

Native Village of Kotzebue

Kotzebue IRA

February 9, 2009

Honorable Reggie Joule
AK State Capitol
Room # 502
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support of H.B. 74 – An Act relating to the Alaska Coastal Management Program; and establishing the Alaska Coastal Policy Board

Knowledge of Language

Knowledge of Family Tree

Sharing

Humility

Respect for Others

Love for Children

Cooperation

Hard Work

Respect for Elders

Respect for Nature

Avoid Conflict

Family Roles

Humor

Spirituality

Domestic Skills

Hunter Success

Responsibility to Tribe

Dear Representative Joule;

The Native Village of Kotzebue writes in strong support of the House Bill 74 relating to strengthening the ACMP and establishing the Alaska Coastal Policy Board.

The Tribe was disappointed with the changes made to the program under previous Governor Frank Murkowski. The ability of the program to provide for real local involvement in development projects affecting the coastal environment of Alaska is very important to assure that projects are compatible with the needs and concerns of local communities. The changes to the program as envisioned under HB 74 would go a long way towards reaffirming the State's commitment to responsible development and local input as a vital component of such projects.

The Tribe supports the Coastal Policy Board as envisioned because it will provide an essential balance to the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP). Currently, the commissioner of DNR makes all ACMP decisions, including approving district plans, which has been shown to be non-compatible with the needs of local communities as the recent wholesale rejection of the proposed Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB) Enforceable Policies demonstrates. It is our understanding that the new board would be responsible for approving coastal district plans and any changes to the ACMP regulations, which should allow for a more responsive approach to approving local priorities as stated through Enforceable Policies.

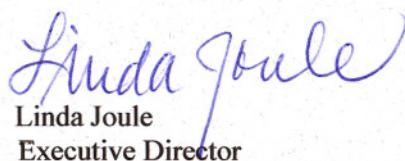
Section 9 and Section 14 of the bill are especially useful in this regard, as they would clarify the criteria for Coastal District Enforceable Policies so as to obviate interpretation by DNR, because as the wholesale rejection of the NWAB District Plan relating to Enforceable Policies should show, it is currently not clear what the criteria are. The statutes currently allow districts to establish Enforceable Policies, but as it has been interpreted and implemented by the DNR, only one of the 50 enforceable policies proposed by the NWAB was approvable, which speaks to the disconnect between what local communities need and what the program is believed (by the DNR) to allow for. The bill would also allow coastal districts to address air and water quality issues during ACMP project reviews. Currently, activities permitted by DEC are unfortunately excluded from the coordinated consistency review of a project, which negatively impacts the ability of local communities to be able to take into account and fully mitigate the broadest range of impacts from any specific project falling under ACMP review.

We appreciate your leadership on ACMP revision and look forward to passage of this important Bill.

Sincerely,



Alex Whiting
Environmental Specialist



Linda Joule
Executive Director