ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 1987-1988 8672
4986 HRES HB 524 - HB 545 558

"A stable resolution will require two things. It must be clearly legal under the Federal Clean Water Act; and it must protect the rights of both placer miners and other water users."

Our proposed language does exactly that. It is simple, straight forward and positive. The adoption of these regulations will provide partial relief to some miners. We will continue to work the identified problems of NPDES assumption, water quality criteria, stream reclassification and restructuring of uses. Please refer to the attached documentation for further definition.

Respectfully yours,

ALASKA MINERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Claude Morris

Claude Morris
Co-Chairman Water Quality Committee

cs/wateract.cow

Enclosure

ALASKA MINERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
501 W Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 203, Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 276-0347

February 4, 1988

Commissioner Dennis Kelso
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Water Quality Management Section
P.O. Box O
Juneau, AK 99811-1800

Dear Commissioner Kelso:

Attached is our response to the proposed mixing zone and start-up variance regulations by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Our position is that the DEC proposed regulations, as written, do not give any regulatory relief to the industry and we therefore reject that proposal. The language used is negative in tone and imposes more controls on the industry than regulations that are currently in place. The DEC's proposed mixing zone regulations are generally more to the detriment then benefit of the placer mining industry. The proposed start-up variance language is an improvement over the present regulations in that point sources of water discharge are also included. But the scope of its application is so limited and the language used is so subjective that the final product offers very little to the placer industry. With minor changes to the short term variance language, to include variances for point source discharges, the objective of the start-up variance concept is better achieved.

The adoption of mixing zone and short-term variance regulations is the first step needed to help some miners continue to operate legally under the letter of the law in the face of what are presently unattainable water quality standards. We are not looking for a solution for the irresponsible operator. Our intent is to protect the rights of other water users and the rights of the placer miner. We believe that this goal can be achieved.

As you can see, it is not the concept of the proposed regulations that we are opposed to, but rather the language that was used in the proposed regulations. Therefore, we are proposing an alternative wording to the regulations. Any changes which lessens the objectives of our proposed language for mixing zones

(7)

and short term variances would not satisfactorily address the concerns expressed to us by representatives of the placer industry. This proposal is in full compliance with the Clean Water Act and the EPA regulations, meets with miner acceptance, and follow the intent of the Governor's memo to the Commissioners (March 30, 1987), which states that:

"Continuation of the status quo is not acceptable."

"A stable resolution will require two things. It must be clearly legal under the Federal Clean Water Act; and it must protect the rights of both placer miners and other water users."

Our proposed language does exactly that. It is simple, straight forward and positive. It is the much needed first step that the State must take with would create a positive platform from which we can continue to work on the other identified problems of water quality criteria, restructuring of water uses, stream reclassification, and NPDES assumption.

The Industry Water User Group will continue to work with the DEC to remedy the water use concerns of not only the placer mining industry, but of all water user industries.

Sincerely,

ALASKA MINERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Claude Morris

Claude Morris
Co-Chairman, Industry Water User Group

cs/kelso.dra

irbanks, Alaska

Fairbanks

Sunday, March 27, 1988—A-3

Water quality on placer-mining rivers improves

By FRED PRATT
Correspondent

Placer miners are adopting effective pollution control measures, government officials said here Saturday, and their work shows in cleaner water of Alaska's rivers.

The comments came during an "agency session" with state and federal officials at the conclusion of the three-day annual placer mining conference at Alaskaland.

Water quality monitoring shows a "general trend toward improvement" on five Interior placer-mining streams, Larry Dietrick of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation said. Only three operations were cited for violations, Dietrick added, two for settling pond problems and one for not following his plan of operation. All responded with corrections when notified.

Pointing to a "significant increase" in use of wastewater treatment techniques by miners, Dietrick said 1987 mine inspections showed the following:

- Mines using full recycling systems and having no discharge of wastewater grew from five in 1986 to 31 in 1987.
- Surveys found 51 mines using at least some water recycling, up from 14 in 1986.
- Use of tailings to filter wastewater increased from seven in 1986 to 44 in 1987.
- Seven mines now use "tundra filters" to absorb wastewater, up from only two last year; and
- Use of chemical flocculents to draw fine sediments from wastewater grew from two operations in 1986 to eight in 1987.

Dietrick said DEC found no mines operating without settling ponds and the number found with violations for improper pond design or size dropped from 38 to 12.

"No operations were shut down for water-quality violations where we think the miner was working within his plan of operation," Dietrick said. The plan is submitted by the miner when applying for his state permit, and state agencies can change the plan to add specific stipulations when they grant the permit.

Al Ewing, representing the federal Environmental Protection Agency, said his agency found a significant increase in the number of mines meeting federal standards for settleable solids.

In 1984, Ewing said, only 39 percent of the mines inspected were reducing settleable solids to below the federal limits. In 1985 EPA found 42 percent of the mines in compliance, and in 1986 the figure improved to 55 percent.

In 1987 EPA found 77 percent of the mines it inspected met the limits, and Ewing noted that state officials found 92 percent compliance. The difference between state and federal figures came because the EPA officials focused testing on mines where they expected to find violations, while DEC made a broader sample.

"My own observation is that this represents the result of a cooperative effort with the mining industry," Ewing said. "It shows the cumulative effect on the part of all parties to help move this process toward the point we can all live with."

Settleable solids measure larger particles that sink out of water over a specified time, and the standards are among the easier water quality limits for placer miners to meet.

Miners say turbidity standards, which measure finer particles that stay in suspension even after settling pond treatment, are all but impossible to meet, but Ewing noted that EPA does not have a major enforcement effort on that front.

Not all the miners accepted the rosy picture.

Don Stein suggested that a greater percentage of mines are meeting EPA standards because more mines are being closed by the effects of government regulation. Noting that Alaska had 700 operating placer mines a few years ago and has only 200 now, he said the number of operating mines will decrease gradually until there is 100 percent compliance but only a very few mines left.

Ewing said there is no question that there are fewer mines operating now, and that enforcement of water quality regulations is responsible for at least some of the decline. "We're implementing the law in the most reasonable way we know how, and that can result in a few people going out of business," Ewing said.

Pat Wrightman of the state Division of Govermental Coordination told the group that coastal zone management plan compliance has not been a problem in granting mining permits.

In the year ending Sept. 1, 1987 her office granted nine consistency findings for placer mines operating in coastal zone areas, and gave 36 consistency findings with stipulations. Seven permit applications were withdrawn, Wrightman added, but none were denied.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which recently entered the placer mining permit arena with new wetlands regulations, and the U.S. Park Service were not represented at the meeting.

STATE OF ALASKA
1988 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: HB 524
PUBLISH DATE: _____

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: Relating to the application of water quality criteria.
Sponsor: Frank, Miller, Bover and Shultz
Requestor: House HESS

Agency Affected: Environmental Conservation
BRU: Environmental Quality
Components: Southeast, Southcentral and Northern Regional Offices

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	858.0				
TRAVEL	0	90.0				
CONTRACTUAL	0	185.0				
SUPPLIES	0	9.0				
EQUIPMENT	0	27.0	9.0			
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	1,169.0	438.3	352.1	573.6	489.7
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	1,057.0	438.3	352.1	573.6	489.7
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	18.0					
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

See Attachment

Prepared by: Dan Easton, Deputy Director
Division: Division of Environmental Quality
Phone: 465-2640
Date: 4/6/88

Approved by Commissioner: [signature]
Agency: Environmental Conservation
Date: April 14, 1988

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

page ____ of ____

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

HB 524 FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

(April 4, 1988)

The fiscal note includes funding to determine mixing zones for all wastewater discharges in Alaska as required by HB 524. While the Department presently includes mixing zones in many of the state and federal wastewater discharge permits it issues or certifies, HB 524 mandates that mixing zones be issued for all wastewater discharges and alters the sizing criteria. Consequently, new mixing zones would have to be calculated. HB 524 also moves the burden of providing information and mixing zone calculations from the permit applicant to the Department.

The annual costs associated with implementing HB 524 were derived using the number of state and federal wastewater permits due to be reissued in each of the next five fiscal years. A new mixing zone would be calculated as each wastewater permit was due for renewal. Because the term of most wastewater permits is five years, this has the effect of spreading the total costs over a five-year period. (The drawback to this approach is that years would pass before mixing zones could be calculated for some discharges. In the interim, the legal status of the permits

awaiting designation of a new mixing zone would be unclear.) For purposes of projecting costs, it was assumed that the number of wastewater permits in effect would not change from current levels.

To begin to implement HB 524 in FY 89, a total of 18 new positions would be required to calculate a mixing zone for each of the 724 permits to be reissued. Of these positions, three will be non-technical support positions. The other 15 would be technical staff. The technical staff would be assigned the following responsibilities:

- As required by HB 524, for each wastewater discharge, the new positions would collect information pertaining to: the physical, chemical, biological and mixing characteristics of the receiving waters; the uses of the receiving waters; and the characteristics of the effluent. In many cases, collecting this information would require travel to the site. For major discharges, the Department would contract with consultants to provide the required information.

- The new positions would calculate dilution and mixing rates, and mathematically model the mixing of the effluent and receiving waters to predict pollutant concentrations as a function of distance from the outfall. For major discharges such as those from pulp mills, the ballast water treatment

facility at Valdez, and off-shore mining operations, computer models will be used. For smaller, simpler discharges, staff would hand-calculate mixing behavior.

- From predicted pollutant concentrations, the new staff would delineate mixing zones on the basis of the "as small as practicable" criterion prescribed by HB 524. The Department would then designate the mixing zones in state wastewater permits. For wastewater discharges permitted under the federal wastewater permitting (NPDES) program, the Department will request that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) include the mixing zones in the federal permits.

In addition to the personal services and support costs for the required 18 new positions, the fiscal note includes contractual funds in the amount of $95.0 for FY 89. These funds will be needed to secure technical consultant assistance in collecting information and calculating mixing zones for major discharges to marine waters.

Annual costs decrease from FY 89 levels as the number of permits due for renewal decrease. While not shown on the fiscal note, the FY 94 costs would again rise to FY 89 levels.

The costs for mixing zone calculations could be reduced approximately by half if the bill were applied only to fresh waters. This would exclude most major industrial facilities and seafood processing plants.

HB

545

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y · STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
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Mary Van Nimwegen

Joint House Finance / Resources

3-16-87

(9)

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date referred: 3/4/87 FURTHER REFERRALS: Finance

DATE: _____

The Resources Committee has considered HB 164

"An Act relating to the oil and gas properties production tax; and providing for an effective date."

RECOMMENDS:

[ ] replace with _____ [ ] the same title

[ ] attached amendment(s) [ ] a new title

[ ] do pass

[ ] do not pass

[ ] no recommendation

[ ] individual recommendations

[ ] additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: [ ] _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):

[ ] fiscal impact

[ ] zero fiscal note

[ ] zero with analysis

[ ] same as previous fiscal note published _____

[ ] same as previous zero fiscal note published _____

SIGNING DO PASS:

Mike Navarre

Sam Cox

Cliff Davidson

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Adelheid Herrmann No Rec

Heinrich Springer No Rec

Do Not Pass

Chairman's signature

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version: CS HB 164
REQUEST — Publish Date:

Revision Date:
Agency Affected: Revenue
Title: An act relating to the oil and gas production tax.
BRU: Audit
Sponsor: Rules/Goverror
Components: Oil & Gas
Requestor: House Resources

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Millions of Dollars)

	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
OPERATING						
PERSONAL SERVICES	-	-	-	-	-	-
TRAVEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
CONTRACTUAL	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUPPLIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-
LANDS & STRUCTURES	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRANTS, CLAIMS	-	-	-	-	-	-
MISCELLANEOUS	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OPERATING	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAPITAL	-	-	-	-	-	-
REVENUE	-	88.7	108.5	117.6	112.9	117.8

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-	-	-	-	-	-
FEDERAL FUNDS	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-	-	-	-	-	-
PART-TIME	-	-	-	-	-	-
TEMPORAPY	-	-	-	-	-	-

ANALYSIS: The above numbers represent the increase in general fund revenues if this bill becomes law. The key assumptions are introduction of a 55,000,000 scaling factor into the exponent of the current ELF formula and fixing the value of the Production at the Economic Limit (PEL) at 300 barrels per well per day. The production impact from FY88 through FY2005 represents a cumulative total loss of 20.9 million barrels.

Prepared By: Chuck Logsdon — Phone: 276-5364
Division: Office of the Commissioner — Date: 3/19/87

Approved by Commissioner: [signature] — Date: 3/19/87
Agency: Revenue

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):
- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)
- Senate Secretary

Current Law (-MM $)

	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	Total
Sohio	262.915268	4.917486	0	2.594634	2.115	272.540389
Arco	[illegible]	20.571051	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Exxon	[illegible]	.154476	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Mobil	[illegible]	.159105	0	0	0	[illegible]
Phillips	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	0	0	9.760333
Chevron	[illegible]	.047291	.105212	0	0	[illegible]
Texaco	2.802492	0	0	0	0	2.802492
A. Hess	[illegible]	0	0	0	0	[illegible]
Shell	[illegible]	0	0	0	0	[illegible]
Marathon	.25949	0	0	0	0	.25949
BP	.051098	14.765331	0	0	0	14.817229
LL & E	.207592	0	0	0	0	.207592
Union	0	2.196992	0	.39795	0	2.594942
Conoco	0	0	.474788	0	0	.474788
CIRI	0	0	0	.024635	0	.024635
Total	513.98	42.91	.58	3.814635	10.58	576.[illegible]4635

COMPANY FIELD EFFECT ADMIN. PROPOSAL

	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	Total	Delta Base
Sohio	310.718044	4.97364	0	2.847936	2.182	320.72162	48.178232
Arco	133.585452	20.80596	0	.000832	4.364	158.756244	20.918580
Exxon	133.585452	.15624	0	.874432	4.364	138.980124	20.763146
Mobil	11.65346	.1519	0	0	0	11.80536	1.794555
Phillips	11.408124	.1085	0	0	0	11.516624	1.756321
Chevron	4.354714	.04774	.25396	0	0	4.656414	.819243
Texaco	3.312036	0	0	0	0	3.312036	.509544
A. Hess	3.250702	0	0	0	0	3.250702	.500108
[illegible]	.858676	0	0	0	0	[illegible]	[illegible]
Marathon	.30667	0	0	0	0	.30667	.04718
BP	.061334	14.[illegible]4	0	0	0	14.995274	.178045
LL & E	.245336	0	0	0	0	.245336	.037744
Union	0	2.22208	0	.4369	0	2.65898	.063938
Conoco	0	0	1.14604	0	0	1.14604	.671252
CIRI	0	0	0	.02704	0	.02704	.002405
Total	613.34	43.4	1.4	4.18704	10.91	673.23704	96.372405

COMPANY FIELD EFFECT FIELD ELF

	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	Total	Delta Base
Sohio	305.[illegible]	9.258954	0	.788444	.794	315.167516	42.[illegible]
Arco	131.274594	34.512008	0	.000228	1.500	167.374828	27.[illegible]
Exxon	131.274594	.259164	0	.259628	1.500	133.[illegible]	15.[illegible]
Mobil	11.45187	.251965	0	0	0	11.703835	1.69303
Phillips	11.210778	.179975	0	0	0	11.390753	1.63045
Chevron	4.279383	.079189	.003628	0	0	4.3622	.525029
Texaco	3.254742	0	0	0	0	3.254742	.45225
A. Hess	3.194469	0	0	0	0	3.194469	.443875
Shell	.843822	0	0	0	0	.843822	.11725
Marathon	.301365	0	0	0	0	.301365	.041875
BP	.060273	24.771759	0	0	0	24.832032	10.014803
LL & E	.241092	0	0	0	0	.241092	.0335
Union	0	3.685008	0	.1197	0	3.805583	1.210646
Conoco	0	0	.016372	0	0	.016372	-.458416
CIRI	0	0	0	.00741	0	.00741	-.017225
Total	602.73	[illegible]	.02	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

STEVE COWPER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

March 3, 1987

The Honorable Pen Grussendorf
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Grussendorf:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to the oil and gas properties production tax. The primary effect of the bill is to postpone the application of the "true" economic limit factor (ELF) to the Prudhoe Bay field. The bill also amends the economic limit factor provisions applying to all oil fields so that the ELF is not sensitive to changes in the value of oil.

Existing AS 43.55.011(e) provides that an oil producer must calculate its production (severance) tax by multiplying the nominal rate calculated under AS 43.55.011(b) and (c) by the economic limit factor determined under AS 43.55.013. The ELF is a formula that has the effect of reducing the severance tax rate. In 1981, the legislature made several changes in oil and gas taxes: the income tax was changed to substitute modified apportionment for separate accounting; the nominal rate of the severance tax was increased for some fields; and the application of the ELF to a lease or property with an ELF of more than .7 was suspended until after that lease or property had been in commercial production for 10 years. Ch. 116, SLA 1981. Suspension of application of the ELF was accomplished by providing that, if the ELF was more than .7, then the ELF was considered to be "one." AS 43.55.011(b)(3). Thus, when multiplying the severance tax rate by the ELF, the full amount of the tax is the product.

Only the Prudhoe Bay and Lisburne fields currently have an ELF greater than .7. The Lisburne ELF is expected to fall below .7 after fiscal year 1988, but the Prudhoe Bay ELF is expected to remain about .7 for a number of years. Prudhoe Bay will have been in production for 10 years in June, 1987; thus, absent an amendment to AS 43.55.013(b)(3), the "true" ELF, as calculated under AS 43.55.013(b)(1), will begin to apply to that field at that time.

The fiscal note on the 1981 legislation did not include projections beyond FY 1985, but an analysis by the Legislative Finance Division showed that application of the "true" ELF provision would cause state revenue to fall precipitously in FY 1988. Governor Hammond noted this possibility, but expressed "full confidence in the ability of the legislature to deal at that time" with adverse revenue consequences, should they prove to be serious. Statement of Governor Hammond on signing FCCSSB 524 (ch. 110, SLA 1981); see July 27, 1981 press release on oil and gas legislation, fourth page.

Application of the "true" ELF to Prudhoe Bay would result in serious consequences for the state in the coming fiscal year: state severance collections would be reduced by over 15 percent, and FY 1990 revenue would fall by $93,000,000 (already accounted for in the official "mean" forecast). Section 1 of the attached bill would prevent this precipitous decline in revenue by amending AS 43.55.011(h)(2) to delay the applicability of the true ELF to Prudhoe Bay for an additional five years. Section 2 of the bill also makes a conforming amendment to AS 43.55.011(h)(3) and (4). So long as the "true" ELF does not apply, the severance tax rate will be the full 15 percent of value, or $.80 a barrel, whichever is greater, subject to the adjustment in AS 43.55.011.

The bill also changes the ELF provisions for all oil fields to remove the sensitivity of the ELF to price fluctuations. An element of the ELF calculation is the "PEL," or "production at the economic limit." The PEL represents the number of barrels a producer must produce in order to recover the costs of production. Currently, the PEL is presumed to be 300 barrels per well per day, but the taxpayer may rebut this presumption at a hearing before the Department of Revenue. At the hearing, the PEL would be calculated by dividing the cost of production into the value of the oil. AS 43.55.013(d). If the price of oil drops, the producer may be able to prove an entitlement to a PEL in excess of 300 barrels; if so, the ELF for that producer will go down. Thus, if prices fall drastically, the state loses severance tax revenue not only because the severance tax is applied against a lower value of oil, but also because the severance tax rate itself goes down as the result of a PEL hearing. Earlier in 1986, because of low prices, we were faced with the possibility that the state might suffer from this double reduction in severance tax revenue.

Section 2 of the attached bill deals with that problem by repealing the portion of existing law that provides for a hearing to change the PEL. The PEL is then simply set at 300 barrels per day. As a result, the PIF will be sensitive to changes in the amount of production, but will no longer be sensitive to fluctuations in price or the costs of production. Section 3 of the bill repeals two subsections in AS 43.55.011 dealing with the two elements of the hearing: costs and values. These changes do not apply to the production of gas.

I urge your early consideration and passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Steve Cowper
Governor

M E M O R A N D U M

STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Revenue

Petroleum Research Section

February 27, 1987

To: Vincent D. Wright, Chief of Research

From: Charles Logsdon, Petroleum Economist

Subject: More ELF

Per your request, I have examined the revenue and production impact of extending the 10 year period during which the ELF is subject to the .7 or greater test to 15 years and fixing the value of the Production at the Economic Limit (PEL) at 300 barrels per well per day. Prudhoe Bay and Lisburne are the fields currently producing with a calculated ELF greater than .7 and thus would be directly impacted by this change in the State severance tax law. On average, the calculated ELF for Prudhoe is not expected to fall below 0.7 over the next 5 years. We expect the Lisburne ELF to fall below 0.7 in FY 1989 and subsequent years.

By setting the PEL at 300, the ELF no longer would be sensitive to the price of oil or the cost of producing oil and would be totally dependent on per barrel productivity for a producing lease or property. Over the next 5 years as Prudhoe Bay production begins to decline the only reason for an ELF less than 0.7 would be if a significantly greater than expected number of additional wells were drilled. For example we currently expect Prudhoe to produce on average, 0.984 million barrels per day in 1992 from 465 wells providing an ELF of.7911. If this same amount of oil were produced from 705 wells, the ELF would be equal to .6906.

The following tables illustrate the revenue impact and production impact of extending the ELF time line to 15 years and fixing the value of PEL at 300. These results are generated by the DOR revenue simulation model using the December 1986 input assumptions. The most significant result other than the revenues generated is that there is almost no average expected effect on North Slope production.

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y · STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

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Mary Van Nimwegen

Joint Meeting of: House Finance Cmte. - March 18, 1987
House Resources Cmte.

State of Alaska
MEMORANDUM

Office of the Governor

Division of Policy

P.O. Box AM, Juneau, AK, 99811
Tel. 465-3568 / Mail Stop 0164

TO: Rep. Drew Pearce DATE: 19 March 1987

FROM: Gregg Erickson
Senior Economist

SUBJECT: Shares of Alaska Oil Revenue.

I have enclosed OMB's most recent (April 11, 1986) analysis of the shares of net revenue from oil production and transportation in Alaska during the FY 82-85 period. Oil industry Alaska profits over this 4-year period (net of capital charges, costs, royalties and taxes) totaled $22,103 million.

The profits earned in Alaska can be compared with the $6 billion in oil industry invested in Alaska over the same period. Testimony of Harold Heinze, House Finance transcript, April 12, 1985, p. 130.

I have also provided copies of our correspondence with Exxon regarding the "shares" analysis.

cc: Rep. Cotten
Mary Halloran

STATE, FEDERAL AND INDUSTRY SHARES OF ALASKA OIL RESOURCE INCOME: FISCAL 1982-1985

(millions of dollars except as noted)

Fiscal year	[1] Total Revenue	[2] State Royalty	[3] Sever. Conser. tax	[4] Total Prop. tax	[5] Total Oper. Costs	[6] Total Deprec.	[7] Total Acquis. Costs	[8] Windfall Profits Tax
1982	$16,456	$1,553	$1,581	$276	$940	$602	$1	$2,018
1983	$15,470	$1,448	$1,494	$307	$1,101	$780	$1	$1,018
1984	$14,955	$1,409	$1,393	$358	$1,259	$998	$1	$412
1985	$15,136	$1,390	$1,389	$397	$1,449	$1,093	$1	$70

Fiscal Year	[9] Uncap. Interest Expense	[10] Explore. Costs	[11] Admin. Costs	[12] Other Deducs.	[13] Total Deducs.	[14] State Taxable Net Income	[15] Corp. Petrol Income Tax	[16] Federal Taxable Income
1982	$721	$191	$236	$149	$8,268	$8,188	$669	$7,519
1983	$676	$204	$252	$142	$7,423	$8,047	$236	$7,811
1984	$614	$219	$265	$136	$7,064	$7,891	$265	$7,626
1985	$566	$234	$278	$130	$6,997	$8,139	$169	$7,970

Fiscal Year	[17] Federal Corp. Income Tax	[18] Oil Industry Alaska Profits	[19] Total Federal Tax	[20] Total State Tax & Royalty	[21] ----Share of Oil Income---- State	[22] Federal	[23] Industry
1982	$2,098	$5,421	$4,116	$4,079	30%	30%	40%
1983	$2,140	$5,671	$3,158	$3,485	28%	26%	46%
1984	$2,242	$5,384	$2,654	$3,425	30%	23%	47%
1985	$2,343	$5,627	$2,413	$3,345	29%	21%	49%

SOURCES AND FORMULAS --

Column [1]: Vincent Wright, chief of research, to Mary Nordale, Commissioner of Revenue, Memorandum of October 31, 1985, Table 3.

Columns [2] & [3]: January 1986 DOR Revenue Sources, p. 39.

Columns [4] to [12]: Vincent Wright, loc. cit.

Column [13]: sum of columns [2] through [12]

Column [14]: column [1] - column [13]

Column [15]: Revenue Sources, p. 39.

Column [16]: column [14] - column [15].

Column [17]: column [16] * (production-weighted average tax rate -- 1982 = .279; 1983 = .274; 1984 = .294; 1985 = .294). Company effective rates for '82-84 from R. McIntire and R. Folen, "Corporate Income Taxes in the Reagan Years," Oct. 1984, pp. 32-36; '85 estimated by OMB.

Column [18]: column [16] - column [17].

Column [19]: column [8] + column [17].

Column [20]: sum of columns [2], [3], [4], and [15].

Column [21]: (column [18])/(sum of columns [18], [19], and [20]).

Column [22]: (column [19])/(sum of columns [18], [19], and [20]).

Column [23]: (column [20])/(sum of columns [18], [19], and [20]).

Office of Management and Budget
Division of Strategic Planning
revised April 11, 1986

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version : HB 164
Publish Date : HOUSE 3/4/87

REQUEST:

Revision Date:
Title : An Act Relating to the Oil and Gas Properties Production Tax
Sponsor : Rules/Governor
Requestor : Rules

Agency Affected : Revenue
BRU :
Components :

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING						
CAPITAL						
REVENUE		76,730.0	91,950.0	98,480.0	99,850.0	105,610.0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

SEE ATTACHTED ANALYSIS

Vincent Wright

Prepared by : Chuck Logsdon
Division : Revenue/Research
Phone : 276-5364
Date : March 2, 1987

Approved by Commissioner : Hugh Malone
Agency : Department of Revenue
Date : 3/2/87

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)
Senate Secretary

Revenue Impact of Extend5 (Million $)

Fiscal Year	Delta 30%	Delta Mean
1987	0	0
1988	76.73	96.26
1989	91.95	118.06
1990	98.48	128.33
1991	99.85	132.92
1992	105.61	139.09
1993	5.73	7.3
1994	3.9	7.64
1995	3.66	6.56
1996	4.55	5.28
1997	3.67	5.55
1998	2.01	3.91
1999	2.53	2.62
2000	-.16	2.08
2001	-.1	2.79
2002	-.82	2.68
2003	-.73	2.28
2004	.53	2.1
2005	.49	1.87

No. 1
HB 164
3/4/87

Production Impact of Extend5 (Million bbls/yr)

Fiscal Year	Prudhoe Bay	Kuparuk	Milne Point	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Other Onshore	Other Offshore	Total
1987	0	0	0	0	-.01	0	0	0	-.01
1988	-.77	-.12	-.04	-.02	-.02	0	0	0	-.97
1989	-.69	-.12	-.07	-.04	-.03	0	0	0	-.95
1990	-.6	-.12	-.11	0	.03	0	0	0	-.86
1991	-.57	-.11	-.15	-.03	-.05	0	0	0	-.91
1992	-.52	-.1	-.15	-.06	-.05	0	0	0	-.88
1993	-.49	-.09	-.14	-.06	-.06	0	0	0	-.84
1994	-.44	-.11	-.14	-.04	-.07	0	0	0	-.8
1995	-.39	-.07	-.09	-.05	-.05	0	0	0	-.65
1996	-.35	-.06	-.12	-.05	-.05	0	0	0	-.63
1997	-.32	-.08	.01	-.04	-.06	0	0	0	-.49
1998	-.43	-.05	.03	-.03	-.09	0	0	0	-.57
1999	-.25	-.04	.02	-.01	-.02	0	-.02	0	-.32
2000	-.22	-.03	-.02	-.01	-.03	0	-.02	0	-.33
2001	-.2	-.03	.02	0	-.02	0	-.02	0	-.25
2002	-.18	-.02	.01	0	-.02	0	-.02	0	-.23
2003	-.16	-.01	-.01	0	-.01	0	-.01	0	-.2
2004	-.19	0	.04	0	-.01	0	-.01	0	-.17
2005	-.13	.01	.04	0	0	0	-.01	0	-.09
									0
									0
Total	-6.9	-1.15	-.87	-.44	-.68	0	-.11	0	-10.15

M E M O R A N D U M

STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Revenue

Petroleum Research Section

4164

February 27, 1987

To: Vincent D. Wright, Chief of Research

From: Charles Logsdon, Petroleum Economist

Subject: More ELF

Per your request, I have examined the revenue and production impact of extending the 10 year period during which the ELF is subject to the .7 or greater test to 15 years and fixing the value of the Production at the Economic Limit (PEL) at 300 barrels per well per day. Prudhoe Bay and Lisburne are the fields currently producing with a calculated ELF greater than .7 and thus would be directly impacted by this change in the State severance tax law. On average, the calculated ELF for Prudhoe is not expected to fall below 0.7 over the next 5 years. We expect the Lisburne ELF to fall below 0.7 in FY 1989 and subsequent years.

By setting the PEL at 300, the ELF no longer would be sensitive to the price of oil or the cost of producing oil and would be totally dependent on per barrel productivity for a producing lease or property. Over the next 5 years as Prudhoe Bay production begins to decline the only reason for an ELF less than 0.7 would be if a significantly greater than expected number of additional wells were drilled. For example we currently expect Prudhoe to produce on average, 0.984 million barrels per day in 1992 from 465 wells providing an ELF of.7911. If this same amount of oil were produced from 705 wells, the ELF would be equal to .6906.

The following tables illustrate the revenue impact and production impact of extending the ELF time line to 15 year and fixing the value of PEL at 300. These results are generated by the DOR revenue simulation model using the December 1986 input assumptions. The most significant result other than the revenues generated is that there is almost no average expected effect on North Slope production.

STATE OF ALASKA 1986 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date : _____

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No. : HB 545
Title : An Act Relating to the Oil Production Tax

Sponsor : House Finance Committee
Requestor : House Finance Committee
Date of Request : 2/3/86

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected : _____
BRU : _____

Components : _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES : (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING						
CAPITAL						
REVENUE			155,720	143,140	155,310	138,410

FUNDING : (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS :

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : Attach a separate page if necessary

See attached.

Prepared by : Chuck Logsdon — Phone : 465-2173
Division : Research — Date : 2/20/86

Approved by Commissioner : [signature] — Date : 2/20/86
Agency : _____

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note) :
- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

10/25/85

Analysis

This bill would change the oil production tax by altering the formula for calculating the economic limit factor (ELF) and making the calculated value of ELF apply to the tax rate in all instances. The change in formula results in a value for ELF which is higher or lower than currently calculated depending upon whether an oil field produces more or less than 80,436 Bbls/Day. Applying the calculated value of ELF in all instances results in a lower effective tax rate for fields producing less than 80,436 bbls/day and for fields which have an ELF equal to or greater than .7 and which will have been in production less than 10 years upon the effective date of the bill. The effective tax rate will increase for those fields which produce more than 80,436 b/d, and which have been in production more than 10 years. Under current law, the ELF is set to 1.0 when a field has been in production less than 10 years and has a calculated ELF greater than or equal to .7, otherwise the calculated ELF applies. Prudhoe Bay because of its immense size and productivity is in this category of oil fields. Prudhoe Bay began production in 1977 so under current law the production tax rate is scheduled to fall in FY 1988 since an ELF less than 1.0 will be applied to the nominal tax rate. This bill would apply an ELF much greater than that calculated under the current formula. As a result the tax rate on Prudhoe Bay will decrease only a small amount in FY 1988 and beyond, so that tax revenues for Prudhoe Bay will increase over the current projections.

The Revenue impacts estimated in this fiscal note are for the 30 percent case. The effect of this bill was analyzed using the Petrev model. The production effect is based on the change in the average expected production from the North Slope oil fields using the economic feasibility subroutine of that model. The actual realized production impact could be much larger or smaller if assumptions other than tax rate were changed i.e. price, however several issues are suggested by these results. The first is that the effect of the tax on feasibility given the Petrev December oil price assumptions does not appear large since Prudhoe Bay produces 45 million bbls. every month. Second the major impacts on production would occur in Prudhoe Bay, Kuparuk and West Sak Sands. This occurs because of the impact on enhanced recovery for Prudhoe and Kuparuk, and because of the marginal economics and production characteristics of West Sak (significant production but a very large number of wells).

Production Effect

FY 1987 - FY 2000

Field		Average Expected Production Effect
Prudhoe Bay	*	-22.37 million bbls.
Kuparuk	*	-15.72 million bbls.
Milne Pt.		3.3 million bbls.
Endicott		-1.45 million bbls.
Lisburne		-.67 million bbls.
West Sak		-15.97 million bbls.
Other Onshore		6.85 million bbls.
Other Offshore		.47 million bbls.
TOTAL		-45.56 million bbls.

*Enhanced Recovery Effect

MEMORANDUM State of Alaska

TO: Vincent Wright, VW
Chief of Research

DATE: December 3, 1986

FILE NO.:

THRU:

TELEPHONE NO.:

SUBJECT: ELF presentation for the Tax Committee

FROM: Charles Logsdon, CL
Petroleum Economist

Per your request, enclosed is the latest draft of my presentation on the ELF for the joint Tax Committee meeting December 4, 1986. We have essentially updated the analysis prepared for the cancelled October 15, 1986 meeting using the assumptions underlying the December petroleum production revenue forecast. Unfortunately, due to the severe time constraint in preparing this updated analysis, "minor" revisions in the numbers may be necessary. As you will notice, the new input assumptions do not materially change the original analysis.

from Joint Special Committee on Tax Policy, Supplement to preliminary report February 1987

ANALYSIS OF ELF ALTERNATIVES

State of Alaska
Department of Revenue
December 4, 1986

The Effect of Four Possible Changes in the ELF on State of Alaska Severance Tax Revenues

The purpose of this brief note is to examine the effect of changing the relationship of the Economic Limit Factor (ELF) to State of Alaska Severance taxes. The ELF is a number with a value of between zero and one which is multiplied by the nominal severance tax rate or the cents per barrel tax floor to reduce the severance taxes paid as an oil or gas producing lease approaches its economic breakeven point. This analysis will specifically examine how changes in the application of the ELF and in the ELF itself impact oil revenues and production. The focus will be on the North Slope. Cook Inlet production will be considered seperately since the economics of these producing fields are dominated by costs associated with the shutdown and abandonment of older low productivity oil wells located on expensive offshore production facilities.

Specifically the following four possible changes are investigated.

1. Eliminate application of the ELF to the current $.80 per barrel tax floor.

2. Change the ELF formula to one similiar to that proposed in HB545 and modified by OMB in which the exponent is modified to raise the tax rate on fields with total field productivity in excess of roughly 100,000 barrels per day and lower the tax rate on fields with production less than this amount.

3. Establish a new severance tax floor at $1.50 not subject to the ELF and index it for inflation.

4. Eliminate the ELF entirely.

These hypothetical changes in the severance tax law are analysed using the Department of Revenue Petroleum Revenue Forecasting Simulation Model. All assumptions concerning oil prices, transportation costs, and market deliveries are the same as were used in preparing the Department's December 1986 forecast of petroleum production revenues.

The simulation model is used because it can show the changes in average expected revenues and oil production due to a change in the tax law over a wide range of price and transportation cost assumptions. Further, since it is the model used to make the official State forecast of severance tax revenues it conveniently illustrates how the current forecast would change if the severance tax law were changed.

As a general principle, any of the changes in the severance tax mentioned above will increase the average expected taxes levied on the oil producers in the State. Since higher taxes make producing oil a more costly enterprise it is likely that in some instances this higher cost will make production unprofitable. In a broad sense then, it would be nice to know the tradeoff between the increased tax revenue to the State and the reduced investment in oil production and consequently reduced tax base due to the increased cost of producing oil.

Such an investigation is possible but since so many assumptions have to be made, the results will always be subject to dispute. As a practical matter oil producing companies are not a homogenous group with respect to risk preference or financial capacity. One has only to look at the companies producing on Alaska's North Slope to appreciate this distinction i.e. Amerada Hess as compared to Exxon. It is also important to stress that the companies are the one's who make the decisions affecting production and any financial model such as the one used in this analysis can only make reasonable assumptions about the parameter values the companies themselves would choose (price, discount rate, or capital outlay). Further this analysis can only examine the relative merits of oil production in the State of Alaska, since we do not have accurate data on oil production prospects globally. Finally this analysis is done without examining the issue of budget constraints which obviously all in the oil business are facing given the current depressed price situation.

There too many unknowns for this analysis to delve in depth into the relative regional economic impact of public expenditure vs.

private expenditure in the State of Alaska so the discussion will be limited to the effect of changes in ELF on State petroleum revenues and barrels of oil and not on whether those changes make sense for the Alaskan economy.

Eliminate the application of the ELF to the cents per barrel tax floor

This would essentially guarantee the State a minimum severance tax payment for every barrel of oil produced in the State (currently $. 80 per barrel). Tables 1 and 2 show the change in average expected revenues and production for each of the North Slope oil fields assumed to be in production between the present and 2005. Fixing the severance tax floor would increase average expected revenues between 1987 and 2005 by $135.42 million in nominal dollar terms or $95.98 million discounted at 8%. The disincentive to produce created by the fixed floor results in a decrease in average expected production of over 19 million barrels of oil. One way of looking at it is that the State gains an average of roughly $7.00 for every barrel of oil production foregone.

Prudhoe Bay production is effected the most by this change in the severance tax. This is primarily because after primary recovery Prudhoe will still have a tremendous amount of oil in the ground which may be recoverable with additional investment. On the other hand Kuparuk and some of the other more marginal fields can be seen to provide the lion's share of the average expected revenue increase. This is because these fields currently have calculated ELF's which are much lower than Prudhoe so that at prices which trigger the cents per barrel tax these fields will experience a relatively larger increase in their tax bill.

Modify the ELF Exponent to Reflect Total Field Production

This proposed change in the ELF is contained in a bill submitted in the Alaska House of Representatives in the Spring of 1986. In

Table 1

Production Impact of Fixed Severance Tax Floor = $.80/bbl
(Millions Bbls.)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	-.04	0	0	0	-.04
1988	-.77	-1.01	-.08	-.08	-.08	0	0	0	-2.02
1989	-.68	-.12	-.11	-.26	-.10	0	0	0	-1.27
1990	-.60	-.12	-.16	-.29	-.13	0	0	0	-1.30
1991	-.56	-.12	-.11	-.31	-.20	0	0	0	-1.30
1992	-.52	-.09	-.11	-.27	-.20	0	0	0	-1.19
1993	-.48	-.09	-.12	-.26	-.24	0	0	0	-1.19
1994	-.45	2.22	-.21	-.19	-.24	0	0	0	1.13
1995	-.40	1.42	-.22	-.11	-.23	0	0	0	.46
1996	-.50	1.18	-.17	-.04	-.26	0	0	0	.21
1997	-.34	-.73	-.11	-.01	-.31	0	0	-2.99	-4.49
1998	-.64	-.72	-.05	.02	-.44	0	0	-1.50	-3.33
1999	-.59	-.49	-.03	.05	-.25	0	0	-.03	-1.34
2000	-.42	-.38	0	.05	-.16	0	0	-.20	-1.11
2001	-.40	-.31	0	.06	-.06	0	0	-.15	-.86
2002	-.02	-.32	0	.05	-.04	-.02	0	-.03	-.38
2003	-.02	-.25	0	.03	-.03	0	0	-.09	-.36
2004	-.01	-.23	0	.03	-.02	-.03	0	-.57	-.83
2005	-.01	-.20	0	.01	-.01	-.02	0	-.02	-.25
Total	-7.41	-.36	-1.48	-1.52	-3.04	-.07	0	-5.58	-19.16

Table 2

Revenue Impact of Fixed Severance Tax Floor = $.80/bbl
(Millions $)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	.10	29.66	1.70	0	.50	0	0	0	31.96
1988	9.50	8.92	.11	1.38	.27	0	0	0	20.18
1989	5.16	5.37	0	2.66	.64	0	0	0	13.83
1990	2.74	3.83	-.03	1.51	.30	0	0	0	8.35
1991	3.35	4.37	-.02	1.45	.58	0	0	0	9.73
1992	2.21	4.14	-.03	.84	.38	0	.01	0	7.55
1993	2.71	3.53	-.03	-.01	.66	0	.02	0	6.88
1994	3.12	19.80	.13	-.05	.96	0	.07	0	24.03
1995	2.70	17.43	.10	-.02	1.02	.09	.03	0	21.35
1996	1.75	15.58	.05	.04	.87	.09	.02	0	18.10
1997	1.34	-1.42	.03	.07	.66	-.01	0	0	.67
1998	.30	-2.50	.03	.09	.34	-.02	-.01	0	-1.77
1999	-.53	-3.17	.05	.14	.22	-.02	0	0	-3.31
2000	-.13	-3.51	.07	.13	.13	-.03	-.01	0	-3.35
2001	.13	-3.76	.06	.13	.13	-.06	-.01	0	-3.38
2002	.05	-3.95	.05	.10	.07	-.13	-.01	0	-3.82
2003	.01	-4.09	.05	.08	.05	-.10	0	0	-4.00
2004	-.07	-3.97	.04	.05	.04	-.14	-.01	0	-4.06
2005	-.08	-3.68	.04	.03	.03	-.16	0	0	-3.82
Total Revenue									
Nominal	34.36	82.58	2.40	8.62	7.85	-.49	.10	0	135.12
10% disc	20.07	57.69	1.63	5.21	3.64	-.06	.05	0	88.24
8% disc	22.15	62.23	1.73	5.71	4.18	-.09	.06	0	95.98

this example the formula specification is the one used in the presentation by Dr. Tom Chester at the Tax Committee's September meeting. The formula used in HB545 raises the tax rate on fields with production in excess of roughly 80,000 barrels per day and lowers the rate for lower production rates. The modification presented by Dr. Chester changes the trigger to roughly 100,000 barrels. The purpose of this change is to increase the effective tax rate over current law for "large oil fields" while at the same time keeping severance taxes from discouraging investment in smaller oil fields. Practically speaking it effectively increases revenues to the State through the impact on the prolific Prudhoe Bay field.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the field by field impact on revenue and production of this change in the severance tax law. Average expected revenues through the year 2005 increase $2270.52 million in nominal dollar terms ($1073.67 million discounted at 8%). As might be expected because of the upside potential of the higher effective tax rate on large fields, should oil prices grow over time the large reserves of Prudhoe contribute the most to this revenue increase. Average expected production would decrease by 28.41 million barrels under this tax regime. Once again the disincentive to produce additional barrels from the large Prudhoe Bay field accounts for the largest share of estimated production decrease. However because the tax burden is lowered for some fields, West Sak and Seal Island actually show greater average expected production. This ELF alternative increases State revenues by roughly $80 for every barrel of oil production foregone.

<u>Establish a New Severance Tax Floor at $1.50 Not Subject to the ELF and Index it for Inflation.</u>

Tables 5 and 6 show the field by field effect of this alternative on average expected production and average expected revenues. Indexing the severance tax floor from a $1.50 base results in an increase of revenues of $1797.17 million through 2005 in nominal dollar terms ($1195.04 discounted at 8 percent). This alternative has a devastating impact on average expected

Table 3

Production Impact of OMB Altered Exponent
(Millions Bbls.)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	-.01	-.01	0	0	-.02
1988	-.71	-.05	0	-.02	-.01	0	0	0	-.79
1989	-.63	-.12	0	-.04	-.01	0	0	0	-.8
1990	-.57	-.12	-.01	-.04	-.01	0	0	0	-.75
1991	-.55	-.11	-.01	-.05	-.02	0	0	0	-.74
1992	-.47	-.09	-.01	-.07	-.02	0	-.13	0	-.79
1993	-.45	.09	-.02	-.07	-.03	0	-.23	0	-.71
1994	-2	.23	-.43	-.06	-1.31	0	-.24	0	-3.81
1995	-1.73	.17	-.35	-.06	-1.09	.79	-.3	0	-2.57
1996	-2.37	.15	-.28	-.05	-.9	.72	-.31	0	-3.04
1997	-3.05	-.33	.05	-.05	-.86	.77	-.29	2.99	-.77
1998	-3.19	-.2	.04	-.04	-.68	.7	-.24	1.4	-2.21
1999	-2.72	-.21	.05	-.04	-.57	.62	-.32	-.09	-3.28
2000	-2.18	-.16	.05	-.03	-.49	.61	-.26	.01	-2.45
2001	-2.04	-.13	.06	-.02	-.39	.61	-.2	.05	-2.06
2002	-1.62	-.09	.05	-.02	-.28	.77	-.17	-.07	-1.43
2003	-1.32	-.07	.03	-.01	-.22	.81	-.09	-.03	-.9
2004	-1.06	-.09	.03	-.02	-.2	.73	-.06	.45	-.22
2005	-1.17	-.08	.02	-.01	-.15	.48	-.03	-.13	-1.07
Total	-27.83	-1.21	-.73	-.7	-7.25	7.6	-2.87	4.58	-28.41

Table 4

Revenue Impact of OMB Altered Exponent
(Millions $)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	5.94	29.29	-.35	0	-3.35	0	0	0	31.53
1988	93.85	38.51	-.7	-2.18	-5.84	0	0	0	123.64
1989	106.32	49.2	-1.92	1.06	-4.8	0	0	0	149.86
1990	114.56	55.31	-2.31	1.08	-5.18	0	0	0	163.46
1991	117.43	40.61	-2.38	1.14	-1.45	0	0	0	155.35
1992	121.4	21.83	-3.43	1.26	-1.61	0	-2.76	0	136.69
1993	124.53	17.32	-4.07	1.71	2.49	0	-3.42	0	138.56
1994	124.27	14.59	-7.22	-3.66	8.69	0	-3.35	0	133.32
1995	122.99	11.42	-7.32	-2.74	6	2.56	-3.53	0	129.38
1996	121.97	5.22	-7.15	-5.63	.76	5.32	-3.83	0	116.66
1997	121.16	2.47	-4.86	-6.91	1.21	15.03	-5.19	0	122.91
1998	123.22	-2.01	-4.39	-6.67	-6.63	17.42	-5.89	-2.87	112.18
1999	123.31	-5.48	-3.66	-5.19	-13.47	20.38	-6.2	-1.7	107.99
2000	123.55	-8.42	-2.85	-3.65	-17.84	27.9	-8.1	-1.26	109.33
2001	118.02	-9.7	-1.81	-2.21	-18.53	31.67	-8.17	-2.3	106.97
2002	112.28	-7.83	-1.49	-1.19	-16.1	41.71	-8.97	-2.37	116.04
2003	106.24	-5.79	-.61	-.45	-12.2	46.2	-10.48	-3.11	119.80
2004	99.26	-4.25	-.2	-.02	-7.99	34.3	-10.51	-4.04	106.55
2005	91.89	-3.1	.17	.06	-5.27	17.56	-9.72	-1.29	90.30
Total Revenue									
Nominal	2072.19	239.19	-56.55	-34.19	-101.11	260.05	-90.12	-18.94	2270.52
10% disc	781.96	166.60	-22.23	-9.90	-28.72	56.40	-22.67	-3.96	917.48
8% disc	927.72	179.68	-26.39	-12.54	-35.58	75.37	-29.26	-5.33	1073.67

Table 5

Production Impact of Indexed Fixed Floor
(Millions Bbls.)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	-.21	0	0	0	-.21
1988	-15.79	-2.93	-.32	-.69	-.44	0	0	0	-20.17
1989	-14.15	-2.4	-.45	-2.18	-.61	0	0	0	-19.79
1990	-12.48	-2.4	-.49	-1.97	-.79	0	0	0	-18.13
1991	-11.77	-2.17	-.44	-1.87	-1.18	0	0	0	-17.43
1992	-10.74	-1.9	-.44	-1.84	-1.18	0	.25	0	-15.85
1993	-9.35	1.68	-.45	-1.86	-1.42	0	.43	0	-10.97
1994	-8.24	-.77	-.47	-1.34	-1.44	0	.42	0	-11.84
1995	-7.15	.04	-.51	1.09	-1.43	.06	.46	0	-7.44
1996	-7.23	.1	-.45	.82	-1.45	.03	.49	0	-7.69
1997	-6.87	-1.95	-.29	.63	-1.64	0	.5	2.99	-6.63
1998	-5.93	-1.65	-.27	.47	-1.28	-.01	.52	1.5	-6.65
1999	-5.46	-1.02	-.31	.37	-.79	-.04	.54	.03	-6.68
2000	-4.12	-.93	-.21	.36	-.57	-.04	.43	.2	-4.88
2001	-3.43	-.91	-.18	.35	-.37	-.06	.36	.15	-4.09
2002	-1.93	-.79	-.08	.08	-.23	.02	.32	.03	-2.58
2003	-1.84	-.91	-.04	-.02	-.25	.03	.27	.09	-2.67
2004	-2.12	-.94	0	-.02	-.32	.06	.2	.57	-2.57
2005	-1.88	-.67	0	-.01	-.36	.06	.16	.02	-2.68
Total	-130.18	-20.52	-5.4	-7.63	-15.96	.11	5.35	5.58	-168.95

Table 6

Revenue Impact of Fixed Indexed Floor
(Millions $)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	223.91	80.84	5.87	0	2.27	0	0	0	312.89
1988	180.5	58.65	2.31	8.56	7.33	0	0	0	257.25
1989	109.65	44.29	6.21	32.07	14.94	0	0	0	207.16
1990	77.65	37.84	7.34	32.63	16.36	0	0	0	171.82
1991	76.29	36.51	7.13	34.7	26.88	0	0	0	181.51
1992	55.19	30.8	5.4	33.15	25.8	0	4.68	0	155.02
1993	43.17	24.46	5.27	23.42	29.17	0	5.72	0	131.21
1994	34.04	36.88	4.44	17.49	27.57	0	4.36	0	124.78
1995	24.57	30.63	3.56	13.49	25.57	5.28	3.4	0	106.50
1996	15.6	25.97	2.67	9.99	22.87	5.05	2.43	0	84.58
1997	10.22	6.09	2.04	7.53	20.46	5.51	0	0	51.85
1998	1.43	2.25	1.39	5.39	14.16	3.78	-.71	.07	27.76
1999	-2.09	.32	.8	3.76	10.22	2.46	-1.18	.04	14.33
2000	-1.79	-1.03	.42	2.2	7.62	.98	-.92	.04	7.52
2001	-1.61	-2.26	.02	-.1	5.84	.86	-.87	.02	1.90
2002	-2.19	-3.08	-.05	-.15	4.29	.39	-.98	.01	-1.76
2003	-5.34	-4.78	-.07	.1	2.71	.2	-.95	0	-8.13
2004	-8.9	-5.29	.03	.07	.61	.01	-.76	-.01	-14.24
2005	-8.95	-4.84	.05	.04	-.33	-.12	-.63	0	-14.78
Total Revenue									
Nominal	821.35	394.25	54.73	224.34	264.34	24.4	13.59	.17	1797.17
10% disc	562.83	247.88	30.11	117.70	117.13	7.82	7.57	.05	1091.10
8% disc	604.33	270.22	33.57	132.65	135.90	9.72	8.60	.06	1195.04

production which is reduced by nearly 179 million barrels. This impact on production is a direct result of the increased liklihood that such a tax would cause a premature shutdown in the already producing oil fields or would make additional investment uneconomic. This alternative has a most dramatic effect on Prudhoe Bay production because it significantly increases the probability that Prudhoe Bay shuts down prematurely. As will be seen, eliminating the ELF entirely results in much greater expected revenue without as severe an effect on production. This is because with the percent of value tax the State shares in the high oil price value cases and also shares the loss in the low oil price case (down to the current $.20/bbl floor). The fixed indexed floor fails to reflect the relative change in profitability of falling oil prices. The indexed floor increases State revenue by roughly $10 for every barrel of production foregone.

Eliminate the ELF Entirely

This alternative would remove entirely the severance tax relief given to low productive oil wells.

Tables 7 and 8 show the revenue and production effect on a field by field basis. Total average expected revenues through the year 2005 increase by $5082.43 million, $2111.87 million discounted at 8 percent, while average expected production falls by 84.67 million barrels. Prudhoe Bay because it dominates North Slope production over the next ten years accounts for over half of the increased revenue. Kuparuk one of North America's largest fields because its current ELF is roughly .6 accounts for the largest relative increase.

Prudhoe Bay with its large reserves accounts for a 28 million barrels of the production loss, while the West Sak field with its relatively low productive high cost wells accounts for another 21 million barrels of the average expected decline in production. Eliminating the ELF increases State revenue by roughly $49 for every barrel of oil production foregone.

Table 7

Production Impact of Eliminating the ELF
(Millions Bbls.)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	-.05	0	0	0	-.05
1988	-1.1	-1.01	-.08	-.15	-.09	0	0	0	-2.43
1989	-.96	-.18	-.11	-.51	-.12	0	0	0	-1.88
1990	-.85	-.18	-.16	-.55	-.15	0	0	0	-1.89
1991	-.8	-.17	-.12	-.58	-.22	0	0	0	-1.89
1992	-.72	-.14	-.12	-.6	-.22	0	-.3	0	-2.1
1993	-.67	-.13	-.13	-.62	-.27	0	-.5	0	-2.32
1994	-1.19	-.52	-.67	-.49	-4.76	0	-.5	0	-8.13
1995	-.99	-.87	-.61	-2.49	-3.9	-1.41	-.55	0	-10.82
1996	-3.2	-.73	-.5	-1.98	-3.23	-1.71	-.57	0	-11.92
1997	-2.97	-.8	-.14	-1.56	-.48	-2.13	-.58	-2.99	-11.65
1998	-2.65	-.7	-.08	-.19	-.44	-1.97	-.6	-1.92	-8.55
1999	-1.63	-.47	-.09	-.07	-.2	-1.69	-1.75	-.64	-6.54
2000	-.79	-.39	-.08	-.16	-.09	-1.55	-1.45	-.74	-5.25
2001	-1.01	-.37	-.1	-.21	.06	-1.3	-1.23	-.69	-4.85
2002	-1.75	-.39	-.08	-.1	.19	-2.93	-.34	-.55	-5.95
2003	-2.61	-.5	-.06	-.02	.17	-2.63	-.27	-.62	-6.54
2004	-2.15	-.64	-.03	.01	.05	-2.49	-.2	-1.06	-6.51
2005	-2.04	-.58	-.05	-.08	-.06	-1.15	-.14	-.8	-4.9
Total	-28.08	-8.77	-3.21	-10.35	-13.81	-20.96	-8.98	-10.01	-104.17

Table 8

Revenue Impact of Eliminating the ELF
(Millions $)

Year	Prudhoe	Kuparuk	Milne	Endicott	Lisburne	West Sak	Pt. Thomson	Seal Island	Total North Slope
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	5.76	30.42	2.03	0	.58	0	0	0	38.79
1988	100.15	38.53	1.17	3.19	.57	0	0	0	143.91
1989	114.81	49.32	3.08	13.28	7.21	0	0	0	187.7
1990	125.23	55.31	3.9	14.88	13.53	0	0	0	212.85
1991	129.21	56.02	4.01	15.87	21.39	0	0	0	226.5
1992	134.94	59.97	5.59	17.84	23.66	0	3.2	0	245.2
1993	110.42	59.92	6.48	24.57	33.16	0	4.07	0	268.62
1994	148.74	62.93	3.18	24.04	3.76	0	3.93	0	246.58
1995	148.9	59.93	2.92	9.4	13.16	10.7	4.29	0	249.3
1996	152.12	63.71	2.91	11.01	21.54	14.22	4.86	0	270.37
1997	162.67	60.9	5.07	11.81	46.78	28.35	6.7	0	322.28
1998	167.04	60.34	4.95	22.4	47.85	33.54	7.66	-2.04	341.74
1999	169.48	58.82	4.63	22.23	47.02	39.63	-6.57	3.12	338.36
2000	171.87	57.33	4.11	20.46	46.3	55.66	-2.08	4.45	358.1
2001	167.58	54.07	3.56	15.26	45.39	64.29	2.72	5.41	358.28
2002	163.87	50.23	3.11	11.19	44.26	48.56	14.08	6.66	341.96
2003	159.23	30.89	2.54	10.03	41.89	60.19	13.48	9.99	328.24
2004	154.36	19.41	1.87	7.3	37.3	72.01	13.56	11.64	317.45
2005	147.21	12.71	.32	4.91	33.15	67.92	13.51	6.47	286.2
Total Revenue									
Nominal	2663.89	940.76	65.43	259.67	528.5	495.07	83.41	45.7	5082.43
10% disc	948.54	383.01	26.18	98.23	157.56	107.91	20.72	8.45	1750.61
8% disc	1137.24	448.57	30.79	116.89	196.10	143.89	26.70	11.68	2111.87

Summary and Analysis

All four of the proposed changes in the severance tax result on average in increased State revenues. Average expected oil production, however, is lower due to the negative impact of potentially higher taxes on expected profitability.

The effect of each of these proposed changes is analysed using the Monte Carlo simulation model. This type of model evaluates many possible combinations of variables effecting oil production revenues including high prices where taxes are not so important in determining development feasibility and low prices where taxes may be an important consideration in deciding whether or not a project is viable. The output of the model is determined not only by the scenarios of the prices and costs and quantities entered as input into the model but also by the probability assigned to each scenario. The model results, in this case State petroleum production revenue by year to the year 2005, are depicted as the probability distribution of possible outcome. Another way of looking at the output is to say many possible outcomes are evaluated and this is what to expect on average will occur. The analysis of these changes in severance tax law is of course only as good as the input into this model. Department of Revenue analysts have weighted the inputs into the model which may or may not correspond to the way in which the different producing oil companies would weight them. Further the feasibility part of the model uses a hurdle rate 8% real and assumes no budget constraints and no competing global investment alternatives. Those caveats aside the results of this analysis are summarized as follows.

1. Fixing the severance tax floor at $0.80 per barrel has the least impact on expected State revenues and has the least negative impact on expected North Slope production.

2. Eliminating the ELF entirely, generates the largest average expected increase in State revenue.

3. Increasing the fixed floor to $1.50 and indexing it to account for inflation has the greatest negative effect on average expected production.

4. Because the real upside potential for State revenue continues to depend on the share of the value of Prudhoe Bay production taken by the State, modifying the ELF to reflect total field productivity is the most efficient alternative in terms of dollars gained for every barrel foregone ($80 per barrel as opposed to $7 per barrel for the fixed $.80 per barrel ELF alternative). This is because this tax increases revenues while at the same time mitigating the negative effect on average expected production. The ranking of ELF alternatives using this type of revenue maximizing criteria is as follows.

1) Modified Exponent ELF	$80/bbl
2) Eliminate ELF	$49/bbl
3) Indexed Floor	$10/bbl
4) Fixed $.80/bbl Floor	$7/bbl

5. The production disincentives are generally associated with development of the so called marginal fields, and enhanced recovery investment in Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk although in some very low price cases no doubt potentially higher taxes cause even these already producing fields to be shut-in.

The above analysis says nothing about the impact of any of these hypothetical tax changes on Cook Inlet. Currently Cook Inlet production is roughly 50 thousand barrels per day. Because much of current production is from a large number of wells with average daily production less 300 barrels, the ELF under current law is zero or nearly zero for most oil producing leases. As a result FY 1986 oil severance collections are estimated to be less than $2 million or roughly $.12 per barrel. If a minimum tax of $.80 per barrel were levied, assuming no fields were abandoned,

severance taxes would increase to $12.78 million. Although there is a considerable difference in terms of well productivity and profitability among the Cook Inlet fields, given the economics of field abandonment it is likely that the bulk of production would continue even with higher taxes burden. On the other hand additional investment in further production would no doubt be much much lower than it would be under the current tax regime. It may be important to note that Cook Inlet oil production is an integral part of the regional economic base on the Kenai Pennisula. Eliminating the ELF would probably shutin Cook Inlet production. The modified exponent ELF would have no negative impact on Cook Inlet because all these fields produce much less than 100,000 bbls/day.

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESENTATION ON ELF
given by Gregg Erickson
TAX POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING - September 11, 1986

TAPE 2, SIDE 1, COUNTER #238

The ELF was established in 1977 and as Mr. Monkman told you, the ELF is a tax break. The purpose of the ELF as it was established in 1977 was to reduce the tax rate. Oil producers like the ELF. Any proposal to [increase] the ELF is [not] going to win favor with the oil producers and give them more money, allow them to keep more of the proceeds of the production of oil than they keep now.

The ELF can reduce the tax rate by a lot or it can reduce the tax rate by a little depending on one major factor. And that is the average per well productivity. If the average well in a field produces 300 B per day, that field will pay a lower tax rate under the ELF, other things being equal, than if the average per well productivity in the field is 1000 B per day. The average per well productivity is always the major factor in establishing the ELF and it needs to be kept in mind. We'll be coming back to that again later.

The ELF is always a number, and the number is always between zero and one. If you like, you can think of the ELF as a percentage that's applied to the regular nominal percentage tax rate. That's another important concept.... Right now, Alaska has a nominal percentage severance tax rate of 15% for some fields and 12.25% for some fields, and some fields change around from 15 to 12.25% because of amendments to the severance tax law that were adopted in 1981 and we'll talk about those later. That nominal tax rate gets reduced by the ELF by multiplication of this number (between zero and one, remember) times the nominal percentage rate. So, if the ELF is .5 (one-half) then the nominal tax rate is reduced by a half. So, [if] the ELF is .5 and our nominal percentage rate is 15%, the effective percentage rate is half of 15%, or 7.5%. Oil companies like the ELF, it reduces their tax rate.

I think that we can understand how this works best now by taking you to the never-never land of charts and graphs.(*) I know that it's a hard thing for some people to grasp the kind of geometric concepts we are going to be dealing with, so, Mr. Chairman, if it's alright with you, I'd be appreciative if people would interrupt me and say that they don't understand a particular concept that I'm trying to get across.

This is a picture of the Economic Limit Factor. Start out by looking at the two axes here, the two lines. The lower axis right here is...daily output per well. [It] starts out here at 50, but you can imagine it going even further down here, to zero. That means 50 B of oil per day, per well. It goes way on up here to 2500, 2800 B per day per well. The other axis on this chart is the ELF. And as I told you before, if you recall, it's a number between zero and one. [Y]ou see those numbers here, starting at 0 at the bottom, .5 in the middle and 1 at the top. If you have an oil field and the ELF is 1.0, you get no tax reduction because your nominal tax rate is multiplied times 1 which means it's not changed at all. If your ELF is .5, it's multiplied by one-half, it means you pay half of the nominal tax rate. If your ELF is 0, you pay no tax at all. Oil companies like the ELF.

You notice that fields have different average daily production, some fields have very high productivity in comparison to others. Prudhoe Bay field has, or had, because this graph was originally made about nine months ago, an average

(* Refer to charts attached to transcript.)

daily productivity as calculated for the ELF of around 2500 B per day per well. Milne Point, on the other hand, has a lower productivity and Kuparuk has a lower productivity still. If we applied the ELF in exactly the same manner to Prudhoe Bay, to Milne Point, and Kuparuk, it affects them differently. Prudhoe Bay, because it has the highest productivity, gets the least tax break. Kuparuk, because it has the lowest per well productivity, gets the biggest tax break from the ELF. And if we had a field down in this region, it would get an even bigger tax break from the ELF.

Now we say that the ELF is a function. [T]hat means it depends on the daily output per well. That means that if you know the daily output per well you can, or at least you have been able to in the past, determine what the ELF is going to be, what number between zero and one gets multiplied times that nominal tax rate to produce the effective tax rate, which is what Mr. Nelson and his oil company people are really concerned about, the effective tax rate. And it's really what the State of Alaska is concerned about too. In terms of all the factors that we're concerned about on severance taxes, it's the effective rate that people have to pay that makes the difference, not whether the nominal rate is 15% or 30% or 2%.

Now, you'll notice that this curve has a shape that puts every point out here as we move to the right along this lower axis, we also move at every point up on the fractions of the ELF axis. Except for this region down here at the bottom, we'll be coming back to this as we calculate the ELF, but that region is the economic limit region.

The framers of the legislation in 1977, that christened the ELF, that created the ELF, decided that they wanted to insure that fields of relatively low productivity such as they expected to develop among the Cook Inlet fields at that time, would not be forced to shut down before the cost of [operating] the fields exceeded the value of the oil that was being produced. And there was a problem that Milton Lipton and many others spoke to the Legislature about and they called it the premature shut-down effect. If you had too high a tax burden at these low productivity, and presumably low profitability fields,...those fields would shut down, even though they could continue to make profits if the taxes were reduced and continue to make, at least if not profits, at least enough money to bear their operating costs and to keep the jobs and keep the economic activity represented by those fields. Economist and experts and business people alike agreed that it didn't make much sense to shut a field down before the actual cost of production exceeded the value of the oil. Taxes, and royalties too, were dead weight that had to be carried by the production of those fields and so this device was created to, at least as far as the severance tax is concerned, eliminate that dead weight drag on those fields that might otherwise shut [them] down.

We'll come back to that concept so it's not necessary that everybody grasp that in its entirety. But, I'd like to stop right now while we've got this graph in front of us and ask any member of the committee, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, if they have any questions or if there's anything I've covered so far that doesn't compute.

COUNTER #377

(QUESTION from Sen. Eliason: Just a general question, the lower level of production, there, and in fact what they're paying is only 7½% or is it the 15%, is that what we're saying.)

We're saying that Prudhoe Bay, under these assumptions, which are a little bit out of date right now, is paying 83% of, in the case of Prudhoe Bay, 15%. And Tom Chester, our expert, or maybe Mr. Nelson who probably knows a lot about Prudhoe Bay too, can give you the exact number.

(QUESTION from Sen. Eliason: The question of course, or the point was, in other words, that's the 7½%, that low production field is paying 7½% rather than the 15.)

If the nominal rate on Kuparuk was 15% that would be true. However, the nominal rate on Kuparuk is, if I am correct, 12.25%. [They're] paying half of that, that's correct.

(COMMENT from George Nelson: I want to make one correction because in Prudhoe Bay we're paying, based on one, 15% simply because of the fact that for the first ten years, by the law, the factor cannot, if it calculates out above .7, it's always going to be 1. So it's July 1987 before Prudhoe Bay can really use ELF to the advantage of reducing that percent.)

Mr. Nelson is absolutely correct. The reason, and I'm sorry I gave the misrepresentation if I did, that Prudhoe Bay's actual tax rate was reflected by this calculation, because as he says, there's a special exception in the law for Prudhoe Bay which was established in the 1981 tax amendments. But, the ELF by itself works this way, and if the ELF applies, which it does not right now to Prudhoe Bay, Prudhoe Bay would be paying 83% of whatever its nominal rate would be.

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: The ELF is based on the output per well, or site. What are advantages or disadvantages if we went by field?)

The output per well was chosen, it's my opinion anyhow, that in 1977, it was chosen by the legislature as the factor to determine the ELF because they believed that that was the most readily measurable indicator of field profitability and they wanted to have lower taxes for fields that had lower profits and higher taxes for fields that had a higher profit. But they wanted to retain the concept of a severance tax, as Mr. Monkman mentioned to you. They didn't want to create an income tax here and call it a severance tax, although, they in effect got a little bit close to that perhaps at times.

They chose this one factor recognizing, I think, that there were a lot of other factors that affect profits as well. And for example, we have here Kuparuk, which may well be a more profitable field than Milne Point, and yet the Milne Point has a very small number of relatively high productivity wells, or at least was anticipated to have that situation. And Kuparuk has a relatively larger number of lower productivity wells. As a consequence, Kuparuk gets a bigger tax break than Milne Point. That shows in effect, the arbitrariness, if you will, of just using daily output per well as the indicator of relative profitability. Because if the situation I just described is true, if Kuparuk is a more profitable field than Milne Point, then this ELF factor has not produced the results that I think the framers of the legislation in 1977 wanted to produce. And it might well be that that problem is a consequence of the failure of this ELF factor to reflect total field size. [T]here are a number of factors, indeed, besides daily output per well and total field size, that could be taken account of in an ELF kind of calculation. And the framers chose daily output per well.

(QUESTION from Rep. Sund: How is the curve generated?)

We're going to take you all through that, in excruciating detail, I'm afraid.

(QUESTION from Sen. Eliason: Could also the ELF be construed as an incentive to put more wells in a field?)

Indeed, it could be. However, there are technical provisions in the law which say that you really don't look at number of wells, you look at the number of days that a well operates multiplied. So, it's really well days that are used to try to prevent the incentive, or eliminate any incentive for gold-plating or over-drilling a field. Now, I don't know that any studies have been made to indicate whether or not there is any residual incentive or not. My

suspicion is that its minor if it is. You'll see those technical provisions when we go through the actual translation of the ELF which is coming next.

(QUESTION from Bart Garber: On your graph, the figures on the bottom line, those are constants for the formula, they don't ever change?)

The figures on the bottom line change for every field, from day to day.

(QUESTION from Bart Garber: No, I understand that, what I'm saying is as far as the formula itself goes, to determine the ELF rate, the number of barrels pumped per well don't change?)

[I don't] know if I understand your question correctly. Let me rephrase it and tell me if I'm getting back to you. Does a well this year pumping at 1300/bbl per day get exactly the same ELF this year as it will five years from now if the law doesn't change?

(QUESTION from Bart Garber: No, that's not what I meant. My question is are those figures constant there. Will you always use those figures. In other words, if a well is pumping at 1300/bbl daily output per day, I'm not saying will that well remain constant, I'm saying will that figure remain constant at wherever you're at on ELF?)

Like at .7. If you'd asked me that question last year, or 13-14 months ago, I would have said yes, absolutely. But, I would have been wrong because, as Mr. Monkman mentioned, there is a provision in the law which [was never] really thought [much about], to change this production-at-the-economic-limit number. You'll see how that enters into it later on. And it's nobody's fault but my own that I would have misanswered your question, but I think there were a lot people who would have made the same mistake a year and a half ago.

(QUESTION from Gordon Harrison: I see a question, Gregg, to follow up on, Sen. Eliason's question about the number of wells. Is well spacing regulated, the number of wells that is, by the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission?)

Yes it is. Indeed, the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission establishes regulations and when the oil companies wish to change the average spacing, they need to get permission. However, the Commission grants or withholds that permission based on generally a reference to engineering practice rather than economic analysis. Or at least that is to my understanding.

COUNTER #523

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: Gregg, that was the concept of the formula?)

We go from the general, and that can be called general, to the formula itself. Now folks, don't automatically assume that you can't figure this out. This is the formula, the ELF here equals this mathematical construction. We're going to take you through this mathematical construction and it's not nearly as complicated as it seems. The only thing that you may find unfamiliar, and I think most of you will have had some familiarity with it, is the use of the exponent. This little 'exp' in the formula means that the expression following it is, taken together, an exponent. If you recall what any...exponent says, you raise the number to a power, and if the exponent is two, that means you multiply the number by itself. So, four squared ([a four] with a little two above it] means four times four, and that's all we're doing here, but a little more complex than that because we use fractional exponents. But, that's the principle.

The formula has in it abbreviations because if you wrote the whole thing out it would just be too long. And one of those abbreviations, the first one,... ELF,...is an abbreviation [that] stands for Economic Limit Factor. The second abbreviation is PEL. It stands for Production at the Economic Limit. Now you recall the graph we showed you just a moment ago, had a zero tax rate at [an] average daily per well production of from zero to 300 B. The concept

behind that was that it would probably take about, it's a real rough and arbitrary kind of number, but nevertheless, take about 300 B a day for an average well in the average field to make its expenses. Now there's all sorts of things that vary. [O]bviously the cost of the well can vary enormously. [A]s we've discovered, the amount of money you get from the oil can vary enormously, and all these affect how many barrels you have to produce to just cover your operating expenses. Incidentally, the operating expenses in the statute were defined very, very narrowly. But, as a rough approximation...the law says you will take 300 B unless a showing is made otherwise. And up to now, everyone has calculated their ELF using 300 B, so we use it here today in our calculation. [I]t's defined in the law as times the number of wells and times the number of days the well is operating, actually defined as well days. So that the production at the economic limit for this month for this hypothetical field which is similar to Prudhoe Bay,...would be 4,869,000 B. The concept there is that if the Prudhoe Bay owners could get 4,869,000 barrels [per month], they would at least make their expenses. So we plug that number, 4,869,000, into the formula at this point, and at the bottom down here....

The second factor in the formula is the total production for the field for the month. Since we're talking about 300 B per day, and yet the tax gets paid on a monthly basis, we have to calculate in the total number of barrels in the field per the whole month. And that's just simply the monthly production, but we've also shown it here as the result of multiplying the average number of operating wells during the month times the number of days of production for the month times the average daily production per well. And in the example here, we show 541 wells, assuming each of them operated for 30 days, and the average per well productivity was 2,477 B per well, that means they actually produced forty million barrels in that month. So, they actually produced, if this example is correct, roughly 20-25 times as much oil as is necessary under this very rough calculation to meet their operating expenses that we calculated up here in this calculation.... Remember this may not actually be enough to meet their operating expenses, or maybe much more. [It's] what the statute says you use, and I'm explaining not anything that's in the statute when I say operating expenses, but the concept. Well, actually it is in the statute elsewhere, but it's the concept here that we're talking about.

Then we have to plug in the number of well days in the exponent, and that's calculated simply as the number of operating wells during the month times the number of days each well operates. For example, in our case here,...541 wells [times] thirty days gives us [about] 16,000 well days.

Now we come to the calculation. But let me stop right here and talk about these definitions.... Does anybody have anything that they don't understand about these definitions so far?

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1, COUNTER #638

TAPE 2, SIDE 2, COUNTER #001

(Beginning of tape unintelligible.)

...show us that it should be more. Up to now, it has been 300 B a day because the operators have either not come in, or if they have, have not satisfied the requirements that they satisfy.

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: Where do the numbers (tape unintelligible) to break even?)

Three hundred. It's in the statute itself. It says "it shall be presumed to be 300/bbl per day per well, unless..." etc.

(QUESTION from Rep. Martin: Is it possible to look at this formula as a disincentive for oil production. To me, the more they produce, the more tax burden that they have. In a way, it may be worthwhile for production companies

to say let's keep it at a certain level, and therefore we know that our tax factor will be decreased.)

That's entirely possible. The formula is based, however, on the assumption that these more productive fields are more profitable. Now if that assumption doesn't hold or the higher profits are not more than enough to counterbalance the higher taxes, then your supposition could be correct.

(QUESTION from Rep. Martin: Especially at the lower price market, I can see where they want to produce as much as they want at the high prices, because they get more and more percentage of the profit. But in this flexibility we have now, what's to say that a company won't say hey, now it's our turn to pay less taxes and get more profit at the lower price market?)

Well, if I was an oil company, I [c]ould certainly say that.

Now, we have to go and plug these numbers in where...these acronyms [were]. Let's go back up and look at the formula again one more time.

* * * *

[There are] two parts to the ELF formula: the exponent, which is everything within these parentheses starting here and going over to here, and the inverse function, which is everything within these parentheses starting here and going over to here.

In calculating, let's go through the inverse function first. We plug in the PEL right here, the Production at the Economic Limit, which we calculated up here, and that's 4,800,000 some barrels. We plug in the Total Production here, and that's 40 million, and we divide 40 million into 4,800,000. Now, 4,800,000 is a lot smaller number that 40 million, so the result is less than 1. It's a fraction and in this case it's .12, a little over 1/10th. After we make this division, we plug that number in right there.

Now the formula says that you take that little fraction and subtract it from 1. So we do that here, and we get the result of .8789. Now if there was no exponent, that would be the ELF. And indeed, as you will see, as we go back over the history of the 1977 session, that as originally proposed...was all there was to the ELF, was just that calculation we just made. And if that had been the case, and the ELF applied to this particular field, then the nominal tax rate would be multiplied times .8789 to produce the effective tax rate. The effective tax rate would be 88 percent, roughly, [of] the nominal rate. But for reasons that we'll come back to later, the exponent got added.

The exponent is calculated by a constant here, which is 460 (that's a dimensionless constant, it's in the formula, it's in the statute, it's plugged into anything you do with the ELF under this current law) times the number of well days, and that's 16,230, so we plug that in right there, times the PEL, which we calculated up here as some 4,800,000. We can multiply or divide these in any order we want. And [when] we do that,...divide the 16,000 by the formula, and you get a very small number, and you multiply it by 460, it gets large enough so it's always generally over 1. And the results here, if you'd want to take a calculator and do it, multiply 460 times 16,000, and divide the results by some 4,800,000, you get this number. Let me stop right there and see if people have followed me so far.

COUNTER #59

(QUESTION from Rep. Sund: Where does the 460 come in and what's the theory behind it?)

I'd like to defer that until we get into the discussions in the free conference committee in 1977, because I think that's the easiest place to bring that in, but I'll tell you right now that it was a means of...changing the shape of this curve, and it was a means basically of pushing this curve this way. We'll get back to that.

So we've got now this inverse function which has been reduced down to .87, and if it wasn't for the exponent, that would be the ELF, and we've got this exponent. Now normally, this exponent is written just a little bit above the number to which it applies, but because the exponent is so large, we use this different notation, this 'exp'. And if you look in the statute, 43.55, you will find that formula just exactly as we've written it here. The number comes out to 1.5 and probably most of you are not familiar with raising a number to a fractional power, but you can think of it like this. Suppose this exponent was 2, that would look a lot more familiar. It would say .87 squared, with a little tiny 2 right above here and that would be the same thing as we've got written here, except with this being a 2 instead of a 1.5.

Well now what happens when you multiply, usually you think when you square a number it gets bigger, like 4 squared, raised to the second power is 16, that's a bigger number than 4. Now if the number being raised to the power is less than 1 however, you're multiplying a fraction times a fraction and when you multiply a fraction times a fraction you get a number that is smaller. And, in fact, if you multiplied, if the number here was just .8, and the exponent here was 2, you would be multiplying 8 times 8, which is 64, which would make this number here not 64, but .64. In other words, it would reduce it. And that's indeed what happens here. Because this exponent is greater than one, and so if the exponent was one, it would have no effect on this number, and if it was smaller than this number it would make it bigger. But we don't have to worry about that. Basically, if you've got a calculator, plug it in and press the exponent button and it will do it for you.

The result of raising .8789 to the 1.5 power is .82. It's higher than it would be if we were raising .8 to, squaring it, and you can see how that relationship goes, I hope. This is the one part that involves mathematics that most people probably aren't familiar with, but fortunately we have calculators now [so] we [don't] have to be familiar with it.

Does anybody have any questions about the basic calculation about the ELF.

Okay, what happens when we change some of these numbers. Well I ran through three examples here just to show you quickly the results of some adjustments to this ELF calculation. [I]n this case we've increased the exponential constant. It was 460, [and] it is 460 in the statute. What if that number were 1000. Well, we've run through here, and I won't take you through it at any length because you have in front of you the printed copy of this. I've highlighted with bold numbers every number that has changed from our previous example. This number is changed, this number is changed, and this number is changed.

The result of an increase in the exponential constant is a decrease in the tax. The exponent gets larger, you take a larger exponent and apply it to the same basic ELF and the result is a smaller number. Like raising a number to the third power instead of to the second power. So, just to go over it again, if the exponential constant is increased, the tax gets decreased, and in 1977, as you'll see, this was one of things that the free conference committee which met for almost two weeks argued and argued and argued about.

COUNTER #119

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: Was that where your 460 came in?)

The 460 was the number that previously took the place of 1000. Yes, the answer to your question is yes.

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: I understand that. In the free conference they argued this 1000 to 460?)

Well, 1000 wasn't one of their options, but they argued the difference between 750 and 300.

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: This was an arbitrary figure that they were trying to work out?)

They wanted this curve, as you'll see, to look the way they wanted it to. And that number, this 1000 or 460 or 300, makes a significant difference on how that curve looks and who gets hit with a tax jab and who doesn't.

(COMMENT from Sen. Abood: So more is less.)

In this case, more is less. An increase in the exponential constant means a decrease in the tax. And you may not be surprised to learn that the Senate, in 1977, wanted a bigger exponent and the House wanted a smaller one.

(COMMENT from Sen. Abood: I wasn't there at the time.)

(QUESTION from Sen. Eliason: Do you have the names of the free conference committee members?)

I certainly do. (Paus - Let's take a look here at the results if the exponential constant is reduced. [It's] just the opposite, I've run it here from 460 down to 300. I've run through the calculations in exactly the same way. The exponent here becomes 1. And if you recall our earlier discussion, an exponent of 1 means that the number to which it is applied is unchanged. The result is an increase in the taxes you would expect. What happens if, remember there's another constant in the calculation, and that was the PEL here, the 300/bbl per day in our other calculation, here I show in Case 4, the results of changing that 300 to 400. Now this change could come about as...a consequence of the law being changed. The law currently says the production at the economic limit is assumed to be this calculation right here with 300. If they change the law to make it 400, the result would be as we'll show you here now. It could also come about as a consequence of the oil companies petitioning and the Dept. of Revenue approving a higher PEL allowance for a particular field. The result, I won't carry you all the way through this, just go down to the bottom, is in this case, a very small decrease in the tax. Basically we're saying here this is the amount of oil you get for free, and naturally that reduces the tax.

Now if this had been, the result here is reduction from .822, I believe, to .816, a very small reduction. But if this had been a much smaller field, and if this factor in the calculation right here had been smaller, the result could have been much more significant in terms of a tax reduction. But the principle [still] holds, and that is when the PEL constant is increased, the tax decreases. And that tends to be more important for the smaller fields, but it holds true for all fields. And I won't show you another example, because it's just the other way around. If the PEL constant is decreased, the tax increases.

That is how the tax is calculated and now it seems like the best way is to run this sort of backwards to show you how [the legislature got to this point] ([though] nobody really knows what went through the collective collegial bodies' minds when they make a decision like this). [W]hat was in the minds of the legislators who grappled with these problems in 1976 and 1977, [what were] some of things that they were thinking about? [T]o do that, I'd like to start with the tax law as it existed in 1977. This chart is actually from the 1977 session, and the axes here are the average barrels per day, the same axes that we had on our other chart, and the percentage tax rates, not the ELF here, this is the total percentage tax paid. So it's similar to what the ELF is but in this case we didn't have an ELF at the time and we're looking at the effective tax rate which, in the case of the '77 law, was the same as the nominal rate.

Let's focus on this scalloped curve right here. This is the law as it existed in 1977. It had been adopted in the 1973 special session. Some people call it the pipeline session. The law provided that the first 300/bbl of oil produced from a well during a day were taxed at 5%. And with what's an increasing block structure, which is very similar to the kind of structure that

you pay [on] your electric bills in most areas, except reversed. With electric bills, you usually pay less for the higher consumption, and in this case, the more you produce, the higher was your tax rate. Now those blocks produced this kind of scalloped appearance when they're applied to the average daily production and the rate that you're actually paying. For the next 700 B the rate was 6%. So you paid 5% on the first 300 B and 6% on the next 700 B, which meant that the average rate, which is what we're talking about here, never quite got up to 6%, because you always had this low price block down here. The next block, the final block, which was everything over 1000 B was taxed at 8% flat tax. So that if you've got it way, way out here, you eventually got close to 8%, and it was about 7.5% here around 3,500 B per day. That was the tax as it stood, so the effective rate, if you had 4,000 B per day of production, was about 7.6%. The top marginal block was 8%. Nobody was taxed more than 8%. If you were very, very productive in terms of average daily per well production, your tax rate was approaching 8%.

COUNTER #206

Okay, what was wrong with that? Why did the legislature want to change it? Well, I think there were two things in the minds of this special oil and gas and pipeline impact committee when they proposed what became known as House Bill 144. They wanted to reduce the tax rate for low productivity fields. This is the same kind of declining block structure under the bill that was introduced by the special committee that was formed to study this. And that bill reduced the tax rate for fields with productivities of less than about 1200-1300 B per day and increased the tax rate, substantially increased the tax rate for the high productivity fields. It was a device, a proposal that would have increased the taxes for the fields that have high average daily production and would have decreased the taxes for fields with low average daily production. Why did they want to do that? Well, clearly one thing that was in their mind and that they said in their report was that they were fearful that a 5% rate on these low blocks would cause Cook Inlet fields to shut down in some future year. They were seeing the gradual decline in productivity of the Cook Inlet fields and there was concern that that was something that they didn't want to see, they didn't want to see those jobs lost, and they didn't want to see the dead weight economic loss of shutting down a field when it was actually producing enough oil to make its cost. So they proposed that the first 100 B of oil paid absolutely no tax at all, and the next 200 B pay tax at the rate of 3% and so on, on up, so that the maximum tax rate was, if I recall correctly, 12%, it may be 12½%, I don't recall the top block. But as you can see, this was a very hefty tax increase for these more productive fields.

The Dept. of Revenue had, through 1976 and 1977, been conducting a major study of oil and gas taxes and it to this day remains a very, very useful piece of work. I have a copy with me in my briefcase back there right today in case questions come up that I can't answer, because it is even now, though somewhat out of date, a very useful document. It is primarily authored by John Messenger and his associate Tom Williams. As a result of that study and discussions within the administration and the Dept. of Law and the Dept. of Revenue, and Governor Hammond at that time, they came forward and introduced a proposed legislation that would have looked, had it been adopted, like this curve shown here. It contained an Economic Limit Factor without the exponent. Remember, in most cases, the exponent was a factor that when raised, reduces the tax.

The problem, I think, that some people saw with that was that it created too high a tax, too soon. In other words, a field here with, let's say 300/bbl of productivity would be paying tax of around 7%. That was even higher than the existing tax here and it was exactly those kinds of fields that the special oil

and gas committee was concerned with in terms of providing some tax breaks for them. Their proposal provided substantial tax breaks for every field producing less than 1300/bbl per day, that is a break in comparison with the laws that stood at that time. So there were attempts made to adjust the Economic Limit Factor...in the administration's bill. And that intent, since there were really only two factors you could adjust in that bill, one was the Production at the Economic Limit, which in their bill was 100. They said well if you don't want to lower that, let's just increase it, and so here was a, this was never introduced as a bill but was discussed as a proposal, Economic Limit Factor of 1000. Well, without the exponent, what happens is that this curve gets pushed this way, it actually gets pushed, this point gets moved to here and this curved area gets pushed down to here. That didn't produce the result that people were comfortable with either because it was felt that the result was even too big a tax break for the fields that were in this region right here. And, as well, when you gave that tax break, the result was the depression of the curve over in this region here. You couldn't avoid it if the calculation of the formula was such that if you moved this over here, this part came down as well. So, I think the desire was, and this is my guess, there was some evidence in the written record to indicate that this was what in fact was in the minds of some legislators, they wanted to give this break here, but they didn't want to give this big a break out here, and they couldn't figure out a way to do it with the Economic Limit Factor that the Dept. of Revenue had presented. And legislators kept saying, well, I'd like to use the Dept. of Revenue's formula because it's always good to get the administration's bill passed and put your amendments on the administration's ideas rather than try to do it the other way around, but they were saying,"We want a curve that incorporates the administration's formula, but one that more closely approximates what we've got here in our own bill. Can you give us an ELF factor that produces this?" And the result was the exponent because the exponent allowed you to push this part of the curve this way, to push the curve inward without pushing this part down very much, pushing this outer edge down very much.

It's interesting, some people say that these kinds of complications in law wouldn't happen if the legislature and the administration didn't have a bloated bureaucracy to dream up crazy ideas like this. And I think that's absolutely true, but it wasn't the bureaucracy that dreamed up the idea because they wanted to complicate the law, it was because the legislators and the policy makers came and said I want to accomplish a result, how do we do it? And that's how it happened that the ELF got an exponent.

COUNTER #302

The two bills that...ended up in free conference committee then had three things that they could adjust. The nominal rate, the exponential constant and the Production at the Economic Limit, and they also had a cents-per-barrel factor which I can get into if you like. I think it's probably worthwhile covering, but I think I'd like to reserve it for a little bit later.

In terms of the nominal rate, the house bill suggested 12.5% of value, the Senate wanted 11.5% of value, two different nominal rates which meant that the senate bill's curve headed up towards 11.5, never quite got to it, and the house bill was above it, was headed up towards 12.5, also never quite reaching it. The presumed Production at the Economic Limit in the house bill was 300/bbl per day and in the senate bill was 100/bbl per day, which was to say that the house bill gave a bigger tax break under the PEL, than did the senate bill. I think that reflected the greater concern in the House with the production problems that might in the future occur in Cook Inlet, or that were seen as a potential future problem in 1977.

The final factor that the free conferees were arguing about for those two weeks was the exponential constant, and the Senate wanted 750 and the House wanted 300. And to make a long story short, they compromised. In the very last minutes, as often does, it came together very quickly with a compromise which was a very small reduction in the House's proposed nominal rate from 12.5 down to 12.25, and they got to the end where they were arguing about hundredths of a percentage point, and they compromised on the House's part, or really a willingness on the Senate's part to adjust that exponential constant downward and there was some disagreement among the various oil companies as to their reactions to that and I don't think any of that disagreement ever got on the record, but it least it was said that some of the smaller oil companies operating in Cook Inlet felt that some advantage for the larger oil companies had been gained at their expense. I don't know if that's true, but that was an interesting side light on the negotiations and discussions.

COUNTER #348

There were probably ten or, there were a multitude of curves of this nature drawn and I think that's about all I can tell you about what went on in 1977 free conference. But the formula we worked through today arose out of those kinds of political compromises and I think it's the fact that the free conferees had to get in to this material as deeply as they did and as we have done today that has persuaded Gordon Harrison to ask me to go into as deeply as I have.

There are a whole lot of additional things that probably should be talked about, including the cents-per-barrel differences in 1977. The House proposed a cents-per-barrel tax...with an annual adjustment to the cents-per-barrel, based on the GNP deflator, basically based on inflation. So, had the House provision in that regard been adopted, the cents-per-barrel floor would have risen each year to keep pace with inflation and we haven't calculated what it would have been. The House proposed 93¢ per barrel, so it clearly would have been somewhere well above $1.00 by now as a floor for the severance tax.

There's another interesting side light. The Dept. of Revenue initially proposed in 1977 and later retracted, or withdrew, a proposal to provide a royalty credit against severance tax, and it was a cute little device that would have, had it been legal, or had it been adopted, would have protected royalty revenues with a floor of sorts, in effect, using the severance tax as a means of providing a floor under royalty revenues as well. Senator Ferguson, who was around all this time, and Sen. Eliason haven't said anything about these, I hope that your memory ... accords with mine on these points.

The Senate had proposed a cents-per-barrel floor of 75¢ per barrel and had said that there would be no escalator. They compromised on that at 80¢ per barrel and that's where the 80¢ per barrel comes from that's in our law today. That's a good stopping place, I think, for the moment. There are a whole lot of other things to go into, but now is probably a good time to pause.

What comes next, if we want to go into it, Mr. Chairman, is the procedure for establishing the Production at the Economic Limit. The 1981 amendments, which of course gave us the tax system we have and which substantially changed the applicability of the ELF, as Mr. Nelson pointed out earlier, the ELF doesn't at this moment apply to Prudhoe Bay and that's because of what was done in 1981. Do you want to go on to those right now, Mr. Chairman, or do you want to pause at this point?

COUNTER #398

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: What would be your timing on that, Gregg?)

I think the 1981 amendments we could probably get through before lunch, and probably finish up this whole thing before lunch, unless you want to take an early lunch. I guess I'm getting a little hoarse, but that's alright.

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: Are there any objections to continuing?)

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: One question, Mr. Chairman, I want to be sure it's straight. The only two fields that are affected are the Milne Point and the Kuparuk at this present time, is that correct?)

Affected by the ELF? I don't believe that's correct, but I would defer to my colleague, Tom Chester, who's probably looked into it. Cook Inlet fields, of course, are affected as well. And I think...

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: But you were saying, if I may, Prudhoe Bay is not effected by it, but Kuparuk and Milne Point according to this graph, is affected by it?)

The Kuparuk field does have the ELF applied in calculation if its taxes, and the Milne Point field does as well, yes.

(QUESTION from Sen. Abood: So everything but Prudhoe Bay is affected by it?)

At this time, that's correct. (tape unintelligible) It appears that that would the case, yes, unless the law is altered.

In 1981, let me back up, because there's one thing I should really say that I am not really the expert to talk, or the person to profess any expertise on, and that is the procedures under which the Production at the Economic Limit can be modified. And I am going to defer to Mr. Monkman or Ms. Vogt or Dr. Logsdon, if you want to go into more detail on those procedures. They're dealing with them on a daily basis. But the 1977 law, both versions, the House version and the Senate version, had a provision that said if the oil companies came in and could show that the costs of their production, and the bill defined costs very narrowly, although it left some ambiguities which I think may be a matter of some concern, if the oil companies could come in, or any oil company, any producer, could come in and show that its costs or the revenue from the production of the given 300 B was not enough to cover its narrowly defined costs, then the company would be entitled to, and the Dept. of Revenue was directed to grant, a higher Production at the Economic Limit. That factor, that provision was, I must say in my memory, not particularly a matter of concern to either side in the negotiations. There was concern that the language be written very tightly and of course, as usually often happens in this case, the concern of those of us who were drafting at the direction of the committee was to define those costs very narrowly. It turns out that that wasn't the problem, and as is often the case, it's the problem you don't think about is the one that comes back and grabs [you]. So, if there are further questions on that, I think I'd like to defer and have them direct it to the Dept. of Revenue, since they're in administrative hearings and are thinking a lot about it, if it's alright with Mr. Monkman.

COUNTER #458

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: Any last questions of Gregg, here on PEL?)

Let's go on to 1981 then. In 1981, I don't think we want to go through the long history of the 1981 situation, but in brief, the state had been sued with respect to the constitutionality of its oil and gas corporate income tax. And as a result of the deliberations in the 1981 session, there were attempts to settle that lawsuit legislatively, that is to remove the provisions of the petroleum corporate income tax that was passed in '78, which offended the oil companies, and thus settle the law suit. Those efforts came to naught, but there were efforts and concern on the part of the administration of Governor

Hammond to limit the state's liability by substituting another kind of tax that would not be so legally, at least would not be subject to the legal vulnerabilities that some people thought the oil and gas corporate income tax, that was then called, by shorthand, separate accounting, was supposedly vulnerable to.

The legislature decided to repeal the separate accounting tax and substitute a different tax which, it was felt, would be less subject to legal threat. The result of that change was a substantial reduction in revenue to the state. And to counterbalance that reduction, significant changes were made in the 1977 severance tax. The effect of those changes were to increase the tax rate at Prudhoe Bay from what was then about 11% up to 15%. This was done by establishing in the law, what I call in a shorthand way, the ten-year ELF trigger. And the ELF trigger says that any time a field has been in production for ten years, if that field began production before 1981, that it, the ELF goes into effect only after ten years of production. That is why Prudhoe Bay does not have the ELF applied in calculating its effective tax rate right now. Now there was also another trigger in the 1981 law and that's the .7 trigger. And I know this sounds very confusing and it is because the 1981 amendments were confusing. They were, in my opinion anyhow, kind of jury-rigged to produced the revenue result that was needed to balance the losses of revenue resulting from the change in the separate accounting to modified apportionment tax in the income tax side.

The theory behind it however, there was a theory behind those changes, and the theory behind the changes was that a field would be entitled in general (and this wasn't in the law this was sort of the theory behind it) to five years of production with a tax rate of 12.25% and that thereafter the tax rate would go up to 15%. Since Prudhoe Bay had already producing for five years in 1981, it meant that Prudhoe Bay had about five years to go without, actually in terms of the effective date about seven years to go, and with a tax rate that was not affected by the ELF. In addition, that unfortunately didn't get enough money to make up the difference, and so it was rather arbitrarily the law was designed so as to apply a 15% rate to Prudhoe Bay during the present time on the distinction that it came into production earlier and that they were going give a better tax situation to the smaller fields that were expected to come on after 1981. //

COUNTER #536

So the result is that Prudhoe Bay has a calculated ELF of about .8 right now, which being above .7, doesn't trigger the .7 trigger, which if it did would cause the ELF to be applied. As a result, Prudhoe Bay pays a full 15% tax and will do so until it has been in production for ten years, which happens next year. That change means that there will be a significant reduction in the amount of severance taxes that the Prudhoe Bay field will produce for the State of Alaska.

That reduction sometimes gets caught in a kind of semantic difficulty. [I]t certainly is a reduction from the tax that is currently being paid by the oil companies on their Prudhoe Bay properties and their Prudhoe Bay production. It is not, however, a reduction from the current tax law, so I think it's useful in discussing this to remember that semantic distinction there. Usually we can say current tax and compare it with something else, in this case the word current tax can have two quite different meanings. So that is...one kind of ELF legacy, if you will, that is left over from the 1981 session: he ten years is running out and Prudhoe Bay is waiting to get its ELF.

The second legacy, and one that really works the other way, is that the five years that fields are allowed to produce at 12.25%, and this only applies to the newer fields, means that in the 1990's or late 1980's some of these newer

fields are going, actually they'll all be in the 1990's, are going to have a significant tax increase. Endicott for example, is going to be subjected to about an increase from, I don't know what the effective rates are, but it's about a 20% severance tax increase in about 1991-1993 (I don't have that sheet in front of me, but Tom Chester will talk to you later about the revenue effects of these things and show that to you) because the nominal rate changes from 12.25 to 15% in that year. Now if those fields are marginal, it's probably [not] something you want to hit with an extra tax burden at that time. That is another legacy left by the 1981 amendments.

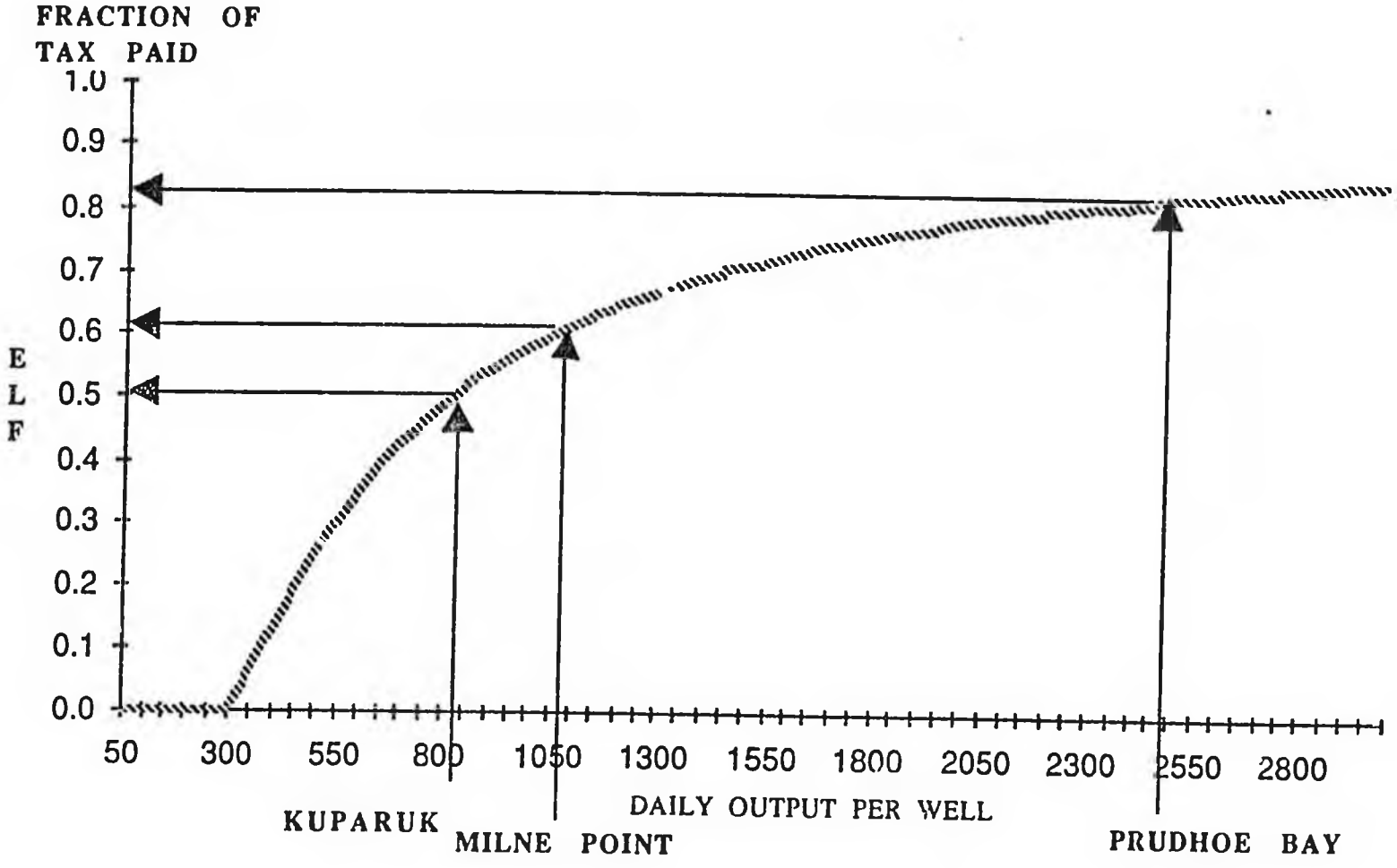
There is, of course, the legacy of the 1977 session, in what Mr. Monkman has descriptively called the "trap door in the floor." That is the application of the ELF to the cents-per-barrel which means that the tax rate could in fact fall to zero. Something that I don't think was contemplated or thought about one way or the other very much at the time the bill was drafted, although others may have a different opinion on that. So there are at least these two legacies from the 1981 amendments, and those may or may not be something you'll be interested in looking at further.

That concludes my presentation, and I am to be followed, presumably this afternoon, by my colleague, Tom Chester, who will discuss with you the revenue implications of these legacies, if you will, and the ways that those revenue implications could be altered, some of the ways that those revenue implications could be changed.

(QUESTION from Rep. Grussendorf: Before we break, do we have any questions of Gregg? When we come back, we'll be dealing with revenue effects of ELF and then the previous proposals to change ELF. Will coming back at 1:00 be acceptable with you? Let's recess until 1:00.)

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2, COUNTER #633

ECONOMIC LIMIT FACTOR



CASE 1

HOW THE ELF IS CALCULATED

ELF = (1 - [PEL/TP])exp(460*WD/PEL)

PEL = (Production at the Economic Limit) =
(300 barrels per day)*
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month).

EXAMPLE

PEL = 300 barrels * 541 wells * 30 days = 4,869,000 barrels per month

TP = (Total Production for the field for the month) =
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month)*
(average daily production per well).

EXAMPLE

TP = 541 wells * 30 days * 2477 barrels per well = 40,201,710 barrels per month

WD = (Well Days) =
(number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days each well operates)

EXAMPLE

WD = 541 wells * 30 days = 16,230 well days

CALCULATION EXAMPLE

ELF = (1 - [PEL / TP])exp(460* WD / PEL)

ELF = (1 - [4,869,000/40,201,710])exp(460*16,230/4,869,000)

ELF = (1 - .1211) exp (1.533)

ELF = (.8789) exp (1.533)

ELF = .82

CASE 2

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE EXPONENTIAL CONSTANT IS INCREASED?

$$ELF = (1 - [PEL/TP])\exp(1000*WD/PEL)$$

PEL = (Production at the Economic Limit) =
(300 barrels per day)*
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month).

EXAMPLE

PEL = 300 barrels * 541 wells * 30 days = 4,869,000 barrels per month

TP = (Total Production for the field for the month) =
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month)*
(average daily production per well).

EXAMPLE

TP = 541 wells * 30 days * 2477 barrels per well = 40,201,710 barrels per month

WD = (Well Days) =
(number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days each well operates)

EXAMPLE

WD = 541 wells * 30 days = 16,230 well days

CALCULATION EXAMPLE

ELF = (1 - [PEL / TP])exp(1000* WD / PEL)

ELF = (1 - [4,869,000/40,201,710])exp(1000*16,230/4,869,000)

ELF = (1 - .1211) exp (3.333)

ELF = (.8789) exp (3.333)

ELF = .65 **RESULT: A DECREASE IN THE TAX**

CASE 3

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE EXPONENTIAL CONSTANT IS REDUCED?

ELF = (1 - [PEL/TP])exp(**300***WD/PEL)

PEL = (Production at the Economic Limit) =
(300 barrels per day)*
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month).

EXAMPLE

PEL = 300 barrels * 541 wells * 30 days = 4,869,000 barrels per month

TP = (Total Production for the field for the month) =
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month)*
(average daily production per well).

EXAMPLE

TP = 541 wells * 30 days * 2477 barrels per well = 40,201,710 barrels per month

WD = (Well Days) =
(number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days each well operates)

EXAMPLE

WD = 541 wells * 30 days = 16,230 well days

CALCULATION EXAMPLE

ELF = (1 - [PEL / TP])exp(**300*** WD / PEL)

ELF = (1 - [4,869,000/40,201,710])exp(**300***16,230/4,869,000)

ELF = (1 - .1211) exp (1)

ELF = (.8789) exp (1)

ELF = .8789 **RESULT: AN INCREASE IN THE TAX**

CASE 4

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PEL CONSTANT IS INCREASED?

ELF = (1 - [PEL/TP])exp(460*WD/PEL)

PEL = (Production at the Economic Limit) =
(**400** barrels per day)*
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month).

EXAMPLE

PEL = **400** barrels * 541 wells * 30 days = **6,492,000** barrels per month

TP = (Total Production for the field for the month) =
(average number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days of production for the month)*
(average daily production per well).

EXAMPLE

TP = 541 wells * 30 days * 2477 barrels per well = 40,201,710 barrels per month

WD = (Well Days) =
(number of operating wells during the month)*
(number of days each well operates)

EXAMPLE

WD = 541 wells * 30 days = 16,230 well days

CALCULATION EXAMPLE

ELF = (1 - [PEL / TP])exp(460* WD / PEL)

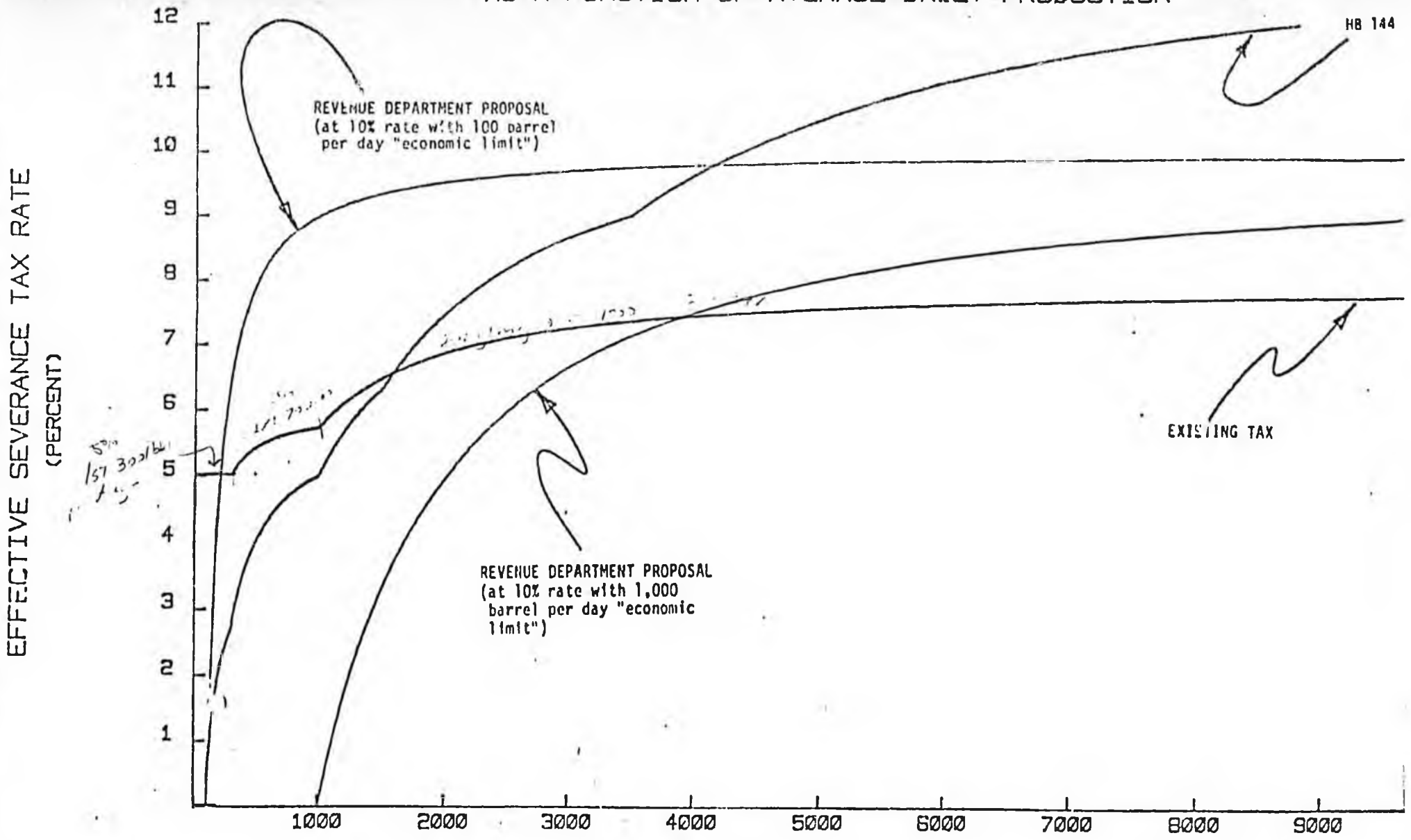
ELF = (1 - [**6,492,000**/40,201,710])exp(460*16,230/**6,492,000**)

ELF = (1 - **.1615**) exp **(1.150)**

ELF = **(.8385)** exp **(1.150)**

ELF = **.816** **RESULT: A DECREASE IN THE TAX**

EFFECTIVE SEVERANCE TAX RATE
AS A FUNCTION OF AVERAGE DAILY PRODUCTION



DOR Y=10*(X-100)/X: INTEGRAL F(X)=05114.05

DOR Y=10*(X-1000)/X: INTEGRAL F(X)=07005.65

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENC
RESEARCH DIVISION
15 February 1977

Office Correspondence

STANDARD
ALASKA PRODUCTION

TO: G. N. Nelson

DATE: October 16, 1986

FROM: G. J. Abraham

CC NO:

SUBJECT: Proposed Severance Tax Changes

YOUR REF:

I have some serious concerns with the proposals before the Joint Special Committee on State's Tax Policy (Committee) to alter the Economic Limit Factor (ELF). Implementation of the proposals to amend or eliminate the ELF presented by OMB at the September 11, 1986 meeting could result in decreased recovery at Prudhoe Bay and could significantly impact future exploration and production activities in Alaska.

Prudhoe Bay Development

Prudhoe Bay is a field of 10 billion barrels of recoverable liquids out of 22 billion barrels in place. Approximately five billion barrels have already been produced leaving a reserve of five billion barrels. Up to four billion barrels of that remainder could be recovered under current State tax law with the wells and facilities in place. Premised on these tax laws, over $5 billion has been spent in the last four years on the drilling of 285 new wells and projects such as Waterflood, Gas Lift, and Enhanced Oil Recovery/Natural Gas Liquids (EOR/NGL).

Recovering the remaining one billion barrels will require additional capital investment in facilities and drilling. Many of these future investment decisions are only marginally economic. This future development and some of the expected production from the current wells and facilities is jeopardized by the proposed changes to the ELF.

Additionally, Prudhoe Bay contains 12 billion barrels unrecoverable with current technology. Some of this currently unrecoverable oil could be recovered with improved technology and major capital investment. Significant increases in taxation will curtail the research necessary to pursue these thinly margined projects and further reduce potential future State revenues.

The ELF is important in decisions to continue development within the Prudhoe Bay Unit. Consider, for example, the decision to drill additional wells at Prudhoe. Removal of the ELF benefit will in many cases make additional wells uneconomic. Four hundred or more future wells will be required to realize the additional one billion barrels referenced. Preliminary studies show that elimination of the ELF could

reduce future drilling at Prudhoe Bay by over 25%, reducing ultimate recovery and industry and State revenues. From the State's perspective, direct losses accrue in the areas of royalty, production tax, income tax and annual property taxes as well as in the secondary areas of employment and economic stimulation.

An ELF modification which involves an additional total field production factor would eliminate some projects which increase field production by raising the severance tax rate on the whole field and thus making the incremental project unattractive. From a broader perspective, selectively penalizing large fields like Prudhoe will curtail their development short of their full potential as discussed above. Further, penalizing large fields discourages unitizations which are an efficient means of managing a reservoir for maximum benefit to the industry and the State.

Alaskan Development Impact

In addition to the Prudhoe Bay impacts, tax increases could have significant adverse effects on future Alaskan oil development. Decisions to proceed with exploration and development projects are based on after-tax economics. There are three tax related factors:

- Cash to finance the project,
- Competitive after-tax returns on investment, and
- Stable business environment.

Cash to Finance the Project

Standard has invested $12 billion on Alaskan exploration, development and transportation. This investment record for TAPS, Prudhoe Bay, Endicott, Kuparuk and Lukiuk, demonstrates the company's willingness to invest in Alaska when competitive after-tax returns are projected.

The oil industry, as well as the State of Alaska, has a severely constrained cash flow. Virtually all major oil companies have significantly reduced 1986 exploration and development budgets and workforce. Standard's 1986 original capital budget for Alaskan field development has been reduced from $923 million to $675 million. Standard's workforce was reduced in July by 172 people.

Increasing industry taxes through changes to the ELF will further reduce the industry's ability to continue to invest in Alaska.

Competitive After-Tax Returns On Investment

The future commitment of available exploration and development funds to Alaska will depend on whether the projected returns are competitive with alternative uses of the funds. The ELF is also critical in this regard.

Modification or elimination of the ELF which increases the effective tax rate on major fields will discourage exploration. Arctic exploration involves expensive, high risk ventures such as Mukluk. These risks are taken to find major, profitable fields such as Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk. Smaller fields are generally a by-product of these efforts. Where the taxation system reduces significantly the profitability of a major field, the high cost exploration risks will not be taken and neither large nor small additional Alaskan fields will be found.

Stable Business Environment

A fair and stable taxation system is a critical component in any business environment. Under the current taxation system, production taxes can be reduced by the ELF where the wellhead value closely approaches the operating costs allowing continued production. Alaska's highest in the nation production tax rate of 15% and highest in the nation production tax floor of 80¢ per barrel will be reduced for Prudhoe by about 20% after ten years of production.

The large Alaskan development expenditures outlined above were determined to be economic based on existing tax laws. Changes in these laws - which result in tax increases - send several unwelcome messages to the oil industry. One message is that the industry could expect tax increases in major fields after the major capital outlays have been made. A second message is that during hard times for the industry and the State, oil industry tax increases will be considered regardless of their impact on the industry.

It is easy to estimate the State revenues to be generated by tax increases. It is difficult to quantify the very real lost future production and the consequent losses to State revenue and the overall Alaskan economy that will be incurred as a result of the enactment of a severance tax increase.

Recommendation

In light of the adverse impacts of increased severance taxes on the Prudhoe Bay Unit and other future industry exploration and development activities, I recommend that these comments be forwarded to the Committee. Hopefully they will provide the Committee with a more balanced perspective in which to consider tax policy and the resulting longer term implications.

G. J. Abraham

1944A

John R. Kemp
Division Manager

Conoco Inc.
3201 'C' Street, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99503

September 4, 1986

Joint Special Committee on State's Tax Policy
Senator Frank Ferguson, Chairman
1024 W. 6th Street, Suite 203
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Senator Ferguson:

The high drilling and production costs and the decline in the value of crude oil significantly impacts the development of new fields in Alaska. It also impacts the decision to continue operating any fields in the State. One of the cost factors, the State's oil and gas production tax, is directly controlled by the State. The modifications and revisions to the present production tax statutes may be the deciding factor for future oil and gas development in Alaska.

The present production tax is based on a monthly production rate at the economic limit OF 300 barrels/day times the number of well days. This is called the economic limit factor (ELF). The statutory presumption is that the ELF represents the producer's break-even point. It is presumed that the producer is making profit from the production of oil and gas before reaching the ELF. The ELF, however, may be rebutted. Rebutting the presumption allows a producer to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the break-even point is higher than 300 barrels for the field or unit. Successfully rebutting the ELF and establishing a new ELF results in a downward adjustment of the production tax payable by the producer.

The legislators who enacted the production tax statutes were farsighted and concerned that a rigidly structured production tax would force producers of economically marginal fields or units to shut down wells prematurely. See, e.g., Governor's transmittal letter for S.B. 238, March 11, 1977, 7th Journal, at 540-41. Prior to 1977, production tax liability was calculated on a rigid stair-step approach with incremental increased taxes based on the amount of production.

This approach was insensitive to the problems of marginal fields and the geographic variation of cost and production.

Early in 1977 after the introduction of the Senate and House production tax bills which would have continued the stair-step approach, the Alaska Department of Revenue published an in-depth comprehensive report titled "Alaska's Oil and Gas Tax Structure", a study with recommendations for improvement. See testimony of Sterling Gallagher, Commissioner of the Department of Revenue, before the House Finance Committee, April 14, 1977. In developing the presumptive ELF factor, the legislature has provided a mechanism to allow production tax relief to producers of marginally economic fields. The present production tax allows the producers to establish their actual break-even point and to be assessed production tax from the point of the field or unit's production at a profit. In essence, the producer is not forced to pay taxes while in a negative profit or loss situation. The provisions for this production tax relief are not automatic. The producer must request a formal hearing and prove by clear and convincing evidence that its break-even point is different than that presumed by the statute. The economic sensitivity in the current production tax statutes allow the States to grant relief to producers of marginally economic fields and allows the production operations to continue, rather than to shut-in during times of unprofitability.

Proposals for new legislation to change the ELF provisions are now under consideration. Conoco urges the legislature to look to the future of Alaska. In the short run, the State may benefit by establishing a fixed minimum tax. It is anticipated that the minimum tax would approximate the current 80 cents per barrel resulting from the presumed ELF. A production tax at this rate could contribute to the shut-in of Milne Point Unit. Shut-ins of these types of units and the prohibitive effect of a fixed tax on the development of new fields means a reduction in the State's employment rate and a detriment to the local economy. It also means a reduction in both the State and local ad valorem taxes. Alaska's economy will stagnate.

Conoco urges the State to maintain the current tax structure. Careful and thoughtful analysis was used in the establishment of the production tax, with the ultimate goal of maximizing both income to the State and the conservation of the State's most valuable non-renewable resource. A panic-induced tampering with the existing law may produce deleterious effects in both near term and long term economic stability. In the alternative, if action on the production tax must be undertaken, Conoco strongly urges that the first 50,000 barrels per

day of production from a unit be exempted from any proposed changes in the tax structure. This provision would maintain the original intent of maximi ng resource utilization in economically vulner.ble units. This type of provision will encourage the continued operation of Milne Point and other small units. It is also farsighted enough not to require y arly amendments and changes and, thus, will encourage the continued development of the oil and gas fields of Alaska.

Yours very truly,

FOR John R. Kemp
Division Manager

vv
HG/AEH
520.0

Standard Alaska
Production Company
900 East Benson Boulevard
P.O. Box 196612
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6612
(907) 564-5423

G.N. Nelson
President

STANDARD
ALASKA PRODUCTION

September 4, 1986

Senator Frank Ferguson
Co-Chairman
Joint Special Committee on the State's Tax Policy
PO Box 131
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

Dear Senator Ferguson:

I recently received the enclosed paper on the Economic Limit Factor prepared by Tom Williams and I thought it would be of interest to you and perhaps other members of the Special Committee. The paper presents an overview of the ELF, explains how it functions and why it was originally written into Alaska's statutes.

Tom prepared the paper at the request of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association Tax Committee. I must emphasize, however, that it is not an official AOGA position paper and should not be taken as such.

A copy of this paper is being also sent to Rep. Grussendorf and I leave it to your discretion to distribute it to other committee members.

I look forward to seeing you on September 11.

Sincerely,

George N. Nelson

cc: Rep. Ben Grussendorf w/enclosure

THE ECONOMIC LIMIT FACTOR
IN ALASKA'S OIL AND GAS PROPERTIES
PRODUCTION TAX

By Thomas K. Williams

September 1986

About the Author

Thomas K. Williams may rightfully lay claim to being the "father of the ELF" since he was the one who first proposed the idea of an economic limit factor for the production tax in late 1976, when he was Director of Petroleum Revenue for the Alaska Department of Revenue. As director, he had immediate responsibility for administering the state's oil and gas tax laws, and he drafted many of the regulations that are still in effect for those taxes. Mr. Williams was director from September 1975 until April 1979, when he became Commissioner of Revenue for the remainder of Governor Hammond's second term. Prior to joining Revenue Mr. Williams was an Assistant Attorney General for the state, specializing in oil and gas matters. He is currently Vice President and General Counsel of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. Mr. Williams received bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Princeton and Harvard, respectively, and earned his law degree at Stanford. He has lived in Alaska since 1973.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE ELF?

The Economic Limit Factor, or ELF, is a mathematical formula that changes the rate of tax on oil and gas production under Alaska's Oil and Gas Properties Production Tax (the "Production Tax"), AS 43.55. Without the ELF, these rates would be the nominal rates set out in the statute -- 15 percent 1/ of the value of taxable oil production 2/ (12.25% during the first five years of production from a lease or property 3/) or $0.80 per barrel, 4/ whichever is greater. 5/ The $0.80 cents-per-barrel amount is for oil having an API gravity of 27 degrees, and it is increased or decreased by half a cent for each degree above or below 27 degrees, respectively, in the API gravity of the actual oil produced. 6/ This adjustment to the cents-per-barrel amount

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1/ AS 43.55.011(b) (15 percent rate for oil produced after June 30, 1981).

2/ AS 43.55.011(a) excludes "any oil the ownership or right to which is exempt from taxation". Such exempt oil almost invariably is state or federal royalty oil.

3/ AS 43.55.011(b) ("for a lease or property coming into commercial production after June 30, 1981, the percentage-of-value amount equals 12.25 percent of the gross value . . . of taxable oil produced from the lease or property in the first five years after the start of commercial production and equals 15 percent . . . thereafter").

4/ AS 43.55.011(c). This statute also specifies a cents-per-barrel rate of $0.60 for "taxable old crude oil", referring to "old oil" under former federal oil price controls. With the expiration of those controls, there is no longer any current production to which the $0.60 rate applies.

5/ AS 43.55.011(a) requires payment of the Production Tax on the basis of the greater amount, with the percentage-of-value amount deemed to be the greater if both amounts happen to be equal. It used to be necessary to establish which amount was being used when both amounts were equal because former AS 43.55.011(d) (repealed by § 18, ch. 116, SLA 1981) called for certain payments into the Alaska Native Fund when the Production Tax was paid on the cents-per-barrel basis.

6/ AS 43.55.012(b).

for API gravity is made before the ELF is applied. 7/ For taxable gas, the nominal tax rate is greater of ten percent of its value or $0.064 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf) 8/ before applying the ELF.

The ELF ranges in value from zero to one, although the way the formula is set up, it could approach, but never actually reach, one. However, by statute, if the calculated value of the ELF under the formula is greater than 0.7 for oil during the first ten years of production from a lease or property, then the ELF is defined to have a value of one; 9/ after ten years of production, the ELF equals its calculated amount under the formula, whether it is above or below 0.7. 10/ There is no corresponding rule changing the value of the ELF for gas from its calculated value under the gas ELF formula. 11/

The actual tax rate for taxable production from a lease or property equals the nominal tax rate multiplied by the ELF for that lease or property. Thus for instance, with oil, as the ELF varies from one down to zero, the effective

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7/ Under AS 43.55.011(a) "[t]he tax is equal to either the percentage-of-value amount calculated under (b) of this section or the cents-per-barrel amount calculated under (c) of this section, whichever is greater, multiplied by the economic limit factor". AS 43.44.011(c) states "[t]he cents-per-barrel amount equals . . . $0.80 per barrel . . . as adjusted by AS 43.55.012 [providing for the API gravity adjustment]". Thus, the API gravity adjustment applies in determining the cents-per-barrel amount under "(c) of this section", and then, if that amount is greater than the percentage-of-value amount, it is multiplied by the ELF.

8/ AS 43.55.016. The reference in AS 43.55.016(c) to an "adjust[ment] by AS 43.55.012" in the $0.064 cents-per-Mcf rate refers to provisions in AS 43.55.012 that have since been repealed. AS 43.55.012(b), the only portion of AS 43.55.012 currently remaining in effect, is applicable only to oil. The reference to AS 43.55.012 is therefore an artifact from prior versions of the statute and no longer has any application; the cents-per-Mcf rate is uniformly $0.064 per Mcf (before applying the ELF).

9/ AS 43.55.013(b)(3).

10/ AS 43.55.013(b)(4).

11/ AS 43.55.013(c).

rate of tax can range between something at or very near its nominal rate of 15 percent (or $0.80 pe. barrel, if greater), down to zero. 12/

12/ The cents-per-barrel and cents-per-Mcf rates represent, in effect, floors on the prices used for Production Tax purposes. If prices drop below these floor levels, the cents-per-barrel or cents-per-Mcf rate kicks in. However, neither of these represents any sort of floor on the actual amount of tax collected. As explained below, the purpose of the ELF is to scale down the burden of the Production Tax so that the tax does not cause the cessation of production before the property would otherwise reach its economic limit (break even point). If the amount of production needed to break even equals the amount currently being produced, the ELF makes the tax zero whether the tax is calculated on a percentage-of-value basis or on the cents-per-barrel (or cents-per-Mcf) basis.

HOW THE ELF WORKS: THE BASIC THEME

The ELF depends primarily on two things. One is the volume of production needed to "break even" so that the gross value of the production just equals the total direct operating costs (as defined in the statute) for producing that oil or gas. The other is the volume of production actually produced during the month in question.

These two factors have a determinative role in the changing economics of an oil and gas property during its productive life, and the ELF attempts to recognize the economics and set the effective tax rate at appropriate levels throughout that productive life. In general the cost of producing an additional barrel or oil or an Mcf of gas starts off relatively low and increases with time, until eventually the cost of getting the next barrel or Mcf gets so high that it is no longer profitable to continue producing. This point at which operations cease to be profitable is called the economic limit.

The ELF, which gets its name (Economic Limit Factor) from this concept of an economic limit, takes an approximation of how much production is needed to break even at the economic limit, 13/ and then compares that production rate

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13/ The statute makes an approximation of the operating costs at the economic limit by specifically listing certain types of operating costs that one would reasonably expect to continue being incurred right up until the economic limit is reached. Such costs are "royalty, production supplies, purchased fuel, routine maintenance, and wages and benefits of employees working on the production operations." AS 43.55.013(e) (oil); AS 43.55.013(h) (gas). Other current costs are specifically excluded from the calculation of the operating costs at the economic limit because one would reasonably expect them to have been discontinued or no longer incurred by the time the economic limit is reached. These excluded costs are capital expenditures, tangible or intangible drilling expenses, costs of well workovers, and costs of replacement or repairs other than routine maintenance. All of these are excluded because they represent expenses or capital investments that a reasonable person would have discontinued making once the property got close enough to its economic limit that the additional cost or investment no longer promised to pay for itself. Amortization and depreciation are excluded because all past capital investments ordinarily should be fully amortized or depreciated before

(footnote continues on next page)

at the economic limit (PEL) to the volume actually being produced. This ratio is an indicator of the profitability of the lease or property. The smaller PEL is in proportion to the total production (TP) currently being produced, the more profitable the lease or property is and, theoretically, the better it can bear a greater "slice off the top" for the Production Tax. Hence the ELF approaches one (and the effective tax rate approaches its maximum possible rate) when the property is most profitable, but later as the property becomes more and more expensive to operate and less and less profitable, the ELF decreases and scales down the tax rate, until finally both the ELF and the tax are zero when the economic limit is reached.

An example will illustrate exactly how this occurs. In its simplest form, the ELF is one minus the ratio of PEL to TP. Put into algebraic terms, the formula for the ELF is:

$$ELF = 1 - [PEL/TP],$$

where PEL is the production rate needed to cover the projected direct operating costs at the economic limit, and TP is total current production. This is the present formula

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the property reaches its economic limit. Taxes are excluded because (a) the ELF would have reduced the Production Tax to zero when the property reaches the economic limit and (b) ad valorem taxes, even on a replacement-cost basis of assessment, should reflect the fact that there is no remaining economic life for the assets and hence they would be fully depreciated for assessment purposes at the economic limit (the third tax, the conservation tax of one eighth of a cent per barrel, AS 43.57, is disregarded as having a minimal effect). Insurance and overhead are excluded because they were not considered to be sufficiently "direct" in nature. The costs of terminating production operations and shutting down the property are excluded because they are not costs of production, but costs of ceasing production; if anything, the financial advantage (due to the time value of money) to be gained by deferring the termination costs might be enough in itself to induce an operator to continue producing a property even after it reaches what would ordinarily be its economic limit (i.e., after its production revenue started falling short of the direct operating expenses for continuing that production). The statute also allows the Department of Revenue to adopt regulations that include additional direct operating costs that are not specifically set out in the statute; the Department has adopted no regulation including any such additional types of cost.

for the gas ELF 14/ (formerly, when there were still federal oil price controls, it was also the formula for "old oil" production 15/).

Suppose there is a gas-producing property for which the PEL is determined to be 150,000 Mcf per month. Suppose further that initial production from this property is 500,000 Mcf per month. The ELF will be:

$$ELF = 1 - [PEL/TP]$$

$$= 1 - [150,000/500,000]$$

$$= 1 - [0.300000]$$

$$= 0.700000$$

The effective rate of tax will be seven percent of the value of the gas (0.700000 times the nominal rate of 10% equals 7%) or $0.0448 per Mcf (0.700000 times the nominal rate of $0.064 equals $0.0448), whichever is more.

Now suppose the property continues producing at 500,000 Mcf per month for five years, and then, starting in year six and each year thereafter, the rate of monthly production drops by 70,000 Mcf. The following table shows what the ELF and the effective tax rates will be during the life of this property:

Year	Production Rate	ELF	Effective Tax Rate	
			% of Value	$ per Mcf
1 - 5	500,000	0.700000	7.00000%	$0.044800
6	430,000	0.651163	6.51163	0.041674
7	360,000	0.583333	5.83333	0.037333
8	290,000	0.482759	4.82759	0.030897
9	220,000	0.318182	3.18182	0.020364
10	150,000	0.000000	-0-	-0-

14/ Id. ("The economic limit factor for gas production of a lease or property equals one minus the ratio of the monthly production rate at the economic limit to the production during the month for which the tax is to be paid").

15/ Former AS 43.55.013(a), repealed by § 18, ch. 116, SLA 1981 ("The economic limit factor for old crude oil production of a lease or property equals one minus the ratio of the monthly production at the economic limit to the production during the month for which the tax is to be paid").

As one can see from this table, when current production starts to decline, the ELF starts falling off too, but at a somewhat slower rate. For example, between Years 5 and 6 production in this illustration falls from 500,000 to 430,-000 Mcf, a drop of 14 percent (the drop of 70,000 is 14% of 500,000), but the ELF drops from 0.700000 to 0.651163, a decline of only 6.9767 percent (the change of 0.048837 in the ELF between Year 5 and Year 6 is 6.9767% of 0.700000). However, as the table clearly shows, the ELF eventually does fall off fast enough to get to zero when the economic limit is reached.

What this means in practical terms is that the ELF operates to keep the effective tax rate from initially falling off quite as rapidly as does the profitability of the property measured by the ratio of current production to production at the economic limit. Thus the State's Production Tax collections are higher than they would be if the ELF scaled the tax rate down in direct proportion to the property's profitability.

There is one other thing that this illustration reveals about the ELF, and that is why the effective tax rate cannot ever equal the nominal rates set out in the statute (except of course where there is a special statutory rule making the ELF one if its computed value under the formula is greater than 0.7). The reason is that the ELF itself can approach, but never quite reach, the value of one. For the ELF to equal one, the ratio of production at the economic limit to current production must be zero. 16/ In mathematical terms,

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16/ In the "complex" explanation of the ELF, the effects of the exponent in the oil ELF are explained. With the exponent, there is theoretically a second way for the ELF to equal one, and that is if the exponent is zero and the number to which the exponent is to be applied is not equal to zero. However, since the exponent is, in effect, the ratio of 460 barrels a day per well to the actual average daily production rate per well during the month in question, the exponent cannot be zero unless actual production were infinite (this is because 460 divided by any finite number, no matter how huge, will yield a number greater than zero; otherwise, if zero were the quotient, one would be able to reverse the process and multiply that huge but finite number by that quotient (zero) and get back to 460, but zero times any finite number is always zero). Since an infinite production rate is one of the two possible conditions that are described in the "simple" version of the ELF as making the ELF exactly equal to one, there is no practical difference between the "simple" and "complex" versions as to why the ELF is always less than one in the physical world.

if 1 = ELF, then 1 = 1 - [PEL/TP].

Clearly, [PEL/TP] must equal zero for this equation to be true, since if any number other than zero is subtracted from one, the result will not equal one. Thus,

PEL/TP = 0, or

multiplying both sides of this last equation by TP,

PEL = 0 x TP.

There is no finite number for TP which will, when multiplied by zero, yield a value for PEL other than zero. This is because zero times any finite number is always zero. And so, if the ELF is to equal one, either current production (TP) is infinite (which is possible in mathematics, but not in the physical world) or PEL equals zero (again, a practical impossibility, since no field would have costs of production equal to zero, especially at its economic limit).

Thus, the larger current production becomes in proportion to PEL, the closer the ELF comes to a value of one, but it never reaches one under the formula in the real world.

REASONS FOR THE ELF

The ELF operates to reduce the effective rate of the Production Tax as an oil and gas property nears its economic limit; i.e., the point where the income (gross value) from producing a barrel or Mcf of production from that property is just enough to cover the costs of producing that barrel or Mcf. At the end, when the property actually reaches its economic limit, the ELF makes the tax rate zero. Why has this ELF feature been included in the Production Tax?

The reasons for the ELF are both historical and economic. Prior to the enactment of the ELF in 1977, Alaska had a "stair stepped" Production Tax on oil in which the tax depended on the average daily rate of production per well. The first 300 barrels a day per well were taxed at five percent of their gross value, the next 700 barrels a day were taxed at six percent, and average daily production in excess of 1,000 barrels a day per well was taxed at eight percent. 17/ In addition, there were three similarly "stair

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17/ Former AS 43.55.010, repealed by § 9, ch. 136, SLA 1977. The three-tiered "stair step" tax (enacted in ch. 4, FSSLA 1973) replaced an earlier four-tier version, in which the four "stair steps" for percentage-of-value had been enacted first (ch. 247, SLA 1970), with the cents-per-barrel rates added later (ch. 101, SLA 1972). The four "steps" in the original progressive tax rate structure were 0 - 300 barrels a day per well (3% rate), 301 - 1,000 barrels a day per well (5% rate), 1,001 - 2,500 barrels a day per well (6% rate), and 2,500+ barrels a day per well (8% rate). When the cents-per-barrel rates were added to the Production Tax in 1972, they were coupled with a credit for royalty payments to the State, the intent and effect of which was to set a floor on combined state revenues from royalty and Production Tax, corresponding to a "wellhead" price of $2.65 a barrel (which would have dropped to $2.50 on July 1, 1980 if the law had remained in effect). If prices dropped under that floor, the "lost" royalty income would be made up by the corresponding reduction in the royalty credit against the cents-per-barrel rates. See ch. 101, SLA 1972; 1972 House J. 915-916 (Governor Egan's transmittal letter for House Bill 817, introducing the royalty credit concept; the House Finance Committee took the substance of HB 817 and incorporated it into a House Committee Substitute for a Senate Bill, SB 168, that had already passed the Senate; the version that became chapter 101 of the 1972 Session Laws was the Second Free Conference Committee

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stepped" cents-per-barrel rates -- $0.16875 on the first 300 barrels a day, $0.2025 on the next 700, and $0.27 on anything over 1,000 barrels a day. 18/ These cents-per-barrel rates were for oil having an API gravity of 27 degrees, and they were increased or decreased by two percent for each degree of API gravity that the actual oil production was over or below 27 degrees. The actual tax to be paid was the higher of the two, percentage-of-value or cents-per-barrel. 19/ The cents-per-barrel amount would be greater when the "wellhead" price 20/ fell below $3.375; for higher

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Substitute for SB 168, SFCCS HCS SB 168). Litigation over this and other enactments of the 1972 Legislature quickly ensued -- Amerada-Hess Corp., et al., v. State (Superior Ct. No. 72-2719 Civil), ARCO Pipe Line Co. v. Herbert (Superior Ct. No. 72-2798 Civil), Mobil Pipe Line Co. v. State (Superior Ct. No. 72-2720 Civil), consolidated. Legislation enacted by the 1973 Special Session, including repeal of the royalty credit provisions, made part of the litigation moot and allowed the remainder to be settled.

18/ Former AS 43.55.015(a), repealed by § 9, ch. 136, SLA 1977. Actually, the base cents-per-barrel rates (before any adjustment for API gravity) were not constant, but changed from month to month based on monthly changes in the Wholesale Price Index for crude petroleum from the Index for the month of December 1973. See former AS 43.55.015(c); Union Oil Co. of Cal. v. Dept. of Revenue, 560 P.2d 21 (Alaska 1977) (upholding the Department's regulation, former 15 AAC 05.694, which made the December 1973 Index the base Index). This monthly adjustment to the cents-per-barrel rates, in turn, meant that the effective floor price for the Production Tax revenue (i.e., the price at which the cents-per-barrel tax became greater than the percentage-of-value tax) also varied from month to month, depending on the Index.

19/ Former AS 43.55.010(e).

20/ The issue of what is the "wellhead" for royalty and Production Tax purposes has itself been hotly disputed. In Alaska when oil emerges from the ground at the "Christmas tree" atop the well casing, it is cleaned and dehydrated and separated from associated and dissolved gases before it is in a marketable condition. After it has gone through the surface equipment to make it marketable, it is then metered and either sold or

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prices, the percentage-of-value amount would be the greater. 21/ Thus, the cents-per-barrel rates, in effect, established a floor price for the value of the oil for Production Tax purposes, regardless of how low the actual "wellhead" price might fall.

To illustrate how the "stair step" tax worked, suppose a property had 10 wells and produced 450,000 barrels of 27-degree API gravity, valued at $10 apiece during a 30-day month. The tax would be calculated as follows:

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transported away from the property through some common carrier pipeline. In a number of other states, the "wellhead" price is effective at the outlet of the tank gauge or custody transfer meter at which it is first measured in a marketable condition. In Cook Inlet and on the North Slope, it may be miles between the Christmas tree and the custody transfer meter, and the separators and dehydrators represent significant expenditures. If the incidence of the tax or the royalty is at the custody transfer meters, none of the costs incurred upstream from that point for the gathering lines, separators and dehydrators and associated equipment would be deducted in determining the price or value for purposes of paying the tax or royalty. Conversely, if the incidence of the tax or royalty is at the Christmas tree, then all those costs are deducted in determining the price or value on which the tax or royalty is computed and paid. The phrase "wellhead price," while commonly used, can therefore be misleading or at least ambiguous in the Alaskan context, since it is unclear whether it refers to the price at the custody transfer meter or a price further upstream, perhaps as far as the Christmas tree. The Production Tax is based on the "gross value at the point of production", which is specifically defined to be the point of measurement (as opposed to the Christmas tree); see AS 43.55.140(6), 15 AAC 55.210(6).

21/ Five percent of $3.375 equals $0.1687, which is exactly what the cents-per-barrel rate was for the first "stair step." Six percent of $3.375 is $0.2025, the same as the rate for the second "step," while eight percent of it is $0.27, the rate for the third. By 1977 the escalation in the cents-per-barrel rates due to the Wholesale price Index (see note 16, above) had raised the effective floor from its original $3.375 to approximately $6.10.

0 - 300 bbl/day "stair step": 10 wells, times 300 barrels per well a day, times 30 days, equals 90,000 barrels in this "stair step" of the 450,000 total taxable barrels produced. Five percent of 90,000 barrels at $10 each equals $45,000. 90,000 barrels times the cents-per-barrel rate of $0.16875 22/ equals $15,187.50.

301 - 1,000 bbl/day "stair step": 10 wells, times 700 barrels per well a day, times 30 days, equals 210,000 barrels in this "stair step", of the remaining 360,000 barrels that didn't fall into the first "step". Six percent of 210,000 at $10 each equals $126,000, while 210,000 times the $0.2025 cents-per-barrel rate equals $42,525.

1,000+ bbl/day "stair step": 450,000 total barrels, minus the 90,000 barrels falling in the first "stair step" and the 210,000 barrels falling in the second, leaves 150,000 barrels to fall in this top "step." Eight percent of 150,000 at $10 a barrel is $120,000, and at $0.27 a barrel the cents-per-barrel amount is $40,500.

The total percentage-of-value amount would be $45,000 plus $126,000 plus $120,000, or $291,000. This is greater than the cents-per-barrel amount of $98,212.50 ($15,187.50 + $42,525 + $40,500), so the actual tax would be paid on the percentage-of-value basis. The effective rate of tax in this example would be 6.47 percent ($291,000 total tax, divided by a total value of $4,500,000 for the 450,000 barrels, equals 0.0647).

After this tax system was enacted in October 1973 (ch. 4, FSSLA 1973), factors affecting the Alaska oil and gas market changed dramatically. The Arab oil embargo of the United States in early 1974 caused oil prices, which had doubled since the previous May, to redouble. Construction of TAPS finally began in 1974, but costs for constructing

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22/ For simplicity, the example uses the original rates set out in the statute. In actual practice, those rates would first have been adjusted for changes in the crude oil Wholesale Price Index (WPI). One might also note that, by having 27 degree API gravity oil in the example, the example does not show how to make the API gravity adjustment of two percent in the WPI-escalated cents-per-barrel rates per degree above or below 27 degrees would be made. For an example illustrating all these aspects of the former tax, see Alaska Department of Revenue, Alaska's Oil and Gas Tax Structure: A Study with Recommendations for Improvement (February 1977) (the "1977 Tax Study"), pp. II-6 to II-10.

that project continued to skyrocket over all earlier projections. The federal government imposed a complex system of price controls on crude oil and refined products, with a big question mark deliberately left in the system as to how Prudhoe Bay oil would fit into it all once that field came into production.

Uncertain as to what all these changes might mean in terms of the profitability of Prudhoe Bay and the appropriate level and type of state taxation, the Alaska Legislature in 1975 retained Tanzer Economic Associates, Inc. to conduct an economic analysis of Prudhoe Bay, its profits, and the effects of state taxation policy on those profits. In January 1976 Tanzer's results were released. 23/ The "Tanzer Report" concluded that Alaska could significantly increase the overall level of its tax burden on Prudhoe Bay and still provide a sufficient degree of profitability to reward the oil companies there for investing in the development of the field.

A flurry of legislative proposals to increase oil taxes immediately followed, ranging from "excess profit" taxes to a "separate accounting" income tax, with higher Production Tax rates as an option somewhere in between. In the face of misgivings by the Department of Revenue about some of the proposals and the lack of a clear legislative consensus about which proposal(s) to adopt, Governor Hammond prevailed upon the Legislature to give the Department a year to make a comprehensive study of Alaska's then current tax structure and make recommendations in early 1977 about any changes that should be made. 24/ Because of strong support in the Senate for a "separate accounting" income tax 25/ and be-

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23/ Tanzer Economic Associates, Alaska's Prudhoe Bay Oil: Profitability and Taxation Potential (January 9, 1976).

24/ The 1976 Legislature, through a Committee Substitute for Senate Concurrent Resolution 101 (CS SCR 101), resolved that the Legislative Council, through its Interim Committee on Oil and Gas Leasing and Taxation Policy, was to cooperate with the Administration in making a comprehensive and definitive study of Alaska's oil and gas leasing and taxation policies, with recommendations for improvement.

25/ "Separate accounting" is one of two basic ways of determining how much of a multistate business's taxable income is attributable to its activities in a particular state for purposes of that state's income tax. It attempts to isolate the in-state activities from the rest of the business and see how much income results

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