

From The Desk  
Of Representative Paul Seaton

Weekly Legislative Newsletter

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My Trip Home This Past Weekend

I just wanted to give everyone a brief update of what happened in my office last week, and I wanted to update everyone about the trip Tina and I took home last weekend. Due to our trip, this is an abbreviated newsletter. It was great to see all of you this weekend, and I look forward to your continued input.

HB 191- The overhaul of the Coastal Zone Management Program will have it's second hearing from 8:30 - 10 am on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> in the House Special Committee on Fisheries. There are a number of concerns relating to the bill. Foremost is that the bill eliminates most of the enforceable policies for each Coastal Zone Management District. The policies to be eliminated were originally generated by the local areas, expressing local priorities, and were approved by the state and federal governments. Without consideration of these policies, the concern is that forthcoming projects will not reflect the social, cultural, and economic circumstances of local areas. The committee will be seeking detailed explanations of these concerns from the administration before taking public testimony.

Executive Order 107 (EO 107) - As many of you know, EO 107 is the order that would move the Habitat Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The House Special Committee on Fisheries will conduct an intensive review of EO 107, starting at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, March 26. The hearing's format will utilize 3 panels of invited guests representing the administration, industry interests, and conservation

interests. After detailed questioning of the panelists, there **MAY** be time for public questions and concerns about how to enable the DNR Habitat structure to most effectively protect habitat and fisheries. We are using this format because the 2-minute public comment format used in previous hearings did not generate targeted ideas for improving Habitat/DNR procedures, which ultimately is our goal.

This past weekend, Tina and I took advantage of the "Energy Council Break" and traveled back to the district Thursday through Monday. We had good discussions with Senior Citizen groups in Anchor Point, Homer, Cooper Landing and Seward. The main concerns were proposed budget cuts to the Longevity Bonus and Independent Living Centers. Everywhere we traveled, education funding was also a major concern. Seward is having a 2-day work session, hoping to generate alternatives for funding and structuring education. I look forward in hearing about Seward's ideas. Coastal Zone Management was the top item of discussion in Homer. In Seldovia, I really appreciated the "Seldovia, Just another day in Paradise" hat given to me at the ceremony for the Marine Highway Scenic Byway dedication. The dedication was on board the M/V Kennicott, which was docked in Seldovia. While in Cooper Landing, both Tina and I enjoyed our induction into the Cooper Landing "Sexy Seniors" Dumpster cleaning crew!

Many people who said that education was their chief priority added they would be willing to help pay for it through an income tax. They were frustrated that the political atmosphere in Juneau did not seem to allow for this possibility and asked what they could do to push the issue. Since legislators really listen to the people of their own district, I suggest you call your friends in other parts of the State and ask them to call or write their legislators. Many legislators think that the people of their districts are universally opposed to an income tax. They need to start hearing that their constituents may be supportive of an income tax if that's what it takes to get our state back into shape fiscally.

I want to thank all the people who took time to meet with us and share their ideas! We look forward to seeing you all again soon.

### Bill Access System

Remember, all bills can be found on the State's BASIS system. You will find the system to be accessible at the website below.

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/start.asp>

### Live on the Web

Remember that you can hear just about any committee hearing or tune into just about any legislative session-present or past-by going to Gavel to Gavel, TV and public radio broadcasts of the state legislature as it occurs.

Click on the link below to connect to Gavel to Gavel.

<http://www.ktoo.org/gavel/schedule.cfm>

If you need to contact the staff please click below:

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