alaska's political leaders during the 2006 Session, the Climate Impact Assessment Commission released their findings and recommendations to the Alaska Legislature. This report contains important data about impacts along with six substantive recommendations for next steps by the Alaska Legislature, including the need to have a coordinated process for village relocation efforts. ACV also spent much time and effort encouraging the Palin Administration to get engaged and provide much needed leadership. To date, the Governor has set up a Climate Change Sub-Cabinet which is now organizing a process to produce a climate impact action plan similar to other states.

Together these three accomplishments – groundbreaking action on Renewable Energy, Habitat Transfer and Climate Change Engagement – make 2008 a standout year for Alaska's conservation community. It sets a benchmark of accomplishments that will be hard to beat in the near future. This does not mean we won't work as hard or play as smart. Hopefully with your continued support and help, we can extend the momentum gained by these significant accomplishments.

Onwards and Upwards

Alaska Conservation Voters has accomplished much to keep Alaska healthy, but none of our great work would be possible without your generous support.

Please help ensure a safe, healthy environment for years to come by contributing today.

How can I help?

There are numerous ways you can make a difference in ACV's efforts. To become a member or make a donation simply fill out the enclosed envelope or call in your donation to **907.258.6160**.

Thank You for Your Support.

Other Conservation Bills that Passed

☑ **SB46 - Coastal Mgmt Program, Sen. Olson**
 SB46 provides the coastal management districts with time to complete the revisions necessary to comply with the previous administration's Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) changes before the termination of their existing plans. The measure passed unanimously early in 2007.

☑ **SB57 - Marine Parks Additions/Hunting Allowed, Sen. Elton**

SB57 addresses issues related to hunting in marine parks of the Alaska state park system and makes additions and changes to the current marine park units.

☑ **SB229 - Tanana Valley/Minto Flats Refuge, Sen. Thomas**

SB299 transfers portions of Tanana Valley State Forest land to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge.

☑ **SB230 - Film Office/Production Tax Credit, Sen. Ellis**

SB230 creates an Alaska Film Office and gives a tax credit to TV and film producers to encourage them to film in Alaska. Senator Ellis used this legislation to bring attention to the fact that Alaska is the setting of many movies that are not actually filmed here. The intention of the bill is to get those producers filming in Alaska so that Alaskans can benefit economically and ultimately raise the importance of pristine Alaskan landscapes for movies.

☑ **SB289 - Home Energy Conservation, Sen. Hoffman**

SB289 raises the income level eligible for weatherization and increases funds available for increasing energy efficiency in Alaskan homes. \$300 million was appropriated for this bill.

☑ **HB25 - Recreational Land Use Liability, Rep. Seaton**
 HB25 provides landowners with immunity for allowing their land to be accessed for recreational purposes.

☑ **HB220 - Ban Computer Assisted Remote Hunting, Rep. Buch**

HB220 bans a business idea that hasn't yet come to Alaska: computer assisted hunting, or Internet hunting, which allows a person via the Internet to control the aiming and firing of a rifle that is hooked up to a webcam. It passed unanimously in 2007.

☑ **HB267 - Wildlife Violator Compact, Rep. Johnson**

This bill authorizes Alaska to join with 26 other states that have entered into the Wildlife Violator Compact (WVC). This agreement allows the revocation of appropriate licenses in Alaska for failure to comply with the terms of a wildlife resource citation issued in another state that is a party to the compact.

☑ **HB268 - Motor Vehicle Arson on Public Land, Rep. Stoltze**

HB268 makes intentionally burning or exploding cars on state or municipal land a Class C felony - arson in the third degree. It addresses a longstanding concern of many users of public lands in Alaska that this type of activity is not being deterred.

☑ **HB294 - Alaska Marine Highway Advisory Board, Rep. Wilson, LeDoux, Seaton**

HB294 establishes the division of marine transportation, the Alaska Marine Transportation Authority Board and the position of director of the division of marine transportation. This is the latest attempt to address longstanding issues and improve the overall operation of the Alaska Marine Highway system.

☑ **HB330 - Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants, House Resources Committee**

HB330 creates the position of state coordinator for noxious weed, invasive plant, and agricultural pest management and education who will work cooperatively with the Alaska Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and others to develop a much needed management plan and seek federal funding.

Continued On Page 8

Budget Highlights

Budget Item	Amount
Renewable Energy Fund	\$50 Million
Unalaska - Geothermal Exploration	\$1.5 Million
Alaska Energy Authority: Fire Island Wind Farm Transmission Lines	\$25 Million
Chaninik Wind Group - Regional Wind Energy Systems Purchase and Installation	\$4.8 Million
Southeast Conference for the Reynolds Creek hydroelectric project	\$2 Million
AK Housing Finance Corporation - Home Energy Efficiency & Weatherization (\$200m for Weatherization, \$100m for Efficiency)	\$300 Million
Various Erosion Mitigation and Coastal Community Planning (<i>note: erosion protection appropriations are pursuant to a multi-year funding plan developed by the Palin Administration</i>)	\$20.34 Million
Community Recycling Center - Valley Community for Recycling Solutions	\$1 Million
Statewide emergency bridge repair	\$20 Million

ACV Team Conservation



The Senate



Just as in ice hockey, our Power Forwards are those legislators who possess above average offensive skills and play a tough, physical game. However, instead of ranking them on goals and assists, we chose our Power Forwards for their dedication to promoting and passing energy related legislation.



Senator Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage)

Stepping into the position of Senate Majority Leader, Senator Ellis was once again a steady and effective force for conservation this session. Helping to ensure that HB152, the bill to create a renewable energy fund, kept moving in the Senate, Senator Ellis also managed to pass his own personal legislation, SB230, that has the potential to foster a sustainable film industry in Alaska. Senator Ellis also introduced SB268, a bill that sought to give much needed governmental oversight over decisions made by the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority.

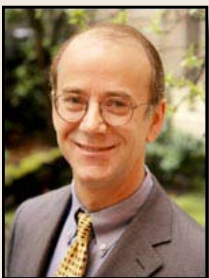
Senator Bert Stedman (R-Ketchikan)

Senator Stedman took the time to thoroughly review HB152, making it a better piece of legislation. Senator Stedman's critique of HB152 highlighted the fact that the original version of the bill created an endowment, a great tool for gradual change but ineffective in our current energy crisis where we need dramatic movement towards renewable energy. He took a bold position and made HB152 an even better bill for quickly developing Alaska's renewable energy.



Senator Lyman Hoffman (D-Bethel)

Senator Hoffman was the primary sponsor of SB289, a bill that passed this session with \$300 million in funds to weatherize homes and increase residential energy efficiency. His bill not only has the potential to help families currently struggling to pay their bills through weatherization and efficiency measures, it will also reduce the combustion of fossil fuels contributing to climate change.



Senator Hollis French (D-Anchorage)

Yet another key player, Senator French played a very important role this session. As Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator French was constantly the last line of defense against short-sighted bills aimed at weakening environmental protections in Alaska.



Perhaps the toughest position in the game, the goaltender is the player who defends his/her team's net by stopping the puck, thus preventing the opposing team from scoring. Just like a goaltender needing special equipment to protect the body from the hard shot pucks flying at them, our goalies need tough skin, attention to detail and quick reflexes to stop short-sighted legislation during the 90-day session.

CONSERVATION RATINGS >> When it comes to classifying or summarizing a season of activity and performances, sport analogies are often used. Similarly, we at ACV found ourselves caught up in the world of sports when pulling together this highlight summary. Since the pace was often frenetic in this first ever 90-day session, especially in the closing moments, ice hockey seemed an appropriate sport analogy to use. To help you understand our legislative assignments here is an explanation of positions. Please visit our website at www.acvoters.org for more information on conservation legislation.

Senator Kim Elton (D-Juneau)

This is not the first time Senator Elton has been mentioned by ACV as being a strong supporter of conservation. This session his work was a mix of offense and defense. The primary sponsor of several pro-conservation bills including a bill to reduce the use of plastic bags, Senator Elton was able to pass SB57, a bill that expanded marine parks of the Alaska state park system while protecting hunting opportunities for our citizens. Back on defense, Senator Elton was one of very few Senators who stood up against HRJ31, the resolution opposing the Federal ban on aerial hunting, the resolution opposing listing the polar bear as an endangered species and a bill causing detrimental changes to Board of Game regulations.



Defense

Our Defense worked hard all session to prevent short-sighted legislation from passing. It is important to have a great line of defense because no matter how powerful our forwards are, we still need the defense to prevent bad bills from passing.



Senator Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak)

While Senator Stevens does not have as strong of a pro-conservation voting record as other members of the team, he is very strong in introducing and supporting pro-conservation bills. The prime example from this session was his introduction of SB238, a bill to ban mixing zones in salmon spawning areas. Senator Stevens introduced this bill after the House version, HB74, had been stalled.

Senator Bill Wielechowski (D-Anchorage)

Senator Wielechowski introduced and co-sponsored several pro-conservation bills this session. However, two of his bills stand out for their contribution to ACV's efforts this session. First is SB288, a bill limiting pesticide use in Alaskan schools, one of ACV's top priorities. The second bill was SJR18 which pointed out that the chemicals that make up the toys and products used by children in Alaska and across the US are not tested for short or long-term health effects.



Assists

Awards for assists goes to those who rolled up their sleeves and worked hard this session.

Box Office Managers

These important individuals maintained open and honest access to the legislative process. Like a good box office manager, they made sure the legislature got their business done in 90 days.

Senator Lyda Green (R-Wasilla)

In her position as Senate President and effective leader of a bi-partisan coalition, Lyda Green was another Legislator who maintained an open and honest working relationship with the conservation community and similarly operated the Senate in an open and accessible way.



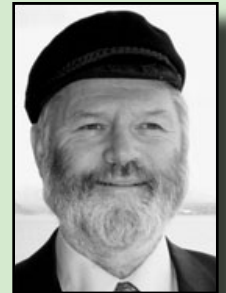


Representative Bill Thomas (R-Haines)

A champion for our top priority this session, Representative Thomas, together with Representative Harris, carried HB152 through to the end, finishing with legislation that was better than when it started. A bill of this size with such a large amount of funding attached is very difficult to pass and took a lot of time and energy on the part of the Representative and his able staff, including Kaci Schroeder Hotch. Representative Thomas certainly earned his spot as an Energy Forward.

Representative Paul Seaton (R-Homer)

Representative Seaton sponsored all of the following pro-conservation bills: HB288 - Net Energy Metering, HB74 - Mixing Zones, HB156 - Mining Royalty Reform, HB25 - Recreational Land Use Liability, HB127 - McNeil River State Game Sanctuary, HB294 - Alaska Marine Highway Advisory Board and HB302 - Public Info Re Mixing Zones. Despite obstructionists within the Legislature, Representative Seaton pushed his bills forward throughout the entire session and got the discussion started on an important energy measure - net metering.



Representative Harry Crawford (D-Anchorage)

Representative Crawford certainly deserves recognition for his powerful presence on the offensive line for conservation. Co-sponsoring at least 8 pro-conservation bills this session, he is not afraid to stand behind an idea he believes in. Perhaps even more importantly, Representative Crawford stepped out in front to introduce bills like HB56 aimed at creating a hydrogen energy research program. Rep. Crawford, along with other legislators, also pushed hard to get the Fire Island wind project in the capital budget.

Representative John Harris (R-Anchorage)

Representative Harris consistently maintained an 'open door policy' with the conservation community and was instrumental in allowing pro-conservation bills to be considered by the Legislature. In addition to being open and accessible, Representative Harris was also an invaluable proponent of HB152. And kudos to staffer John Bitney for his good work on this important measure.



Box Office
Manager



Penalty Box

Fortunately, legislators this session acted in a manner of cooperation and openness and very few penalties occurred. Nonetheless, there are still those legislators who cause a delay in passage or still have problems with a pro-conservation legislation that we feel deserve their 2 minutes in the penalty box.

Senator Con Bunde (R-Anchorage)

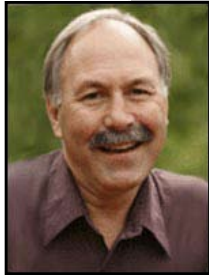
Senator Bunde is in the penalty box for his voting and bill co-sponsorship record. Senator Bunde signed on as a co-sponsor to more anti-conservation bills than any other of his peers in the Senate.



Rookies of the Year

As anyone who has stepped foot into the Capitol can tell you, the legislative process is a messy and confusing thing. Learning how to play the game is tough, and this year we wanted to give special recognition to a few legislators who 'hit-the-ground running' on pro-conservation issues.

Representative Bob Buch (D-Anchorage)



Representative Buch was quick to introduce HB220 last year to prevent Internet hunting from taking hold in Alaska. This proactive legislation was a hit and passed early in 2007.

Representative Andrea Doll (D-Juneau)



Representative Doll is another first session legislator who wasted no time getting behind pro-conservation bills. The prime sponsor of 4 pro-conservation bills and co-sponsor of 12 pro-conservation bills, Representative Doll is a rising force to be reckoned with.

Representative Les Gara (D-Anchorage)



Representative Gara was another prime sponsor of one of ACV's priority bills, HB74, but that is not the only reason why he has earned a spot on our defense. Representative Gara is one of a handful of Representatives who can be counted on to speak and vote their mind, even if it means being the lone dissenting voice.

Defense

Representative Bryce Edgmon (D-Anchorage)



Representative Edgmon introduced HB134, a bill that would have created statutory protections for salmon streams in Bristol Bay. As they always say, "The best defense is a good offense", and this bill reflects Representative Edgmon's proactive strategy to address his concerns about the Pebble Mine's potential impact on Bristol Bay.

Goalie

Representative Beth Kerttula (D-Juneau)



As House Minority Leader and strong conservation advocate, Representative Kerttula continually works to protect the real Alaska, before it is too late.

Assists

Representative Bill Stoltze (R-Wasilla)



Representative Stoltze gave a huge assist to public and municipal land users this session with the introduction and passage of HB268, a bill that makes intentionally burning or exploding cars on state or municipal land a Class C felony - arson in the third degree.

Representative Craig Johnson (R-Anchorage)



Representative Johnson played some pro-conservation offense but still managed to land himself in the penalty box for delaying action on mixing zones legislation. Despite constant pressure from the public to hold a hearing on HB74, the bill to ban mixing zones in salmon spawning areas, Representative Johnson refused to hold a single hearing for the bill in his committee, House Resources. To his credit, Representative Johnson was instrumental in the introduction and passage of two significant pro-conservation bills, HB330 - Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants, House Resources Committee and HB267 - Wildlife Violator Compact, Rep. Johnson.

Penalty Box



HB370 - Damage to Forests/Wildlands, Rep. Kelly
HB 370 modifies the wording in AS 19.40.010 to change the term 'forest fire' to 'wildland fire'. The central purpose of the bill is to allow firefighters the discretion to protect dwellings during a forest fire.

EO114 – Executive Order issued by Governor Palin
An Administrative priority for ACV, Governor Palin decided to return the duties of Habitat from Dept of Natural Resources to Dept of Fish & Game effective July 1, 2008.

Anti-Conservation Bills that were Stopped>>

SB176 - Active Game Mgmt/Aerial Shooting, Rules by request of the Governor

State Fish and Game officials said that the bills were basically a housekeeping measure to merge and simplify two confusing and sometimes conflicting wildlife management laws. Opponents of the bills maintained that changes would give the Board of Game too much discretion, take away scientific standards, limit public participation and encourage ideologically motivated decision making by the Board of Game. ACV was opposed to these bills as drafted.

Pro-Conservation Bills that Failed >>

SB288 - Pesticides/Broadcast Chemicals in Schools, Sen. Wielechowski

One of ACV's top priorities, SB288 addressed the use of pesticides in schools by limiting schools from using the two most toxic classes of pesticides, unless it was a health or safety emergency. While the bill did not pass this session we were able to educate our conservation allies about pesticides in Alaskan schools and

worked with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to get more precise and thorough information about the specific instances of pesticide use in schools.

HB74 - Mixing Zones, Rep. Seaton, Gara, LeDoux
HB74 - a bill to ban mixing zones in salmon spawning freshwater streams, moved out of the House Fisheries Committee in 2007 but stalled in the House Resources Committee and did not pass. Despite a widespread campaign and diverse coalition, built over several years of working on this legislation, we were unable to force a Resources hearing for the bill. Efforts included large volumes of letters, postcards, emails and phone calls targeted at both the Governor and Representative Johnson. A Senate version introduced late in 2008 didn't get a hearing in Senate Resources.

SJR18 - Child Product Safety, Sen. Wielechowski
SJR18 requested the testing of the materials used in toys and other products for children. The Resolution points out that the chemicals that make up the toys and products used by children in Alaska and across the US are not tested for short or long-term health effects.

HB 156 - Mining Production & License Taxes/Royalties, Rep. Seaton

Another top priority for ACV, HB156, makes changes to the Mining License Tax, state royalties for minerals and coal, and the per acre rental fees for mining activity on state land. HB156 generated some bi-partisan interest but was strongly opposed by the mining industry. We expect this issue to rise again.

Want to help with pro-conservation legislation?

Email Sue@akvoice.org.



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The Political Arm of Alaska's Conservation Movement