

ALASKA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Alaska Water Resources Board was created by Article 3 of AS 46.15, the Water Use Act of 1966. The Board serves as an advisory group to the governor on all matters relating to the use and appropriation of water in the state of Alaska. Clearly this is a large role as there are many issues concerning the use and appropriation of water on which the board might be assumed to be knowledgeable.

The Board is charged by section 46.15.220 to hold at least two meetings per year with one of these meetings being held in Juneau. The Water Resources Board functioned as an active group from the Water Use Act's passage until 1975. No meetings of the Board have been held since that time.

The Water Resources Board met five times during the years 1973-1975; in March and November of 1973, March and November of 1974, and in March of 1975. These meetings were generally two days long and were held in Juneau (3 times), Soldotna (once) and Anchorage (once). The agenda for the meetings generally consisted of one and a half days of presentations and discussions, with the last afternoon reserved for public presentation and discussion. The following is a cross section of the topics which appeared on the Board's agenda during the three year period:

Fish and Game

1. ADF&G Habitat Improvement program
2. Anadromous water impact reports

Water Quality

1. DEC wastewater regulations with special emphasis on the effects on small water systems
2. Safe Drinking Water Act
3. Protection of roadside drinking water
4. Placer mining vs water rights vs environment
5. Subdivision water systems and public safety

Water Quantity

1. Instream flow bill
2. Wild rivers
3. Finger Lake (draining of a spring-fed pond)

Special Problems

1. Kachemak Bay (Oil lease sale)
2. North Kenai industrial water use
3. State assistance in port development
4. Extension of Seward jurisdiction of coastal waters

Other

1. Dam Safety Act
2. 1975 National Assessment
3. Environmental impact statements

As can be seen by the above listing, the Water Resources Board was presented with many different issues. Most of these agenda items, however, took the forms of presentations and little action was taken. When the Board acted, it did so in the form of resolutions. The following is a list of resolutions which the Board made during the three year period:

Resolution 73-1 recommended to the governor that an instream flow bill not be introduced into the legislature and that if the bill was introduced that all references to "scenic beauty" be stricken. Also recommended, if the bill was introduced to the legislature was a provision that anyone requesting a water reservation be required to provide full study data and justification, including probable economic benefit, with the request.

Resolution 74-1 recommended defeat of SB 443 which provided for state environmental impact statements.

Resolution 74-2 recommended defeat of HB 613 which provided for anadromous water impact reports.

Resolution 74-3 recommended that the Kachemak Bay oil lease sale be delayed until more information on the impact on fisheries could be developed.

Resolution 75-1 recommends that water data survey and collection functions done by DHSS under AS 41.5 be transferred to DGGs.

Resolution 75-2 recommended a three year program of field research on shoreland material utilization be made by the University of Alaska Water Institute

Resolution 75-3 recommended passage of HB 313, a bill to protect fisheries and defeat of HB 278.

Resolution 75-4 recommended passage of SB 215 which provided public access along all navigable and public waters.

Present members of the Water Resources Board are:

Mr. LeVake Renshaw, Anchorage
Ms. Peg Tileston, Anchorage
Mr. David Vanderbrink, Homer
Professor Charles Behlke, College

Mr. Richard Sims, Kodiak
Mr. Wayne Westberg, Anchorage
Mr. Charles Johnson, Nome
Commissioner Ernst Mueller (Ex-Officio)
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation