

Doniece Gott

From: Chicken Gold Camp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2023 9:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Deantha Crockett
Subject: Clean Water Act 404 Funding

I, along with my wife, daughter and son-in-law, operate a placer mining business in Alaska and a tourism business that is tied to the mining business, We have run both for many years. There is good reason for the State of Alaska to assume responsibility for the Clean Water Act:

The State assumption of 404 will bring stability and predictability to our permitting process. For Alaska's small-scale placer mining operations, this would be a significant improvement. Too often, federal employees come to Alaska and serve in their roles for three years or less, often without understanding of the Alaska National Interest Lands and Conservation and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Acts that guide our land management principles, and Alaska's unique environment and characteristics. Alaskan regulators understand the uniqueness of Alaska and can better manage environmental protection policy in our state.

Alaska's miners have a long history of paying their way and contributing to the state economy. We are open to an appropriate increase in fees to cover what it costs the state to administer the 404 program, and stand ready to work with ADEC on that fee structure. We also support DEC efforts to pursue and secure federal funding for the program.

The State of Alaska has an excellent track record of managing federal programs, including the Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES; now the Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System APDES), the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Water Drinking Act. We are well equipped to manage the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulation as well, and doing so would bring the regulatory certainty needed to grow investment in resource and community projects, and the Alaska economy.

If primacy is implemented, the State of Alaska will be required to comply with the Clean Water Act 404 program, and standards will be at least as, if not more stringent than the federal regulations.

Please support funding the Clean Water Act 404 program in this budget as it will strengthen the State' regulatory system and attract investment needed to grow the economy as well as foster predictability in the permitting system for existing Alaska mines.

Thank you,

Mike Busby

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