

Senate Resources Committee on SB 26, Feb. 6, 2013
Testimony of Rick Rogers, Executive Director,
Resource Development Council

Good evening, Madam Chair Giessel and members of the committee. My name is Rick Rogers, Executive Director of the Resource Development Council. RDC is a statewide business association representing forestry, oil and gas, mining, tourism, and fishing industries. Our mission is to grow Alaska through responsible resource development.

A top legislative priority of RDC is to encourage the state to promote and defend the integrity of Alaska's permitting process and advocate for predictable, timely, and efficient state and federal permitting processes based on sound science and economic feasibility.

RDC is in support of SB26. The Alaska Legislature, to its credit, provided DNR with additional resources to address what had become an untenable backlog of permits and authorizations. Such backlogs negatively affect our resource industries as well as individual Alaskans seeking required state authorizations. We understand that while a backlog still exists, DNR has made real progress in catching up on that work.

Ramping up staff to adjudicate the backlog is addressing the symptom, however systemic improvements to what has become a very complex set of statutes authorizing DNR's work is also needed to help prevent future backlog and delays.

The Governor, with support from DNR Commissioner Sullivan and his staff, has identified specific means of improving the efficiency of our complex permitting system. The administration should be applauded for proposing numerous changes to the DNR enabling statutes in order to make their processes more timely and efficient. Adapting our key DNR statutes to ensure we are adjudicating our land and resource authorizations in a more timely and efficient manner is overdue.

We encourage this committee to support the administration's efforts to more efficiently manage DNR's tremendous workload as the reach of the department affects a broad cross section of Alaska businesses, resource industries and individuals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.