

Sponsor Statement for HB 3

Deposits to the Permanent Fund

“An Act relating to deposits to the Alaska permanent fund from mineral lease rentals, royalties, royalty sale proceeds, net profit shares under AS 38.05.180(f) and (g), federal mineral revenue sharing payments received by the state from mineral leases, and bonuses received by the state from mineral leases, and limiting deposits from those sources to the 25 percent required under art IX, sec. 15, Constitution of the State of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.”

This legislation returns the percentage of all mineral lease royalties and bonuses deposited into the Permanent Fund to the constitutionally mandated 25 per cent.

HB 3 proposes changes to a statute -- not the Constitution. Article IX, Section 15 of Alaska's Constitution states that "at least twenty-five percent of all mineral lease rentals, royalties, royalty sale proceeds, federal mineral revenue sharing payments and bonuses received by the state shall be placed in a permanent fund." In 1980, the Legislature recognized excess revenues existed (GF revenues for FY 81 totaled \$4.07 billion) and wisely decided to raise the amount of royalties and bonuses deposited into the Permanent Fund to 50 percent. This surplus situation with state revenues no longer exists today.

It is time for the State to redirect the extra 25% to the General Fund. Passage of this bill would generate an estimated \$29 million (average) per year over the next thirteen years, and \$35.9 million in FY 2002 at an estimate \$24.28 per barrel average.

As the Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk fields - which currently contribute to the General Fund at a 25 percent rate - diminish, we need to replace that production with the new, smaller satellite fields (for example, Alpine, and North Star) contributing at the same 25 percent rate not at a larger 50 percent rate.

While we can and should continue to make budget reductions, we would be foolish to ignore this source of General Fund revenue in solving our budget problem, as well as planning for the future development of Alaska's resources. Prudent fiscal management requires this statutory change. HB 3 is a small step in the right direction.

I strongly urge you to support this much needed, fiscally-prudent legislation.