

Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office

2017 Legislative Guidance for Board & Commission Members

As a member of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board or Marijuana Control Board, you have considerable latitude—as well as responsibility—to recommend changes to your licensing program’s enabling statutes. Members of the public, consumers, other professionals, and your industry’s association confidently approach members of the legislature to affect the change they wish to see in your practice. Whether taking the initiative or reacting to an active bill, board members need to be prepared to champion their cause.

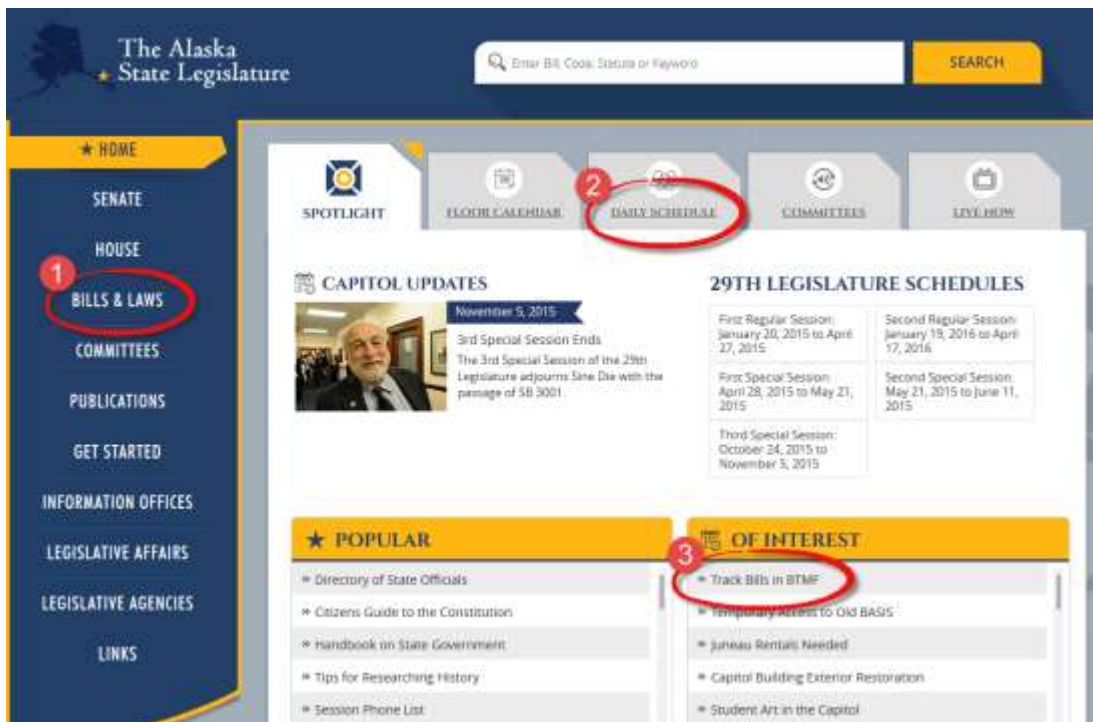
THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT ALWAYS APPLIES

AS 44.62.310(h) provides detailed definitions of "governmental body," "meeting," and "public entity" that, when combined, define what constitutes a public meeting. A meeting of a decision or policy-making body occurs when more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, engage collectively in discussion of a subject that the body is authorized to act and set policy on and is therefore subject to the Open Meetings Act. Under this definition, it doesn't matter where the meeting occurs, if it was prearranged, or who arranged it and could include unplanned casual or social contact in any location, including the office of a legislator.

Members of boards and commissions should take care not to conduct business over email, lest the public be removed from the process. Board members should not email each other about board business; if a special meeting is needed, a member can alert staff and a meeting can be arranged and publicly noticed. Remember, all board member email correspondence is discoverable, and your board business is also the public’s business.

BE INFORMED: IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

- Ahead of the legislative season, select on the record a member who will serve as the point person for legislative activity. In the absence of this person, the Director will look to the Chair of the board for input and interpretation. If the board is championing a piece of legislation, a history of the meeting minutes reflecting the issues and board’s perspective should be compiled by this leader and made available to board members and AMCO management, who will be at every hearing. This research and history will be especially helpful to new board members who are appointed.
- When a bill is filed, the Director will alert board members and program staff. Bills can move and change quickly, so it is important that board members are tracking the testimony and amendments to bills affecting their program.
- Know where to find your bills using the Alaska State Legislature’s web page: akleg.gov. (See graphic below.)
 1. The **BILLS & LAWS** section on the sidebar links to a searchable list of documents. If you know the bill number, you can search using the bar at the top of the screen.
 2. The **DAILY SCHEDULE** shows all committee activity for the day you choose. It is subject to change, but it is a good starting place to see what is happening where.
 3. The **BTMF**—or Bill Tracking Management Facility is your best friend when trying to keep up with a bill. Take the time to set up your profile and register the bill you want to track, then you will receive email updates when its status changes or is scheduled for a hearing.



GUIDELINES FOR BOARD MEMBER TESTIMONY

- Encourage the board to become engaged: Track the bill online, participate in hearings, write a letter, and discuss the legislation in a public meeting. It is a best practice for organizations to speak with “one voice.” Any testimony or correspondence by a board member on behalf of a board must represent deliberation and action taken on the record in a public meeting.
- Staff may not express opinions on behalf of the board or discuss legislation with elected officials without prior arrangements with the Director, DCCED Legislative Liaison, and clearance from the Governor’s Legislative Office. If the board has published a resolution or letter regarding the legislation as a result of a vote at a public meeting, staff may provide that document to legislators per department procedures.
- Individual board members may offer their personal or professional opinions on the legislation by clarifying that while they are appointed to a board, they do not speak on behalf of the board.
- Boards must provide a member to testify at every hearing when being considered for reauthorization. Without member interest and advocacy for the board or commission’s continuation, it is possible that the sponsor could withdraw the bill and the board could sunset.
- Nervous? Don’t worry! Please email or call the Director to discuss tips or even run through some potential questions.

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY CALL-IN DO’S AND DON’TS

Do remember this “off-net” system is designed to serve those who do not have any other way to testify or have a legitimate reason for using the system.

Do remember that off-net calls to the committee must be authorized prior to the meeting by the chairman. A minimum of 24 hours in advance is appreciated. Please work through the Director, Division Operations Manager, or the committee chairman's office for authorization.

Do use the streaming video available at <http://akl.tv/> to watch for your bill to come up. The chairman will announce the order of bills at the beginning of the meeting. Callers may be disconnected from the meeting if they call in prior to their bill being taken up. If video streaming is not an option for you, please contact the committee aide to make arrangements to call in early. Once the bill is before the committee, call 844-586-9085, give your name, bill number and ask to be connected to the _____ Committee.

Do Not call in before the bill you are testifying on comes before the committee.

Do remember the off net call-in lines are for testifiers only. If you wish to listen in, please use the live streaming at <http://akl.tv/>.

Do use the “mute” function of your phone until called on to testify. If this function is not available on your phone, ask the Legislative Information Office (LIO) moderator to mute your call.

Do Not use the “hold” function.

Do try to be in a quiet room without distractions or interruptions. Car noise, open windows, and barking dogs can all be heard by the legislative committee and guests at the hearing. These avoidable disturbances will detract from the credibility of your message. Please treat the important responsibility of testifying with utmost respect and professionalism.

Do remember that everything transmitted over your phone will be broadcast directly into the meeting room and recorded to become part of the permanent record.

Do remember to be in a location with good reception if using a cell phone,. Disruptions coming into the meeting via the phone lines will result in all callers being disconnected from the system. This will require testifiers to call back to be reconnected. Turn off your computer or TV speakers if listening online so you do not create an audio “loop.”

Do try to adhere to time limits imposed by the chairman.

Remember: There are a limited number of phone lines coming into the Capitol. These lines are also used by LIO’s around the state. When all the phone lines are used up, an LIO may not be able to call in with a room full of people.