

Alaska State Legislature
House of Representatives
Minority Leader



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News from Juneau

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Greetings from Juneau where the pre-adjourning rush began in earnest this weekend.

As tradition dictates and prudence requires, the House rejected Senate changes to the FY 2001 operating budget. As expected, the Senate declined to back down and a conference committee was appointed to iron out differences.

Appointment of the budget conference committee triggers Uniform Rule 23(d). Commonly referred to as the "24-hour rule", this provision waives the five-day requirement for public notices of legislative hearings. Instead only 24 hours notice is required, though often meetings are announced one evening and convened the next morning.

Once in play, the 24-hour rule invites mischief, so vigilance is essential. Bills move quickly and the opportunity for meaningful public participation is scaled back.

The Alaska State Legislature's Uniform Rules are on the web at:

<http://www.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/unir?>

Another sign of an approaching adjournment is full floor calendars. Today we had eight pieces of legislation to work on - Monday we have ten. This is the time when months of homework can pay off.

The major obstacles to the Majority's goal of an early adjournment are fiscal. Several ideas for funding the University of Alaska, transportation infrastructure projects, Power Cost Equalization, and contractual obligations are floating around but there is not yet agreement on solutions. I suspect that a compromise will emerge, but employee contracts look to be the main sticking point. The Department of Administration has compiled information that may be useful at:

<http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/labrel/bargaining.htm>

The pace of the next few weeks promises to be fast. It is crunch time, so if you have questions or concerns, please use my office as a resource for keeping up to date.

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