

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

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BREAKFAST MEETING

Thursday, January 6, 2011

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

1. Call to order – Tom Maloney, President
2. Self Introductions
3. Headtable Introductions
4. Staff Report – Jason Brune, Executive Director
5. Program and Keynote Speaker:

Preview to the 2011 Legislative Session
 Representative Mike Chenault, Speaker of the House
 Senator Joe Paskvan, Senate Resources Committee
 Senator Tom Wagoner, Co-Chair, Senate Resources Committee

Next Meeting: January 20: Colleen Starring, President, ENSTAR Natural Gas Company

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Ex-Officio Members
 Senator Mark Begich
 Senator Lisa Murkowski
 Congressman Don Young
 Governor Sean Parnell

2010 Alaska Policy Positions

Top Legislative Actions

RDC was active in Juneau last session, testifying and providing written comments on a number of bills.

- **Supported HB 36 - Open and Transparent Initiative Act**
- **Opposed HB 74/SB 4 - Alaska Coastal Management Program**
- **Supported HB 308 - Oil and Gas Production Act**
- **Supported SB 312 - Cruise Ship Head Tax Reduction**
- **Supported HB 162/SB 127 - Southern Southeast Alaska State Forest**
- **Supported SB 284 - Campaign Expenditures**

Other bills RDC supported that passed included the following:

- HB 20 - Fisheries Loans for Energy Efficiency**
- HJR 7 - Open ANWR to Oil Exploration**
- HJR 18 - Opposing New ANWR Wilderness**
- HJR 28 - Opposing Restrictions to Alaska Waters**
- HJR 40 - Opposing Critical Habitat for Cook Inlet Beluga Whales**
- HCR 10 - Alaska's Right to Submerged Land in Navigable Rivers**

General Issues

Fiscal Policy & Planning

- Advocate development and implementation of a comprehensive, responsible, and long-range state fiscal plan.
- Support equitable and predictable tax and royalty policies.
- Support some use of the Permanent Fund earnings as part of a fiscal plan.
- Support development of a state strategic economic development plan.
- Oppose efforts to enshrine the Permanent Fund Dividend in the Alaska Constitution.

Access

- Advocate increased access to and across public lands for resource and community development.
- Advocate for multiple-use of public lands.
- Continue to assert the state's rights on navigable waters and submerged lands.

Regulation/Permitting

- Support efforts to ensure Alaska's ballot initiative process is open and transparent.
- Encourage the state to promote and defend the integrity of Alaska's permitting process.
- Advocate clear, timely, and streamlined state and federal permitting systems based on sound science, economic feasibility, and protection of property ownership rights.

- Provide adequate resources to permitting agencies for personnel, research, and science.
- Support the State of Alaska's efforts to challenge unwarranted Endangered Species Act listings and proposed critical habitat designations.
- Remove the "Point of Discharge" requirement implemented by the 2006 cruise ship head tax initiative to empower DEC to regulate cruise ship discharges to meet all water quality standards.
- Encourage the state to carefully consider the impacts of potential changes to the ACMP program on communities and industry while striving to eliminate the duplication of current state and federal requirements.

Infrastructure

- Encourage the state to develop a prioritized transportation strategy that supports resource and community development activities.

Education

- Support programs, including the Alaska Resource Education program, to educate students and the general public on responsible resource development activities in Alaska.
- Support growing the state's emphasis on workforce development.

Industry Specific Issues

Oil & Gas

- Advocate for an improved tax policy that enhances the State of Alaska's competitiveness for exploration and development investments.
- Support legislation to encourage new exploration and development of Alaska's oil and gas deposits, as well as enhanced production from existing fields.
- Encourage public policy and fiscal decisions to improve the commercial viability of developing Alaska's North Slope and Interior natural gas resources.
- Support efforts to increase Cook Inlet oil and gas exploration, development and deliverability to meet local demand and export markets.
- Encourage incentives to improve the commercial viability of developing Alaska's challenged oil and gas resources, such as heavy oil.
- Educate and advocate for opening the coastal plain of ANWR to oil and gas development.
- Support offshore oil and gas development and work to maximize benefits to Alaska through advocacy for federal revenue sharing and/or community impact assistance.
- Oppose efforts, either legislatively or through the initiative process, to impose a gas reserves tax.

Energy

- Support simplified leasing and permitting of non-conventional fuel resources to encourage development of the state's resources and provide energy to local areas.
- Encourage development of new electrical generating and transmission systems to provide stable sources of electricity for economic development and existing electricity consumers.
- Support utilization of Alaska's coal resources for value-added industries and power generation in addition to export to international markets.
- Support efforts to diversify Alaska's energy sources, including known renewable energy options and research and development of non-conventional sources.



Mining

- Support competitive mining tax and royalty policies.
- Encourage the expansion and increased production from existing deposits as well as new exploration and development of Alaska's mineral resources.
- Advocate continuation and expansion of the airborne geophysical mapping program and the on-the-ground follow up work required to realize the full benefits of the program.

Fisheries

- Support fisheries policies that ensure access, markets and revenues for Alaska fishermen and coastal communities, and a healthy competitive environment for the Alaskan seafood processing industry.
- Support reduced fisheries waste and better utilization of Alaska fisheries resources, improved product value and development of new product forms.
- Support funding of fisheries and marine mammal research.

Forestry

- Advocate a reliable and economical long-term federal and state timber supply.
- Support adequate funding and enforcement of the Alaska Forest Practices Act.
- Encourage funding of forest management initiatives that address long-term forest health and reforestation.

Tourism

- Advocate for a positive business environment to restore the cruise and tourism industries in Alaska.
- Encourage the Legislature and Administration to resolve the current legal issues between the State and the cruise industry.
- Oppose inequitable taxation directed at the cruise industry as a result of the 2006 Ballot Initiative.
- Advocate for equitable environmental laws for cruise ships.
- Advocate additional aircraft landing sites and reduced restrictions on over-flights.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 10-209

Governor Parnell Releases Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Plan
Focus on Resource Development, Infrastructure, Energy, and Public Safety

December 15, 2010, Anchorage, Alaska – Continuing his focus on fostering jobs and resource development, Governor Sean Parnell today released his balanced budget plan for Fiscal Year 2012.

The governor noted Alaska's strong financial position saying, "Alaska has a balanced budget, substantial cash reserves, and a stellar bond rating."

In his budget speech before the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Governor Parnell said, "If we are disciplined and strategic with our spending, and if we manage our savings well, Alaskans can have economic opportunities for years to come."

The operating and capital budgets total \$11.1 billion, with \$5.45 billion in state general funds. State agency operating growth has been limited to 1.9 percent. Statutorily required increases in Medicaid, payments on the retirement system's unfunded liability, debt service costs, and employee contracts result in a general fund budget that is larger than last year.

Resource Development and Infrastructure

The proposed capital budget totals \$1.6 billion, including \$644.9 million in state general funds. The capital budget includes an aggressive roads-to-resources effort and funds a comprehensive energy build out.

"This budget focuses on lowering the cost of energy throughout the state," Governor Parnell said. "Providing lower-cost energy creates opportunity for Alaskans. It opens doors and promotes responsible, sustainable development."

The budget includes \$65.7 million for the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) to conduct planning, design, and permitting for the Susitna Hydroelectric Project, which is estimated to meet half of the Railbelt's electricity demand. The budget also includes funding for weatherization programs, renewable energy, and heating assistance.

The governor's proposed budget funds additional work on a road connecting the Dalton Highway to Umiat and on a road to the Ambler Mining District.

"We are going to put Alaskans to work," Governor Parnell said. "We've included \$103 million in the capital budget to leverage more than \$705 million in federal and other funds for transportation, highways, aviation, water, sewer projects for vital infrastructure improvements. We have targeted \$60 million for roads and ports that are key to opening up resource development."

Continued efforts on natural gas development, including \$160 million for the Alaska Pipeline Project and \$5.5 million for development of the instate gas line project, are incorporated in the capital budget. The budget also includes \$100 million for the second year of the five-year deferred maintenance plan.

Public Safety

The FY2012 budget builds on the "Choose Respect" campaign to combat the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA) through prevention, investigation, reporting, and services for victims. It funds 15 new Village Public Safety Officers and three new trooper positions.

"We will investigate Internet crimes against children and protect seniors and vulnerable adults from exploitation by stepping up efforts through the Long Term Care Ombudsman," Governor Parnell said. "We will strengthen criminal penalties for those who take advantage of vulnerable Alaskans."

Education

The budget also includes \$8.2 million for Alaska Performance Scholarship awards for high school students who graduate in 2011. The merit-based program for post-secondary education and job-training assistance is one of Governor Parnell's top priorities.

The FY2012 proposed budget will spend less than the amount of revenue projected for the next fiscal year. For FY2012, the oil price forecast is \$82.67 per barrel, production of 622,000 barrels per day, and total unrestricted revenue of \$5.74 billion.

Highlights of Governor Parnell's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget:

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT/INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure

- Port of Anchorage \$20 million
- Port MacKenzie Rail \$20 million
- Skagway City Dock Improvements \$10 million
- Roads to Resources \$10.5 million
- Deferred Maintenance \$100 million

Oil and Gas Development

- Oil and Gas exploration tax credits \$400 million
- AGIA Reimbursement Fund \$160 million
- In-state Gas Development \$5.5 million

Energy

- Susitna Planning, Design, Permitting \$65.7 million
- Renewable Energy Grant Fund \$25 million
- Southeast Energy Grant Fund \$10 million
- Weatherization \$25 million

Matching/Leverage Funds

\$103 million general fund match to leverage over \$705 million in federal and other funds including:

- DOTPF Highway and Aviation \$623 million
- DEC Village Safe Water \$42.3 million
- DEC Municipal Water/Sewer \$20 million
- Municipal Harbor Grant Fund \$5 million

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention \$7.4 million
- 15 New VPSOs and 3 New Trooper Positions

EDUCATION

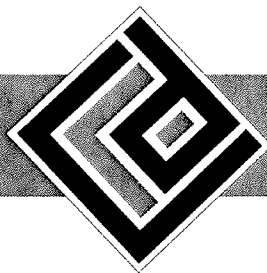
- Full Funding of K-12 Education \$1.13 billion
- Alaska Performance Scholarships \$8.2 million
- School Major Maintenance – 14 projects - \$19.9 million
- School Construction – Quinhagak K-12 Renovation–\$28.5 million

STATEWIDE

- Retirement System Unfunded Liability \$479.5 million
- Community Revenue Sharing \$60 million
- Tourism Marketing \$16 million (\$9 M operating; \$7 M capital)

Draft budget bills and more detailed information on the budget are available on the Office of Management & Budget website at omb.alaska.gov/

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John Zager

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Senator Lisa Murkowski
Congressman Don Young
Governor Sean Parnell

January 5, 2011

Mr. Chris Maisch, State Forester
Division of Forestry
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Additional Lands to Southeast State Forest

Dear Mr. Maisch:

The Resource Development Council (RDC) is writing to support the inclusion of an additional 23,181 acres to the Southeast State Forest. This state land in southern Southeast Alaska is appropriately suited for inclusion into the new state forest as it has been consistently managed for timber harvest. A state forest designation over these lands would expand the Southeast State Forest to 48,472 acres and ensure they will remain in state ownership and contribute to the long-term viability of the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska.

RDC is a statewide, non-profit, membership-funded organization founded in 1975. The RDC membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries, as well as Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to link these diverse interests together to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

RDC supported the creation of the 25,291-acre Southeast State Forest, which was established in June 2010. In Southeast Alaska, demand for state timber exceeds supply and local mills are dependent on a consistent supply to stay in business. The majority of the timber in Southeast Alaska is on federal land, but federal timber sales have declined sharply. Subsequently, the demand for state timber from local mills has increased significantly.

Much of the new state forest was inherited from the U.S. Forest Service with young second-growth stands. There is broad support for shifting timber harvesting in Southeast Alaska from old growth to second growth stands. The new state forest and the proposed additional parcels to it will help provide a sustainable timber supply to local mills and accelerate the harvest of second-growth timber. Actively managed second-growth stands will provide more timber volume per acre on shorter rotations.

The shift to second-growth harvesting can be accelerated and timber volume increased on state land by thinning these stands. However, thinning is a long-term investment and is only justified if the land will be available for timber harvesting.

The Division of Forestry will manage the state forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple use, including wildlife habitat and harvest, as well as recreational activities. The forest will be managed as part of the State Forest System in accordance with a new management plan that will be developed within the next three years. In the interim, existing guidance under the current Prince of Wales Island Area Plan and Central/Southern Southeast area plans will apply.

RDC supports the proposed additions to the Southeast State Forest from lands currently available for timber harvest and believes a larger state forest in the region will benefit the economy.

Sincerely,

Carl Portman
Deputy Director

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Governor Sean Parnell
STATE OF ALASKA

December 13, 2010


Mr. Jason Brune
121 West Fireweed, Suite 250
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Mr. Brune,

I am pleased you have accepted an appointment to the resources, energy, and environment transition team.

I appreciate your willingness to serve Alaska in this important capacity. Your commitment will make a difference as we work together to ensure that the administration moves forward effectively, improving the way that State government serves all Alaskans. Thank you for giving your time, talents, and experience to serve the people of Alaska.

Best regards,


Sean Parnell
Governor



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 11-02

Governor Parnell Disappointed with Air Permit Decision

January 4, 2011, Juneau, Alaska – Governor Sean Parnell expressed great disappointment today that the Environmental Appeals Board remanded key air permits for Shell’s offshore oil and gas exploration activities back to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for further work.

“It is extremely disheartening that Shell has been unsuccessful in trying to get this critical permit for almost four years,” Governor Parnell said. “They have invested tens of millions of dollars in pollution control equipment, and met or exceeded every request made of them, yet they still can’t get a permit to drill a single exploration well off the coast of Alaska.

“This decision comes on top of the continuous challenges and delays caused by other federal agencies. Nothing can replace the jobs that Alaska and America lose when one resource project after another is delayed by endless appeals. The federal permitting system is broken and we are paying the price. These appeals are not all about protecting the environment or the health of Alaskans. They are primarily about outside groups opposed to development and a federal administration in Washington, D.C. all too willing to accommodate them.

“I intend to work with members of Congress, fellow governors and others to bring attention to these concerns and to seek legislative or administrative solutions. We must find a way to allow this and other responsible resource development.”

The Environmental Appeals Board is a body within EPA that reviews administrative appeals of permits. The permits apply to air emissions from the vessel Shell planned to use to drill oil and gas exploration wells in the Arctic Ocean beginning in 2011. Three environmental and Native organizations appealed the permits. The board rendered its decision on December 30, 2010. This appeal follows an appeal in 2007 that had led to EPA withdrawing an earlier permit it had prepared for Shell.

While the Environmental Appeals Board denied some of the petitioners’ arguments, it concluded EPA erred in regard to two aspects of the permits. The permits were remanded to EPA to correct the errors. The board also decided not to answer other questions and directed EPA to do more work in these other areas.

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NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NOAA Proposes Listing Ringed and Bearded Seals as Threatened Under Endangered Species Act

December 3, 2010

NOAA's Fisheries Service is proposing to list four subspecies of ringed seals, found in the Arctic Basin and the North Atlantic, and two distinct population segments of bearded seals in the Pacific Ocean, as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The proposed listings cite threats posed by diminishing sea ice, and additionally, for ringed seals, reduced snow cover. NOAA climate models were used to predict future sea ice conditions.

One of the five recognized subspecies of ringed seals, the Saimaa in Finland, is already listed as endangered under the ESA. Under the proposed rules published today in the Federal Register, the remaining four subspecies of ringed seals – Arctic, Okhotsk, Baltic and Ladoga – would all be listed as threatened.

Ringed seals are found in the Arctic Basin (including the Bering Sea), western North Pacific (Sea of Okhotsk and Sea of Japan), and in the North Atlantic in the Baltic Sea and Lakes Ladoga and Saimaa east of the Baltic Sea.

Throughout most of its range, the Arctic ringed seal does not come ashore and uses sea ice for whelping, nursing, molting, and resting. Ringed seal pups are normally born in snow caves in the spring, and are vulnerable to freezing and predation without them. Timing of spring ice break-up, snow depths on sea ice, and late-winter rain can adversely affect snow cave formation and occupation. That the species produces only a single pup each year may limit the ringed seal's ability to respond to environmental challenges such as the diminishing ice and snow cover.

Because of these factors, NOAA's Fisheries Service has found that these four sub-species of ringed seal are at risk of becoming endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges, warranting a listing as threatened.

The bearded seal has two subspecies, one in the Pacific Ocean and the other in the Atlantic Ocean. Within the Pacific subspecies, there are two distinct population segments (DPS): the Okhotsk DPS, found in the Sea of Okhotsk; and the Beringia DPS, found in the Bering, east Siberian, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas. NOAA's Fisheries Service is proposing to list both Pacific DPSs of bearded seal as threatened.

Both Pacific bearded seal DPSs are closely associated with sea ice, particularly during the reproduction and molting stages. They primarily feed on shallow-water organisms, making their range generally areas where seasonal sea ice occurs over relatively shallow waters. Forecasts predict that this ice will be substantially reduced within this century, particularly in the Sea of Okhotsk, and there is potential for the spring and summer ice edge to retreat to deep waters of the Arctic Ocean basin.

Because of these factors, NOAA's Fisheries Service has found that the two DPSs within the Pacific subpopulation of bearded seals are at risk of becoming endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges, warranting a listing as threatened.



Bearded Seal

High resolution (Credit: NOAA)

NOAA's Fisheries Service previously determined listing was not needed for another ice seal, the ribbon seal, which is less dependent on sea ice than bearded and ringed seals.

NOAA's Fisheries Service is seeking comments from the public on the proposed listing of ringed and bearded ice seals for 60 days from date of publication in the Federal Register, which should occur the middle of next week. The proposed rules, maps, status review reports and other materials relating to this proposal can be found on the Alaska Region website at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>.

As soon as the proposed rule is accessible online on the Federal Register website— likely December 7 or 8—comments may be submitted by any one of the following methods:

- Submit comments online via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments;
- Fax comments to the attention of Kaja Brix at 907-586-7557;
- Mail written comments to Kaja Brix, Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802
- Hand-deliver written comments to Kaja Brix, Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian, Juneau Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Find us on [Facebook](#).

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'Firebrand ways'

A visit with one of the founders of the Center for Biological Diversity

Twenty years ago, they were Earth Firsters, living in tepees, trying to save spotted owls and grafting together a shoestring budget from their unemployment checks. Today, the Center for Biological Diversity has a budget of \$7 million, 62 full-time staffers and 15 offices nationally, in locations from Washington, D.C., to Silver City, N.M. By filing 600 lawsuits and countless petitions against the federal government, the center has won the listing of 380 species as threatened or endangered. It also says it has secured 110 million acres of critical habitat and protected another 130 million acres. CBD has won a reputation as the country's most militant large environmental group, one that seldom shrinks from controversy.

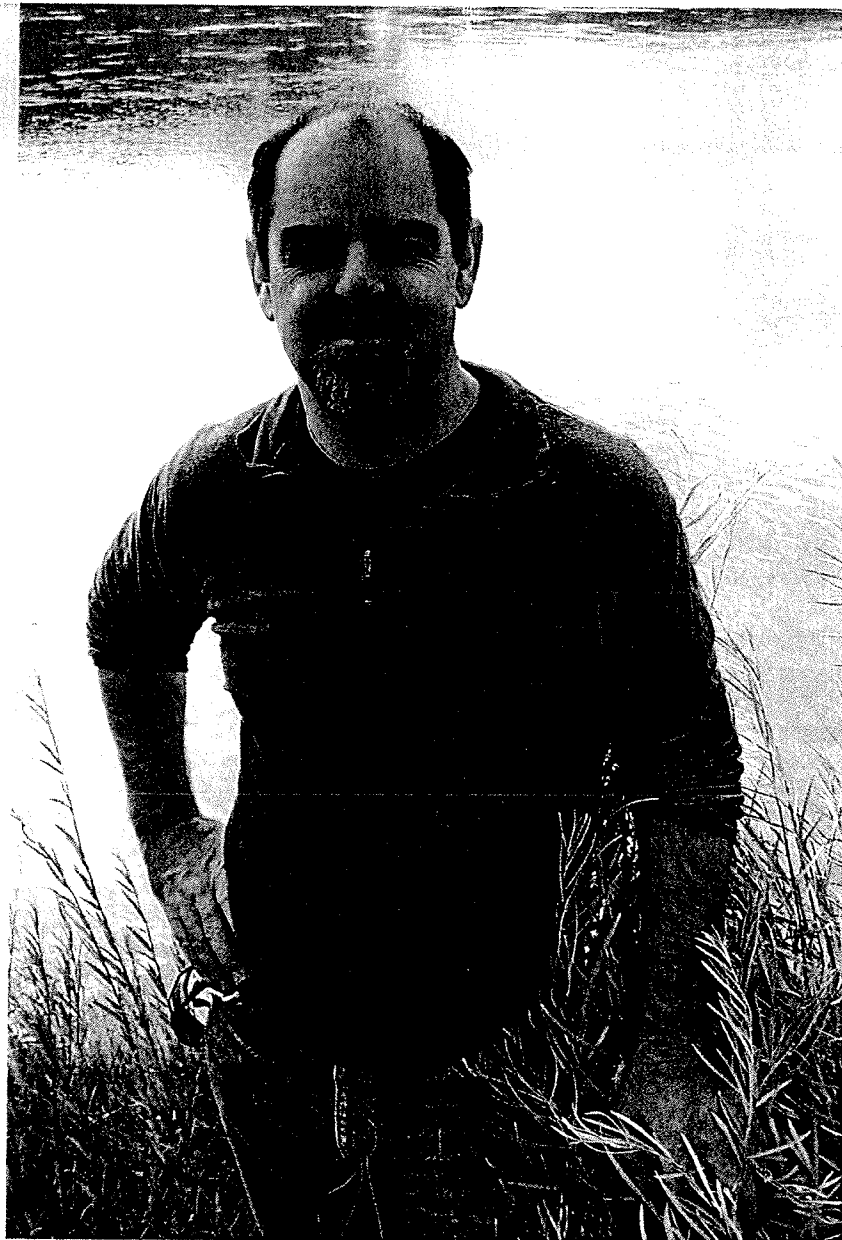
From its Tucson headquarters, it's expanded its species-saving tactics to protect rivers, stop sprawl, battle overgrazing and even tackle climate change. Last year, the group helped get the polar bear listed as a threatened species. Here, one of CBD's founders, 45-year-old director Kierán (pronounced Keer-Oni) Suckling, looks back at how the group got where it is and explains how it differs from the "Big 10" green groups.

HIGH COUNTRY NEWS How did your group get its start? What were your roots?

KIERÁN SUCKLING I was in grad school at SUNY Stonybrook, working on a Ph.D. in philosophy, with my dissertation on the relationship between species extinction and language extinction. I came out West for the 1989 Earth First! Rendezvous in northern New Mexico.

There, I chained myself across a road, blocking access to a timber sale. The timber industry in the Southwest was about to make a radical change in its practices. It had logged off the mesas and now they planned to go in and log steep slope canyons.

I got arrested in the process, along with a woman named Sherie. We fell in love while in jail, and she said, "I'm working for this guy, Peter Galvin, doing Mexican spotted owl surveys on the Gila National Forest (in southwest New Mexico) for the Forest Service. Why don't I see if I can get you a job?" Peter hired me, out of a VW van. One day, one of our survey crew got lost and wandered into Water Canyon, where a timber sale was going on, and found a spotted owl.



Kierán Suckling, one of the founders of the Center for Biological Diversity, scouting for potential sites for river otter reintroduction on New Mexico's Gila River. PHOTO COURTESY CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

HCN The Mexican spotted owl at that point was on the Forest Service's "sensitive species" list. (It was federally listed as threatened in 1993.) What happened after your surveyor found the owl?

SUCKLING First, the Forest Service stopped the sale, then let it resume, saying the company had a contract. We had signed contracts saying we wouldn't divulge owl locations, but we went the next day to the *Silver City Daily Press*, with a map that told our story. We were fired within seconds. That was the start of us becoming full-time activists, starting as the Greater Gila Biodiversity Project.

HCN What made you decide to found your own group?

SUCKLING We were riled up. The government wasn't playing by the rules. The best way to save endangered species wasn't going to work inside the government. I was studying endangered species as part of my Ph.D. research. I realized, Oh my God, this owl species is going extinct. I couldn't keep studying patterns of extinction while letting extinction go on.

HCN What was your first major victory?

SUCKLING A Mexican wolf reintroduction lawsuit in 1990, our first. The Fish and Wildlife Service had formally declared the Mexican wolf unrecoverable. The Audubon Society and the Defenders of Wildlife had formed a wolf coalition to fight this. But they had no legal strategy beyond telling the government, "Pretty please."

A study had been done showing a viable wolf recovery population could be introduced at White Sands Missile Range. They spoke to the general in charge of the range and he had no interest in wolves — he shut them down. The strategy of the wolf coalition was to wait for the general to retire. We decided, let's just sue instead. It got settled with the Service agreeing to do a wolf study, which led to reintroduction.

That was the moment when we looked at it and said, "Wow." The environmental movement spent a decade going to meetings and demanding action and getting nothing done. They were asking powerful people for something from a position of no power. We realized that we can bypass the officials and sue, and that we can get things done in court.

HCN What role do lawsuits play in your strategy to list endangered species?

SUCKLING They are one tool in a larger campaign, but we use lawsuits to help shift the balance of power from industry and government agencies, toward protecting endangered species. That plays out on many levels. At its simplest, by obtaining an injunction to shut down logging or prevent the filling of a dam, the power shifts to our hands. The Forest Service needs our agreement to get back to work, and we are in the position of being able to powerfully negotiate the terms of releasing the injunction.

New injunctions, new species listings and new bad press take a terrible toll on agency morale. When we stop the same timber sale three or four times running, the timber planners want to tear their hair out. They feel like their careers are being mocked and destroyed — and they are. So they become much more willing to play by our rules and at least get something done. Psychological warfare is a very underappreciated aspect of environmental campaigning.

HCN Were you hindered by not having science degrees?

SUCKLING No. It was a key to our success. I think the professionalization of the environmental movement has injured it greatly. These kids get degrees in environmental conservation and wildlife management and come looking for jobs in the environmental movement. They've bought into resource management values and multiple use by the time they graduate. I'm more interested in hiring philosophers, linguists and poets. The core talent of a successful environmental activist is not science and law. It's campaigning instinct. That's not only not taught in the universities, it's discouraged.

HCN How democratic is your group? Does the buck stop with you or is there a collective?

SUCKLING The buck stops with our leadership team: Me, Peter Galvin, our conservation director, and Sarah Bergman, our assistant director. Over our 20 years, we have gone through agonizing debates and battles over consensus decision-making and about a hierarchical organization and social structure. Ten years ago, it settled into this structure of strong leadership, where we give tremendous deference and latitude to our activists to pick battles, tactics and strategy. It's extremely non-hierarchical, but not consensus-based.

HCN Did you plan all along to become a national group?

SUCKLING Not at all. Our initial vision was to protect the Greater Gila Ecosystem — the Gila, Apache and part of the Cibola national forests, about 10 million acres. We got dragged onto the national stage against our will. It didn't take us long to realize that power politics that determine species protection do not occur in the Gila: They happen in Phoenix, Albuquerque and Washington, D.C. We decided first to be the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity, and deal with the whole Southwest. Then, other, grassroots environmental groups started calling us from around the country and asking, "How do I replicate this?" At their request, we started opening offices around the country.

HCN Has your mission changed since you went national?

SUCKLING It's still the same. Our national status came to clarify what drove us. Before, we focused on that 10 million acres, and we were doing that through timber sales, listing petitions, etc., all based in these species. As we've grown, the species focus continues to be the case. Our attachment is to species, not to the particular place.

HCN What about your global warming campaign — what does that have to do with species protection?

SUCKLING It's driven by the need to protect plants and animals. Our global warming goals must be enough to save the polar bear. We need to cut emissions to 40 to 50 percent of 1990 levels by 2020. We need a net negative emissions policy by 2050 — less than zero.

HCN How would you deal with conflicts between renewable energy projects and endangered species? After all, solar panels in the desert can harm sensitive species like the desert tortoise.

SUCKLING We strongly support a rapid ramp-up of solar energy and have mapped out 100,000 acres of degraded public and private lands in the Mojave Desert where solar development would not conflict with endangered species or wilderness. We've also advocated placing solar developments in burned-out state, private and federal lands along Interstate 10 between Tucson and Phoenix. With so many highly degraded, biologically fragmented lands available, good planning should be able to avoid conflicts between solar energy and endangered species.

It's a no-brainer. But unfortunately, many developers have proven to have less than no brain.

HCN Contrast yourself with the "Big 10" environmental groups. What do you see as their strengths and weaknesses?

SUCKLING The environmental movement is strongest when it has a clear vision and is willing to be way out in front of political leaders, and is willing to cause controversy, which is absolutely necessary to change the status quo. I think it's weakest when it too closely follows the Democratic party instead of playing an aggressive nonpartisan position.

Climate change is a really great example. The national environmental movement has articulated no bottom line on climate reductions. It has let the Democratic leadership completely define climate solutions, so every climate bill has been weak. That's why Copenhagen collapsed. National environmental groups did not ask Congress to do anything creative. They waited for Pelosi and Reid to take the lead.

HCN In 10 years, would you like the Center for Biological Diversity to be as big as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and other mainstream national groups?

SUCKLING Yes. At one point we thought we could do our jobs here in the West at a moderate size and rely on the big nationals' political muscle to carry our message in D.C. Now, after years of seeing the built-up political power of so many groups being squandered in D.C., we decided we need to have that political power ourselves.

Plus, there are endangered species in all 50 states, and we feel a responsibility to keep growing and reaching out until all of them are fully protected. We are in the midst of the sixth and possibly the greatest mass extinction crisis in the planet's 4 billion-year history. We have to do everything in our power, and increase our power, to stop it.

HCN Can you do that without growing corrupt?

SUCKLING I'm more than aware of the risks, but I do have confidence that we can be as big as big nationals and retain our firebrand ways. We have to. Otherwise, what's the point? There already is an NRDC. There's no need for another one. □

Tony Davis reports for the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson.



The Mexican gray wolf was reintroduced to the Southwest in 1998, following a lawsuit from the Center for Biological Diversity. More recent CBD lawsuits led to reforms in Mexican wolf management, and to the overturn of a policy that required the removal of any wolf that killed livestock three times in one year.
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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

December 20, 2010

Mr. John Goll, Regional Director
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation & Enforcement
3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500
Anchorage, AK 99503-5820

Re: Shell's 2011 Exploration Plan for the Beaufort Sea and Oil Discharge
Prevention and Contingency Plan

Dear Mr. Goll:

The Resource Development Council (RDC) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the Shell's 2011 Exploration Plan for the Beaufort Sea and the associated Supplemental Environmental Assessment. RDC urges the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation & Enforcement (BOEM) to approve Shell's 2011 open water season exploration plan in the Beaufort Sea and its Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP), especially given the unprecedented steps the company has taken to enhance its program.

RDC is a statewide membership-funded organization founded in 1975. Our Alaskan membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries, as well as Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to link these diverse interests together to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

Shell's 2011 exploration plan and ODPCP have been revised to include provisions to reduce discharges to the marine environment and to bolster its previously approved exploration plan, which underwent extensive public review and met or exceeded all federal and state regulatory standards. The plan was also reviewed and upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In light of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Shell has taken significant steps to prevent any well control event at its exploration well and to strengthen its response capabilities in the highly unlikely event of a blowout. Shell is prepared to stop the flow quickly and to collect or clean up any spilled oil from the environment, using assets that will be pre-staged in the Arctic.

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The new support vessels Shell has added to its project on a standby basis will enhance response capabilities.

Shell's oil spill contingency plan is robust and includes capabilities for the recovery of a "worst case" discharge. Oil spill response personnel, vessels and equipment will be pre-staged in the area to respond immediately should an oil spill event occur. The company itself is well prepared to prevent any well control event. Well control is the primary emphasis of all of Shell's exploration plans. Every activity is geared toward maintaining well control and integrity. Shell has committed to deploying the latest and best available technology to carry out its program.

Drilling in the Arctic offers distinct differences compared to deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The pressure encountered in deepwater drilling is multiple times greater in the Gulf of Mexico than in Alaska where wells would be in shallow water. Another distinction is that many Alaskan offshore operations are seasonal in nature. For example, Shell has proposed conducting its exploratory drilling during the summer and fall open water season. Ice management vessels will be positioned on site to deflect any ice flows that could potentially approach a rig. There are also major differences between state and federal oversight and regulatory frameworks, as well as fundamental differences in the geology of the regions. All of these contrasts warrant special consideration in public policy decisions and should lead the BOEM to conclude that exploration should move forward in the Beaufort Sea in 2011.

RDC has a high level of confidence exploration and development can occur safely in the Arctic – with no significant impact to the environment, polar bears, or other species. BOEM's own analysis of the impacts of Shell's exploration plan, which included a detailed cumulative impact analysis of a multi-well program, determined that exploration would have no significant impact on the marine environment or wildlife. The processes and safeguards in place today in Alaska should allow exploration activity to resume safely in the Alaska OCS.

While the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas are considered frontier areas, exploration activity has occurred there before. In fact, thirty wells have been drilled in the Beaufort and five in the Chukchi – all without incident. These wells were drilled in the 1980s, utilizing older technology compared to what exists today. Moreover, there has never been a blowout in the Alaska or the Canadian Arctic that has resulted in an oil spill.

Opponents of oil exploration have cited the lack of infrastructure in the Arctic as a reason not to drill in the region. However, it is important to note that additional infrastructure will be built to accommodate future needs once exploration and development activities move forward. The lack of infrastructure today is due directly to the fact that there has been virtually no ongoing development or commercial activity of any kind offshore in the Arctic. However, Shell has committed to stage extensive resources onsite to immediately respond to any incident. In addition, the Alaska Clean Seas consortium has substantial resources and experience in the Arctic and has done extensive mapping to identify sensitive areas. The consortium has also conducted extensive safety and oil spill drills in the Arctic and has active research programs dating back into the early 1980s.

It is important to note that not all questions and concerns regarding oil and gas exploration and development can possibly be answered and met. Not all risks can be eliminated. If the

federal government insists that every concern and risk be eliminated, then it must be prepared to import virtually all the oil the nation requires to meet future needs. It must then also accept the consequences of a much heavier reliance on foreign oil, including soaring trade deficits, a weaker and more vulnerable economy, and compromised national security. Put another way, failure to move forward with OCS development in Alaska will put the state economy at risk, as well as the nation's security.

OCS oil and gas development is absolutely critical to Alaska's future economy. With the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) now running at one-third capacity, exploration blocked in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and non-development activists working toward Wilderness designations in the National Petroleum Reserve (NPR-A), nothing less than Alaska's future economy is at stake.

The responsible development of potentially immense oil and gas deposits in the Arctic would significantly boost the economy and extend the life of TAPS. Without new federal oil production, TAPS could be uneconomic to operate at some point in the next decade.

Between ANWR, NPR-A and the Alaska OCS, there could be nearly 40 billion barrels of oil in place. By comparison, 16 billion barrels of oil have been produced on state lands across the North Slope in 33 years. The sustainability of TAPS and Alaska's economy will largely depend on some combination of oil production from these federal areas, which represent the nation's best onshore and offshore prospects for major discoveries.

Not developing federal oil in Alaska makes no sense from an economic and energy security stand point, especially given the fact that America imports over 60 percent of its oil, and at a great cost. American oil production is projected to decrease by 9.9 billion barrels within the next 20 years, nearly a 15 percent annual decrease from current levels. Meanwhile, imports of oil from OPEC are projected to increase by 4.1 billion barrels, nearly 19 percent – and at a cost of \$607 billion.

New production in the Alaska OCS would reduce America's reliance on foreign energy. The Alaska OCS is an important future source of U.S. energy supply with up to 29 billion barrels and over 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas potentially in place. The potential recoverable reserves offshore Alaska is more than all the current total proven U.S. oil reserves of approximately 21 billion barrels. Alaska could have the ninth largest oil resources in the world ahead of Nigeria and Libya – if access is granted to these potential reserves. Moreover, OCS gas reserves would significantly improve the long-term economic viability of the proposed gas pipeline from the North Slope to the Lower 48 – a clean energy priority of the Obama administration. To become a reality, the pipeline requires additional gas reserves beyond what has already been discovered onshore.

Given its potential for immense recoverable reserves and enormous economic benefits to the state and nation, the Alaska OCS should be opened to responsible development. Shell's Beaufort Sea exploration plan for 2011 would be a good first step. OCS development in the Beaufort and subsequent development in the Chukchi Sea would generate hundreds of billions of dollars in royalty and tax revenues to the state and federal governments and aid the nation's economic recovery by reducing the trade deficit and creating tens of thousands of new jobs. All 50 states would benefit, including steel and pipe manufacturers in the Midwest,

shippers along the coasts, and high-tech industries in the Western states. Union labor would benefit from pipeline construction and maintenance.

The OCS can sustain Alaska's economy for generations. Currently there are more than 108,000 Alaskan jobs tied to the discovery, production and shipment of Alaskan oil and natural gas, accounting for more than 15 percent of Alaska's population. According to a University of Alaska study, OCS production could provide an annual average of 35,000 additional jobs within the state for 50 years and \$72 billion in new payroll.

RDC and many Alaskans share President Obama's view that America needs to conserve more and put new emphasis on renewable and alternative energy. By doing so, the nation can ultimately break its reliance on foreign oil. Yet while America must conserve more and move toward renewable energy, it still needs to pursue new oil and gas production, given the fact it will take decades before renewable energy becomes a dominant energy source. Even with the Obama administration's goal to decrease dependence on oil, it is projected that fossil fuels will still account for two-thirds of this nation's energy consumption in 2025. Meanwhile, every barrel of oil that is not produced in the U.S. will be imported from abroad to meet our needs. Given economic, environmental and geopolitical concerns, America must produce more of the oil it consumes – under American laws, regulations and oversight, and by American workers. It is vital that Alaska's abundant offshore energy resources be fully utilized for compelling economic and energy security reasons.

In concluding, I would like to quote from a December 2, 2010 editorial of the Anchorage Daily News: "Let Shell go to work in 2011 to explore for oil – and also restore faith in the industry's ability and will to do it right, to tap Alaska's oil and gas treasure while abiding by the highest environmental and safety standards on the planet. We need the oil. We need the jobs. And we need to provide them while protecting the Arctic environment and its communities." This statement accurately reflects the sentiment of RDC and most Alaskans regarding Shell's proposed exploration program.

RDC encourages BOEM to act in a timely manner to allow Shell to proceed with its 2011 exploration program in the Beaufort Sea.

Sincerely,

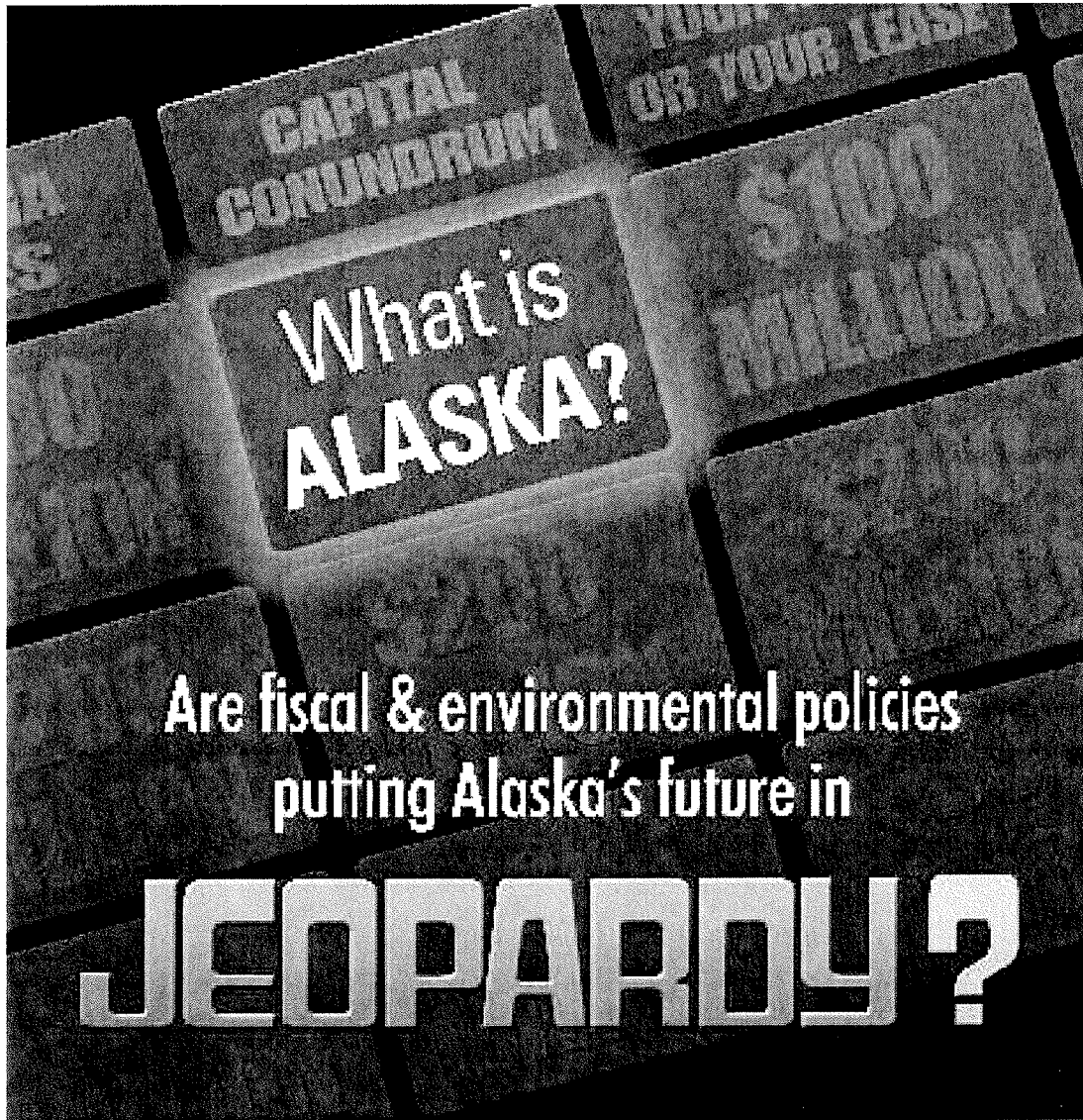
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Portman', written in a cursive style.

Carl Portman
Deputy Director



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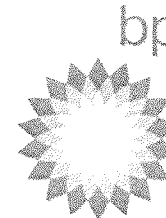


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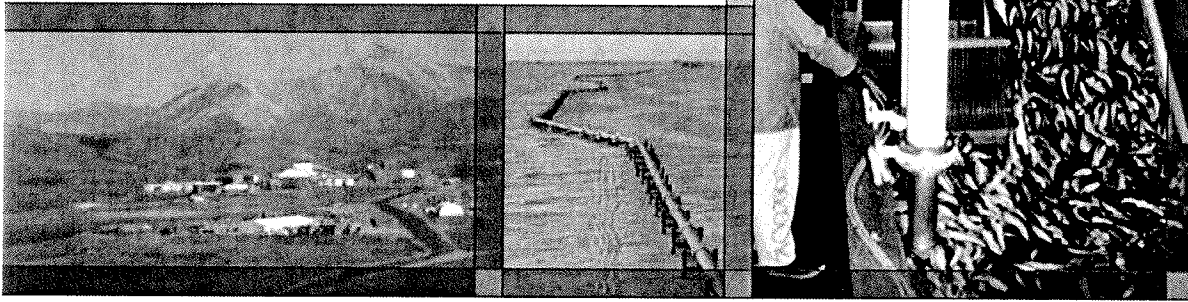


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Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development



Presentations

2010

December 16: Update on Port of Anchorage Expansion, Bill Sheffield, Port

December 2: The BLM, NPRA, and Other Energy Issues, Bob Abbey, National Director, Bureau of Land Management

November 17-18: RDC's 31st Annual Conference, Alaska Resources

November 16: Endangered Species Act Primer, cosponsored by the State of Alaska

November 4: Large Hydro: One of the Keys to Alaska's Future Economy

Bryan Carey, AIDEA/AEA,

Ed Carter, MWH

Rich Wilson, President, Alaska Ratepayers, Inc.

October 21: Ballot Measure One, Representative Reggie Joule

October 20: Gubernatorial Candidate Debate with Ethan Berkowitz and Governor Sean Parnell, co-sponsored by the Alaska Forestry Association, Alaska Miners Association, Alaska Support Industry Alliance and RDC

October 15: Endangered Species Act Strategy, Governor Sean Parnell

October 7: The Status of Sealaska's ANCSA Land Entitlement Legislation, Jaeleen Araujo, Vice President and General Counsel, Sealaska, and Ron Wolfe, Natural Resource Manager, Sealaska

September 30: Future Development in NPR-A, Julia Dougan, Acting State Director, Bureau of Land Management

September 16: An Environmental Litigation Horror Story with Statewide Impacts, Mayor Willard Dunham, Seward

August 4: Special Luncheon for Primary Gubernatorial Debate

July 21: Videos and presentation delivered at RDC's Annual Meeting: Our New Energy Reality Challenges and Opportunities - Karen Alderman Harbert, President and Chief Executive Officer, Institute for 21st Century Energy with opening remarks from U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

May 20: Kenai LNG Plant Export License Extension, Dan Clark, Manager, Cook Inlet, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.

May 11: Larry Persily, Federal Coordinator, Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects



121 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 250
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Alaska Resources 2011

Resource Development Council's 31st Annual Conference

RDC would like to thank the many sponsors of Alaska Resources 2011, which drew 976 registrants from across North America. Without our many sponsors and members, RDC would not be able to do the important work of educating and advocating for the responsible development of Alaska's natural resources. To our generous sponsors and members, thank you for your support!

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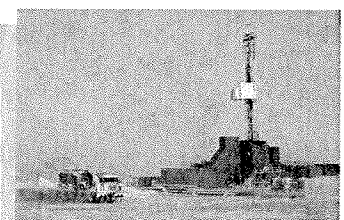
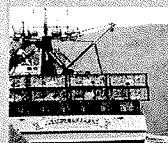
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