



**Interim Report  
by  
Senator Gary Stevens**

Season's Greetings. With just a few weeks left in the interim, lawmakers are getting ready to head to Juneau for the first session of the Thirty-first Alaska State Legislature. The session begins on Tuesday, January 15th and runs for 90 days.

There are several new faces in the Legislature this year. The Senate welcomes five new members, including three who previously served in the House of Representatives. The House will have eleven new members.

While Senate leadership and committee assignments are set, the House's membership and leadership structure and committee roles are uncertain at this time. Court action will decide who will serve in Fairbanks' House District One. The governor will appoint a member to serve an Eagle River's House District 13 due to its representative-elect taking over as Commissioner for the Department of Corrections.

**Senate District P – House Districts 31 & 32**

My role as your Senator is made easier by a strong working relationship with the members House Districts 31 and 32. I am pleased to again be working with Representative Louise Stutes of Kodiak, who is entering her fifth year in House. I look forward to working with Representative-elect Sarah Vance of Homer, who begins her first year in office next month.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank District 31's outgoing member, Representative Paul Seaton of Homer, for his efforts during the past sixteen years. It was a pleasure to work with Paul and his office over the years, and I wish him and his staff all the best in their future endeavors.

**FY 2020 Budget**

Although there is a new governor and many new lawmakers, familiar issues face the next Legislature in 2019, chief among them being the budget. On Friday, December 14th, the governor released a \$11.5 billion preliminary FY '20 budget that will serve as the starting point in the budget discussions. Based on an oil price forecast of \$64 per barrel, there is a deficit of \$1.6 billion between revenues and expenditures in the early budget. We fully expect the

administration to propose spending cuts throughout the state's departments and agencies as the budget works through the legislature. It is unlikely the governor will propose or support revenue measures such as an income tax and statewide sales tax to balance the budget.

As the budget comes before the Senate and House Finance Committees, I hope you will have the opportunity to provide your thoughts during public comment periods. Please contact the Legislative Information Office (LIO) near you for more information on the Finance Committees' schedules, and information on how to take part in the public testimony process.

### **Committee Assignments**

I will serve as Chair of the Senate Education Committee in the new legislature, a role I also held this year. I am also chairing the Legislative Council, which is a joint-committee of Senate and House members that governs the Legislature's internal business and meets throughout the year. Additionally, I will serve as a member of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee

### **State Boards and Commissions**

I hope you will consider lending your time and expertise to your fellow Alaskans by serving on one of the State's boards and commissions. You can find out more about these panels online at <http://gov.alaska.gov/services/boards-and-commissions>. You can also call the Office of Boards and Commissions at (907) 269-7450. Email them at [boards@alaska.gov](mailto:boards@alaska.gov).

### **Permanent Fund Dividend Filing Period Begins New Year's Day**

The 2019 Permanent Fund (PFD) application opens Tuesday, January 1st at 9:00 a.m. and closes Sunday, March 31st. The Permanent Fund Division is encouraging you to apply online at <http://pfd.alaska.gov>, which I have found to be a very quick and easy process.

If you plan to file online, please do not forget to make a printed copy of your application for your records. If you file an application by mail, I urge you to send it by certified mail with a return receipt to ensure its arrival at the Permanent Fund Division office. Above all else, please double-check your application to make sure that all of the questions are answered accurately, and please do not miss the March 31st filing deadline, as applications not received or postmarked by that date will be denied as late.

For more information on the application process or eligibility questions, please contact the Permanent Fund Dividend Division at 907-269-0370.

### **Legislative Information Offices Available to Assist You**

District P is served by LIOs in Cordova, Homer, Kenai and Kodiak. These offices can help you follow bills and resolutions through the legislative process, participate in teleconferences, and contact legislators.

The Cordova LIO can be reached at 424-5461 and email at LIO.Cordova@akleg.gov

The Homer LIO can be reached at 235-7878 and email at LIO.Homer@akleg.gov

The Kenai LIO can be reached at 283-2030 and email at LIO.Kenai@akleg.gov

The Kodiak LIO can be reached at 486-8116 and email at LIO.Kodiak@akleg.gov

### **Office Schedule for the Remainder of the Interim**

As we transition to Juneau for session, the District P Kodiak office will close Wednesday, January 9th and will reopen in the spring. Our Homer and Capitol offices are open throughout the year.

Please give us a call if you need assistance with issues involving state government. The number in Kodiak is 486-4925. Contact us in Homer at 235-0690. Call us toll-free in Juneau at 1-800-821-4925.

You can E-mail me at: sen.gary.stevens@akleg.gov.

### **Assistance with the Federal Government**

The members of Alaska's Congressional Delegation can assist you with matters involving the federal government. All have offices in-state.

Congressman Don Young's Anchorage office can be reached at (866) 990-5979.

Senator Lisa Murkowski's Anchorage office can be reached at (877) 829-6030.

Senator Dan Sullivan's Anchorage Office can be reached at (907) 271-5915.

### **Capitol Report Returning Soon**

Thank you to Senate District P's media for giving me the opportunity to share this information with you throughout the interim. My session column, the *Capitol Report*, will resume in late January.

On behalf of myself, my wife, Rita, my family, and the District P staff, I wish you a very happy and prosperous new year.