



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Matt Claman

December 2019 Community Council Update

Kusilvak Career Academy Opens — Last month, we attended the [grand opening of the Kusilvak Career Academy](#), located at the former Long House Alaskan Hotel in West Anchorage. The [Lower Yukon School District purchased the building](#) and, in partnership with the Anchorage School District, developed a program for junior and senior high school students from 10 villages in the Lower Yukon School District to come to Anchorage for nine weeks to take career and technical education (CTE) courses.

Education Forward Funding Update — Last month, the Alaska Superior Court ruled that the Legislature's K-12 education forward funding is in keeping with the Alaska Constitution. In 2018, the House and Senate passed [House Bill 287](#), which forward-funded public education for the past fiscal year (FY19) and the fiscal year that began in July of this year (FY20). HB 287 was part of the Legislature's commitment to work together for a long-term fiscal plan for the state and to give schools and teachers the stability they need to educate our children. Governor Dunleavy and Attorney General Clarkson argued that forward funding education conflicts with the constitution and refused to acknowledge the validity of HB 287. The administration argued that the Legislature should include K-12 education as a line item in the FY20 operating budget in order for schools to receive funding—even though the Legislature had appropriated the funds one year earlier. The Legislature refused to re-appropriate the previously-appropriated funds and, to protect the concept of forward funding and ensure stability for schools moving forward, the Legislature turned to the courts to resolve the issue.

[In his ruling](#), Judge Daniel Schally wrote: "The Alaska Constitution vests the governor with the responsibility 'for the faithful execution of the laws'... thus [he has] a constitutional obligation to execute the [forward-funding] appropriations." The ruling is a positive step for schools that will help ensure stable funding going forward. The governor and the attorney general may appeal the case to the Alaska Supreme Court. For more detailed explanations about the origin of lawsuit, please see our [May 17, 2019 newsletter](#) and [May 30, 2019 newsletter](#).

BP/Hilcorp Sale — Last month, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) found that the sale of BP's Alaska assets to Hilcorp does not raise antitrust concerns, allowing the sale to proceed. A sale of this magnitude and importance to Alaska must be carefully reviewed and scrutinized at both the federal and state level, and I support legislative hearings on the subject. Rep. Tarr and Rep. Lincoln, as co-chairs of the House Resources Committee, are planning a joint hearing with the Senate Resources Committee to learn more about the sale and bring more transparency to the process. Currently, the hearing is [scheduled for Monday, December 16, 2019 at 2:00 PM](#).

In addition to FTC approval, the sale will require approval from several state entities including the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Law, the Department of Revenue, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA). The [RCA extended the deadline for public comment to December 13, 2019](#) to provide the public with additional time to weigh in on this issue. The following link will take you to the RCA page for the BP/Hilcorp sale: <http://rca.alaska.gov/RCAWeb/Dockets/DocketDetails.aspx?id=fc6f0126-1553-4a05-8ed4-3f3595c233a1> Click on the "Public Notices & Comments" tab and then the "Submit Comments" link on the right side of the page to begin the submission process.

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