

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 8, 2011

8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz, Chair
Representative Neal Foster, Vice Chair
Representative Alan Austerman
Representative Alan Dick
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Sharon Cissna
Representative Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Bob Herron

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: CITY OF UNALASKA EPA NPDES PERMIT/ADEC

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 130

"An Act relating to municipal building code requirements for fire sprinkler systems in certain residential buildings; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 130 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 130

SHORT TITLE: RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

SPONSOR(S): LABOR & COMMERCE

01/28/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/28/11	(H)	CRA, L&C
02/08/11	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

CHRIS HLADICK, City Manager
City of Unalaska
Unalaska, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the City of Unalaska's EPA NPDES permit situation.

DAN EASTON, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Environmental Conservation
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided further background regarding the City of Unalaska's EPA NPDES permit situation.

LYNN TOMICH KENT, Director
Division of Water
Department of Environmental Conservation
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During City of Unalaska overview regarding the EPA NPDES permit, answered questions.

CAMERON LEONARD, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Natural Resources Section
Civil Division (Fairbanks)
Department of Law
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the City of Unalaska overview regarding the EPA NPDES permit, answered questions.

MARK LYNCH, City Manager
City of Cordova
Cordova, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the City of Unalaska overview regarding the EPA NPDES permit, related Cordova's situation.

ROB EARL, Staff
Representative Bob Herron
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 130 on behalf of the sponsor, Representative Herron.

JEFF TUCKER, President
Alaska Fire Chiefs Association
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified that the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association is not opposed to HB 130, as currently written.

PAUL MICHELSON, Co-Chair
Alaska State Homebuilders Association Legislative Committee
Alaska State Homebuilders Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 130.

ERROL CHAMPION
Alaska Board of Realtors
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Urged the adoption of HB 130.

WALLY SMITH, Member
Alaska State Homebuilders Association;
Interior Alaska Building Association
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 130.

DARRELL BOURNE, President
Interior Alaska Builders Association;
Member of the Alaska State Homebuilders Association
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 130.

ALAN WILSON, Co-Chair
Alaska State Homebuilders Association Legislative Committee
Alaska State Homebuilders Association
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 130.

GLENDIA FEEKEN
Alaska Association of Realtors
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 130.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:22 AM](#)

CHAIR CATHY ENGSTROM MUNOZ called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives Foster, Austerman, Gardner, and Munoz were present at the call to order. Representatives Saddler, Cissna, and Dick arrived as the meeting was in progress.

Presentation: City of Unalaska EPA NPDES Permit/ADEC

8:02:52 AM

CHAIR MUNOZ announced that the first order of business would be a presentation regarding the City of Unalaska's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

8:03:31 AM

CHRIS HLADICK, City Manager, City of Unalaska, began by informing the committee that he has been the city manager of the City of Unalaska since 2001. He then provided the following summary of the situation in the City of Unalaska. In 1999, a new wastewater treatment plant came on line at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million. In 2004, the city reapplied for a new permit, which included technical limits that required the city to go from a primary treatment to advanced primary treatment. He then turned attention to the other two projects that are directly involved with what the City of Unalaska needs to address by 2014. First, the City of Unalaska needs to build a new cell for its landfill. He explained that the existing landfill is lined and the leachate goes into the wastewater collection system. The leachate impacts the ability to treat wastewater and impacts the efficiency of the plant. After the wastewater treatment project was constructed, the landfill leachate was placed in the waste stream.

MR. HLADICK returned to 2004 when the City of Unalaska realized the new technical limits would require advanced primary treatment. With the help of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the City of Unalaska convinced EPA that a mistake was made on the permit and EPA drafted an amendment to the permit that went out to public comment. At that point, U.S. Fish & Wildlife stated that a section 7 consultation wasn't performed on the impact of the outfall on the Steller's Eider. The EPA said it didn't have time for that and turned the matter over to enforcement. Enforcement then determined that the City of Unalaska had been in violation since 2004. However, in 2004 there was no timeline to build a new plant. Upon the matter being turned over to enforcement, the city negotiated with EPA. The EPA turned the case over to the U.S. Department of Justice, which has resulted in the city dealing with attorneys and settlement negotiations regarding the fine and when the plant will be built.

MR. HLADICK mentioned that in 1979, 76 villages, including Unalaska, were on a list [exempting them from requesting a

waiver from a secondary treatment requirement under the Clean Water Act]. The cost for a new plant to perform advanced primary treatment would be \$11 million, whereas secondary treatment would cost \$24 million. The difference in operating costs will be huge due to the need to deal with sludge. Sludge will have to return to the landfill, while leachate will return to the wastewater treatment plant. At this point, Mr. Hladick explained that the City of Unalaska has to build a new landfill cell for \$9 million as well as an LT2 water plant requirement that has to be online by 2014 to address cryptosporidium. He explained that since cryptosporidium was found and EPA hasn't created a maximum contaminant level, a water plant has to be constructed. The city also faces a minimum cost of \$11.5 million to construct the wastewater treatment plant. On the sewer side, bills have increased by 83 percent. If the city has to go to advanced primary treatment, [sewer] will cost \$120 a month and secondary treatment will cost well over \$150 a month.

[8:09:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE AUSTERMAN recalled that the ex-mayor of Unalaska has touted Unalaska as the top seafood port in the nation. Therefore, he questioned why Unalaska isn't [building a new treatment plant].

MR. HLADICK stated that the amount of money involved is tremendous, not to mention the rate shock the consumer will experience. He clarified that the city is in the planning phases of all three of the projects. The design for the water plant is complete and funds have been applied for from DEC. Furthermore, the city will apply for funds from Washington, D. C., for the water and the wastewater. Moreover, since there's no money available for landfills, the city will likely borrow money for the landfill. In further response to Representative Austerman, Mr. Hladick informed the committee that he is applying for \$3 million for the water treatment plant [from the state] and the federal government. The city will request \$4 million for the wastewater [treatment plant from the state] as well as \$4 million from the federal government and the remainder will come from the city. He noted that he didn't know how long it would take to obtain the financing if the city is required to go to secondary treatment.

[8:10:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked if there have been any discussions with Alaska's federal delegation regarding what it could do.

MR. HLADICK replied yes, adding his hope that there would be committee hearings on this issue in Washington, D.C., as well. Furthermore, the City of Unalaska is working with DEC for a possible legislative fix.

[8:11:13 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ inquired as to what creates the need for more advanced processing than what is presently performed in the existing 76 communities that are exempted.

MR. HLADICK attributed it to the periodic renewal of the permit, which he recalled is every 5 years. He opined that he has never seen a permit have fewer restrictions. With regard to the other exempt communities, Mr. Hladick said that he didn't know what would be next for them, particularly since he is unsure why Unalaska is in the situation it is given the fact that the federal register included published policy by the EPA that changed. In further response to Chair Munoz, Mr. Hladick confirmed that DEC has primacy over these issues.

[8:13:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if the EPA was generally cooperative when the state received primacy over the point of discharge. He inquired as to the EPA's general attitude in regard to Alaska taking the lead with the NPDES.

MR. HLADICK deferred to Mr. Easton. He related his understanding that primacy happened during this entire situation with the City of Unalaska. As far as he knows, the EPA is still handling Unalaska's case. However, Unalaska would like DEC to take over enforcement of this case so that the city could deal with "the folks that we know and that know the community."

[8:13:57 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ noted that EPA was invited to participate with the committee today, but it declined. [Later in the hearing it was brought out that the EPA sent a letter saying it couldn't speak because of involvement in confidential negotiations.]

[8:14:20 AM](#)

DAN EASTON, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation, informed the committee that his involvement with

this situation started in 2004 when he received a call from the then-city manager of Unalaska. The manager related that the City of Unalaska had received a new permit the [requirements] of which he estimated would be difficult to meet. He asked DEC to review the permit. Upon review of the permit, a mistake was found. He explained that DEC made a mistake when it made some calculations when it certified the permit. The department informed EPA of the mistake and that as a result the city wouldn't be able to comply with the permit. The EPA agreed to allow the permit to be fixed and thus a modification correcting the errors was prepared. However, that modification was never made. For that reason and others, the City of Unalaska has had difficulty complying with the permit. As Mr. Hladick related, a few years ago EPA said that the city had violated its permit and turned it over to enforcement for action. In fact, the city and EPA came close to negotiating a settlement, which included a compliance schedule that would've provided time for the city to make upgrades to its sewage treatment plant. Unfortunately, at the last minute that settlement offer was revoked by the EPA and a few years later the case was turned over to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Although negotiations between the city and DOJ are confidential, some of the negotiations are less confidential because it's written correspondence with the city. Upon reading some of that correspondence, Mr. Easton related that the U.S. Department of Justice has said that it will reduce the fine if the city will provide a higher level of secondary treatment than required under the waiver, which would be expensive. He explained that every city has to provide secondary treatment of its sewage unless it has a waiver. The City of Unalaska has one form of a waiver, with which it can provide a lesser level of treatment, primary treatment. Recently, the pace of negotiations between DOJ and the city have slowed if not stopped. Mr. Easton told the committee that DEC has offered to intervene on behalf of the city, preferably having the permit and the enforcement case referred to DEC such that it can work with the city to develop an agreement to improve treatment and achieve compliance in a time certain. However, those offers have been rebuffed by EPA. Mr. Easton then informed the committee that he has dealt with the City of Unalaska for many years and has found them very responsive. Thus, he said he is confident that if DEC were allowed to intervene, it could work with the city to reach a reasonable solution.

MR. EASTON then turned to the issue of primacy. He explained that the 76 communities with waivers, such as the City of Unalaska, would transfer to DEC and DEC would write the permits

and be responsible for enforcing them. The reason the City of Unalaska's waiver didn't transfer is because the transfer agreement includes a provision that specifies that in the event the EPA has an ongoing enforcement case, the permits in the case are to stay with the EPA until the case is resolved.

[8:21:45 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ asked if the other [76] communities [with waivers] would potentially be subject to the same issues the City of Unalaska faces.

MR. EASTON said that there are circumstances that make the City of Unalaska's situation a bit unique. However, he said that he's not sure that it's a foregone conclusion that because it's happening in the City of Unalaska that the other 76 communities would face similar circumstances.

[8:22:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON opined that although the state may hold primacy in the other communities [with waivers], it wouldn't take much for EPA to intervene because of a mistake. He informed the committee of the situation in the City of Bethel, which in 2004 decided not to construct a sludge plant, the cost of which was \$10 million in 2004. He questioned what the City of Bethel will do when the EPA requires it to construct a sludge plant. Representative Herron opined that the state will likely be stuck with a large bill for these 76 communities.

[8:24:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked if there is any precedent for the state taking over in a situation in which there's a dispute with the EPA. She asked if there's any precedent in the nation in which the local enforcement and environmental conservation agency has taken over in an ongoing case.

MR. EASTON said that he couldn't answer. However, he offered that generally in a case of primacy the EPA would defer to the state while it would retain the right to object or have oversight technology. The situation with the City of Unalaska presents a unique set of circumstances.

[8:26:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE AUSTERMAN inquired as to whether Kodiak has a primary or secondary treatment plant.

LYNN TOMICH KENT, Director, Division of Water, Department of Environmental Conservation, presumed that the City of Kodiak has a secondary treatment plant.

MR. EASTON then confirmed that the City of Kodiak provides secondary treatment.

REPRESENTATIVE AUSTERMAN informed the committee that secondary treatment is an expensive, major operation to maintain. Furthermore, sludge is a constant issue.

[8:27:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if the error in calculations made by DEC was substantive or minor.

MR. EASTON answered that it was a very substantive mistake. The permit should've said that city is required to remove 30 percent of the biochemical oxygen demand and/or total suspended solids. However, the permit inverted the numbers, specifying that 70 percent [of the biochemical oxygen demand and/or total suspended solids] must be removed. He noted that even with a correction of the aforementioned, the City of Unalaska would've still had violations with fecal coliform due to the impacts of the leachate on the treatment process. Still, a correction would've resulted in much fewer instances of permit violations.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if EPA acknowledged it has some complicity in not resolving this error that EPA said it would fix.

MR. EASTON said that EPA acknowledged the error, prepared a modification to the permit to correct the error. However, for reasons he didn't understand, the EPA never implemented the modification.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER remarked that it may be time to talk to attorneys.

MR. EASTON indicated that the city has an attorney.

[8:30:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER inquired as to the prospects of settling this issue with EPA in conditions favorable to the city and state.

8:30:53 AM

CAMERON LEONARD, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Natural Resources Section, Civil Division (Fairbanks), Department of Law, noted that he has been involved in a number of the settlement discussions, which have been dragging on for a number of months. At this point, he said he didn't hold much hope that the settlement discussions are going to bear fruit. Although the EPA and DOJ seem quite far from the City of Unalaska in terms of settlement, discussions are still occurring so there is still some hope.

8:31:31 AM

CHAIR MUNOZ recalled testimony that indicated that the City of Unalaska is working with the congressional delegation on a legislative fix. She asked if Mr. Leonard knew what the fix is.

MR. LEONARD responded that he isn't familiar with what kind of legislative fix is being discussed, although he could imagine legislative fixes that would address the problem.

8:32:05 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked if the witnesses are present simply to make the committee aware of the issue or do they desire some particular action be taken by the legislature.

MR. EASTON said that he was asked to be present today.

MR. HLADICK clarified that he is here to let everyone know what's going on and seeking funding for it. Furthermore, he said he's present to notify other communities and alert them to the possible ramifications. He reminded the committee that it's already very expensive to live in the City of Unalaska and now the sewer bill is going to increase from \$50 per month to over \$125 per month. Moreover, the residents of the City of Unalaska will face an increase in their water bill because of the required construction of a \$9.5 million plant, although it has some of the cleanest water in the state. The residents will also face an increase in their landfill bills. Mr. Hladick pointed out that the funds that should be used to build the

infrastructure of the fishing industry are being diverted to meet EPA regulations.

[8:34:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON informed the committee that primary treatment essentially means an open lagoon that is aerated without mechanical devices and the water is discharged into the environment. Any treatment beyond primary requires the use of mechanical systems, which is costly. Representative Herron opined that the EPA is involved because U.S. Fish & Wildlife wouldn't let the EPA approve the modification due to the impact on the Steller's Eiders. He related his fear that the EPA, for other communities such as Bethel, may not allow discharge into the Kuskokwim River until a sludge plant is installed. He questioned what would happen during the time in which the sludge plant is completed. Therefore, he charged that the legislature is going to face a very large bill to have safe water.

[8:36:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked if perhaps the size of the City of Unalaska may have captured EPA's attention whereas the size of other communities may not.

MR. HLADICK said that it's possible, but pointed out that the population of Unalaska is 3,500 while the population of Bethel is 7,000. He emphasized that what was a village in 1979 has changed. In further response to Representative Cissna, Mr. Hladick confirmed that the industry is hooked into the City of Unalaska's wastewater treatment system and thus it pays for wastewater services the city provides.

[8:38:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER said that this discussion has been a real eye opener for him. He noted that he has 13 communities on the list [of communities with waivers]. He expressed concern with placing extra costs of communities in which the average income is at the poverty line, particularly when high energy costs are already an issue. He offered to help with this issue.

[8:39:07 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ requested how the earlier mentioned congressional fix might help the City of Unalaska.

MR. HLADICK clarified that it won't impact the City of Unalaska in terms of being required to go to advanced primary treatment. However, adding language in the regulations regarding not going to secondary treatment may be something in which DEC should be involved as it adds another layer of protection for the other 76 villages.

[8:40:05 AM](#)

MARK LYNCH, City Manager, City of Cordova, related that although Cordova is not on the list, it has a problem. He informed the committee that he was notified December 2009 that the City of Cordova was required to have secondary treatment on its water supply. The initial estimates for the water treatment work in Cordova were in the \$5-\$10 million range or higher. Within the last couple of months, he said that he became aware of Cordova's situation with its wastewater treatment plant. The City of Cordova's permit expired about four years ago and the city had been in the process of getting the permit renewed. A couple of months ago, DEC decided to work on the permit and reviewed the records and the wastewater treatment plant. The DEC informed the City of Cordova that it was in violation 145 times, the primary reason he has determined is that in mid 2000 the parts per million the City of Cordova was allowed to discharge was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000. He questioned whether there was an error in the calculation for Cordova's mixing zone, and therefore CH2MHill has been asked to verify the calculations. Regardless, it's a cost to Cordova.

MR. LYNCH then turned his comments to what he called common sense and impact on the citizens. He informed the committee that EPA passed the LT2 rule regarding drinking water and cryptosporidium; it was implemented nationwide without consideration to communities. He related that the City of Cordova doesn't have cryptosporidium and because of the way the water source works, it's very unlikely Cordova would ever have cryptosporidium. The local health nurse and hospital have no record on file of there ever being an illness caused by cryptosporidium. However, the LT2 rule will require the installation of a water treatment plant for cryptosporidium at a cost of about \$10 million, which would result in charges to residents for water to increase to \$120-\$150 per month. Wastewater treatment is also of concern due to the violations cited. Since Cordova isn't included in the list of communities with waivers, he predicted that Cordova will be told that it needs to go to secondary treatment, which engineers estimate will be \$10 million. With the aforementioned upgrades, citizens

would face \$250-\$300 per month for water and sewer treatment. The City of Cordova has about 2,000 residents with 700 households. He noted that he has found that there are very few grants available for these upgrades; rather most of these types of upgrades are done through low interest loans. Therefore, the entire cost of these upgrades would be borne by the residents. He charged that the City of Cordova doesn't need the water treatment [upgrade to secondary treatment], and furthermore the citizens can't afford the cost of these upgrades. He, too, echoed the point that the funds used for these water and sewer upgrades could be used for economic development and other infrastructure in the community.

[8:46:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA recalled living in Kodiak. She expressed interest in understanding the cost factor better while paying attention to safe water. He inquired as to the history of DCCED and DEC with regard to this issue across the state.

[8:48:13 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ surmised that Representative Cissna was interested in the potential impacts on all 76 communities.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA indicated that to be of interest as well as obtaining a good understanding of the state's responsibilities as well. She reminded members that Alaska is somewhere in the 70th percentile for safe water while the remainder of the U.S. is in the 99th percentile. Alaska is trying to catch up with the nation in terms of having safe communities and providing healthy environments. At the same time, the costs are mammoth. She expressed interest in having a background understanding.

[8:49:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DICK questioned how many other communities have similar concerns to those of Unalaska, but have been unable to get attention.

[8:49:58 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ related her desire to work on a draft letter from the committee and possibly a resolution that would go to EPA and Alaska's congressional delegation.

[8:50:32 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:50 a.m. to 8:56 a.m.

HB 130-RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

[8:56:30 AM](#)

CHAIR MUNOZ announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 130, "An Act relating to municipal building code requirements for fire sprinkler systems in certain residential buildings; and providing for an effective date."

[8:56:36 AM](#)

ROB EARL, Staff, Representative Bob Herron, Alaska State Legislature, speaking on behalf of the sponsor, related that the purpose of HB 130 is to require an expanded public process for ordinances that mandate fire sprinklers in all new construction. The parties interested in this legislation fall into two groups. The Alaska State Homebuilders Association and the Alaska Association of Realtors are concerned that a blanket mandate for sprinklers would raise the cost of homes considerably. The other side of the issue is the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, which promotes expanded installation of fire sprinklers. He reminded the committee that last year the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee was instrumental in facilitating a compromise between the aforementioned groups regarding similar legislation to HB 130. The compromise is embodied in HB 130. Mr. Earl said that he knows of no opposition to HB 130, which is neither pro nor anti fire sprinkler installation and doesn't prohibit Alaskans from choosing to install such systems. He explained that HB 130 says a municipality may not adopt an ordinance to require a sprinkler system in all new residential buildings with one or two dwelling units, unless the municipality does the following: complies with the municipal ordinance requirements already in statute; publishes a summary of the ordinance and the time and place of each public hearing at least 30 days prior to the first public hearing of the ordinance; and schedules at least three public hearings to be held between a 60-180 day period on the proposed ordinance. Mr. Earl related that the sponsor believes that the decision about sprinkler systems being required in homes is appropriate to be decided at the local level, although it deserves a more robust public hearing process.

[8:59:38 AM](#)

JEFF TUCKER, President, Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, thanked the sponsor and his staff for the work they did on HB 130. He then related that the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association does not oppose HB 130 as currently written.

[9:00:24 AM](#)

PAUL MICHELSON, Co-Chair, Alaska State Homebuilders Association Legislative Committee, Alaska State Homebuilders Association, related support for HB 130, which he characterized as a workable agreement. He opined that HB 130 will provide each individual jurisdiction notice of proposed changes and provide time to weigh-in on the matter. He encouraged the committee to pass HB 130.

[9:01:36 AM](#)

ERROL CHAMPION, Alaska Board of Realtors, began by stating that the reasons the Alaska Board of Realtors spoke in support of similar legislation last year are still valid. He expressed the need to keep the costs of acquiring homes in Alaska as inexpensive as possible, which HB 130 will go a long way toward. Therefore, he urged the committee to adopt HB 130.

[9:02:37 AM](#)

WALLY SMITH, Member, Alaska State Homebuilders Association; Interior Alaska Building Association, echoed Mr. Michelson's statements and related support for HB 130.

[9:03:16 AM](#)

DARRELL BOURNE, President, Interior Alaska Builders Association; Member of the Alaska State Homebuilders Association, related his support for HB 130.

[9:03:44 AM](#)

ALAN WILSON, Co-Chair, Alaska State Homebuilders Association Legislative Committee, Alaska State Homebuilders Association, testified in support of HB 130. However, he related his personal concerns regarding the cost of housing throughout the state. The legislation allows each municipality to have a hand in its own future. Since a mandatory residential fire sprinkler ordinance would be a significant change, the mandatory three public hearings are critical, he opined.

[9:04:51 AM](#)

GLEND A FEEKEN, Alaska Association of Realtors, related strong support for HB 130. She stated that realtors encourage affordable housing. A mandatory residential fire sprinkler ordinance would cause a dramatic increase in construction, maintenance, resale, and insurance costs. Therefore, those who would be impacted by this should be advised of the incredible burden it will place on them and have input before its adoption.

[9:05:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER recalled that last year the legislation that evolved to what HB 130 is received a letter of support from the Municipality of Anchorage.

MR. EARL confirmed that was the case.

[9:06:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER inquired as to estimates regarding how much a sprinkler system will add to the cost of an average size home.

MR. EARL related that he has heard an estimate that sprinkler systems add \$3-\$5 per square foot to the cost of an average size home.

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER surmised then that a sprinkler system in a 1,500 square foot home would result in an additional \$4,500 cost.

[9:07:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER moved to report HB 130 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

[9:08:11 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.