Straw person for ONRW –

A) Nomination Submittal Requirements
B) Straw person process for reviewing ONRW public nominations
C) Suggested Criteria for Approving and ONRW

A) Straw person -Nomination Submittal Requirements

Proposing a waterbody/segment as and ONRW provides an opportunity for a substantial level of protection for that waterbody/segment. An ONRW designation could also create varied economic consequences and benefits for the watershed as a whole. Some (or all) of the following could be required as part of a nomination (see Figure 1 for a brief overview):

1. Name of the waterbody / location
2. Reach length
3. Delineated watershed on a topographic map showing the upstream and downstream extent of the proposed ONRW
    a. The map is to show the extent to which the proposed ONRW is located within the boundaries of, flows through, or is adjacent to state or federal forest land, parks, nature preserves, refuges, or wildlife management areas
4. Land use/land cover of the watershed and geographic extent
5. A watershed inventory including a list of the existing permitted withdrawals and discharges within and upstream of the ONRW along with any future uses. Alaska DEC or DNR can provide assistance with this
6. The inventory should also include whether there are any dams located within the ONRW or upstream of the proposed ONRW.
7. Inventory of stakeholders, including public and private landowners that own and manage the land surrounding the waterbody being nominated as an ONRW. Landowners or managers upstream of the proposed ONRW should also be included such as local government, private businesses, fisherman and recreation uses etc.
8. List of relevant historical records, data, and studies supporting the significance of the waterbody if appropriate, relevant water quality (biological, chemical, hydrological), ecological uniqueness, and recreational information that supports the nomination.
9. Documentation of petitioner's public involvement activities to date, including letters documenting level of support, issues or concerns, meetings held, communications, etc. Written letters of support or non-support need to be included from the organized borough, city or tribal entities upstream or adjacent to the proposed ONRW.
10. Additional information as may be recommended by Alaska DEC

B) Straw person process for reviewing ONRW public nominations

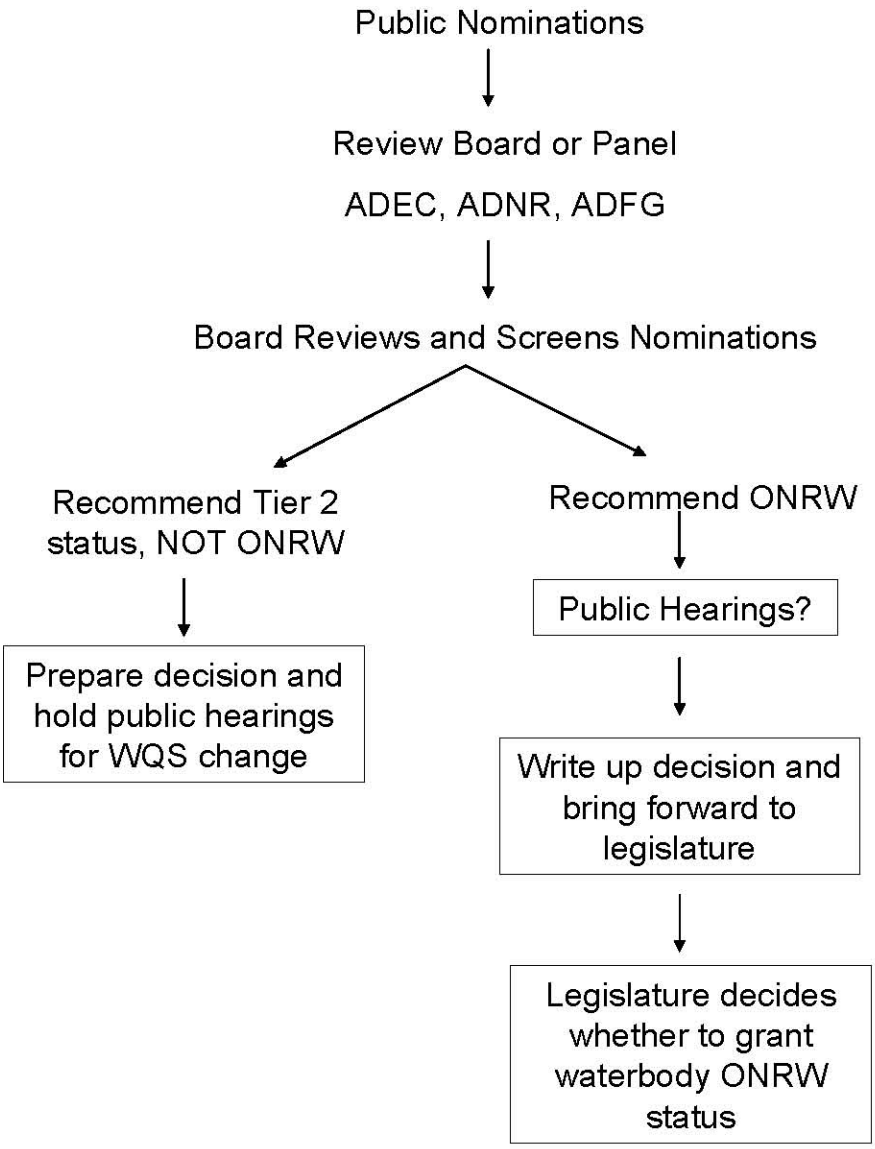

Figure 1. Straw person process for reviewing ONRW public nominations

C) Straw person Suggested Criteria for Approving and ONRW

In addition to having exceptional qualities in terms of aesthetics, culture, recreation, and aquatic life or its habitat as compared to other waterbodies in the State, the following criteria may also be considered as a Tier 3 (ONRW):

(1) **The State has controlling authority to manage the watershed and land uses** for maintaining and protecting the exceptional qualities of the ONRW over time. State land management authority is relevant to who owns land in the watershed and especially in the vicinity of the segment proposed as an ONRW; this may also include an estimate of likely regulatory measures needed to achieve the desired level of protection for ONRW status in a waterbody. Used by – AZ, ND

(2) **Waterbody is located in a special use area such as park, wildlife refuge, sanctuary, special status trout stream, etc** (related to #1 above). This criterion is used by many states. These areas are already assigned certain protections and are located largely in government-owned lands and so might be likely to be maintained in an exceptional condition. Having privately-held lands does not automatically exclude a waterbody from having ONRW status or nominate the waterbody for ONRW status so long as other criteria regarding exceptional qualities are met.

(3) **The waterbody is in a relatively pristine condition**, i.e. largely absent human sources of degradation. This is probably not very useful for Alaska where many waterbodies are pristine. Used by WA.

(4) **Waterbody requires greater protection than that already afforded in State water quality standards**, e.g., designated uses. This gets at the issue of how vulnerable is the waterbody to future pollution or stresses that might lower its current exceptional condition. Used by CO.

(5) **Socioeconomic impacts of designating a waterbody Tier 3 (or Tier 2.5) are not too burdensome.** This would probably come up as a consideration through the public process in any case but some states explicitly mention this as a criterion; especially if the ONRW designation might have very positive economic effects. Used by CO.

(6) **When evaluated for a combination of select indicator pollutants, a waterbody is judged for exceptional water quality**; e.g., E.coli, certain metals, a biological index score, dissolved oxygen, pH, etc. This type of criterion works if the State has adequate data with which to judge what is exceptional and what is not. Also, given the naturally high levels of certain metals observed in certain regions of Alaska, metals at least may not provide a useful indicator for ONRW status. There might be waterbodies where the water chemistry is very unique for Alaska (e.g., high calcium or magnesium carbonates?) which creates an unusual fauna/flora. The unusual fauna/flora may be the actual driver for ORW status. – Used by PA.

(7) **The waterbody has an unusually high abundance of certain valued resources such as salmon or aquatic-dependent wildlife** (e.g., marine mammals or certain bird species) which use a specific area (e.g., bay or estuary) to a large extent. Alaska does not yet have an IBI or other biological index. Used by CA.