

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Albert M. Kookesh



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Standing Committees:
Transportation
Community & Regional Affairs

DISTRICT C

December 6, 2011

Alatna
Allakaket
Aniak
Angoon
Anvik
Arctic Village
Beaver
Beluga
Bettles
Big Delta
Birch Creek
Boundary
Cape Pole
Central
Chalkyitsik
Chandalar Lake
Chenega Bay
Chicken
Chisana
Chistochina
Chitina
Chuathbaluk
Circle
Coffman Cove
Cordova
Cube Cove
Coldfoot
Copper Center
Craig
Crooked Creek
Delta Junction
Deltana
Dot Lake
Dry Creek
Eagle
Eagle Village
Edna Bay
Ellamar
Ernestine
Excursion Inlet
Eureka
Evansville
Eyak
Flat
Fort Greely
Fort Yukon
Fortuna Ledge
Funter Bay
Gakona
Galena
Grayling
Gulkana
Gustavus
Haines
Healy Lake
Hogatza
Hobart Bay
Holy Cross
Hoonah
Hughes
Huslia
Hydaburg

Alaska State Legislature
Regional and Community Leaders
Citizens of Alaska

Dear Colleagues, Leaders and fellow Alaskans,

Forty years ago when the State championed an all Alaska oil pipeline across the state, the promise was, it would bring a better quality of life to all Alaskans. According to the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Water, we still have an estimated 6,028 homes/families without potable/clean drinking water and safe sanitation/sewer systems.

From 1977 to 2009 Alaska earned over one-hundred and two billion dollars in oil revenues, of that only five-hundred seventy-two million (less than one half of 1%) was spent on rural water and sewer projects. Over this same time period, urban municipalities received substantial amount of funds for water and sewer projects, but those numbers have not been tracked as well as the rural funds.

Another example: From 2001 to 2012 urban municipalities received over one-hundred eighty-nine million dollars (\$189,316,186) for water and sewer projects through the state DEC municipal grants and loans programs and water and waste water infrastructure projects and DCCED which do not require a match. Rural communities received over one-hundred eighty million (\$180,459,244) in state funds which is a match to federal funds of five-hundred forty-one million. A majority of these funds went to maintenance and not new projects.

As you can see most communities across the state receive state funds for water and sewer projects with most of them needing substantial financial assistance on initial infrastructure. So to ask the state to fund infrastructure costs is not out of the ordinary. Alaska can afford to do more and I say it has a responsibility and duty to do more. Last year for FY12, the Governor put \$7,647,226 in his budget for village safe water and \$21,817,963 for sanitation municipal matching grants. The funding for water and sewer projects is clearly not enough. I strongly urge all of you to write call and email the Governor urging him to fully fund water and sewer projects and continue to do so until every home has clean water and a safe sanitation system, his phone number is 907.465.3500, fax 907.465.3532; address: P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, AK 99811-0001; email Governor@alaska.gov.

Hyder
Kake
Kaltag
Kasaan
Katalla
Kennicott
Kenny Lake
Klawock
Klukwan
Koyukuk
Labouchere Bay
Lake Minchumina
Lime Village
Livengood
Long Island
Mankomen Lake
Manley Hot Springs
Marshall
McCarthy
McGrath
Medfra
Metlakatla
Mentasta
Minto
Nabesna
Naukati Bay
Nenana
Nikolai
Northway
Nulato
Ophir
Point Baker
Polk Inlet
Port Alice
Port Protection
Rampart
Red Devil
Ruby
Russian Mission
Shageluk
Skagway
Slana
Sleetmute
Stevens Village
Stony River
Strelna
Takotna
Tanacross
Tanana
Tatitlek
Tazlina
Telida
Tenakee Springs
Tetlin Junction
Tok
Tonsina
Tyonek
Utopia Creek
Venetie
View Cove
Waterfall
Whale Pass
Wiseman
Yakutat

In order to get an accurate estimate on how much money will be needed and establish a spectrum of needs, we need an accurate number of homes that do not have water and sewer systems throughout the state. Your help in providing my office with those numbers would be greatly appreciated.

We can no longer continue to do 'business as usual' when so many of our neighbors are living in third world conditions. I plan on introducing legislation this coming session to establish a water and sewer task force that will look at alternative, simple self-sustaining systems; research what other arctic nations are doing; prioritize; coordinate funds and services/departments/organizations; evaluate past projects and all service providers; and anything else that may arise. If you have any suggestions for this task force, an accurate number of homes in your community or region who do not have safe water and sewer systems and letters of support please contact my office; attention Dorothy Shockley, email Dorothy_Shockley@legis.state.ak.us, or call her in my Fairbanks office at 888.452.3471. From January to end of April you can reach her in my Juneau office at 888.288.3473.

Your help in this long overdue initiative is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Senator Albert Kookesh

Cc: Governor Sean Parnell
Larry Hartig, DEC Commissioner
John Moller, Senior Rural Affairs Advisor
Julie Kitka, President, Alaska Federation of Natives