

LDIR#026
EARTHQUAKE
1964

#1 and 2

FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

Washington, D. C.

April 17, 1964

MEMORANDUM TO: SENATOR CLINTON P. ANDERSON
CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMISSION'S WEEKLY REPORT - APRIL 17, 1964

The information reported herein has been taken from the several weekly reports compiled by the participating departments and agencies in the Alaska recovery effort.

The following are highlights in the broad range of activities:

Estimates of Damage

A vital need from the beginning of the reconstruction program has been hard facts. Official and unofficial estimates of damage have abounded, and the figures tend to change as time goes on. The Commission and the State of Alaska have arranged for detailed study of housing and business real property losses in disaster areas, building by building. This survey will include both assessment of damage and outstanding indebtedness on each structure.

The Interior Department completed its preliminary damage assessment on fisheries, and estimates \$13,600,000 in damage to fishing vessels and processing plants in the earthquake area. This estimate does not include damage to boat harbors and other public facilities, or damage resulting from the raising and lowering of land in the various areas.

Initial reconnaissance surveys of the effects of the earthquake have been completed by the Interior Department's geological survey team; a report is being prepared for publication April 27.

Apparent earth settlement of most of Kenai Peninsula accompanied by normal monthly high tides has resulted in moderate to severe flooding many towns and villages on Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. Maximum tides occurred April 14, 1964, and are now decreasing daily.

At Portage, the entire population of about sixty people has been evacuated. At Girdwood, a community of about forty people, there has been flooding up to two feet from high tides, with subsidence estimated at five feet. There has been no evacuation. At Saldovia, where there was several feet subsidence, there was some flooding; however, occupants took action in advance to elevate equipment, merchandise and personal property, thus reducing damages.

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FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

Washington, D. C.

April 24, 1964
(Corrected Copy, April 26)

MEMORANDUM TO: SENATOR CLINTON P. ANDERSON,
CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMISSION'S WEEKLY REPORT - APRIL 24, 1964

Emergency Services

The military services continue to provide extensive emergency assistance, especially in the following areas: supply and rehabilitation; police guard and sentry duties; evacuation; relocation; internal security; communications services; medical, sanitation and inoculation service; restoration of utilities; demolition; provision of food and clothing; supplemental emergency transportation; salvage of fishing boats; aircraft control for civilian aircraft; harbor clearing; electronic repair; aerial and ground photography; repair and relocation of aids to navigation, and supplying and placing sandbags to prevent flooding.

Financial Activities

Because of the critical shortage of funds available in Alaska, the Agriculture Department on April 22 started making emergency three per cent loans to permit continuation of normal farming operations. Loans are for replacement of farm machinery and equipment. Housing is excluded.

The Housing and Home Finance Agency deferred until further notice payments now due -- or to become due -- to the U.S. from public bodies in Anchorage, Cordova, Kodiak, Seward and Valdez. A full review by HHFA of the status of such obligations is planned, to determine what further relief might be justified.

Taxpayers have been told through news media and field trips by officials to Cordova, Kodiak, Seward, and Valdez, of the provisions of the income tax law dealing with casualty losses, and the Internal Revenue Service on April 20 announced a 90-day extension for claiming casualty losses on 1963 returns. The Anchorage office has received 5,500 requests for time extensions on filing 1963 returns. Waiver of filing penalty will be granted to any citizen who is unable to file or who requests extension because of circumstances arising from the earthquake, the Treasury Department said.

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UNITED STATES SENATE

Washington, D. C.

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Office of
Clinton P. Anderson
New Mexico

May 2, 1964

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

This is the fourth report of the Federal Reconstruction and Development Planning Commission for Alaska.

I returned from a three-day visit to Alaska earlier this week well pleased with the recovery effort to date, and confident that the work of reconstruction and development in the months ahead can be accomplished with equal effectiveness. The scores of persons I spoke with were heartened by the assistance provided by the Federal Government. They seemed anxious to get on with the herculean task of rebuilding without waiting for new forms of large-scale Federal help. The sturdy independence that characterized the Alaskan spirit still prevails.

If any doubt remained that the Federal Government was moving as quickly as possible to aid Alaska, your announcement of Tuesday on the rebuilding of the Alaska Railroad dispelled it. Your message was a real spring tonic.

The fine way in which the disaster relief program has been operating is largely due to the direction of Ed McDermott and the agencies which have worked under guidance of the Office of Emergency Planning. We did find some problems in the interrelationship of various agencies in the field, and between them in their headquarters. This is not surprising in such a large undertaking, and I believe our trip helped iron out these problems.

Reconstruction of many homes and buildings, as well as planning for future development, heavily depends on knowing what areas are geologically safe. This information must be sufficiently detailed so that the Alaska state and local governments can write their first building codes. A number of technicians have been carrying out this survey, but

Corrected copy (May 4) follows

FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

Washington, D. C.

May 1, 1964
(Corrected copy - May 4)

MEMORANDUM TO: Senator Clinton P. Anderson
Chairman

SUBJECT: Commission's Weekly Report - May 1, 1964

Highlights

1. Alaska Visit: As you know, our visit to Alaska earlier in the week was highly productive. Informal reports indicate that your statements both struck a note of hope among Alaskans and, at the same time, turned much of the thinking toward programs which are more realistic than the earlier concepts which tended to focus on extremely large grants or indemnification programs. I was in Seward at the time you announced in Anchorage the President's decision to rebuild the Alaskan Railroad. This news gave the town of Seward a complete new lease on life. Our trip has resulted also in the streamlining of certain plans and procedures. Most of the field work of the various agencies, however, has been proceeding very well, with red tape cut to a minimum. Debris removal, for example, has moved at a very rapid pace under the Office of Emergency Planning and the Department of Defense.
2. Community Schedules: We have directed the Commission's Field Committee in Alaska to draw together, on a crash basis, over-all schedules for the reconstruction of work in each damaged community. Plans of various agencies are being integrated into a master schedule for each community in order to complete the urgent work during the short construction season which is about to begin.
3. Construction Committee: The field work has been completed by the Construction Consultant Committee on assessing damage to public facilities. Its report will be completed in less than a week.
4. Damage Assessment: The joint State-Federal building-by-building appraisal of private property damage will be completed over the weekend. Tabulation and analysis of this raw data have been initiated. Damage estimates from both studies are expected to be much lower than the initial estimates made shortly after the disaster.
5. Scientific and Engineering Task Force: A Scientific and Engineering Task Force has been established with prime objective of providing expert advice on those areas suitable for reconstruction and of developing certain design criteria to help guide reconstruction.

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FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

Washington, D. C.

May 1, 1964
(Corrected copy - May 4)

MEMORANDUM TO: Senator Clinton P. Anderson
Chairman

SUBJECT: Commission's Weekly Report - May 1, 1964

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FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

Washington, D. C.

May 8, 1964

MEMORANDUM TO: Senator Clinton P. Anderson
Chairman

SUBJECT: Commission's Weekly Report - May 8, 1964

Highlights

1. S. 627, which includes a proviso to lend money to fishermen to charter fishing boats, has gone to the White House for signature.
2. The field element of the Scientific and Engineering Task Force arrived in Alaska and began work. They will recommend those areas suitable for reconstruction and develop interim zoning and design criteria to guide construction appropriate for that earthquake-prone region.
3. Initial data for the community reconstruction schedules have been received from the various Federal agencies. These preliminary data have already indicated areas and problems which require further review and study.
4. The Housing and Home Finance Agency announced on May 6 an agreement among several agencies to assist certain Alaskan owners of homes totally destroyed or irreparably damaged as a result of the March 27 earthquake. The Federal National Mortgage Association and Veterans Administration will accept a token payment of \$1,000 to satisfy the outstanding mortgage indebtedness they hold on such properties. The Small Business Administration announced that it will make loans up to 30 years at 3 per cent interest for financing new homes for these affected owners. It is hoped that private lenders will follow the Government's lead in making favorable settlements in similar cases.
5. Preliminary data on the joint HHFA-State Housing Authority private property survey was received, totaling \$68,600,000. We have since been advised that the final total will be about \$76,000,000. The debt information on property is not complete.

FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

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WASHINGTON

SENATOR CLINTON P. ANDERSON, N. MEX., CHAIRMAN

DWIGHT A. INK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FRANK C. DI LUZIO, ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIRMAN

May 15, 1964

MEMORANDUM TO: Senator Clinton P. Anderson
Chairman

SUBJECT: Commission's Weekly Report - May 15, 1964

HIGHLIGHTS

1. DoD and Commission staff, meeting in Anchorage May 14, agreed on an expedited geological soils studies schedule, with all completions now expected between June 27 and July 25. Some decisions can probably be made in advance of these completion dates. The Scientific and Engineering Task Force is redefining and reducing the Anchorage high-risk area. Federal and private lending agencies will be able to resume activities promptly for most of the Anchorage area.
2. As you know, the omnibus bill for Alaska was forwarded from your office to the White House.
3. The Bureau of Public Roads in the past week allocated \$5.5 million to the Alaska Department of Highways for earthquake damage repair on forest highways. This is a 100 percent Federal grant, with no State matching funds. With sums allotted in April, this brings BPR's total allocation to nearly \$10 million.
4. New highway reconstruction estimates by BPR and the State of Alaska, requested by you at the May 5 Commission meeting, are: \$65,088,000 to reconstruct to present design standards, and \$55,568,000 to reconstruct to the condition existing before the earthquake.

STATUS REPORT
REPAIR AND RESTORATIVE WORK
UNDER PUBLIC LAW 875
ALASKA DISASTER
AS OF MAY 19, 1964

Executive Office of the President
Office of Emergency Planning