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Governor Walker signs legislation protecting Permanent Fund, approving yearly budgets
Budgets prioritize public safety, education; Permanent Fund Protection Act preserves dividend program

JUNE 13, 2018 ANCHORAGE – Governor Bill Walker signed the Permanent Fund Protection Act and this year’s budget bills into law today, surrounded by Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program students in Anchorage.

“This fiscal package is a statement of our shared values as Alaskans,” **Governor Bill Walker** said. “Passing a sustainable budget and the Permanent Fund Protection Act are the biggest steps Alaska has taken in the last five years to turn the corner toward a stable future. Supported by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, these bills invest in public safety, public schools, and guarantee our children will receive the same benefits from the Permanent Fund and its dividends that we do today.”

During the ceremony, the governor signed four bills: [S.B. 26](#), the Permanent Fund Protection Act, [H.B. 286](#), the Operating Budget, [S.B. 142](#), the Capital Budget, and [H.B. 285](#), the Mental Health Budget.

Key facts about the overall fiscal package include:

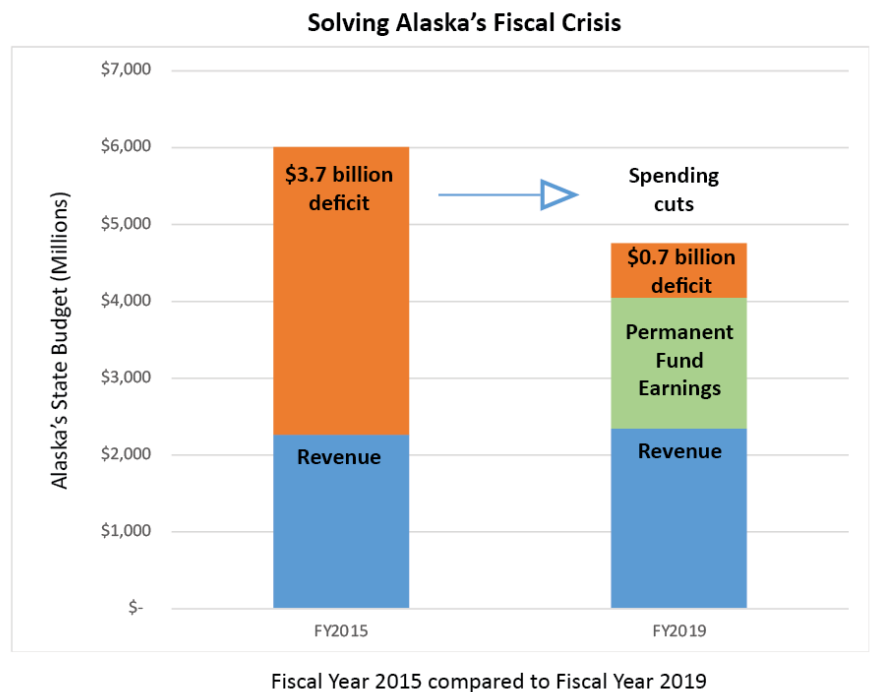
- **Permanent Fund dividends.** Each Alaskan will receive a \$1,600 Permanent Fund dividend.
- **Senate Bill 26.** Dividends in 2018 and going forward are possible because of SB 26, which guarantees the longevity of the Permanent Fund *and* a robust dividend program by making sure draws from the fund are structured and sustainable. SB 26 reduces this year’s deficit from \$2.4 billion to \$700 million.
- **Public safety funding.** Legislators approved \$27 million of the Governor’s public safety priorities, as well as \$7 million for other public safety concerns. That means more prosecutors in Anchorage, Bethel, and Kotzebue, more frequent trooper travel to rural communities, a statewide drug prosecutor, dedicated investigators to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and more.
- **Twenty-first century 911 services.** Every Alaskan should be able to call 911 to get help, but the state’s outdated emergency response system leaves a huge portion of the state without 911 service. Governor Walker requested \$9.5 million to modernize the system. Lawmakers approved \$3.5 million to begin enhancing 911 services.
- **Protecting Alaska’s schools.** Parents and teachers deserve certainty that Alaska’s schools will be funded consistently each year. Teachers should not live in fear of receiving pink slips. Lawmakers approved a \$20 million increase in school funding for the upcoming school year, forward funded education for the year after with a \$30

million increase, and invested \$19.5 million for improvement grants over the next several years.

- **Elevating the University of Alaska.** The Legislature invested \$10 million into the university budget, to help prioritize programs and focus on what they do best: educating Alaskans.
- **Senior benefits preserved.** Legislators funded the Governor’s proposal to maintain the senior benefits program, which assists nearly 12,000 low-income elders and pioneers across Alaska.

Governor Walker used his executive authority to veto four line-items from the budget:

- \$2.5 million appropriated for the Knik Arm crossing project;
- \$499,000 for a study on the health benefits of Vitamin D;
- A provision that allowed overdrawing the Permanent Fund under certain circumstances, to ensure exclusively sustainable draws on the Permanent Fund are made now and in the future;
- A veto preventing the removal of funds from an existing project to improve street lighting in Mountain View to avoid interrupting the project.



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