



SENATOR KIM ELTON

SB 245
Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to retirement contributions and benefits under the public employees’ retirement system of certain harbor officers.”

If you think a harbor officer is just there to pump out your boat when it’s sinking, think again.

Among other duties, harbor officers:

- enforce regulations on the use of parking, safe operation of boats and vehicles, and the conduct of people and animals in the harbor and harbor areas;
- have the authority to issue citations and can testify in court;
- assist police, fire and other emergency personnel in harbor-related activities;
- carry radios to stay in contact with local police, state troopers and coast guard;
- work with state troopers and fish and wildlife officers;
- are required to render aid to distressed persons along with body recovery of drowning victims;
- work with the coast guard and FBI on security issues at the port; and
- have the authority to arrest individuals for violations.

Under federal regulations, harbor officers are responsible for port security. They have training in explosives and related fields and are part of homeland security. They are responsible for the security of docks when the huge cruise ships tie up and bring visitors to Alaska communities.

Harbor officers should be given the same retirement benefits as peace officers, fire fighters and dispatchers in the Public Employees Retirement System.