

HB

531

SFIN

FILE

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORTED OUT
MAY 05 2004
SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE

DATE: 5/5/04

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 5 May 2004

Finance Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 531(FIN) am

HB 531 CONVENTIONAL & NONCONVENTIONAL GAS LEASES

"An Act relating to natural gas exploration and development and to nonconventional gas, and amending the section under which shallow natural gas leases may be issued; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with S CS CS HB 531 (FIN)
- adopt previous _____ CS CS forthcoming (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:
 Same Title
 New Title

House Bill:
 Same Title
 Technical Title Change
 New Title w/ SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero.	FN#

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
DNR	4/29/04	2526			#2
Admin	5/5/04	20.0			#3

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	No REC	AMEND
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REPORTED OUT

MAY 05 2004

SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: B
Bill Version: SCS CSHB 531(RES)
(S) Publish Date: 5/5/04

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Administration
Title: Shallow Natural Gas RDU: Oil & Gas Conservation Commission
Component: Oil & Gas Conservation Commission
Sponsor: House Resources Committee
Requester: Sen. Resources Component No.: 2010

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual	20.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	20.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1162 AOGCC Receipts	20.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
TOTAL	20.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2005 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
\$20.0 for hydrology training and contractual costs.

Prepared by: John Norman, Chair Phone: _____
Division: Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Date/Time: 5/5/04 7:44 AM
Approved by: Ray Matlashowski, Commissioner Date: 5/5/2004
Agency: Department of Administration

REPORTED OUT
MAY 05 2004
SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
Bill Version: CSHB 531(FIN)
(H) Publish Date: 4/30/04

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): 4/29/2004 Dept. Affected: Natural Resources
Title: Conventional & Non-conventional Gas Leasing RDU: Resource Development
Component: Oil and Gas Development
Sponsor: House Resources
Requester: House Rules Component No. 439

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services	80.0					
Travel	4.0					
Contractual	165.5					
Supplies	3.1					
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	252.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	**Indeterminate Amount**					
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	252.6					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	252.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2005 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary	1					

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
This bill would eliminate the current over-the-counter shallow natural gas program. HB 531 would create a new gas only option under the competitive leasing and exploration licensing programs.

**Indeterminate positive revenue: Moving from an over-the-counter program to a competitive program will result in increased revenue to the state. The commissioner will be able to set minimum rentals and bonus bid amounts based on technical analysis of the potential resources and economics of the lease or license area. While a best interest finding process will cost more up front, that cost will be more than offset by the gains in going to a competitive process. Also, having a best interest finding process at the leasing and licensing stage will facilitate a more efficient progression to exploration and development and provide the state with royalties and other revenues from development sooner.

Prepared by: Mark D. Myers Phone 269-8800
Division: Oil and Gas Date/Time 4/29/04
Approved by: Thomas Irwin, Commissioner Date 4/29/04
Agency: Natural Resources

FISCAL NOTE #2

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB 531(FIN)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Section 60 would allow all pending shallow natural gas applicants a one-time opportunity to convert to a noncompetitive exploration license application upon payment of an application fee of \$1 per acre and with a 3-year work commitment equal to \$3 per acre. This section would also require DNR to conduct a best interest finding process prior to issuing the license.

In order to convert pending shallow natural gas applications to exploration licenses, DNR would need to simultaneously work on at least three additional best interest findings. In order to do so, it will be necessary to add one additional temporary best interest finding writer and contract out major portions of at least three findings. DNR anticipates after completing these findings that additional funding will not be needed.

DNR anticipates that there would be three separate best interest findings to cover conversion of the shallow natural gas applications to exploration licenses.

Expenditures:

Natural Resource Sp. III (\$80,000 Personal Services, \$4,300 Contractual, \$3,000 Supplies).

Travel for public hearings: \$4,000.

Outside Contracts for portions of three best interest findings: \$150,000

Expenses Associated with public notice and printing best interest findings:

Printing findings: \$1,400

Postage \$1,600

Envelopes: \$69

Public Notice (legal ads and display ads): \$8,231

(The Anchorage Daily News has general circulation in all areas of the state. The cost for a legal notice in the Anchorage Daily News is \$404 per day (weekday). $9 \times \$404 = \$3,636$. Publication cost in a local paper is estimated at \$225. $9 \times \$225 = \$2,025$.

Display ad in the Anchorage Daily News = $\$614.70 \times 3 = \$1,844.10$. Display ad in a local paper = $\$242.00 \times 3 = \726)

AMENDMENT

by Sen. GREEN

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

TO: SC CSHB 531(RES)

1 Page 20, line 10:

2 Delete "AS 38.05.180(ff)(4)"

3 Insert "AS 38.05.180(ff)(3)"

4

5 Page 40, lines 6 - 12:

6 Delete all material.

7

8 Renumber the following paragraph accordingly.

9

10 Page 40, line 18:

11 Delete "Before"

12 Insert "For an activity or operation related to the extraction of coal bed methane,

13 (1) for which the department by regulation requires submission and
14 approval of a plan of operations before activities or operations may be undertaken, the
15 director shall, as a condition for determining a bond requested under AS 38.05.130,
16 after notice and an opportunity to be heard, review the plan of operations to determine
17 if use of the owner's land is reasonably necessary to extract the coal bed methane; a
18 bond determined under AS 38.05.130 and this paragraph may, at the discretion of the
19 director, be imposed against a statewide bond that has been posted by the person
20 initiating the request for determination of the bond if the statewide bond remains in
21 effect, and an additional bond is not required;

22 (2) before"

23

1 Page 40, line 21:

2 Delete "(1)"

3 Insert "(A)"

4

5 Page 40, line 22:

6 Delete "paragraph"

7 Insert "subparagraph"

8

9 Page 40, line 25:

10 Delete "(2)"

11 Insert "(B)"

12

13 Page 40, line 27:

14 Delete "paragraph"

15 Insert "subparagraph"

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
5/5/2004 COMMITTEE ACTION

Bill Number	HB 531		
Amendment	#1		
Motion	sbbpt		
<u>Motion by</u>	Green		
<u>Objection by</u>	Wilken		
<u>Removed</u>	✓		
<u>Second Objection by</u>			
<u>Committee Member</u>	Y	<u>Vote</u>	N
Senator Bunde			
Senator Dyson			
Senator Hoffman			
Senator Olson			
Senator Stevens			
Co-Chair Green			
Co-Chair Wilken			
<u>Tally</u>			
Yea			
Nay			
Absent			
<u>MOTION</u>	Pass		



Alaska State Senate

Senate Finance Committee

Official Business

Mail Stop 3100
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: 5 May 2004 TIME: 5:35 pm

TO: Legal Services

NUMBER OF PAGES, INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 1

FROM: MINDY ROWLAND
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE SECRETARY
PHONE: 465-4935
FAX: 465-2187

NOTES: Final Please

SCS CS HB 531 (FIN)

23-LS1818 \ C

Plus 1 amendment: \ C.2

Thanks

Mandy Shelf &
Kelly
Jane

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 531(FIN)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to natural gas exploration and development and to nonconventional**
2 **gas, and amending the section under which shallow natural gas leases may be issued;**
3 **and providing for an effective date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 *** Section 1. AS 14.40.365(a) is amended to read:**

6 (a) The University of Alaska may select and is entitled to receive the
7 conveyance of not less than 250,000 and not more than 260,000 acres of land
8 conveyed to the state under sec. 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72
9 Stat. 339). The Board of Regents of the University of Alaska shall periodically submit
10 a list of selections to the commissioner of natural resources and, if the list of selections
11 contains land within the boundaries of a municipality, the Board of Regents of the
12 University of Alaska shall submit the list to the municipality. The Board of Regents
13 and the commissioner of natural resources shall periodically and jointly submit to the
14 legislature, within 30 days of the beginning of a regular legislative session, a list of the

1 selections of land proposed to be conveyed by the state to the University of Alaska
2 under this section. If the list submitted to the legislature contains land within the
3 boundaries of a municipality, the Board of Regents and the commissioner of natural
4 resources shall provide a copy of the list to the municipality. Each list must contain
5 not more than 25 percent of the total acres of land to which the university is entitled
6 after subtracting previous conveyances under this section, but not less than 25,000
7 acres or the remaining entitlement under this section, whichever is less. A list of
8 selections submitted shall be considered approved for conveyance to the University of
9 Alaska unless the legislature acts to disapprove the list during the legislative session
10 during which the list was submitted. If the amount of land to be conveyed exceeds the
11 balance due the university under this section, the university shall set out the land to be
12 conveyed in priority order. Land may not be selected if, on the date of its selection by
13 the university, it

14 (1) is identified in AS 16.20, AS 41.15.300 - 41.15.330, or AS 41.21 or
15 has been reserved by law from the public domain;

16 (2) is located within a municipality unless the land is vacant,
17 unappropriated, unreserved land; if land included on the list of selections is selected
18 by the municipality with remaining selection rights under AS 29.65 within 120 days of
19 receiving the Board of Regents' list of selections under this subsection, the university
20 may not select the land unless a binding agreement between the university and the
21 municipality is negotiated to allow the selection; if the municipal selection is
22 disapproved, in whole or in part, the university may select the land, or any available
23 portion of the land, and that selection will relate back to the date of the Board of
24 Regents' list of selections under this subsection and shall have priority over all other
25 selections or claims made subsequent to that notice; in this paragraph, "vacant,
26 unappropriated, unreserved land" has the meaning given in AS 29.65.130;

27 (3) is land

28 (A) included in a five-year proposed [OIL AND GAS] leasing
29 program under AS 38.05.180(b); or

30 (B) leased under, or for which a lease application is pending
31 under, AS 38.05.180(d) or 38.05.150;

1 (4) is subject to

2 (A) an oil, gas, or coal lease, or coal prospecting permit;

3 (B) a mining claim, offshore prospecting permit, a prospecting
4 site, an upland mining lease, or a mining leasehold location;

5 (5) is necessary to carry out the purpose of an interagency land
6 management agreement; or

7 (6) is subject to conveyance under a land exchange or land settlement
8 agreement.

9 * Sec. 2. AS 14.40.365(e) is amended to read:

10 (e) The list of selections of land submitted to the legislature may not include a
11 land selection made by the University of Alaska under this section if the commissioner
12 of natural resources determines in writing that the proposed selection

13 (1) includes land that the commissioner, in consultation with the
14 commissioner of fish and game, determines has demonstrated value to the public as a
15 habitat area that is especially critical to the perpetuation of fish or wildlife;

16 (2) includes land for which, at the time of its selection under this
17 section, a municipality has made a selection under AS 29.65 unless the land selection
18 is, at a later date, rejected by the commissioner of natural resources or relinquished by
19 the municipality;

20 (3) includes land that the commissioner reasonably believes may be
21 selected by a newly formed municipality under AS 29.65.030, but the commissioner
22 may not withhold selection under this paragraph for more than three years after the
23 municipality's incorporation;

24 (4) includes land within the boundaries of a municipality, the
25 municipality has a remaining entitlement under AS 29.65, and the municipality selects
26 the land under AS 29.65 within 120 days after receipt by the municipality of the Board
27 of Regents' list of selections under (a) of this section;

28 (5) includes land that, at the time of its selection under this section,

29 (A) is subject to an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license
30 issued under AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134; or

31 (B) the commissioner reasonably believes will be made part of

1 an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license issued under AS 38.05.131 -
 2 38.05.134; the commissioner may not refuse to convey title to land to the
 3 University of Alaska under this subparagraph for more than two years after its
 4 first selection by the University of Alaska; or

5 (6) includes land the commissioner of natural resources reasonably
 6 believes would not be in the best interests of the state to convey outside of state
 7 ownership.

8 * **Sec. 3.** AS 19.40.200(b) is amended to read:

9 (b) The prohibition on disposal of state land under (a) of this section does not
 10 apply to a disposal

11 (1) to a licensed public utility or a licensed common carrier under
 12 AS 38.05.810(e);

13 (2) for the reauthorization of leases that were in effect on January 1,
 14 1994, for nonresidential purposes within the following development nodes:

15 (A) Coldfoot:

16 Township 28 North, Range 12 West, Fairbanks Meridian

17 Sections 3 - 4

18 Sections 9 - 10

19 Sections 15 - 16

20 Sections 20 - 22

21 (B) Yukon River Crossing:

22 Township 12 North, Range 10 West, Fairbanks Meridian

23 Sections 6 - 7

24 Township 12 North, Range 11 West, Fairbanks Meridian

25 Sections 1 - 2

26 Section 12

27 Township 13 North, Range 10 West, Fairbanks Meridian

28 Sections 29 - 32

29 Township 13 North, Range 11 West, Fairbanks Meridian

30 Section 22

31 Sections 25 - 27

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Sections 34 - 36

(3) for nonresidential development within the following development

nodes:

(A) Deadhorse:

Township 10 North, Range 14 East, Umiat Meridian

Township 10 North, Range 15 East, Umiat Meridian

Section 8

Sections 17 - 20

Section 30

(B) Coldfoot:

Township 28 North, Range 12 West, Fairbanks Meridian

Sections 3 - 4

Sections 9 - 10

Sections 15 - 16

Sections 20 - 22

Township 29 North, Range 12 West, Fairbanks Meridian

Sections 23 - 27

Sections 34 - 35

(C) Franklin Bluffs:

Township 4 North, Range 14 East, Umiat Meridian

Sections 3 - 4

Sections 9 - 10

Sections 15 - 16

(D) Happy Valley:

Township 3 South, Range 14 East, Umiat Meridian

Sections 19 - 20

Sections 29 - 30

(E) Yukon River Crossing:

Township 12 North, Range 10 West, Fairbanks Meridian

Sections 6 - 7

Township 12 North, Range 11 West, Fairbanks Meridian

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Sections 1 - 2

Section 12

Township 13 North, Range 10 West, Fairbanks Meridian

Sections 29 - 32

Township 13 North, Range 11 West, Fairbanks Meridian

Section 22

Sections 25 - 27

Sections 34 - 36; or

(4) necessary for

(A) an oil and gas lease or gas only lease under AS 38.05.180;

(B) exploration, development, production, or transportation of oil and gas north of 68 degrees north latitude; or

(C) a state lease or materials sale for

(i) exploration, development, production, or transportation of oil or [AND] gas;

(ii) reconstruction or maintenance of state highways; or

(iii) construction or maintenance of airports.

* Sec. 4. AS 31.05.030(j) is amended to read:

(j) For exploration and development operations involving nonconventional gas, the commission

(1) may not

(A) issue a permit to drill under this chapter if the well would be used to produce gas from an aquifer that serves as a source of water for human consumption or agricultural purposes unless the commission determines that the well will not adversely affect the aquifer as a source of water for human consumption or agricultural purposes; or

(B) allow injection of produced water except at depths below known sources of water for human consumption or agricultural purposes;

(2) shall

(A) regulate hydraulic fracturing in nonconventional gas

1 wells to assure protection of drinking water quality;

2 (B) regulate the disposal of wastes produced from the
 3 operations unless the disposal is otherwise subject to regulation by the
 4 Department of Environmental Conservation or the United States
 5 Environmental Protection Agency;

6 (C) for the purposes of AS 46.04.030(b), [THE
 7 COMMISSION SHALL] determine whether a well drilled for
 8 nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas may penetrate a formation
 9 capable of flowing oil and, if so, whether the volume of oil encountered will be
 10 of such quantities that an oil discharge prevention and contingency plan will be
 11 required; and

12 (D) as a condition of approval of a permit to drill a well for
 13 production or production testing of coal bed methane, require the
 14 operator to design and implement a water well testing program to provide
 15 baseline data on water quality and quantity; the commission shall make
 16 the results of the water well testing program available to the public.

17 * Sec. 5. AS 31.05.060(c) is amended to read:

18 (c) Notwithstanding the requirements of (a) and (b) of this section that relate
 19 to fixing a date for a hearing and causing notice of the hearing to be given, for an
 20 action under this chapter that involves the exploration for or development of
 21 nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas and that has application to a single
 22 well or a single field, upon the request of a lessee or operator, the commission may,
 23 where operations might be unduly delayed, approve a variance from the commission's
 24 regulations that apply to the well or field without providing notice and opportunity to
 25 be heard. In the exercise of its authority to issue the variance,

26 (1) the commission may approve the variance if

27 (A) the approval provides at least an equally effective means of
 28 accomplishing the requirement set out in the commission's regulation; or

29 (B) the commission determines that the request is more
 30 appropriate to the proposed operation than compliance with the requirement of
 31 the regulation; and

1 (2) the terms of the approval of the variance may include exempting
 2 the lessee or operator from a requirement of a regulation if the commission determines
 3 that the requirement is not necessary or not suited to the well or field taking into
 4 consideration

5 (A) the nature of the operation involved;

6 (B) the characteristics of the well or field for which the
 7 variance is sought; and

8 (C) the reasonably anticipated risks of the exemption from the
 9 requirement to human safety and the environment.

10 * Sec. 6. AS 31.05.170 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

11 (16) "nonconventional gas" has the meaning given in AS 38.05.965.

12 * Sec. 7. AS 36.30.850(b)(25) is amended to read:

13 (25) acquisition of confidential seismic survey data necessary for pre-
 14 sale oil and gas lease or gas only lease analyses under AS 38.05.180;

15 * Sec. 8. AS 36.30.850(b)(33) is amended to read:

16 (33) contracts between the Department of Natural Resources and
 17 contractors qualified to evaluate hydrocarbon development, production, transportation,
 18 and economics, to assist the commissioner of natural resources in evaluating
 19 applications for [OIL AND GAS] royalty increases or decreases or other [OIL AND
 20 GAS] royalty adjustments, and evaluating the related financial and technical data,
 21 entered into under AS 38.05.180(j);

22 * Sec. 9. AS 38.04.065(i) is amended to read:

23 (i) An oil and gas lease sale or gas only lease sale is not subject to this
 24 section. Oil and gas lease sales and gas only lease sales are subject to the planning
 25 process established under AS 38.05.180.

26 * Sec. 10. AS 38.05.035(e) is amended to read:

27 (e) Upon a written finding that the interests of the state will be best served, the
 28 director may, with the consent of the commissioner, approve contracts for the sale,
 29 lease, or other disposal of available land, resources, property, or interests in them. In
 30 approving a contract under this subsection, the director need only prepare a single
 31 written finding. In addition to the conditions and limitations imposed by law, the

1 director may impose additional conditions or limitations in the contracts as the director
 2 determines, with the consent of the commissioner, will best serve the interests of the
 3 state. The preparation and issuance of the written finding by the director are subject to
 4 the following:

5 (1) with the consent of the commissioner and subject to the director's
 6 discretion, for a specific proposed disposal of available land, resources, or property, or
 7 of an interest in them, the director, in the written finding,

8 (A) shall establish the scope of the administrative review on
 9 which the director's determination is based, and the scope of the written
 10 finding supporting that determination; the scope of the administrative review
 11 and finding may address only reasonably foreseeable, significant effects of the
 12 uses proposed to be authorized by the disposal;

13 (B) may limit the scope of an administrative review and finding
 14 for a proposed disposal to

15 (i) applicable statutes and regulations;

16 (ii) the facts pertaining to the land, resources, or
 17 property, or interest in them, that the director finds are material to the
 18 determination and that are known to the director or knowledge of which
 19 is made available to the director during the administrative review; and

20 (iii) issues that, based on the statutes and regulations
 21 referred to in (i) of this subparagraph, on the facts as described in (ii) of
 22 this subparagraph, and on the nature of the uses sought to be authorized
 23 by the disposal, the director finds are material to the determination of
 24 whether the proposed disposal will best serve the interests of the state;
 25 and

26 (C) may, if the project for which the proposed disposal is
 27 sought is a multiphased development, limit the scope of an administrative
 28 review and finding for the proposed disposal to the applicable statutes and
 29 regulations, facts, and issues identified in (B)(i) - (iii) of this paragraph that
 30 pertain solely to the disposal phase of the project when

31 (i) the only uses to be authorized by the proposed

1 disposal are part of that phase;

2 (ii) the disposal is a [AN OIL AND GAS] disposal of
 3 oil and gas, or of gas only, and, before the next phase of the project
 4 may proceed, public notice and the opportunity to comment are
 5 provided under regulations adopted by the department unless the
 6 project is subject to a consistency review under AS 46.40 and public
 7 notice and the opportunity to comment are provided under
 8 AS 46.40.096(c);

9 (iii) the department's approval is required before the
 10 next phase of the project may proceed; and

11 (iv) the department describes its reasons for a decision
 12 to phase;

13 (2) the director shall discuss in the written finding prepared and issued
 14 under this subsection the reasons that each of the following was not material to the
 15 director's determination that the interests of the state will be best served:

16 (A) facts pertaining to the land, resources, or property, or an
 17 interest in them other than those that the director finds material under (1)(B)(ii)
 18 of this subsection; and

19 (B) issues based on the statutes and regulations referred to in
 20 (1)(B)(i) of this subsection and on the facts described in (1)(B)(ii) of this
 21 subsection;

22 (3) a written finding for an oil and gas lease sale or gas only lease sale
 23 under AS 38.05.180 is subject to (g) of this section;

24 (4) a contract for the sale, lease, or other disposal of available land or
 25 an interest in land is not legally binding on the state until the commissioner approves
 26 the contract, but if the appraised value is not greater than \$50,000 in the case of the
 27 sale of land or an interest in land, or \$5,000 in the case of the annual rental of land or
 28 interest in land, the director may execute the contract without the approval of the
 29 commissioner;

30 (5) public notice requirements relating to the sale, lease, or other
 31 disposal of available land or an interest in land for oil and gas, or for gas only,

1 proposed to be scheduled in the five-year oil and gas leasing program under
2 AS 38.05.180(b), except for a sale under (6)(F) of this subsection, are as follows:

3 (A) before a public hearing, if held, or in any case not less than
4 180 days before the sale, lease, or other disposal of available land or an interest
5 in land, the director shall make available to the public a preliminary written
6 finding that states the scope of the review established under (1)(A) of this
7 subsection and includes the applicable statutes and regulations, the material
8 facts and issues in accordance with (1)(B) of this subsection, and information
9 required by (g) of this section, upon which the determination that the sale,
10 lease, or other disposal will serve the best interests of the state will be based;
11 the director shall provide opportunity for public comment on the preliminary
12 written finding for a period of not less than 60 days;

13 (B) after the public comment period for the preliminary written
14 finding and not less than 90 days before the sale, lease, or other disposal of
15 available land or an interest in land for oil and gas or for gas only, the director
16 shall make available to the public a final written finding that states the scope of
17 the review established under (1)(A) of this subsection and includes the
18 applicable statutes and regulations, the material facts and issues in accordance
19 with (1) of this subsection, and information required by (g) of this section,
20 upon which the determination that the sale, lease, or other disposal will serve
21 the best interests of the state is based;

22 (6) before a public hearing, if held, or in any case not less than 21 days
23 before the sale, lease, or other disposal of available land, property, resources, or
24 interests in them other than a sale, lease, or other disposal of available land or an
25 interest in land for oil and gas or for gas only under (5) of this subsection, the director
26 shall make available to the public a written finding that, in accordance with (1) of this
27 subsection, sets out the material facts and applicable statutes and regulations and any
28 other information required by statute or regulation to be considered upon which the
29 determination that the sale, lease, or other disposal will best serve the interests of the
30 state was based; however, a written finding is not required before the approval of

31 (A) a contract for a negotiated sale authorized under

1 AS 38.05.115;

2 (B) a lease of land for a shore fishery site under AS 38.05.082;

3 (C) a permit or other authorization revocable by the
4 commissioner;

5 (D) a mineral claim located under AS 38.05.195;

6 (E) a mineral lease issued under AS 38.05.205;

7 (F) an exempt oil and gas lease sale or gas only lease sale
8 under AS 38.05.180(d) of acreage subject to a best interest finding issued
9 within the previous 10 years or a reoffer oil and gas lease sale or gas only
10 lease sale under AS 38.05.180(w) of acreage subject to a best interest finding
11 issued within the previous 10 years, unless the commissioner determines that
12 substantial new information has become available that justifies a supplement to
13 the most recent best interest finding for the exempt oil and gas lease sale or
14 gas only lease sale acreage and for the reoffer oil and gas lease sale or gas
15 only lease sale acreage; however, for each oil and gas lease sale or gas only
16 lease sale described in this subparagraph, the director shall call for comments
17 from the public; the director's call for public comments must provide
18 opportunity for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days; if the
19 director determines that a supplement to the most recent best interest finding
20 for the acreage is required under this subparagraph,

21 (i) the director shall issue the supplement to the best
22 interest finding not later than 90 days before the sale;

23 (ii) not later than 45 days before the sale, the director
24 shall issue a notice describing the interests to be offered, the location
25 and time of the sale, and the terms and conditions of the sale; and

26 (iii) the supplement has the status of a final written best
27 interest finding for purposes of (i) and (f) of this section;

28 (G) [A SHALLOW GAS LEASE AUTHORIZED UNDER
29 AS 38.05.177 IN AN AREA FOR WHICH LEASING IS AUTHORIZED
30 UNDER AS 38.05.177;

31 (H)] a surface use lease under AS 38.05.255;

1 (H) [(I)] a permit, right-of-way, or easement under
2 AS 38.05.850;

3 (7) the director shall include in

4 (A) a preliminary written finding, if required, a summary of
5 agency and public comments, if any, obtained as a result of contacts with other
6 agencies concerning a proposed disposal or as a result of informal efforts
7 undertaken by the department to solicit public response to a proposed disposal,
8 and the department's preliminary responses to those comments; and

9 (B) the final written finding a summary of agency and public
10 comments received and the department's responses to those comments.

11 * Sec. 11. AS 38.05.035(g) is amended to read:

12 (g) Notwithstanding (e)(1)(A) and (B) of this section, when the director
13 prepares a written finding required under (e) of this section for an oil and gas lease
14 sale or a gas only lease sale scheduled under AS 38.05.180, the director shall consider
15 and discuss

16 (1) in a preliminary or final written finding facts that are known to the
17 director at the time of preparation of the finding and that are

18 (A) material to issues that were raised during the period
19 allowed for receipt of public comment, whether or not material to a matter set
20 out in (B) of this paragraph, and within the scope of the administrative review
21 established by the director under (e)(1) of this section; or

22 (B) material to the following matters:

23 (i) property descriptions and locations;

24 (ii) the petroleum potential of the sale area, in general
25 terms;

26 (iii) fish and wildlife species and their habitats in the
27 area;

28 (iv) the current and projected uses in the area, including
29 uses and value of fish and wildlife;

30 (v) the governmental powers to regulate the [OIL AND
31 GAS] exploration, development, production, and transportation of oil

and gas or of gas only;

(vi) the reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects of [OIL AND GAS] exploration, development, production, and transportation for oil and gas or for gas only on the sale area, including effects on subsistence uses, fish and wildlife habitat and populations and their uses, and historic and cultural resources;

(vii) lease stipulations and mitigation measures, including any measures to prevent and mitigate releases of oil and hazardous substances, to be included in the leases, and a discussion of the protections offered by these measures;

(viii) the method or methods most likely to be used to transport oil or gas from the lease sale area, and the advantages, disadvantages, and relative risks of each;

(ix) the reasonably foreseeable fiscal effects of the lease sale and the subsequent activity on the state and affected municipalities and communities, including the explicit and implicit subsidies associated with the lease sale, if any;

(x) the reasonably foreseeable effects of [OIL AND GAS] exploration, development, production, and transportation involving oil and gas or gas only on municipalities and communities within or adjacent to the lease sale area; and

(xi) the bidding method or methods adopted by the commissioner under AS 38.05.180; and

(2) the basis for the director's preliminary or final finding, as applicable, that, on balance, leasing the area would be in the state's best interest.

* Sec. 12. AS 38.05.036(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department may conduct audits regarding royalty and net profits under oil and gas contracts, agreements, or leases under this chapter and regarding costs related to [OIL AND GAS] exploration licenses entered into under AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134 and exploration incentive credits under this chapter or under AS 41.09. For purposes of audit under this section,

1 (1) the department may examine the books, papers, records, or
2 memoranda of a person regarding matters related to the audit; and

3 (2) the records and premises where a business is conducted shall be
4 open at all reasonable times for inspection by the department.

5 * Sec. 13. AS 38.05.127(e) is amended to read:

6 (e) The establishment of easements or rights-of-way for oil and gas, gas only,
7 and mineral leases under (a) of this section need not be made until the leases are ready
8 to be developed.

9 * Sec. 14. AS 38.05.131(a) is amended to read:

10 (a) Unless specifically provided otherwise in AS 38.05.132 - 38.05.134, the
11 provisions of AS 38.05.005 - 38.05.037, 38.05.140(f), 38.05.180, 38.05.182 -
12 38.05.184, and 38.05.920 - 38.05.990 apply to the issuance of [OIL AND GAS]
13 exploration licenses and leases for oil and gas, or for gas only, as appropriate,
14 under AS 38.05.132 - 38.05.134.

15 * Sec. 15. AS 38.05.132(a) is amended to read:

16 (a) To encourage exploration for oil and gas on state land, the commissioner
17 may issue [OIL AND GAS] exploration licenses. The commissioner may limit the
18 exploration licenses under AS 38.05.132 - 38.05.134 to exploration for and
19 recovery of gas only. The commissioner may not issue an exploration license on
20 land that is held under an existing coal lease entered into under AS 38.05.150 that
21 has an active permit for exploration or mining unless the licensee under this
22 subsection is also the lessee under AS 38.05.150 of that land.

23 * Sec. 16. AS 38.05.132(b) is amended to read:

24 (b) An [OIL AND GAS] exploration license issued under this section gives
25 the licensee

26 (1) the exclusive right to explore, for a term not to exceed 10 years,
27 [FOR DEPOSITS OF OIL AND GAS] on unleased state land described in the
28 exploration license for deposits of oil and gas, or for deposits of gas only, as
29 appropriate, unless the exploration license is terminated under (d)(1) of this section
30 or the land is earlier relinquished, removed, or deleted under (d)(2) of this section; and

31 (2) unless the exploration license is terminated under (d)(1) of this

1 section, the option to convert the exploration license for all or part of the state land,
 2 except the land that is deleted or removed from the land described in the exploration
 3 license under (d)(2) of this section, into an oil and gas lease, or a gas lease only, as
 4 appropriate, upon fulfillment of the work commitments contained in the exploration
 5 license.

6 * Sec. 17. AS 38.05.132(c) is amended to read:

7 (c) An exploration license awarded under this section

8 (1) is not subject to the acreage limitations imposed by
 9 AS 38.05.140(c) or 38.05.180(m);

10 (2) may cover, subject to the maximum acreage limitation on
 11 exploration licenses by one licensee under AS 38.05.131(e), an area of not less than
 12 10,000 acres and not more than 500,000 acres, that must be reasonably compact and
 13 contiguous;

14 (3) must be conditioned upon an obligation to perform a specified
 15 work commitment, in total for the term of the license, expressed in dollars of direct
 16 exploration expenditures; the specified work commitment

17 (A) may include a provision that adjusts the total amount of
 18 work commitment, expressed in dollars of direct exploration expenditures, to
 19 account for inflation;

20 (B) must include a requirement that the licensee complete at
 21 least 25 percent of the licensee's total specified work commitment by the fourth
 22 anniversary of the effective date of the issuance of the [OIL AND GAS]
 23 exploration license;

24 (4) must be conditioned upon the posting of a bond or other security
 25 acceptable to the commissioner, in favor of the state and subject to the following
 26 requirements:

27 (A) the bond or other security must be renewed annually;

28 (B) the annual bond or other security shall be calculated as the
 29 entire work commitment expressed in dollars, less the cumulative direct
 30 exploration expenditures of the licensee as of the last day of the most recent
 31 project year, divided by the number of years remaining in the term of the

1 exploration license;

2 (5) is subject to an annual review and revocation if the commissioner
3 determines that the licensee has failed to provide or maintain in effect the bond or
4 other security required by (4) of this subsection;

5 (6) must be conditioned upon the licensee's payment to the state of a
6 nonrefundable [OIL AND GAS] exploration license fee of \$1 for each acre of land or
7 fraction of each acre that is subject to the exploration license; and

8 (7) must be conditioned upon an agreement that exploration
9 expenditures are subject to audit by the commissioner.

10 * Sec. 18. AS 38.05.132(f) is amended to read:

11 (f) In this section,

12 (1) "direct exploration expenditure" means cash expenses undertaken
13 in performance of a specified work commitment under the provisions of AS 38.05.131
14 - 38.05.134 and necessarily incurred by the licensee in the permitting, mobilization,
15 conducting, demobilization, and evaluation of geophysical and geological surveys, or
16 the drilling, logging, coring, testing, and evaluation of oil and gas or gas only wells;
17 the term

18 (A) includes direct labor costs, including the cost of benefits,
19 for employees directly associated with the work commitment programs, the
20 cost of renting or leasing equipment from parties not affiliated with the
21 licensee, the reasonable costs of maintaining and operating equipment,
22 payments to consultants and independent contractors not affiliated with the
23 licensee, and costs of materials and supplies;

24 (B) does not include noncash expenses such as depreciation
25 and reserves, interest or other costs of borrowed funds, return on investment,
26 overhead, insurance or bond premiums, or any other expense that is
27 unreasonable or that the licensee has not incurred to satisfy the licensee's work
28 commitment;

29 (2) "work commitment" includes the drilling of one or more
30 exploration wells or the gathering of data from activities described in (1) of this
31 subsection, or both.

1 * Sec. 19. AS 38.05.133(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) The procedures in this section apply to the issuance of an [OIL AND GAS]
3 exploration license under AS 38.05.132.

4 * Sec. 20. AS 38.05.133(f) is amended to read:

5 (f) After considering proposals not rejected under (d) of this section and public
6 comment on those proposals, the commissioner shall issue a written finding
7 addressing all matters set out in AS 38.05.035(e) and (g), except for
8 AS 38.05.035(g)(1)(B)(xi). If the finding concludes that the state's best interests
9 would be served by issuing an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license, the finding must
10 (1) describe the limitations, stipulations, conditions, or changes from the initiating
11 proposal or competing proposals that are required to make the issuance of the
12 exploration license conform to the best interests of the state and (2) if only one
13 proposal was submitted, identify the prospective licensee whom the commissioner
14 finds should be issued the exploration license. The commissioner shall attach to the
15 finding a copy of the exploration license to be issued and the form of lease that will be
16 used for any portion of the exploration license area subsequently converted to a [AN
17 OIL AND GAS] lease under AS 38.05.134.

18 * Sec. 21. AS 38.05.133(h) is amended to read:

19 (h) If competing proposals are submitted, and the commissioner's finding
20 under (f) of this section concludes that an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license should
21 be issued, the commissioner shall issue a request for competitive sealed bids, under
22 procedures adopted by the commissioner by regulation, to determine which
23 prospective licensee should be issued the exploration license. The finding provided to
24 the prospective licensees and the public under (f) of this section must contain notice
25 that (1) the commissioner intends to request competitive sealed bids, (2) a prospective
26 licensee who intends to participate in the bidding must notify the commissioner in
27 writing by the date specified in the notice, and (3) a prospective licensee's notice of
28 intent to participate in the bidding constitutes acceptance of issuance of the
29 exploration license, as limited or conditioned by the terms contained in the finding and
30 by the exploration license to be issued and the form of lease to be used that have been
31 attached to that finding, if the prospective licensee is the successful bidder. The

1 successful bidder is the prospective licensee who submits the highest bid in terms of
2 the minimum work commitment dollar amount.

3 * **Sec. 22.** AS 38.05.134 is amended to read:

4 **Sec. 38.05.134. Conversion to lease.** If the licensee requests and the
5 commissioner determines that the work commitment obligation set out in an [OIL
6 AND GAS] exploration license issued under AS 38.05.132 has been met, the
7 commissioner shall convert to one or more [OIL AND GAS] leases all or part, as the
8 licensee may indicate, of the area described in the exploration license that remains
9 after the relinquishments, removals, or deletions required by AS 38.05.132(d)(2). A
10 lease issued under this section

11 (1) is subject to the acreage limitations imposed by AS 38.05.140(c);

12 (2) is subject to AS 38.05.180(j) - (m), (o) - (u), and (x) - (z);

13 (3) must be conditioned upon a royalty in amount or value of not less
14 than 12.5 percent of production, except that the lessee who, proceeding under
15 AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134, under a lease issued in the Cook Inlet sedimentary basin
16 who is the first to file with the commissioner a nonconfidential sworn statement
17 claiming to be the first to have drilled a well discovering oil or gas in a previously
18 undiscovered oil or gas pool and who is certified by the commissioner within one year
19 of completion of that discovery well to have drilled a well in that pool that is capable
20 of producing in paying quantities shall pay a royalty of five percent on all production
21 of oil or gas from that pool attributable to that lease for a period of 10 years following
22 the date of discovery of that pool, and thereafter the royalty payable on all production
23 of oil or gas from the pool attributable to that lease shall be determined and payable as
24 specified in the lease; the payment of the five percent royalty under this paragraph is
25 authorized only to a holder of a lease who meets the requirements of
26 AS 38.05.180(f)(4);

27 (4) must include an annual rent of \$3 per acre or fraction of an acre
28 initially paid to the state at inception of the lease and payable annually after that until
29 the income to the state from royalty under that lease exceeds the rental income to the
30 state under that lease for that year; and

31 (5) is subject to other conditions and obligations that are specified in

1 the lease.

2 * Sec. 23. AS 38.05.140(a) is amended to read:

3 (a) A person may not take or hold coal leases or permits during the life of coal
4 leases on state land exceeding an aggregate of 92,160 acres, except that a person may
5 apply for coal leases or permits for acreage in addition to 92,160 acres, not exceeding
6 a total of 5,120 additional acres of state land. The additional area applied for shall be
7 in multiples of 40 acres, and the application shall contain a statement that the granting
8 of a lease for additional land is necessary for the person to carry on business
9 economically and is in the public interest. On the filing of the application, except as
10 provided by AS 38.05.180(ff)(3) or 38.05.180(gg) [AS 38.05.177(a)(2)(C)], the coal
11 deposits in the land covered by the application shall be temporarily set aside and
12 withdrawn from all other forms of disposal provided under AS 38.05.135 - 38.05.181.

13 * Sec. 24. AS 38.05.140(f) is amended to read:

14 (f) The submerged and shoreland lying north of 57 degrees, 30 minutes, North
15 [NORTH] latitude and east of 159 degrees, 49 minutes, West [WEST] longitude
16 within the Bristol Bay drainage are designated as the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve.
17 Within the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve, a [NO] surface entry permit to develop an
18 oil or gas lease or an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license under AS 38.05.131 -
19 38.05.134 may not be issued on state owned or controlled land until the legislature by
20 appropriate resolution specifically finds that the entry will not constitute danger to the
21 fishery.

22 * Sec. 25. AS 38.05.150(f) is amended to read:

23 (f) Notwithstanding AS 38.05.132(a), 38.05.180(ff), or 38.05.180(gg)
24 [AS 38.05.177], a lease entered into under this section gives the lessee the right to vent
25 or remove methane and other gas held in association with the coal in the land covered
26 by the lease to ensure safe coal mining operations.

27 * Sec. 26. AS 38.05.177(a) is amended to read:

28 (a) The provisions of this section
29 [(1)] apply to nonconventional gas [, WHETHER METHANE
30 ASSOCIATED WITH AND DERIVED FROM COAL DEPOSITS OR
31 OTHERWISE, FROM A FIELD IF A PART OF THE FIELD IS WITHIN 3,000

Amend
#1

1 FEET OF THE SURFACE; AND

2 (2) DO NOT APPLY TO AUTHORIZE LEASE OF

3 (A) LAND

4 (i) THAT IS SUBJECT TO AN OIL AND GAS
5 EXPLORATION LICENSE OR LEASE ISSUED UNDER
6 AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134; OR

7 (ii) THAT IS LEASED UNDER AS 38.05.180;

8 (B) THE LAND (i) THAT IS PROPOSED TO BE SUBJECT
9 TO AN OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION LICENSE OR LEASE ISSUED
10 UNDER AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134; OR (ii) THAT IS DESCRIBED IN AND
11 PART OF A PROPOSED OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM
12 PREPARED UNDER AS 38.05.180(b); HOWEVER, THE COMMISSIONER
13 MAY WAIVE THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH;

14 (C) THE LAND THAT IS HELD UNDER A COAL LEASE
15 ENTERED INTO UNDER AS 38.05.150, UNLESS THE APPLICANT FOR
16 A SHALLOW NATURAL GAS LEASE IS ALSO THE LESSEE UNDER
17 AS 38.05.150 OF THAT LAND; OR

18 (D) THE VALID EXISTING SELECTIONS OF THE
19 ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY MADE FOR THE
20 PURPOSE OF RECONSTITUTING THE MENTAL HEALTH TRUST
21 ESTABLISHED UNDER THE ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH ENABLING
22 ACT, P.L. 84-830, 70 STAT. 709 (1956), THAT BECOME SUBJECT TO
23 MANAGEMENT UNDER AS 38.05.801, OR OF LAND THAT HAS BEEN
24 DESIGNATED BY LAW FOR OR IS SUBJECT TO DESIGNATION FOR
25 CONVEYANCE TO THE ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST
26 AUTHORITY; HOWEVER, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE
27 ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY, THE
28 COMMISSIONER MAY WAIVE THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS
29 SUBPARAGRAPH].

30 * Sec. 27. AS 38.05.177(d) is amended to read:

31 (d) A lease

1 (1) shall be automatically extended if and for so long thereafter as gas
 2 is produced in paying quantities from the lease and the lessee continues to meet all
 3 requirements of the lease; a [. A] lease issued under this section covering land on
 4 which there is a well capable of producing gas in paying quantities does not expire
 5 because the lessee fails to produce gas unless the lessee is allowed reasonable time to
 6 place the well on a producing status; if [. IF] drilling has commenced on the
 7 expiration date of the primary term of the lease and is continued with reasonable
 8 diligence, including such operations as redrilling, sidetracking, or other means
 9 necessary to reach the originally proposed bottom hole location, the lease is extended
 10 for one year and for so long thereafter as gas is produced in paying quantities; a [. A]
 11 gas lease issued under this section that is subject to termination by reason of cessation
 12 of production does not terminate if, within 90 days after production ceases or a longer
 13 period determined at the discretion of the director, reworking or drilling operations are
 14 commenced on the land under lease and are thereafter conducted with reasonable
 15 diligence during the period of nonproduction; on application by the lessee, the
 16 director may extend the lease issued under this section for a period of not more
 17 than 10 years if the gas produced from the lease is to be used by the lessee solely
 18 for its mining operations;

19 (2) issued under former (c) of this section before January 1, 2004,
 20 may be extended at the discretion of the director; a lease may be extended under
 21 this paragraph [. IN ADDITION,] upon application by the lessee; [,] the director
 22 may once extend the [A] lease [ISSUED UNDER (c) OF THIS SECTION] for a
 23 period of not more than three years; in exercising discretion to extend a lease under
 24 this paragraph, the director may not extend the lease unless the director
 25 considers

26 (A) the extent of the shallow natural gas exploration
 27 activity already conducted on the lease and on adjacent areas;

28 (B) the probability that further shallow natural gas
 29 exploration activity will occur on the lease and will lead to shallow natural
 30 gas development and production; and

31 (C) whether extension of the lease's primary term will

accelerate the eventual production of shallow natural gas from the lease.

* Sec. 28. AS 38.05.177(l) is amended to read:

(l) A lessee holding [OBTAINING] a lease modified under AS 38.05.180(n)(2)(A) [THIS SECTION] may exercise the rights authorized by this section and the lease. The rights granted by the lease must be exercised in a manner that does not unreasonably interfere with eventual development of other mineral deposits on the land leased. However, in a lease entered into under AS 38.05.150 for land that is already subject to a lease covered [LEASED] under this section, coal may not be mined or extracted by the coal lessee from the coal lease without prior agreement with the lessee holding the lease covered [ISSUED] under this section.

* Sec. 29. AS 38.05.180(a) is amended to read:

(a) The legislature finds that

(1) the people of Alaska have an interest in the development of the state's oil and gas resources to

(A) maximize the economic and physical recovery of the resources;

(B) maximize competition among parties seeking to explore and develop the resources;

(C) maximize use of Alaska's human resources in the development of the resources;

(2) it is in the best interests of the state

(A) to encourage an assessment of its oil and gas resources and to allow the maximum flexibility in the methods of issuing leases to

(i) recognize the many varied geographical regions of the state and the different costs of exploring for oil and gas in these regions;

(ii) minimize the adverse impact of exploration, development, production, and transportation activity; and

(B) to offer acreage for oil and gas leases or for gas only leases, specifically including

(i) state acreage that has been the subject of a best

1 interest finding at annual areawide lease sales; and

2 (ii) land in areas that, under (d) of this section, may be
3 leased without having been included in the leasing program prepared
4 and submitted under (b) of this section.

5 * Sec. 30. AS 38.05.180(b) is amended to read:

6 (b) The commissioner shall biennially prepare and, between the first and the
7 15th day of the first regular session of each legislature, notify the legislature of the
8 availability of, a five-year proposed oil and gas leasing program consisting of a
9 schedule of proposed lease sales and specifying as precisely as practicable the location
10 of tracts proposed to be offered for oil and gas leasing or for leasing of gas only
11 during the calendar year in which the proposed program is made available to the
12 legislature and the following four calendar years.

13 * Sec. 31. AS 38.05.180(c) is amended to read:

14 (c) Except as provided in (d) and (w) of this section, an oil and gas lease sale
15 or gas only lease sale may not be held unless it was included in the proposed leasing
16 programs submitted to the legislature during the two calendar years preceding the year
17 in which the sale is held. A lease sale, whether for oil and gas or for gas only, may
18 not be held before the date it is scheduled in the proposed oil and gas leasing program.

19 * Sec. 32. AS 38.05.180(d) is amended to read:

20 (d) The commissioner

21 (1) may annually offer leases for oil and gas or leases for gas only
22 [LEASES] of the acreage described in AS 38.05.035(e)(6)(F);

23 (2) may issue [OIL AND GAS] leases in an area that has not been
24 included in a leasing program prepared, in accordance with (b) of this section, if the
25 land to be leased

26 (A) was previously subject to a valid state oil and gas lease, a
27 valid state gas lease, or a valid federal oil and gas lease;

28 (B) is contiguous to land already under state, federal, or private
29 lease and the commissioner makes a written finding, after hearing, that leasing
30 of the land would result in a substantial probability of early evaluation and
31 development of the land to be leased;

1 (C) is adjacent to land owned or controlled by another party on
 2 which a discovery of commercial quantities of oil or gas has been made, and
 3 the commissioner finds, after hearing, that there is a reasonable probability that
 4 the land to be leased contains oil or gas in communication with the oil or gas
 5 discovered on the land of the other party;

6 (D) is adjacent to land included in the federal five-year Outer
 7 Continental Shelf leasing program under 43 U.S.C. 1344, and the
 8 commissioner makes a written finding, after hearing, that coordinated or
 9 simultaneous leasing with the federal government is in the public interest; or

10 (E) is the subject of an [OIL AND GAS] exploration license
 11 issued under AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134; however, if the license issued was
 12 for exploration for and recovery of gas only, then the lease issued under
 13 this subsection shall be limited to exploration for and recovery of gas only.

14 * Sec. 33. AS 38.05.180(f) is amended to read:

15 (f) Except as provided by AS 38.05.131 - 38.05.134 [AND 38.05.177], the
 16 commissioner may issue oil and gas leases or leases for gas only on state land to the
 17 highest responsible qualified bidder as follows:

18 (1) the commissioner shall issue an oil and gas lease or a gas only
 19 lease, as appropriate, to the successful bidder determined by competitive bidding
 20 under regulations adopted by the commissioner; bidding may be by sealed bid or
 21 according to any other bidding procedure the commissioner determines is in the best
 22 interests of the state;

23 (2) whenever, under any of the leasing methods listed in this
 24 subsection, a royalty share is reserved to the state, it shall be delivered in pipeline
 25 quality and free of all lease or unit expenses, including but not limited to separation,
 26 cleaning, dehydration, gathering, salt water disposal, and preparation for transportation
 27 off the lease or unit area;

28 (3) following a pre-sale analysis, the commissioner may choose at least
 29 one of the following leasing methods:

30 (A) a cash bonus bid with a fixed royalty share reserved to the
 31 state of not less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of production

1 removed or sold from the lease;

2 (B) a cash bonus bid with a fixed royalty share reserved to the
3 state of not less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of the production
4 removed or sold from the lease and a fixed share of the net profit derived from
5 the lease of not less than 30 percent reserved to the state;

6 (C) a fixed cash bonus with a royalty share reserved to the state
7 as the bid variable but no less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of the
8 production removed or sold from the lease;

9 (D) a fixed cash bonus with the share of the net profit derived
10 from the lease reserved to the state as the bid variable;

11 (E) a fixed cash bonus with a fixed royalty share reserved to the
12 state of not less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of the production
13 removed or sold from the lease with the share of the net profit derived from the
14 lease reserved to the state as the bid variable;

15 (F) a cash bonus bid with a fixed royalty share reserved to the
16 state based on a sliding scale according to the volume of production or other
17 factor but in no event less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of the
18 production removed or sold from the lease;

19 (G) a fixed cash bonus with a royalty share reserved to the state
20 based on a sliding scale according to the volume of production or other factor
21 as the bid variable but not less than 12.5 percent in amount or value of the
22 production removed or sold from the lease;

23 (4) notwithstanding a requirement in the leasing method chosen of a
24 minimum fixed royalty share, on and after March 3, 1997, the lessee under a lease
25 issued in the Cook Inlet sedimentary basin who is the first to file with the
26 commissioner a nonconfidential sworn statement claiming to be the first to have
27 drilled a well discovering oil or gas in a previously undiscovered oil or gas pool and
28 who is certified by the commissioner within one year of completion of that discovery
29 well to have drilled a well in that pool that is capable of producing in paying quantities
30 shall pay a royalty of five percent on all production of oil or gas from that pool
31 attributable to that lease for a period of 10 years following the date of discovery of that

1 pool, and thereafter. The royalty payable on all production of oil or gas from the pool
2 attributable to that lease shall be determined and payable as specified in the lease; for
3 purposes of this paragraph, the reduced royalty authorized by this paragraph is subject
4 to the following:

5 (A) only one reduction of royalty authorized by this paragraph
6 may be allowed on each lease that qualifies for reduction of royalty under this
7 paragraph;

8 (B) if, under this paragraph, application is made for a royalty
9 reduction for a lease that was entered into before March 3, 1997, the
10 commissioner may approve the application only if, on that date, the lease was a
11 nonproducing lease that was not committed to a unit approved by the
12 commissioner under (m) of this section, that is not part of a unit under (p) or
13 (q) of this section, and that has not been made part of a unit under AS 31.05;

14 (C) if application for a royalty reduction is made under this
15 paragraph for a lease on which a discovery royalty was claimed or may be
16 claimed under the discovery royalty provisions of former AS 38.05.180(a) in
17 effect before May 6, 1969, the commissioner shall disallow the application
18 under this paragraph unless the applicant waives the right to claim the right to
19 a reduced royalty under the discovery royalty provisions of former
20 AS 38.05.180(a) in effect before May 6, 1969; and

21 (D) the commissioner shall adopt regulations setting out the
22 standards, criteria, and definitions of terms that apply to implement the filing
23 of applications for, and the review and certification of, discovery [OIL AND
24 GAS ROYALTY] certifications under this paragraph;

25 (5) notwithstanding and in lieu of a requirement in the leasing method
26 chosen of a minimum fixed royalty share, or the royalty provision of a lease, for leases
27 unitized as described in (p) of this section, leases subject to an agreement described in
28 (s) or (t) of this section, or interests unitized under AS 31.05, the lessee of all or part of
29 an oil or gas field identified in this section that has been granted approval of a written
30 plan submitted to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission under
31 AS 31.05.030(i) shall, subject to (dd) of this section, pay a royalty of five percent on

1 the first 25,000,000 barrels of oil and the first 35,000,000,000 cubic feet of gas
 2 produced for sale from that field that occurs in the 10 years following the date on
 3 which the production for sale commences; the fields eligible for royalty reduction
 4 under this paragraph, all of which are located within the Cook Inlet sedimentary basin,
 5 were discovered before January 1, 1988, and have been undeveloped or shut in from at
 6 least January 1, 1988, through December 31, 1997, are

- 7 (A) Falls Creek;
- 8 (B) Nicolai Creek;
- 9 (C) North Fork;
- 10 (D) Point Starichkof;
- 11 (E) Redoubt Shoal; and
- 12 (F) West Foreland;

13 (6) notwithstanding and in lieu of a requirement in the leasing method
 14 chosen of a minimum fixed royalty share, or the royalty provision of a lease, for leases
 15 unitized as described in (p) of this section, leases subject to an agreement described in
 16 (s) or (t) of this section, or interests unitized under AS 31.05, the lessee of all or part of
 17 an oil field located offshore in Cook Inlet on which an oil production platform
 18 specified in (A), (C), or (E) of this paragraph operates, or the lessee of all or part of the
 19 field located offshore in Cook Inlet and described in (G) of this paragraph,

20 (A) shall pay a royalty of five percent on oil produced from the
 21 platform if oil production that equaled or exceeded a volume of 1,200 barrels a
 22 day declines to less than that amount for a period of at least one calendar
 23 quarter, as certified by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, for
 24 as long as the volume of oil produced from the platform remains less than
 25 1,200 barrels a day; the provisions of this subparagraph apply to

- 26 (i) Dolly;
- 27 (ii) Grayling;
- 28 (iii) King Salmon;
- 29 (iv) Steelhead; and
- 30 (v) Monopod;

31 (B) shall pay a royalty calculated under this subparagraph if the

1 volume of oil produced from the platform that was certified by the Alaska Oil
2 and Gas Conservation Commission under (A) of this paragraph later increases
3 to 1,200 or more barrels a day and remains at 1,200 or more barrels a day for a
4 period of at least one calendar quarter; until the royalty rate determined under
5 this subparagraph applies, the royalty continues to be calculated under (A) of
6 this paragraph; on and after the first day of the month following the month the
7 increased production exceeds the period specified in this subparagraph, the
8 royalty payable under this subparagraph is

9 (i) for production of at least 1,200 barrels a day but not
10 more than 1,300 barrels a day - seven percent;

11 (ii) for production of more than 1,300 barrels a day but
12 not more than 1,400 barrels a day - 8.5 percent;

13 (iii) for production of more than 1,400 barrels a day but
14 not more than 1,500 barrels a day - 10 percent; and

15 (iv) for production of more than 1,500 barrels a day -
16 12.5 percent;

17 (C) shall pay a royalty of five percent on oil produced from the
18 platform if oil production that equaled or exceeded a volume of 975 barrels a
19 day declines to less than that amount for a period of at least one calendar
20 quarter, as certified by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, for
21 as long as the volume of oil produced from the platform remains less than 975
22 barrels a day; the provisions of this subparagraph apply to

23 (i) Baker;

24 (ii) Dillon;

25 (iii) XTO.A; and

26 (iv) XTO.C;

27 (D) shall pay a royalty calculated under this subparagraph if the
28 volume of oil produced from the platform that was certified by the Alaska Oil
29 and Gas Conservation Commission under (C) of this paragraph later increases
30 to 975 or more barrels a day and remains at 975 or more barrels a day for a
31 period of at least one calendar quarter; until the royalty rate determined under

1 this subparagraph applies, the royalty continues to be calculated under (C) of
2 this paragraph; on and after the first day of the month following the month the
3 increased production exceeds the period specified in this subparagraph, the
4 royalty payable under this subparagraph is

5 (i) for production of at least 975 barrels a day but not
6 more than 1,100 barrels a day - seven percent;

7 (ii) for production of more than 1,100 barrels a day but
8 not more than 1,200 barrels a day - 8.5 percent;

9 (iii) for production of more than 1,200 barrels a day but
10 not more than 1,350 barrels a day - 10 percent; and

11 (iv) for production of more than 1,350 barrels a day -
12 12.5 percent;

13 (E) shall pay a royalty of five percent on oil produced from the
14 platform if oil production that equaled or exceeded a volume of 750 barrels a
15 day declines to less than that amount for a period of at least one calendar
16 quarter, as certified by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, for
17 as long as the volume of oil produced from the platform remains less than 750
18 barrels a day; the provisions of this subparagraph apply to

19 (i) Granite Point;

20 (ii) Anna; and

21 (iii) Bruce;

22 (F) shall pay a royalty calculated under this subparagraph if the
23 volume of oil produced from the platform that was certified by the Alaska Oil
24 and Gas Conservation Commission under (E) of this paragraph later increases
25 to 750 or more barrels a day and remains at 750 or more barrels a day for a
26 period of at least one calendar quarter; until the royalty rate determined under
27 this subparagraph applies, the royalty continues to be calculated under (E) of
28 this paragraph; on and after the first day of the month following the month the
29 increased production exceeds the period specified in this subparagraph, the
30 royalty payable under this subparagraph is

31 (i) for production of at least 750 barrels a day but not

1 more than 850 barrels a day - seven percent;

2 (ii) for production of more than 850 barrels a day but
3 not more than 1,000 barrels a day - 8.5 percent;

4 (iii) for production of more than 1,000 barrels a day but
5 not more than 1,200 barrels a day - 10 percent; and

6 (iv) for production of more than 1,200 barrels a day -
7 12.5 percent;

8 (G) shall pay a royalty of five percent on oil produced from the
9 field if oil production that equaled or exceeded a volume of 750 barrels a day
10 declines to less than that amount for a period of at least one calendar quarter,
11 as certified by the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, for as long
12 as the volume of oil produced from the field remains less than 750 barrels a
13 day; the provisions of this subparagraph apply to the West McArthur River
14 field;

15 (H) shall pay a royalty calculated under this subparagraph if the
16 volume of oil produced from the field that was certified by the Alaska Oil and
17 Gas Conservation Commission under (G) of this paragraph later increases to
18 750 or more barrels a day and remains at 750 or more barrels a day for a period
19 of at least one calendar quarter; until the royalty rate determined under this
20 subparagraph applies, the royalty continues to be calculated under (G) of this
21 paragraph; on and after the first day of the month following the month the
22 increased production exceeds the period specified in this subparagraph, the
23 royalty payable under this subparagraph is

24 (i) for production of at least 750 barrels a day but not
25 more than 850 barrels a day - seven percent;

26 (ii) for production of more than 850 barrels a day but
27 not more than 1,000 barrels a day - 8.5 percent;

28 (iii) for production of more than 1,000 barrels a day but
29 not more than 1,200 barrels a day - 10 percent; and

30 (iv) for production of more than 1,200 barrels a day -
31 12.5 percent; and

1 (I) may obtain the benefits of the royalty adjustments set out in
2 (A) - (H) of this paragraph only if the commissioner determines that the
3 reduction in production from the platform or the field is

4 (i) based on the average daily production during the
5 calendar quarter based on reservoir conditions; and

6 (ii) not the result of short-term production declines due
7 to mechanical or other choke-back factors, temporary shutdowns or
8 decreased production due to environmental or facility constraints, or
9 market conditions.

10 * Sec. 34. AS 38.05.180(h) is amended to read:

11 (h) The commissioner may include terms in any [OIL AND GAS] lease
12 imposing a minimum work commitment on the lessee. These terms shall be made
13 public before the sale, and may include appropriate penalty provisions to take effect in
14 the event the lessee does not fulfill the minimum work commitment. If it is
15 demonstrated that a lease has been proven unproductive by actions of adjacent lease
16 holders, the commissioner may set aside a work commitment. The commissioner may
17 waive for a period not to exceed one two-year period any term of a minimum work
18 commitment if the commissioner makes a written finding either that conditions
19 preventing drilling or exploration were beyond the lessee's reasonable ability to
20 foresee or control or that the lessee has demonstrated through good faith efforts an
21 intent and ability to drill or develop the lease during the term of the waiver.

22 * Sec. 35. AS 38.05.180(i) is amended to read:

23 (i) The commissioner may provide for the establishment of an exploration
24 incentive credit system under which a lessee of state land drilling an exploratory well
25 on that land may earn credits based upon the footage drilled and the region in which
26 the well is situated. The commissioner may also provide for credits to be earned by
27 persons performing geophysical work on state land, if that work is performed during
28 the two seasons immediately preceding an announced lease sale and on land included
29 within the sale area and the geophysical information is made public following the sale.
30 Credits may not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the drilling or geophysical work.
31 Credits may be used during a limited period established by the commissioner and may

1 be assigned during that period. Credits may be applied against (1) [OIL AND GAS]
 2 royalty and rental payments for oil and gas or for gas only payable to the state or (2)
 3 taxes payable under AS 43.55. A credit may not exceed 50 percent of the payment
 4 toward which it is being applied. Amounts due the Alaska permanent fund
 5 (AS 37.13.010) shall be calculated before the application of credits under this
 6 subsection.

7 * Sec. 36. AS 38.05.180(j) is amended to read:

8 (j) The commissioner

9 (1) may provide for modification of royalty on individual leases, leases
 10 unitized as described in (p) of this section, leases subject to an agreement described in
 11 (s) or (t) of this section, or interests unitized under AS 31.05

12 (A) to allow for production from an oil or gas field or pool if

13 (i) the oil or gas field or pool has been sufficiently
 14 delineated to the satisfaction of the commissioner;

15 (ii) the field or pool has not previously produced oil or
 16 gas for sale; and

17 (iii) oil or gas production from the field or pool would
 18 not otherwise be economically feasible;

19 (B) to prolong the economic life of an oil or gas field or pool as
 20 per barrel or barrel equivalent costs increase or as the price of oil or gas
 21 decreases, and the increase or decrease is sufficient to make future production
 22 no longer economically feasible; or

23 (C) to reestablish production of shut-in oil or gas that would
 24 not otherwise be economically feasible;

25 (2) may not grant a royalty modification unless the lessee or lessees
 26 requesting the change make a clear and convincing showing that a modification of
 27 royalty meets the requirements of this subsection and is in the best interests of the
 28 state;

29 (3) shall provide for an increase or decrease or other modification of
 30 the state's royalty share by a sliding scale royalty or other mechanism that shall be
 31 based on a change in the price of oil or gas and may also be based on other relevant

1 factors such as a change in production rate, projected ultimate recovery, development
2 costs, and operating costs

3 (4) may not grant a royalty reduction for a field or pool

4 (A) under (1)(A) of this subsection if the royalty modification
5 for the field or pool would establish a royalty rate of less than five percent in
6 amount or value of the production removed or sold from a lease or leases
7 covering the field or pool;

8 (B) under (1)(B) or (1)(C) of this subsection if the royalty
9 modification for the field or pool would establish a royalty rate of less than
10 three percent in amount or value of the production removed or sold from a
11 lease or leases covering the field or pool;

12 (5) may not grant a royalty reduction under this subsection without
13 including an explicit condition that the royalty reduction is not assignable without the
14 prior written approval, which may not be unreasonably withheld, by the
15 commissioner; the commissioner shall, in the preliminary and final findings and
16 determinations, set out the conditions under which the royalty reduction may be
17 assigned;

18 (6) shall require the lessee or lessees to submit, with the application for
19 the royalty reduction, financial and technical data that demonstrate that the
20 requirements of this subsection are met; the commissioner

21 (A) may require disclosure of only the financial and technical
22 data related to development, production, and transportation of oil and gas or
23 gas only from the field or pool that are reasonably available to the applicant;
24 and

25 (B) shall keep the data confidential under AS 38.05.035(a)(9)
26 at the request of the lessee or lessees making application for the royalty
27 reduction; the confidential data may be disclosed by the commissioner to
28 legislators and to the legislative auditor and as directed by the chair or vice-
29 chair of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to the director of the
30 division of legislative finance, the permanent employees of their respective
31 divisions who are responsible for evaluating a royalty reduction, and to agents

1 or contractors of the legislative auditor or the legislative finance director who
2 are engaged under contract to evaluate the royalty reduction, if they sign an
3 appropriate confidentiality agreement;

4 (7) may

5 (A) require the lessee or lessees making application for the
6 royalty reduction under (1)(A) of this subsection to pay for the services of an
7 independent contractor, selected by the lessee or lessees from a list of qualified
8 consultants compiled by the commissioner, to evaluate hydrocarbon
9 development, production, transportation, and economics and to assist the
10 commissioner in evaluating the application and financial and technical data; if,
11 under this subparagraph, the commissioner requires payment for the services of
12 an independent contractor, the total cost of the services to be paid for by the
13 lessee or lessees may not exceed \$150,000 for each application, and the
14 commissioner shall determine the relevant scope of the work to be performed
15 by the contractor; selection of an independent contractor under this
16 subparagraph is not subject to AS 36.30;

17 (B) with the mutual consent of the lessee or lessees making
18 application for the royalty reduction under (1)(B) or (1)(C) of this subsection,
19 request payment for the services of an independent contractor, selected from a
20 list of qualified consultants to evaluate hydrocarbon development, production,
21 transportation, and economics by the commissioner to assist the commissioner
22 in evaluating the application and financial and technical data; if, under this
23 subparagraph, the commissioner requires payment for the services of an
24 independent contractor, the total cost of the services that may be paid for by
25 the lessee or lessees may not exceed \$150,000 for each application, and the
26 commissioner shall determine the relevant scope of the work to be performed
27 by the contractor; selection of an independent contractor under this
28 subparagraph is not subject to AS 36.30;

29 (8) shall make and publish a preliminary findings and determination on
30 the royalty reduction application, give reasonable public notice of the preliminary
31 findings and determination, and invite public comment on the preliminary findings

1 and determination during a 30-day period for receipt of public comment;

2 (9) shall offer to appear before the Legislative Budget and Audit
3 Committee, on a day that is not earlier than 10 days and not later than 20 days after
4 giving public notice under (8) of this subsection, to provide the committee a review of
5 the commissioner's preliminary findings and determination on the royalty reduction
6 application and administrative process; if the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee
7 accepts the commissioner's offer, the committee shall give notice of the committee's
8 meeting to all members of the legislature;

9 (10) shall make copies of the preliminary findings and determination
10 available to

11 (A) the presiding officer of each house of the legislature;

12 (B) the chairs of the legislature's standing committees on
13 resources; and

14 (C) the chairs of the legislature's special committees on oil and
15 gas, if any;

16 (11) shall, within 30 days after the close of the public comment period
17 under (8) of this subsection,

18 (A) prepare a summary of the public response to the
19 commissioner's preliminary findings and determination;

20 (B) make a final findings and determination; the
21 commissioner's final findings and determination prepared under this
22 subparagraph regarding a royalty reduction is final and not appealable to the
23 court;

24 (C) transmit a copy of the final findings and determination to
25 the lessee;

26 (D) with the applicant's consent, amend the applicant's lease or
27 unitization agreement consistent with the commissioner's final decision; and

28 (E) make copies of the final findings and determination
29 available to each person who submitted comment under (8) of this subsection
30 and who has filed a request for the copies;

31 (12) is not limited by the provisions of AS 38.05.134(3) or (f) of this

1 section in the commissioner's determination under this subsection.

2 * **Sec. 37.** AS 38.05.180(l) is amended to read:

3 (l) Subject to the provisions of AS 31.05, the commissioner has discretion to
4 enter into an agreement whereby, with the consent of the lessee, the state's royalty
5 share of [OIL AND GAS] production of oil and gas or gas only may be stored or
6 retained in storage by the lessee, or the commissioner may enter into an agreement
7 with one or more of the affected field lease holders to trade current royalty production
8 from a field for a like amount, kind, and quality of future production, on the condition
9 that the state receives back its stored or traded royalty share during the first half of the
10 estimated field life or no later than 15 years after start of production, whichever is
11 sooner.

12 * **Sec. 38.** AS 38.05.180(m) is amended to read:

13 (m) An oil and gas lease or a gas only lease must cover a reasonably compact
14 area not exceeding 5,760 acres, and may be for a maximum period of 10 years, except
15 that the commissioner may issue a lease for a period not less than five years upon a
16 finding that it is in the best interests of the state. An oil and gas lease shall be
17 automatically extended if and for so long thereafter as oil or gas is produced in paying
18 quantities from the lease or if the lease is committed to a unit approved by the
19 commissioner, and a gas only lease shall be automatically extended if and for so
20 long thereafter as gas is produced in paying quantities from the lease or if the
21 lease is committed to a unit approved by the commissioner. A lease issued under
22 this section covering land on which there is a well capable of producing oil or gas in
23 paying quantities does not expire because the lessee fails to produce oil or gas unless
24 the lessee is allowed reasonable time to place the well on a producing status. Upon
25 extension, the commissioner may increase lease rentals so long as the increased rental
26 rate does not exceed 150 percent of the rate for the preceding year. If drilling has
27 commenced on the expiration date of the primary term of the lease and is continued
28 with reasonable diligence, including such operations as redrilling, sidetracking, or
29 other means necessary to reach the originally proposed bottom hole location, the lease
30 continues in effect until 90 days after drilling has ceased and for so long thereafter as
31 oil or gas is produced in paying quantities. An oil and gas lease or a gas only lease

1 issued under this section which is subject to termination by reason of cessation of
 2 production does not terminate if, within 60 days after production ceases, reworking or
 3 drilling operations are commenced on the land under lease and are thereafter
 4 conducted with reasonable diligence during the period of nonproduction.

5 * Sec. 39. AS 38.05.180(n) is amended to read:

6 (n) The commissioner may establish by regulation that after a well has been
 7 plugged and abandoned, the rental rate which was in effect during the year of
 8 abandonment is maintained for the remainder of the term. Rental is payable in
 9 advance and continues until income to the state from royalty or net profit share
 10 exceeds rental income to the state for that year. Under this subsection,

11 (1) [OIL AND GAS] leases for oil and gas or for gas only shall
 12 provide for payment to the state of rental on the following basis:

13 (A) [(1)] for the first year \$1.00 per acre;

14 (B) [(2)] for the second year, \$1.50 per acre;

15 (C) [(3)] for the third year, \$2.00 per acre;

16 (D) [(4)] for the fourth year, \$2.50 per acre;

17 (E) [(5)] for the fifth and following years, \$3.00 per acre;

18 (2) if the lessee under a gas only lease demonstrates to the
 19 commissioner that the potential resources underlying the lease are reasonably
 20 estimated to be only nonconventional gas,

21 (A) the rental payment is \$1.00 per acre until the lease
 22 expires or paying quantities of conventional oil or gas are discovered
 23 underlying the lease; and

24 (B) if the nonconventional gas produced will not be in
 25 direct competition with gas on which a royalty at a rate of at least 12.5
 26 percent is payable, then the royalty share payable to the state on all
 27 production of gas from the pool attributable to that lease shall be 6.25
 28 percent based upon production delivered in pipeline quality and free of all
 29 lease expenses, including separation, cleaning, dehydration, gathering, salt
 30 water disposal, and preparation for transportation off the lease.

31 * Sec. 40. AS 38.05.180(p) is amended to read:

1 (p) To conserve the natural resources of all or a part of an oil or gas pool,
 2 field, or like area, the lessees and their representatives may unite with each other, or
 3 jointly or separately with others, in collectively adopting or operating under a
 4 cooperative or a unit plan of development or operation of the pool, field, or like area,
 5 or a part of it, when determined and certified by the commissioner to be necessary or
 6 advisable in the public interest. The commissioner may, with the consent of the
 7 holders of leases involved, establish, change, or revoke drilling producing, and
 8 royalty requirements of the leases and adopt regulations with reference to the leases,
 9 with like consent on the part of the lessees, in connection with the institution and
 10 operation of a cooperative or unit plan as the commissioner determines necessary or
 11 proper to secure the proper protection of the public interest. The commissioner may
 12 not reduce royalty on leases in connection with a cooperative or unit plan except as
 13 provided in (j) of this section. The commissioner may require a lease [OIL AND
 14 GAS LEASES] issued under this section to contain a provision requiring the lessee to
 15 operate under a reasonable cooperative or unit plan, and may prescribe a plan under
 16 which the lessee must operate. The plan must adequately protect all parties in interest,
 17 including the state.

18 * **Sec. 41.** AS 38.05.180 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

19 (ff) The provisions of this section that authorize oil and gas leases also apply
 20 to authorize the commissioner to issue leases for the production of gas only, subject to
 21 the following:

22 (1) in authorizing and managing leases under this subsection, the terms
 23 "oil and gas" or "oil or gas" as they are used in this chapter may be read and applied as
 24 appropriate as referring to gas only;

25 (2) when a lease is authorized as a gas only lease, the lease does not
 26 give the lessee the right to produce oil; if a well drilling for gas under a gas only lease
 27 authorized by this subsection penetrates a formation capable of producing oil, the
 28 owner or operator

29 (A) shall notify the department and the Alaska Oil and Gas
 30 Conservation Commission; and

31 (B) may not conduct further operations in the drilled well until

1 the facility complies with all applicable laws and regulations relating to oil and
2 gas exploration and production; however, this subparagraph does not prevent
3 the owner or operator from conducting activities that may be required by the
4 Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to plug, plug-back, or abandon
5 a well;

6 (3) the provisions of this subsection do not apply to authorize a lease
7 for the recovery of nonconventional gas on land that is held under an existing coal
8 lease entered into under AS 38.05.150 that has an active permit for exploration or
9 mining unless the lessee under this subsection is also the lessee under AS 38.05.150 of
10 that land.

11 (gg) For an activity or operation related to the extraction of coal bed methane,

12 (1) for which the department by regulation requires submission and
13 approval of a plan of operations before activities or operations may be undertaken, the
14 director shall, as a condition for determining a bond requested under AS 38.05.130,
15 after notice and an opportunity to be heard, review the plan of operations to determine
16 if use of the owner's land is reasonably necessary to extract the coal bed methane; a
17 bond determined under AS 38.05.130 and this paragraph may, at the discretion of the
18 director, be imposed against a statewide bond that has been posted by the person
19 initiating the request for determination of the bond if the statewide bond remains in
20 effect, and an additional bond is not required;

21 (2) before approving operations for the development of coal bed
22 methane under AS 38.05.134, 38.05.177, or this section, the director shall ensure that
23 the approval is conditioned upon

24 (A) reasonable and appropriate setbacks governing the
25 placement by the operator of compressor stations; setbacks approved under this
26 subparagraph must be determined with reference to the population density and
27 general character of the parcels surrounding the proposed compressor station
28 site; and

29 (B) reasonable and appropriate measures to mitigate the noise
30 of compressors, engines, and other noise generating equipment operated by
31 the operator on the lease or license; measures approved under this

#1
deleted
language

#1

1 subparagraph must be determined with reference to the population density and #1
 2 general character of the parcels surrounding the proposed compressor, engine,
 3 or other noise generating equipment.

4 * Sec. 42. AS 38.05.860(a) is amended to read:

5 (a) The commissioner may require an applicant seeking the sale, lease, or
 6 other disposal of land or an interest in land, other than under an oil and gas lease, gas
 7 only lease, or mineral lease, to deposit an amount covering the estimated cost of an
 8 appraisal, survey, and other costs necessary to offer the land or interest in land,
 9 including advertising. All deposited funds not expended shall be refunded to the
 10 applicant. If the land or interest in land is awarded to a person other than the applicant
 11 making the deposit, the person awarded the land shall pay the total actual cost incurred
 12 by the department in making the disposal, and the deposit shall be returned to the
 13 original applicant. In lieu of requiring the deposit under this subsection, the
 14 commissioner may enter into an agreement with an applicant seeking land or an
 15 interest in land requiring the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred
 16 in the disposal if the applicant is awarded the land or interest in land.

17 * Sec. 43. AS 38.05.860(c) is amended to read:

18 (c) The commissioner shall require each bidder for the competitive leasing of
 19 [OIL AND GAS] land for oil and gas, or for gas only, to submit with each bid a
 20 deposit of money equal to 20 percent of the bonus.

21 * Sec. 44. AS 38.05.945(a) is amended to read:

22 (a) This section establishes the requirements for notice given by the
 23 department for the following actions:

24 (1) classification or reclassification of state land under AS 38.05.300
 25 and the closing of land to mineral leasing or entry under AS 38.05.185;

26 (2) zoning of land under applicable law;

27 (3) issuance of a

28 (A) preliminary written finding under AS 38.05.035(e)(5)(A)
 29 regarding the sale, lease, or disposal of an interest in state land or resources for
 30 oil and gas, or for gas only, subject to AS 38.05.180(b);

31 (B) [REPEALED]

1 (C)] written finding for the sale, lease, or disposal of an interest
 2 in state land or resources under AS 38.05.035(e)(6), except a [AN OIL OR
 3 GAS] lease sale described in AS 38.05.035(e)(6)(F) for which the director
 4 must provide opportunity for public comment under the provisions of that
 5 subparagraph;

6 (4) a competitive disposal of an interest in state land or resources after
 7 final decision under AS 38.05.035(e);

8 (5) a preliminary finding under AS 38.05.035(e) concerning sites for
 9 aquatic farms and related hatcheries;

10 (6) a decision under AS 38.05.132 - 38.05.134 regarding the sale,
 11 lease, or disposal of an interest in state land or resources.

12 * Sec. 45. AS 38.05.965 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

13 (25) "nonconventional gas" means coal bed methane, gas contained in
 14 shales, or gas hydrates.

15 * Sec. 46. AS 38.06.080(2) is amended to read:

16 (2) "state lease" means an oil and gas lease or gas only lease on state
 17 land.

18 * Sec. 47. AS 38.35.020(a) is amended to read:

19 (a) Rights-of-way on state land including rights-of-way over, under, along,
 20 across, or upon the right-of-way of a public road or highway or the right-of-way of a
 21 railroad or other public utility, or across, upon, over, or under a river or other body of
 22 water or land belonging to or administered by the state may be granted by
 23 noncompetitive lease by the commissioner for pipeline purposes for the transportation
 24 of oil, products, or natural gas under those conditions prescribed by law or by
 25 administrative regulation. Except to the extent authorized by an oil and gas lease, a
 26 gas only lease, or an oil and gas or gas only unit agreement approved by the state, no
 27 person may engage in any construction or operation of any part of an oil, products, or
 28 natural gas pipeline, which in whole or in part is or is proposed to be on state land
 29 unless that person has obtained from the commissioner a right-of-way lease of the land
 30 under this chapter.

31 * Sec. 48. AS 43.20.072(c) is amended to read:

1 (c) A taxpayer's business income shall be apportioned to this state by
 2 multiplying the taxpayer's income determined under (b) of this section by the
 3 apportionment factor applicable to the taxpayer among the following factors:

4 (1) the apportionment factor of a taxpayer subject to this section but
 5 not engaged in the production of oil and gas, or of gas only, as appropriate, from a
 6 lease or property in this state during the tax period is a fraction, the numerator of
 7 which is the sum of the property factor under AS 43.19 (Multistate Tax Compact) and
 8 the sales factor under (d) of this section for the taxpayer for that tax period, and the
 9 denominator of which is two;

10 (2) the apportionment factor of a taxpayer subject to this section but
 11 not engaged in the pipeline transportation of oil or gas in this state during the tax
 12 period is a fraction, the numerator of which is the sum of the property factor under (e)
 13 of this section and the extraction factor under (f) of this section for the taxpayer for the
 14 tax period, and the denominator of which is two;

15 (3) the apportionment factor of a taxpayer engaged both in the
 16 production of oil or gas from a lease or property in this state and in the pipeline
 17 transportation of oil or gas in this state during the tax period is a fraction, the
 18 numerator of which is the sum of the sales factor under (d) of this section, the property
 19 factor under (e) of this section, and the extraction factor under (f) of this section for
 20 the taxpayer for the tax period, and the denominator of which is three.

21 * Sec. 49. AS 43.55.025(a) is amended to read:

22 (a) Subject to the terms and conditions of this section, on oil and gas produced
 23 from an oil and gas lease, or on gas produced from a gas only lease, on or after
 24 July 1, 2004, a credit against the tax due under this chapter is allowed in an amount
 25 equal to

26 (1) 20 percent of the total exploration expenditures that qualify under
 27 (b) and (c) of this section, 20 percent of the total exploration expenditures that qualify
 28 under (b) and (d) of this section, or both, for a total credit that does not exceed 40
 29 percent of the total exploration expenditures; or

30 (2) 40 percent of the total exploration expenditures that qualify under
 31 (b) and (e) of this section, for a total production tax credit that does not exceed 40

1 percent of the total qualified exploration expenditures.

2 * Sec. 50. AS 43.55.900(9) is amended to read:

3 (9) "lease or property" means any right, title, or interest in or the right
4 to produce or recover oil or gas including:

5 (A) a mineral interest,

6 (B) a leasehold interest,

7 (C) a working interest, royalty interest, overriding royalty
8 interest, production payment, net profit interest or any other interest in a lease,
9 concession, joint venture, or other agreement for [OIL AND GAS] exploration,
10 development, or production of oil and gas or of gas only,

11 (D) a working interest, royalty interest, overriding royalty
12 interest, production payment, net profit interest or any other interest in an
13 agreement for unitization or pooling under the provisions of 26 U.S.C.
14 614(b)(3) (Internal Revenue Code) as defined on January 1, 1974;

15 * Sec. 51. AS 46.03.100(f) is amended to read:

16 (f) This section does not apply to discharges of solid or liquid waste material
17 or water discharges from the following activities if the discharge is incidental to the
18 activity and the activity does not produce a discharge from a point source, as that term
19 is defined in regulations adopted under this chapter, directly into any surface water of
20 the state:

21 (1) mineral drilling, trenching, ditching, and similar activities;

22 (2) landscaping;

23 (3) water well drilling and [,] geophysical drilling [, OR COAL BED
24 METHANE DRILLING OR OTHER NATURAL GAS DRILLING TO RECOVER
25 GAS FROM A FIELD IF A PART OF THE FIELD IS WITHIN 3,000 FEET OF THE
26 SURFACE]; or

27 (4) drilling, ditching, trenching, and similar activities associated with
28 facility construction and maintenance or with road or other transportation facility
29 construction and maintenance; however, the exemption provided by this paragraph
30 does not relieve a person from obtaining a permit under this section if

31 (A) the drilling, ditching, trenching, or similar activity will

1 involve the removal of the groundwater, stormwater, or wastewater runoff that
2 has accumulated and is present at an excavation site for facility, road, or other
3 transportation construction or maintenance; and

4 (B) a permit is otherwise required by this section.

5 * Sec. 52. AS 46.04.030(b) is amended to read:

6 (b) A person may not cause or permit the operation of a pipeline or an
7 exploration or production facility in the state unless an oil discharge prevention and
8 contingency plan for the pipeline or facility has been approved by the department and
9 the person is in compliance with the plan. This subsection does not apply to an
10 exploration or production facility used solely to explore for or to develop or produce
11 nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas resources, except that this exemption
12 does not apply if the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission determines: under
13 AS 31.05.030(j) that

14 (1) a well drilled for nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas
15 may penetrate a formation capable of flowing oil; and

16 (2) the volume of oil encountered will be of such quantities that a
17 contingency plan will be required.

18 * Sec. 53. AS 46.04.040(b) is amended to read:

19 (b) A person may not cause or permit the operation of a pipeline or an
20 exploration or production facility in the state unless the person has furnished to the
21 department, and the department has approved, proof of financial ability to respond in
22 damages. Proof of financial responsibility required for

23 (1) a pipeline or an offshore exploration or production facility is
24 \$50,000,000 per incident;

25 (2) an onshore production facility is

26 (A) \$20,000,000 per incident if the facility produces over
27 10,000 barrels per day of oil;

28 (B) \$10,000,000 per incident if the facility produces over 5,000
29 barrels per day but not more than 10,000 barrels per day of oil;

30 (C) \$5,000,000 per incident if the facility produces over 2,500
31 barrels per day but not more than 5,000 barrels per day of oil;

1 (D) \$1,000,000 per incident if the facility produces 2,500
2 barrels per day or less of oil;

3 (3) an onshore exploration facility is

4 (A) \$25,000 per incident for a facility used solely to explore for
5 nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas by means of drilling a well to
6 explore for the gas [, WHETHER METHANE ASSOCIATED WITH AND
7 DERIVED FROM COAL DEPOSITS OR OTHERWISE, FROM A FIELD IF
8 A PART OF THE FIELD IS WITHIN 3,000 FEET OF THE SURFACE]; and

9 (B) except as provided by (A) of this paragraph, \$1,000,000 per
10 incident.

11 * Sec. 54. AS 46.04.900 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

12 (31) "nonconventional gas" has the meaning given in AS 38.05.965.

13 * Sec. 55. AS 46.40.205 is amended to read:

14 **Sec. 46.40.205. Consistency determinations for certain activities involving**
15 **nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas.** (a) When conducted under
16 oversight and regulation of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and the
17 state's resource agencies, projects for the exploration and development of
18 nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas are consistent with the program
19 described in this chapter. Persons responsible for activities subject to this section shall
20 obtain all required permits and approvals from municipal, state, and federal agencies
21 as otherwise required by law.

22 (b) In this section, "nonconventional [SHALLOW NATURAL] gas" has the
23 meaning given in AS 38.05.965 [AS 46.04.900].

24 * Sec. 56. AS 46.40.210(12) is amended to read:

25 (12) "uses of state concern" means those land and water uses that
26 would significantly affect the long-term public interest; "uses of state concern" include

27 (A) uses of national interest, including the use of resources for
28 the siting of ports and major facilities that contribute to meeting national
29 energy needs, construction and maintenance of navigational facilities and
30 systems, resource development of federal land, and national defense and
31 related security facilities that are dependent upon coastal locations;

1 (B) uses of more than local concern, including those land and
 2 water uses that confer significant environmental, social, cultural, or economic
 3 benefits or burdens beyond a single coastal resource district;

4 (C) the siting of major energy facilities, activities pursuant to a
 5 state oil and gas lease, a state gas only lease, or a federal oil and gas lease, or
 6 large-scale industrial or commercial development activities that are dependent
 7 on a coastal location and that, because of their magnitude or the magnitude of
 8 their effect on the economy of the state or the surrounding area, are reasonably
 9 likely to present issues of more than local significance;

10 (D) facilities serving statewide or interregional transportation
 11 and communication needs; and

12 (E) uses in areas established as state parks or recreational areas
 13 under AS 41.21 or as state game refuges, game sanctuaries, or critical habitat
 14 areas under AS 16.20.

15 * Sec. 57. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska added by sec. 1, ch. 45, SLA 2003, is
 16 amended to read:

17 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

18 (1) [THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHALLOW NATURAL GAS
 19 RESOURCES IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE STATE OF ALASKA;

20 (2)] shallow natural gas is abundant and widespread in Alaska and
 21 bears the promise of providing Alaskans, particularly Alaskans living in rural areas,
 22 with an inexpensive and clean source of energy if those resources can be economically
 23 developed;

24 (2) [(3)] the development of shallow natural gas poses significantly
 25 fewer risks and creates substantially less impact to the environment than traditional
 26 deep oil and gas projects, which have served as the model for oil and gas industry and
 27 environmental regulations to date in Alaska;

28 (3) [(4)] the regulatory requirements developed and applied to
 29 traditional deep oil and gas projects in Alaska are ill-suited and unduly onerous when
 30 applied to shallow natural gas projects, threatening the economic viability of otherwise
 31 desirable exploration and development projects;

1 (4) [(5)] there is an immediate state and national need for the
2 development of clean and economical unconventional energy sources, such as shallow
3 natural gas resources;

4 (5) [(6)] reform of existing laws and regulations is needed to remove
5 unnecessary regulatory burdens on the private sector to foster and encourage the
6 development in Alaska of these necessary resources;

7 (6) [(7)] the legislature is acting in the interest of promoting the active
8 development of such resources, while ensuring that suitable measures are taken to
9 protect human health and safety and the natural environment,

10 (A) to remove impediments to the responsible development of
11 shallow natural gas; and

12 (B) to provide the proper state agencies with clear authority and
13 discretion to adopt regulatory practices appropriate to shallow natural gas
14 exploration and development projects, in recognition of the lower risks posed
15 by such projects to human health and safety and the natural environment [;
16 AND

17 (C) TO RESERVE ALL RIGHTS AND POWERS NOT
18 PREEMPTED BY FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATION IN ORDER TO
19 ASSERT STATE PRIMACY OVER THE REGULATION OF SHALLOW
20 NATURAL GAS].

21 * **Sec. 58.** AS 31.05.125, 31.05.170(14); AS 38.05.177(b), 38.05.177(c), 38.05.177(e),
22 38.05.177(f), 38.05.177(g), 38.05.177(h), 38.05.177(j), 38.05.177(k), 38.05.177(m),
23 38.05.177(n), 38.05.177(o); and AS 46.04.900(25) are repealed.

24 * **Sec. 59.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
25 read:

26 CERTAIN SHALLOW NATURAL GAS LEASES AND LEASE APPLICATIONS
27 TO BE ADMINISTERED UNDER FORMER LAW. The provisions of AS 38.05.177(a),
28 (d)(1), and (l), amended by secs. 26 - 28 of this Act, as those provisions read on the day
29 before the effective date of amendment of those subsections, and the provisions of
30 AS 38.05.177(b), (c), (e) - (h), (j), (k), (m), (n), and (o), repealed by sec. 58 of this Act, as
31 those provisions read on the day before the effective date of the repeal of those subsections,

1 apply to shallow natural gas leases issued under AS 38.05.177 and in effect on December 31,
2 2003.

3 * **Sec. 60.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
4 read:

5 **CONVERSION OF EXISTING SHALLOW NATURAL GAS LEASE**
6 **APPLICATIONS.** (a) The applicant for a shallow natural gas lease under AS 38.05.177
7 whose application was received by the Department of Natural Resources before the effective
8 date of this section may, not later than August 31, 2004, or 60 days after the effective date of
9 this Act, whichever is later, convert the application to an exploration license and lease
10 application under AS 38.05.131(a), as amended by sec. 14 of this Act. An applicant
11 converting an application under this subsection

12 (1) may apply for as few as 3,000 acres, notwithstanding the minimum
13 limitation of acreage set out in AS 38.05.132(c)(2);

14 (2) shall pay the fee required by AS 38.05.132(c)(6);

15 (3) is subject to a three-year work commitment lieu of a work commitment
16 of any other duration required by AS 38.05.132 and, notwithstanding AS 38.05.132(c)(3), is
17 under an obligation to perform a specified work commitment of \$1 per acre per year; and

18 (4) may, subject to (b) of this section, convert an exploration license to a lease
19 under AS 38.05.134, as amended by sec. 22 of this Act.

20 (b) The provisions of AS 38.05.035(e) apply to an application made under (a) of this
21 section.

22 (c) For an application made under (a) of this section, the director of the division of
23 lands shall remit to the applicant the application fee paid by the applicant under
24 AS 38.05.177(b)(2).

25 * **Sec. 61.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Co-Chair
Representative Beverly L. Masek
State Capital, Rm. #403
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182
(907) 465-2679



Co-Chair
Representative Nancy A. Dahlstrom
State Capital, Rm. #126
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

SPONSOR STATEMENT

S CS CS HB 531 (RES) – Conventional / Non-Conventional Gas Leases

The intent of original shallow gas leasing legislation in 1995, HB 394, was to expand development of our state's marketable natural gas resources, as well as to promote private-sector employment, generate less expensive energy alternatives for rural Alaskan consumers, and enhance local tax bases for municipalities. Shallow gas legislation was inspired by the need to tailor the particular economies of this resource opportunity to available market opportunities. This type of gas extraction does not conform to the same economies of scale as conventional deep-hole oil and gas drilling.

Original legislation provided for leasing on a first-come, first-served basis so that development of the resource in areas away from the energy grid could take place. With a well-known shortage of natural gas development opportunities in South Central Alaska, prospects of leasing on-shore fields in the Cook Inlet Basin became very attractive. Two unintended consequences of this sudden interest materialized. One, it sparked leasing of the state-owned subsurface mineral estate in uneconomic areas, and two, it encouraged leasing in areas where divergent interests between gas development and established local residential and business activities came into conflict.

Without HB 531, a subsequent gas development entity could immediately lease land relinquished by the original lessee. In addition, land not currently leased remains subject to current over-the-counter standards. This bill initiates a permanent solution to these problems. It has been brought forward in response to strong citizen interest in the Mat-Su Valley and on the Kenai Peninsula, with input from several public meetings held at one time or another by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Senate Resources Committee.

Legislation Highlights

- ~ Eliminates over-the-counter, first-come, first-served shallow gas leases and replaces it with area-wide leasing or exploration licensing.
- ~ Requires a best-interest finding before any oil and gas leasing or exploration licensing. This will give DNR control of what land is leased, avoiding unnecessary surface-owner conflicts. Best-interest finds are a time-tested public process.
- ~ Creates a gas-only section of area-wide leasing and exploration licensing identified in a best-interest finding by DNR.

~

Differentiates conventional and non-conventional gas resources for the purposes of lease rentals.

~

Defines conventional and non-conventional gas development, and treats each distinctly. Recognizes that lease rights should not be determined by a depth criteria only. Enhances production opportunities.

~

Encourages exploration licenses with a best-interest finding as the method for non-conventional gas exploration outside of the area-wide leasing in rural Alaska.

~

Makes leasing and regulatory criteria fit the appropriate activity.

~

Ensures competitive processes, thereby maximizing the state's interests.

HB 531 / House Resources Committee / Rp. Beverly Masek / staff: Eleanor Wolfe / 465-6585

HB 531

- Repeals existing over the counter shallow gas leasing program and replace it with current exploration licensing and conventional competitive leasing programs.
Both these programs require the Department of Natural Resources to do a Best Interest Finding (BIF) prior to leasing. The BIF process has extensive public noticing and public input and requires the Commissioner to balance interests prior to holding a lease sale or issuing a license.
- Includes additional ground water protections involving the production of non-conventional gas through requiring the AOGCC to regulate:
 - Hydraulic fracturing,
 - Disposal of wastes,
 - reinjection of produced water
 - prohibiting the production of gas from aquifers that serve as a source of water for human consumption or agricultural purposes unless it can be demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the aquifer
- Limits the discretion of DNR to extend the existing shallow gas leases
- Gives the Commissioner the discretion to issue either oil and gas or gas only leases
- On a gas-only-lease allows for the lessee to make a showing to DNR that can result in lower rentals and royalties if: The gas doesn't compete with other gas and the lease has only nonconventional gas potential.
- Repeals the HB 69 provisions allowing the Commissioner of DNR override authority over local zoning ordinances
- Gives a one-time opportunity for pending lease applicants to apply for a noncompetitive exploration license with a Best Interest Finding and a work commitment.
- As amended requires the DNR Commissioner to establish setbacks and noise mitigation measures for compressor stations prior to approving coalbed methane operations on any state leases.
- As amended requires the operator design and implement a water well testing program to provide baseline data on water quality and quantity as a condition for approval of a AOGCC permit to drill a coalbed methane well for production or production testing
- As amended specifies bonding requirements on gas-only-leases

Provided by House Committee on Resources

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 5/1/04

FURTHER: Finance

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 5-4-04

Resources Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 531(FIN) am

HB 531 CONVENTIONAL & NONCONVENTIONAL GAS LEASES

"An Act relating to natural gas exploration and development and to nonconventional gas, and amending the section under which shallow natural gas leases may be issued; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with S CS CSHB 531 (RES)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
House Bill:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

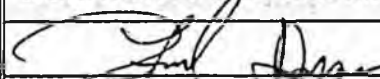
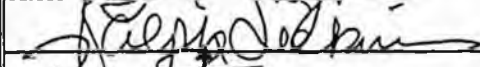
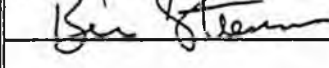
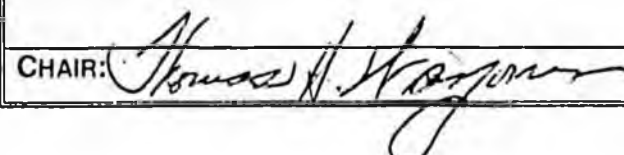
NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
ADM	5/5	✓			3

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
DNR	4/29/04	✓			2

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
Dyson 	✓			
Seelins 	✓			
B. Stevens 	✓			
Wagoner Vice-CHAIR: 	✓			

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SIGN-IN

HB 531-CONVENTIONAL & NONCONVENTIONAL GAS LEASES

~~NAME: Jim SYKES *Had to leave JS* Subject/Bill No: HB 531
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: 907-745-6962
Address: POB 696 Palmer Zip: 99645
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions~~

NAME: MARK MYERU Subject/Bill No: HB 531
Co./Dept./Title: DNR OIL & GAS, Director Phone: 269-8800
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions