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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **Public Outreach on the Process of Nominating and Designating Tier 3 Waters to Include Workshops and Website**

(JUNEAU, AK) — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) wants to hear from Alaskans as the department works to establish a statewide process for nominating and designating Outstanding National Resource Waters, known as Tier 3 waters. DEC has developed a website with background information, including three possible alternative nomination and designation processes, and has organized workshops around the state this month.

Per the federal Clean Water Act, Alaska's water quality anti-degradation policy creates three classifications, or "tiers," of waters. A Tier 3 designation requires a waterbody be maintained and protected in its current state, with no new discharges of pollution allowed. The Clean Water Act requires states to have a process for designating Tier 3 waters, but it does not require states actually designate any waters. Alaska currently does not have a process in place for designating Tier 3 waters. Once the process is established, the designation of waters is driven by state law.

DEC also plans to conduct four public workshops this month. These will be "roll-up-the-sleeves" workshops, rather than formal hearings. The public may register for the workshops through the website below.

**Juneau** — Monday, March 20, 1-4pm, Centennial Hall, Egan Room  
**Anchorage** — Tuesday, March 21, 1-4pm, Performing Arts Center, Voth Hall  
**Fairbanks** — Wednesday, March 22, 9am-12 noon, DEC, 610 University Drive  
**Statewide Teleconference** — Thursday, March 23, 4-7pm (call-in info on website)

The goal is for the process to work well for all Alaskans and for all waters of the state, now and in the future. The process should be transparent and allow any Alaskan to submit a nomination. The process should provide opportunity for local input, and for the thorough evaluation of a nomination using defined criteria.

The public is encouraged to visit the Tier 3 website for more info and to submit comments: <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wqsar/Antidegradation/Tiers123.html>.

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