



Council of
Alaska Producers

HB77: Land Disposals/Exchanges; Water Rights
February 7, 2013

Representative Eric Feige
Representative Dan Saddler
Co-Chairs, House Resources Committee
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99811

Co-Chairs Feige and Saddler,

The Council of Alaska Producers (CAP) appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB77: Land Disposals/Exchanges; Water Rights. CAP is a non-profit trade association formed in 1992 and serves as a spokesperson for the large producing metal mines and major metal developmental projects in the state.

Recently the State of Alaska has begun implementation of a strategy of statewide permitting reform in order to accomplish their stated objective of *"Improve the State of Alaska's permitting processes in order to advance the public interest by ensuring projects are permitted in a timely predictable and efficient manner while safeguarding the environment."*

One method of accomplishing this reform was to have the Division of Mining, Land and Water identify statutory changes that help reduce applicant costs, create efficiencies, reduce redundancies, and reduce opportunities for legal challenges in order to ensure the public can use and enjoy Alaska's lands and resources.

HB77 accomplishes this through a variety of mechanisms including allowing general permits, clarifying the appeals process, and simplifying leases and water permits. While the resource development industry is certain to be affected by this legislation, it is important to keep in mind that these provisions benefit everyone in Alaska including cabin owners, aquatic farmers, home developers and any individual who seeks to do business on state land or water.

From a CAP perspective, the State's permitting reform efforts and this legislation fits our position that permitting in Alaska must be rigorous, science based, transparent and predictable. We urge the committee members to support this bill and move it out of committee in an expeditious fashion.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

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Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Testimony
HB 77- Land Disposals/Exchanges: Water Rights
Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Good afternoon co-chairmen Feige and Saddler and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Rachael Petro and I am the president and CEO of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. The Alaska Chamber is a statewide membership organization made up of all sizes and types of businesses from across Alaska.

The Alaska Chamber's primary mission is to advocate for policies that improve Alaska's business climate. Efficient, predictable and common sense regulations and permitting processes are integral to creating an environment in which businesses, new and old, can succeed. Each Fall Alaska Chamber members gather to set its legislative agenda for the following year.

For the past several years in a row, including this year, Alaska Chamber members have expressed strong support for Alaska's policies and regulations that guide development of Alaska's natural resources while protecting Alaska's environment. At the same time, we have also advocated for streamlining those same regulations and policies where bureaucratic and business efficiencies can be gained.

In regard to the Fraser Institute's study, referenced earlier today in testimony, internationally, Alaska ranks just below Kazakhstan and just above Columbia in regard to uncertainty concerning environmental regulations. In regard to regulatory duplication and inconsistencies Alaska ranks below Honduras and just above Niger. Alaska Chamber members believe Alaska can do better!

The Alaska Chamber supports the provisions within HB 77/SB26 because they provide clarity, eliminate unnecessary processes, and modernize statutes based on the experience gained over many years from the professional staff within the Department of Natural Resources.

It is our belief that HB 77 is a common sense piece of legislation that should receive broad bipartisan support. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

House Resources Committee on HB 77, Feb. 6, 2013
Testimony of Rick Rogers, Executive Director,
Resource Development Council

Good afternoon co-chairs Feige, Saddler 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 HB77. 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.