November 17, 2011

State of Alaska Legislators

Regional and Community Leaders

Citizens of Alaska

Dear Colleagues, Leaders and fellow Alaskans,

Forty years ago when the State championed an all Alaskan oil pipeline across the state the promise was it would bring a better quality of life to all Alaskans. According to the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Division of Water we still have an estimated 6,028 homes/families without potable/clean drinking water and safe sanitation/sewer systems, i.e. third world conditions.

From 1977 to 2009 Alaska earned over 102 billion dollars in oil revenues, of that only 300 million was spent on rural water and sewer projects. Over this same time period municipalities received substantial amount of funds but those figures have not been tracked as well as the rural funds.

For example: From 2001 to 2012 municipalities received over 189 million dollars ($189,316,186) through the DEC municipal grants and loans programs, state funds for water and sewer projects. Rural communities received over 180 million ($180,459,244) in state funds which is a match to federal funds of 541 million. In this time period the majority of the rural funds went to maintenance and not new projects.

As you can see communities across the state receive state funds for water and sewer projects with most of them needing substantial financial assistance on initial infrastructure. So to ask the state to fund infrastructure costs is not out of the ordinary. Alaska can afford to do more and I say it has a responsibility and duty to do more. I strongly urge all of you to write call and email the Governor urging him to fully fund the water and sewer program and continue to do so until every home has clean water and a safe sanitation system, his phone number is 907.465.3500, fax 907.465.3532; address: P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, AK 99811-0001; email

In order to get an accurate estimate on how much money will be needed I need an accurate number of homes throughout the state that does not have water and sewer systems. Your help in providing my office with those numbers would be greatly appreciated.

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Water and Sewer

I plan on introducing legislation this coming session to establish a water and sewer task force that will look at alternative simple self-sustaining systems; look at what other arctic nations are doing; prioritize; coordinate funds and services; evaluating past projects and all service providers; and anything else that may arise. If you have any suggestions for this task force please don’t hesitate in contacting my office, attention Dorothy Shockley at Dorothy\_Shockley@legis.state.ak.us, or call the Fairbanks office at 888.452.3471 from now until the end of December. From January to end of April you can reach her at 888.288.3473 in Juneau.

Your help in this long overdue initiative is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Senator Albert Kookesh

Cc: State of Alaska Legislators

 Regional Profit and Nonprofit Organizations

 Communities throughout the State of Alaska