



# Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the

HCRA

Committee name

Committee on

HB 74

dated

2/10/09

Bill/Subject

Signed:

KAROL KOLEHMAINEN

Testifier

ALEUTIAN WEST CRSA

Representing (Optional)

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Good Morning

My name is Karol Kolehmainen and I am the Program Coordinator for the Aleutians West Coastal Resource Service Area. I am here today to bring testimony from my elected seven member Board of Directors which is largely in favor of HB74 as I will describe. The AWCRSA Board represents the entire western Aleutian area from Unalaska Island west to Attu Island, an area that is 20 to 60 miles in width and roughly 1000 miles long. This area, bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the south and the Bering Sea to the north, has a wealth of natural resources including some of the richest fishing grounds in the state.

We are here today because HB 191 mandated significant changes to the Alaska Coastal Management Program and our local district program. I would like to provide a brief overview of our current coastal management plan. The AWCRSA coastal management plan became effective February 11, 2007. Of the 44 enforceable policies we had at the beginning of the revision process, 10 remain. We no longer have any habitat policies, mitigation policies, or policies that mention air, land, or water quality. Also, we have designated subsistence use areas but no enforceable subsistence policies. Many of our previous enforceable policies have been moved to an unenforceable appendix and classified as "advisory" policies.

The ACMP prior to the passage of HB 191 was a networked program where local reviewers were on a par with state and federal reviewers. Following passage of HB 191 the program became centralized in DNR. We do not feel that it was the intent of HB 191 to silence the local voice or result in a disconnected program but it has had this effect. Passage of HB 74 will return us to a more meaningful position within a networked program.

The AWCRSA is in support of a Coastal Policy Board that incorporates the positive aspects of the former Coastal Policy Council. HB 74 accomplishes this by creating a policy board that includes representation from the coastal districts, the resource agencies and the DCCED Division of Community and Regional Affairs. We agree that the Board's mission should include the ability to approve local district plans, program related funding, and especially program and regulatory changes. We also agree that the Board would not be responsible for consistency reviews and would not hear elevations but rather they would be heard within a review panel of the resource agencies and not solely by the DNR Commissioner as is now the case. The new Board would serve as a public forum that should result in more public involvement and a more equitable decision making process. Also, it would provide an outreach component that is sorely lacking in the post HB 191 amended program.

The DEC carveout has confused the consistency review process especially where the scope of the project requires permits from more than one agency. The removal of the DEC has been interpreted as the removal of any matter relating to

air, land, or water quality through the program implementing regulations. As I stated earlier, it became impossible to craft any acceptable policies related to air, land or water quality or that even mentioned the words air or land. This negated not only policies that were clearly within regulation of DEC but also policies related to habitat that might touch on water issues. The return of DEC to the coordinated ACMP program is integral to a meaningful program and the AWCRSA Board supports the inclusion of DEC in the networked ACMP.

The AWCRSA does not support the change made in Sec 46.40.190 relating to cooperative administration. The proposed wording has totally reversed the meaning of the paragraph and has the potential to undermine the existence of CRSA's. We request that the original wording be retained.

Time has shown that not all of the changes required by HB191 have worked and we appreciate the sponsor's efforts to address the problems in the current program. Passage of HB 74 will go a long way to restore the role of coastal districts in the ACMP, increase public involvement and oversight, and bring consistency reviews back into a coordinated and networked program.

Thank you for your time.



*Program Director*  
AWCRSA