

Michael Rovito

These comments are being filed for Alaska Power Association.



Alaska Power Association
703 West Tudor Road, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6650
(907) 771-5700
Fax: (907) 561-5547
www.alaskapower.org

January 13, 2023

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Siting of Microreactors – Public Scoping for Regulation Development
PO Box 111800
Juneau, AK 99811

To Whom it May Concern,

Alaska Power Association (APA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments for this public scoping for regulation development related to the siting of microreactors in Alaska. Alaska's electric utilities are actively taking part in the ongoing clean energy transition and microreactors can play a key role in that transition.

APA is the statewide trade association for electric utilities in Alaska. Our members provide power to Alaskans from Utqiagvik to Unalaska, through the Interior and Southcentral, and down the Inside Passage. APA's members serve some of the most remote areas of the country with islanded systems disconnected from any regional or national grid.

As the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or the department) considers the elements to include in regulations related to siting of microreactors, the department should adhere to the law as established by Senate Bill 177, which was passed in 2022 during the 32nd Alaska legislature. This legislation was carefully considered through the legislative process with expert testimony and input from APA, electric utilities, academia, legislators, and state agencies.

Importantly, the law as passed in SB 177 exempts the requirement for microreactors to only be situated on legislatively designated lands. This exemption provides local control to cities, municipalities, and boroughs and avoids a potentially long political process under legislative siting authority. In situations where a proposed microreactor is in an unorganized borough, the legislature retains siting authority.

DEC's draft regulations should respect this local authority and remove DEC from any involvement in siting decisions unless specifically asked by a local governing authority. The department, per SB 177, will still be involved in the eventual permitting of a microreactor due to provisions in AS 18.45.030(c) that require DEC to coordinate and submit comments from the departments or agencies referenced in AS 18.45 to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensing process specific to the microreactor.

The intent of SB 177 was to streamline a portion of the process necessary to construct and operate a microreactor in Alaska. This technology is part of a growing toolkit of alternative

energy infrastructure that can diversify electric generation and potentially lower costs and increase reliability in many parts of the state.

The department's draft regulations on siting of microreactors should recognize that an in-depth state and federal permitting process still exists before a microreactor can be constructed and operated. DEC should craft microreactor siting regulations that take a minimal approach to the siting process except in those situations where the agency is specifically asked to weigh in.

Thank you again for considering APA's comments. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Crystal Enkvist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Crystal" written in a smaller, more legible script than the last name "Enkvist", which is more stylized.

Crystal Enkvist
Executive Director

CC: Governor Mike Dunleavy
John Espindola