

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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January 26, 2011

The Honorable Bill Stoltze
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 515
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

The Honorable Bill Thomas
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room Room 505
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: Department of Law Overview – FY 2012 Budget Request

Dear Representatives Stoltze and Thomas:

It is a pleasure and a privilege to present to the House Finance Committee an overview of the Department of Law and its related FY 2012 budget request. I am looking forward to working with all of you as we proceed through the budget process.

The mission of the Department of Law remains as it has been for the past several years – protecting Alaskans, promoting good governance, safeguarding the state's fiscal integrity and facilitating economic development. These are the concerns of every Alaskan, and these are the objectives the men and women of the Department of Law are committed to pursuing with integrity and vigilance.

The successes of the department during this past year have been many and run the gamut from incarcerating dangerous criminals to interfacing with attorneys and other law agencies to provide free legal services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The department daily confronts key constitutional and statutory questions, this year obtaining rulings from the Ninth Circuit upholding Alaska's merit selection system for appointing judges and from the Alaska Supreme Court allowing a parental notice ballot initiative to be placed before the voters.

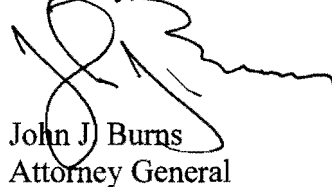
The department defended the Division of Elections' decisions during the state's contentious senatorial election. It successfully negotiated a half billion dollar settlement with the state's former actuary in connection with the unfunded liabilities to the state's public pension funds and also secured credit protection for current and former state employees who potentially were exposed to identity theft.

Much attention has been focused on the department's efforts to resist, aggressively, federal regulatory overreach that threatens the state's ability to responsibly develop the state's natural resources. Although those efforts have often entailed litigation against federal agencies, litigation is the choice of last resort. Unfortunately, when dialogue and educational efforts prove unsuccessful and federal agencies continue to violate the state's substantive and procedural due process rights without regard to the devastating socio-economic consequences that such regulations will impose, then it is incumbent upon the state through the Department of Law to oppose such encroachment.

One need only read the Alaska Statehood Act to recognize that the right of the state to responsibly develop its natural resources is the key to the state's economic foundation, and therefore the good jobs that allow families to prosper. The future of this great state and its citizens is inextricably tied to the state's ability to preserve and protect this right. To that end, the Department of Law, in conjunction with other state agencies and with the assistance of the administration and the legislature, must and will remain vigilant in protecting against the federal regulatory overreach that threatens our socio-economic well-being.

Through the dedication, intelligence and passion of the men and women who comprise the Department of Law, we remain committed to making a positive and lasting difference in the future of Alaska and to improving the quality of life for Alaskans. I am very proud and honored to be part of this continuing and noble effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Burns", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John J. Burns
Attorney General