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From: pl hamlett [plhamlett@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 2:15 PM
To: info@communitycouncils.org
Subject: FW: From the Desk of Johnny Ellis: Asking Tough Questions, Making Smart Choices For Alaska

Mark,

pls fwd to CPCC members

Thanks
PETER HAMLETT
CPCC Chair

From: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: From the Desk of Johnny Ellis: Asking Tough Questions, Making Smart Choices For Alaska
Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2012 18:11:46 +0000

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**SENATOR
JOHNNY ELLIS**
Working hard
Solving problems

February 17, 2012

ASKING TOUGH QUESTIONS, MAKING SMART CHOICES
FOR ALASKA

*Senate Finance and Resources Committee Joint Hearings,
Constituent Parties, Anchorage Caucus, Suicide Prevention*

Friends and Neighbors,

The [Senate Bipartisan Working Group](#) has a new and improved website. The [website](#) is a 'one stop shop' for learning about the Senate Bipartisan Working Group and keeping up with Senate news, information, [photos](#) and [social media](#).

Just a quick reminder that this weekend I'm returning to

Getting things done

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Sen. Lisa Murkowski

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Office of the Governor

Anchorage for our constituent meet and greet parties. We hope to see you there!



VIDEO: Representative Berta Gardner and Senator Johnny Ellis invite you to join them for coffee and donuts in Midtown on Saturday, February 18th from 2:00 to 3:30 at [Tudor Elementary](#).



VIDEO: Representative Les Gara and Senator Johnny Ellis invite you to join them for free pizza Downtown on Sunday, February 19th from 4:00 to 6:00 at the Fairview Recreation Center.

Reminder for Anchorage Caucus Meeting

Saturday, February 18th, 10 am-noon, is the annual Anchorage Caucus Meeting at the Anchorage Loussac Library — Assembly Chambers. This is a great opportunity for you to talk to your Anchorage Senators and Representatives about the issues most important to you and your family.



Members of the National Guard and Reserve asked legislators to sign a letter of support for laws protecting the rights of workers who serve in the Reserve. Senator Ellis thanks and honors those who serve in the Guard and Reserve and now proudly displays this letter in his office.



Senator Ellis and Senate colleagues this week held a ‘Q & A’ with school districts from across the state. The Butrovich Room was filled to capacity with school district representatives and legislators discussing the challenges school districts are facing. Last week, the [Senate voted to help improve our schools by modestly increasing the Base Student Allocation](#).

Oil & Gas Tax Expert Advised Senate Finance Committee

The Senate Finance Committee heard two days of testimony from international oil and gas tax expert [Dr. Pedro Van Meurs](#) this week. He described in detail how the big three oil companies are in “harvesting mode”—taking as much profit as possible out of Alaska to fuel their operations elsewhere. Dr. Van Meurs’ testimony made it perfectly clear that passing the Governor’s oil tax bill (HB110) would have been a huge mistake, and Senate President Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak) went so far as to say that Van Meurs’ implied HB110 would be a “disaster.” I am proud the Senate Bipartisan Working Group had the leadership and fortitude to say “No, we need more information,” when the Governor’s bill came before us last session.

We learned a lot from Dr. Van Meurs. Contrary to what you may hear from the other sources, Dr. Van Meurs stated that Alaska’s taxes on existing oil production “compare favorably” with other Arctic nations (#9 out of 28). While his research shows that our tax on existing production is competitive, he encouraged us to offer tax incentives for new oil, heavy oil, ultra-heavy oil, shale oil, and natural gas. He also suggested that Alaska’s exploration and capital credits may be overly generous. These are the issues we will be working on.

Dr. Van Meurs is just one of three consultants advising the Senate as we do the careful analysis required to improve our oil tax system. Wood Mackenzie and PFC Energy, both highly

respected international consultancies, will be offering their analysis as well. I am 100% confident that the Senate will take action this session on a thoroughly researched and well-crafted piece of oil tax legislation that ensures oil profits are fairly shared between the State and the Industry.

Suicide Prevention

This past Wednesday, staffers from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) spoke to legislators and staff about the alarming rate of suicide in Alaska and what we as policymakers can do to prevent future suicides. Through building awareness and educating our community on risk factors and the resources at their disposal, we can work together to prevent these tragedies. As a board member of the Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, this is a cause I truly believe in. I encourage you to visit our [website](#), and take a look at [what the council is doing](#) to lower the suicide rates in our communities.



This Wednesday Senator Ellis and other legislators spoke at a luncheon for [Rural CAP](#), a statewide non-profit organization that works to improve the quality of life for low-income Alaskans. In his speech, Senator Ellis outlined his efforts to work towards energy solutions, substance abuse treatment and education improvements for Alaskans.

See “Big Miracle” with Open Captioning

If you haven’t seen “[Big Miracle](#),” the first of several major motion pictures to be filmed in Alaska since the [film incentives](#) started, here’s a great chance: **Monday, February 20th at 12:05pm at Tikahtnu theater** in Anchorage. For those with hearing impairments, open captioning includes readable text of dialogue as well as descriptions of music, sound, set design and costumes on the screen. “Big Miracle” is an inspiring story and this showing will be held at matinee prices, so take the whole family and enjoy seeing your amazing state on the silver screen!

As always, please don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns you may have.

Until Next Week,



Senator Johnny Ellis

P.S. February 16th was [Elizabeth Peratrovich Day](#) in Alaska. The annual Elizabeth Peratrovich Day recognizes the [achievements of Peratrovich](#) and Alaska Natives across the state. Her 1945 speech to the Territorial Legislature is considered decisive in leading to the official end of segregation in Alaska, nearly 20 years before the U.S. Civil Rights Act.

P.P.S. Art in Your Capitol

The bronze bust of Elizabeth Peratrovich is prominent in the Capitol's lobby. Peratrovich, Alaska civil rights leader and former Alaska Native Sisterhood Grand President, is also honored in the Capitol with the Elizabeth Peratrovich House Chamber Gallery.

