

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 3, 2003

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair
Representative Hugh Fate, Co-Chair
Representative Beverly Masek, Vice Chair
Representative Carl Gatto
Representative Cheryll Heinze
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Beth Kerttula

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Kelly Wolf

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Ralph Seekins

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

- HEARD

OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- OVERVIEW CANCELED

TAPES

03-1, SIDE(S) A & B [HOUSE RES TAPE]

CO-CHAIR HUGH FATE convened the meeting of the House Resources Standing Committee at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Fate, Chenault, Masek, Gatto, Heinze, Lynn, Guttenberg, and Kerttula were present at the call to order. Senator Ralph Seekins also was present during the meeting. Co-Chair Fate announced that Representative Wolf's absence was excused.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

ERNESTA BALLARD, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), offered a brief synopsis of her career history, and discussed the different objectives of working in both the public and the private sectors. She provided and discussed a handout that listed statutes pertaining to DEC's role as a department; described state policy with respect to the environment; highlighted obligations of the department in performing an internal performance audit as ordered by the governor in Administrative Order No. 202; discussed her role and responsibilities as commissioner; listed duties of the department; and provided information about the organization, mission, and functions of the various divisions within the department. Commissioner Ballard introduced various division directors and acting directors, and called on each to answer questions relating to his or her particular division.

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked Commissioner Ballard questions about the coordination of DEC with other departments, and if it concurred with the governor's agenda; discussed the [public's negative] perception of DEC; and asked questions relating to the permitting process. Representative Heinze asked questions about best available technology relating to oil spill response, and about statutory requirements relating to budgeting, funding, and conference requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG highlighted the department's obligation to balance between [effective] budgeting and its mission "to protect"; he spoke about evaluating the program under the mission and measures concept; he also mentioned reorganization. Representative Guttenberg asked Commissioner Ballard questions relating to state primacy.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO suggested the community views government [department's] such as DEC with [fear]; indicated it is often expensive and debilitating for small businesses to meet DEC's requirements, and asked if DEC could offer [alternatives] to "expensive fixes"; and he talked about the impacts of streamlined permitting. Representative Gatto asked questions and presented information relating to Mount McKinley Meat and Sausage.

CO-CHAIR FATE, referring to a streamlined permitting process, asked Commissioner Ballard what steps she would take to make permitting more efficient, and whether she expected DEC to need future legislation to achieve a streamlined permitting process.

LARRY DIETRICK, Director, Division of Spill Prevention and Response, Department of Environmental Conservation, answered questions and provided information relating to emergency spill response, best available technology, and response fund administration.

REPRESENTATIVE MASEK highlighted the underground storage tank issue and mentioned future updates on the program; she also mentioned the Homeland Security Act and asked about a future update [outlining] DEC's role in the process. Representative Masek mentioned oil and gas coordination, and asked Commissioner Ballard to provide a list of proposed projects and [an outline] of DEC's [role] in helping the industry stakeholders and project proponents in the oil and gas industry.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN spoke about his goals for [having resource development] be predictable, stable, and competitive.

KRISTIN RYAN, Acting Director, Division of Environmental Health, Department of Environmental Conservation, was available for questions, and noted that the Mount McKinley Meat and Sausage [viability] issue was not under the realm of her division.

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA asked Commissioner Ballard about her position on combining the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and DEC. She also asked Commissioner Ballard to comment on state primacy and federal programs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and

after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.