

2021 SESSION OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

OFFERED IN: The House Finance DNR Subcommittee

TO: HB 69

OFFERED BY: Rep. Hopkins

DEPARTMENT: Department of Natural Resources
APPROPRIATION: Fire Suppression, Land & Water Resources
ALLOCATION: Geological & Geophysical Surveys

ADD: Intent:

“It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Natural Resources Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys submit to the Finance Co-Chairs and Legislative Finance Division by December 1, 2021, a proposal to conduct large geophysical, geochemical and geological data collections over mineral-rich portions of the state, and to develop fee schedules to charge for the raw data, once collected, while publishing low-cost hardcopy maps, and providing free access to visual representations of the data through the divisions website.”

EXPLANATION: DNR DGGS will craft an aggressive, four-year project that will conduct the following in Alaska’s critical-mineral belts:

- Complete regional airborne geophysical surveys (magnetic, radiometric and electromagnetic) over all areas that can be flown with a fixed-wing aircraft.
- Complete re-analysis of existing stream sediment samples, and filling data gaps in coverage with new sampling through private-sector contractors.
- Expand bedrock geologic mapping during the term of the project.

This would require extensive use of private sector contractors and laboratories to complete this work. We estimate over 90 percent of appropriated funds will go to the private sector, which would provide considerable economic stimulus to the contracting industry, and complete geophysical and geochemical mapping over approximately 350,000 square km of our state. This would bring Alaska into comparable status with other major mining jurisdictions in terms of data availability, increasing the attractiveness of working in the state, and the rate of mineral discovery.

During this process, DGGS will develop a fee schedule to monetize access to the raw and processed data. As data becomes available, DGGS will publish paper maps which will be available for a nominal charge and provide visual access to the information via an online portal. This will provide free - or low-cost - access to prospectors, while requiring payment for versions of the data that can be ingested into GIS or other software for more advanced processing and exploration targeting by companies.