



Division of Legislative Audit

Report Digest #10-20072-11

SUMMARY OF: A Sunset Review on the Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission (ASHSC), June 15, 2011

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In accordance with Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the ASHSC. The purpose of this audit was to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for its continued existence and if it has been operating in an effective manner. As required by AS 44.66.050(a), this report shall be considered by the committee of reference during the legislative oversight process in determining whether the ASHSC should be reestablished. Currently, under AS 44.66.010(a)(8), the ASHSC will terminate on June 30, 2012, and will have one year from that date to conclude its administrative operations.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS

The ASHSC's termination date should be extended until June 30, 2016. Overall, we found the ASHSC is operating in the public's interest. The ASHSC has gathered and disseminated information; facilitated discussions and partnerships with various members of state, local, and federal government as well as private entities concerning seismic hazards and risk mitigation; encouraged efforts to address seismic risk mitigation; and brought attention to seismic hazards.

However, improvements are needed to increase the ASHSC's effectiveness and efficiency. Although the organization has been active in addressing a number of its statutory objectives, it lacks measureable outcomes to improve seismic hazards risk mitigation that correspond to commission activities. Additionally, the ASHSC has made only two formal policy recommendations in six years. By not analyzing its progress on a regular basis, the commission cannot readily identify areas in need of improvement, ways to efficiently manage its goals, or areas in need of greater attention.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The ASHSC should develop a strategic plan to guide its efforts to mitigate seismic hazard risk in Alaska.
2. The ASHSC should develop procedures to ensure meetings are published on the Alaska Public Notice System in a timely manner.
3. The ASHSC should follow the adopted rules of procedure and recommend immediate replacement of habitually absent members.
4. The Office of the Governor and the ASHSC should work to fill appointments to all commission seats in a timely manner.