

S C R

15



Alaska State Legislature

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POSITION PAPER
SCR 15

NIKISKI HYDROGEOLOGICAL SURVEY

While considerable progress has been made during the past year to identify and begin cleaning up hazardous waste sites on the Kenai Peninsula, there is still considerable concern among residents of the Kenai/Nikiski area that pollutants from the Kenai industrial complex may potentially contaminate the local water supply. In order to monitor water quality on an on-going basis, the Division of Geologic and Geophysical Surveys of DNR has proposed to initiate a comprehensive groundwater survey of the North Kenai Peninsula area to better understand and manage the area's water resources.

This study would provide valuable information regarding the location, quality and flow patterns of groundwater on the North Kenai Peninsula; information which is necessary for the continued protection of the communities' water supplies as well as the planning and siting of future industrial activities and waste disposal areas. Since good management of groundwater resources includes providing water for a variety of uses, it is necessary to know as much about the resource as possible.

The Division of Geologic and Geophysical Surveys has developed an outline for conducting a comprehensive study for the Kenai-Nikiski area which includes: reviewing existing groundwater data; collecting information on current water quality from existing monitoring wells; mapping underground water deposits; developing flow maps to chart water flow patterns; and monitoring changes in ground-water levels, quality and usage over time.

SCR 15 requests the Governor to direct the Division of Geologic and Geophysical Surveys to conduct a North Kenai Peninsula hydrogeologic study to insure clean water supplies for area residents and assist in site planning for future industrial projects.

Senate District E

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Hydrogeologists lack money, staff for Nikiski groundwater study

By **BEN SWAN**
Staff Writer

State water geologists have begun preliminary work on a groundwater survey of the Nikiski area but stressed any results may be long in coming without sufficient money or staff.

"The fact that we're here today means that we've started something," said Jim Munter, head hydrogeologist with the division of geological and geophysical surveys. The division is part of the state Department of Natural Resources. Munter spoke at the North Kenai Chamber of Commerce weekly luncheon Thursday in Nikiski about the process of a comprehensive groundwater survey.

Bill Long, the division's chief of water resources, prefaced Munter's talk with colorful facts about the division's limitations.

"We're a small department with a small

budget," Long said. "We have 39 projects statewide and four of those projects are on the Kenai Peninsula. We understand you're concerned about groundwater and will try to integrate a program as far as funds are allowed."

Munter told the group that without additional funding any study would be slow. He also said the upcoming fiscal year did not indicate any study for the area.

"If there's going to be money from the state, it'll have to come from the Legislature," Munter said.

The division's interest in a groundwater survey stems from a petition coordinated by Nikiski resident Gary Superman. Superman gathered more than 250 signatures after it was determined that a Nikiski well was contaminated with tetrachloroethylene, an ingredient found in solvent, degreaser and dry

cleaning fluid.

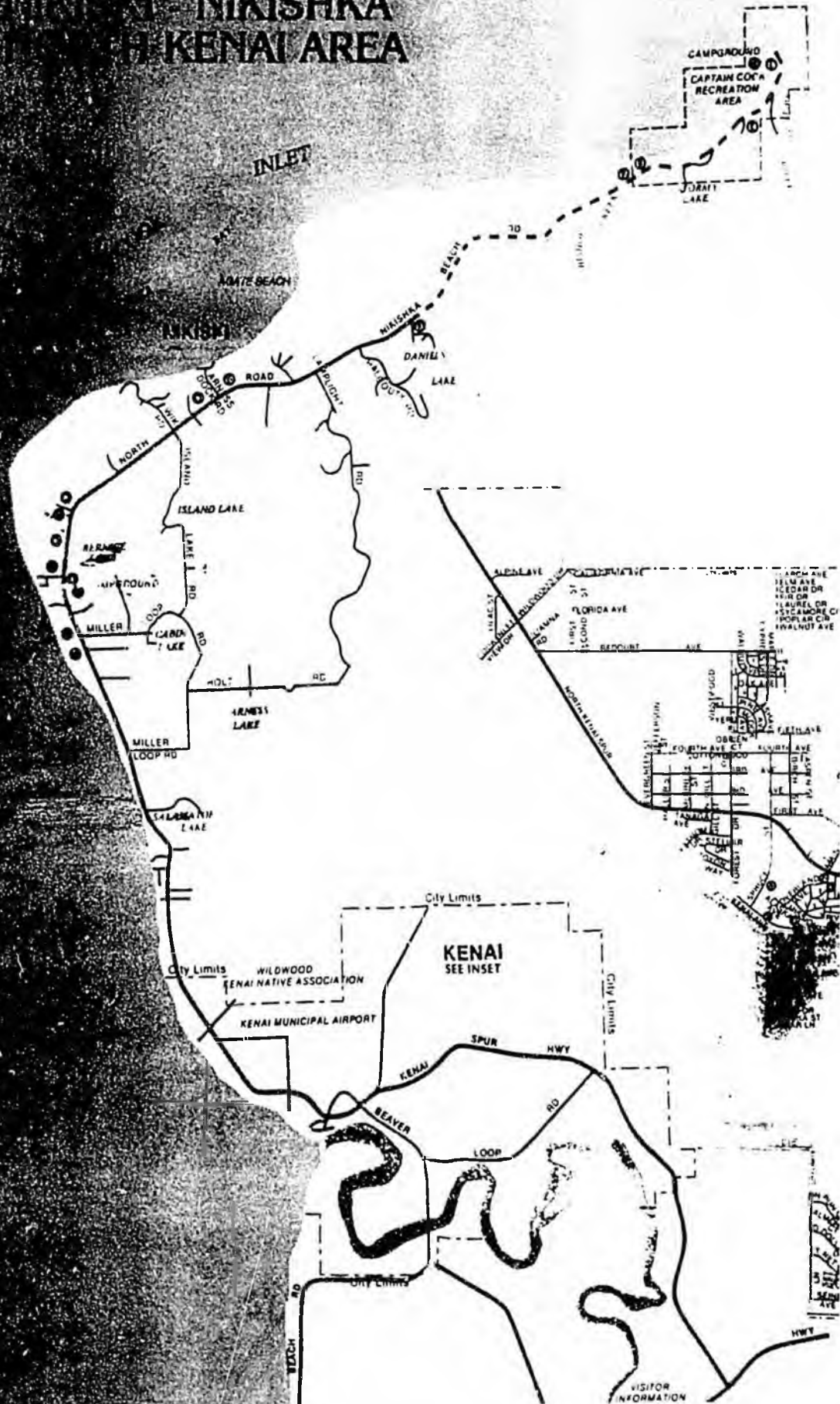
The petition requested a comprehensive groundwater survey on the Nikiski industrial complex and the surrounding area, Superman said. Water flow, water quality, soil identification of upper confining levels and the depths of the aquifer levels — the region under the ground that contains water — would be examined in the survey.

In a teleconference last week, hydrogeologists were asked to come to Nikiski and speak about the logistics of a comprehensive survey, Superman said.

"The timing for the petition was very good," Munter said. "It was a good thing to get us started (on a survey) because we don't just go into an area and tell the people a survey needs to be done."

Although a study has not been initiated, Munter said he was in Nikiski to solicit input and gather feedback from people about the water evaluation. He said any survey conducted should be done from the long-term perspective that the Nikiski groundwater would be the primary water source for years to come.

NIKISHKA NIKISHKA NORTH KENAI AREA



FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____ Agency Affected: Environmental Conservation
 Title: Relating to hydrogeological survey BRU: Environmental Quality
on the Kenai Peninsula
 Sponsor: Senator Szymanski and Senator Components: _____
 Requestor: Senator Szymanski Kerttula

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
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REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS: None

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

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 Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 10 February 1989
 Approved by Commissioner: *CD/Kyle* Date: 2/10/89
 Agency: Department of Environmental Conservation

Distribution (by preparer):
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AEL ISSUES PAPER - SCR 15 CENTRAL KENAI HYDROGEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The Alaska Environmental Lobby is strongly in favor of a comprehensive ground-water study on the Kenai Peninsula, as proposed in Senate Concurrent Resolution 15.

The groundwater in the Kenai/Nikiski area is at high risk of contamination because of extensive industrial and waste disposal activity. In its 1987 investigation of the extent of ground-water contamination in Alaska, the Division of Geological and Geophysical surveys found that "the major sites of potential contamination in Alaska are petroleum-product storage and transportation facilities, historic oil spills, hazardous-waste disposal areas, waste-water discharge lands, landfills and dumps, and coastal areas with relatively large rates of ground-water extraction." Many of these criteria describe the situation on the Kenai.

The report continues on to cite a study done in 1986, which noted that "estimates of the quantity of hazardous waste generated in Alaska are about twice as large as estimates of quantities disposed of annually." This comment, and the fact that little is currently known about the basic dynamics of water flow patterns on the Kenai, highlight the need for study in the region.

At this point in time, the probability that contamination of one well will spread to other areas is unknown. But because of the great amount of water that is used on the Kenai (Nikiski uses several million gallons of water each day), the consequences of contamination or of a change in the center of pumping are potentially far-reaching.

The Environmental Lobby agrees that the non-regulatory nature of the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys is appropriate to the need for data collection and research on the Kenai Peninsula. A basic pool of knowledge will provide citizens, industry, and regulatory agencies such as the Department of Environmental Conservation with a foundation from which to make decisions.

A comprehensive ground-water study such as the one proposed will be invaluable for both short and long-term use. We believe it will also fulfill the responsibility of the state to "control water, land and air pollution in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state." (AK Statute 46.03.010)

Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee
February 21, 1989

Karen Wood

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