

From: pl hamlett [plhamlett@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 8:48 AM
To: info@communitycouncils.org
Subject: FW: Berta's Briefings - \$9.5 Billion and Still Missed Opportunities

Mark,

pls fwd to CPCC members

Thanks
PETER HAMLETT

From: [Representative Berta Gardner@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Berta_Gardner@legis.state.ak.us)
To: [Representative Berta Gardner@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Berta_Gardner@legis.state.ak.us)
Subject: Berta's Briefings - \$9.5 Billion and Still Missed Opportunities
Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2012 00:14:53 +0000



BERTA'S BRIEFINGS

REPRESENTATIVE BERTA GARDNER

Serving Geneva Woods, College Village, Green Acres, Tudor, Taku & Campbell Park

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MARCH 16TH, 2012

\$9.5 Billion and Still Missed Opportunities

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Last night the Alaska State House passed a \$9.5 billion operating budget, the largest operating budget in Alaska's history. This budget pays for general day-to-day activities state agencies, the University of Alaska, education etc. Given its size, as you can imagine, it includes lots of good and important things as well some pork.

I am disappointed about missed opportunities to put our vast wealth into meaningful opportunities for Alaskans.

Savings. I know for myself that when I have money in the checking account I am far more likely to spend it than if I move it to savings account. If I use it to buy bonds, or put it into a retirement account, I completely forget about it and never think to use it outside of a real crisis. For this reason I was part of an effort to move \$2 BILLION of the state's current \$19 BILLION surplus into the Permanent Fund. We must plan for a time when our resources no longer support us as they do today and when that time comes, our children or our grandchildren will thank us for putting some of today's cash wealth out of our reach. Our proposal was roundly defeated.

Education. Despite the huge size of the overall budget, the education portion does not even keep up with inflation. In fact, in the Governor's proposal Education had the smallest increase of all state departments. We had a great opportunity to correct the problem and at the very least make sure that our children do not lose ground in their classrooms. Our proposal was roundly defeated.

Energy. We know that high oil prices fill state coffers (See Savings above) but also cause havoc on family finances. Energy efficiency is one excellent way to lower heating bills for the long term, so for several years the state has offered a highly popular home improvement rebate to help Alaskans reduce heat loss of their homes. Participants have seen an average savings of \$1,297 annually in reduced energy use. Our amendment to reduce the long waitlist through increased funding was roundly defeated.

These are but a few of the missed opportunities in our state's new plan. As we deal with present needs, we need to continue looking for ways to ensure that our bountiful resources translate to the best benefits possible for Alaskans not just today, but also tomorrow.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office.
I'm Berta and I'm still listening,



Representative Gardner speaks with former House Speaker Gail Phillips and former Senator Arliss Sturgulewski during the Women's History Month summit celebrating Alaska's women legislators.



Berta

Quote of the Week

“Take two amendments and call me in the morning”

-Rep. Mike Doogan

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