

Environmental Permitting chapter outline

Charge: What changes to the state's regulatory environment and permitting structure that would be conducive to encouraging increased investment while protecting the interests of the people of the state and the environment?

We see value in improving the efficiencies of existing permitting processes and enhancing on-going permit efficiency efforts to maximize continuous improvement. This is consistent with efforts underway currently as State regulatory agencies are forced to find more efficient ways of doing business due to shrinking funding.

Specific chapter sections:

- 1) The Governor has launched an effort to evaluate permit processes and consider ways to improve community involvement and transparency for permit holders and the general public. We have connected with the Governor's office on this effort and recommend connecting these two efforts. In our chapter, we can refer to their work and the outcomes that work will identify that are relevant to our work to encourage investment in Alaska.
- 2) Existing permit process improvements (as noted in the October 2014 DNR presentation) need to be captured as a reflection of the earlier realization that programs needed to be improved to enhance the business/investment climate. We need to re-cap what has been done to date and what is on-going.
- 3) Efficiencies in the permitting process & increased community involvement require education of operators & the public about both the activity & the related permit process. DOG has published guidance documents with the new online Plan of Ops application. These can be expanded for use with the public to ensure a meaningful engagement with clearly defined concerns. This material could also address the concept of phased development and how DNR is incorporating the concept of cumulative impacts into the permit process.
- 4) Resurrect an automated checklist similar to the one previously provided by the Coastal Zone Management Program (ACMP). An on-line checklist that walks applicants through the various approvals and authorizations they may need can help companies navigate the State of Alaska's permitting system.

DNR was asked to create a prototype online version with a checklist as a result of the ACMP sunset. The hypothesized online format was created to operate with the fewest re-formed resources and/or existing resources as possible. However, the product still required some resources and the prototype was never actually brought online, largely due to transition and budget considerations.

- 5) Establish a statewide wetlands compensatory mitigation bank and in-lieu fee program. Efforts currently underway at DNR.
- 6) Continue discussions with industry regarding drill rigs and air permit requirements. There is some debate about the best way to regulate air emissions from drill rigs. A workgroup has been established. DEC has maintained a website with meeting notes and outcomes: <http://dec.alaska.gov/air/ap/OilGasDrillWorkgroup.html>
- 7) The report should mention the federal regulatory climate as it impacts development in Alaska's offshore and onshore environment . Several recommendations for improvements to that system were documented in a recent report published by the National Petroleum Council. The chapter should have a discussion about those and should rely on any additional publication where Alaska's regulatory framework has been evaluated.

http://www.npcarcticpotentialreport.org/pdf/AR-Part_1-061115B.pdf