

• MINING

AOGA opposes ballot measure

By SHANE LASLEY
Petroleum News

In a rare move the Alaska Oil & Gas Association's board of directors passed a resolution opposing Ballot Measure 4, aimed at changing regulations on water discharged from Alaska's large-scale metallic mines.

In its Aug. 7 resolution AOGA said the Aug. 26 primary ballot measure would dramatically change portions of Alaska's water quality laws without the level of review and scrutiny they would receive under the regular legislative and/or rulemaking process — processes that require public hearings, public comment periods, scientific analysis, input from stakeholders and, often times, a detailed economic analysis.

When asked why AOGA is weighing in on a ballot measure targeting mining, AOGA Executive Director Marilyn Crockett told Petroleum News, "It is bad public policy to be deciding scientific and technical issues in a voter referendum. It doesn't bring with it the appropriate scrutiny that the legislature or an agency with expertise in that area would bring with it. That is not a good way, from our perspective, for issues technical in nature such as the ones being addressed in that ballot measure. That is not the appropriate way for those issues to be addressed and resolved."



MARILYN CROCKETT

JUDY PATRICK

AOGA said the state of Alaska and the federal government each have a rigorous and comprehensive permitting process to ensure that thorough environmental analyses are conducted on all resource development projects before any project is allowed to proceed. The association said state and federal permitting processes include specific requirements that ensure water quality is protected.

AOGA also pointed out that because the initiative language will not receive a thorough examination by most voters, Alaskans may not fully understand the significant ramifications and implications of the proposed changes.

"It doesn't matter whether the issue is one that addresses restrictions on discharges into water, discharges into air; any of those kinds of issues really need to be run through the rigorous scientific evaluation that the legislature or the agencies would do, and not simply in a confusing voter referendum that don't meet that sort of rigorous review," Crockett said.

AOGA board members decided to oppose Ballot Measure 4 because it "could preclude a project from proceeding before it even begins the governmental review process and more importantly, this initiative would set a precedent for scientifically based policy to be determined without the benefit of a full public process." •

STAND UP FOR ALASKA.

Do you believe that one proposal should threaten an entire industry, jobs, and future revenue for Alaska communities?

YES NO

Do you believe special interests from the Lower 48 should dictate how Alaskans develop our resources?

YES NO

Do you believe rural Alaska has too many good-paying jobs?

YES NO

Do you believe an arbitrary and untested proposal should replace Alaska's thorough, science-based laws that already protect Alaska's fish, air, human health, and pristine water?

YES NO

THEN VOTE NO ON 4.

YES NO

"It is the policy of the State to encourage the settlement of its land and the development of its resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest."

- Constitution of the State of Alaska



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