

Jeff Garness

Comments from public hearing

1                   JEFF GARNESS: Yes. Jeff Garness,  
2 G-A-R-N-E-S-S. I think I mentioned -- and I  
3 conveyed this earlier. I don't think that a lot of  
4 folks out there were aware of this regulatory  
5 change at all. And I won't speak for them. I'll  
6 speak at least that when I reached out to the  
7 Municipality of Anchorage, they were completely  
8 unaware of this. I reached out to one of the lead  
9 engineers that handles lots of the on-site work for  
10 the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and  
11 they were completely unaware of this. Both parties  
12 were also unaware that this was even -- this phone  
13 call was even taking place today. And I called a  
14 number of engineers in the valley, Kenai Peninsula,  
15 and none of them were aware of this phone call  
16 today. One of them was not aware that the  
17 regulatory change was going on.

18                   I guess what I'm trying to get at  
19 is I think that there's -- somewhere in the process  
20 it's missed getting out to people. I don't think  
21 that they're aware of what's going on to a great  
22 extent, and so -- and then, of course, the number  
23 was posted wrong so that some people probably  
24 didn't even call in. They don't even know what  
25 number to call in unless they got an e-mail through

1 listserv that came late today, actually right  
2 before the phone call.

3           As you're aware, the call-in  
4 number was posted incorrectly, so some folks, you  
5 know, are probably not even aware how they could  
6 call in if they didn't -- if they weren't, you  
7 know, checking their e-mail and whatnot. So I just  
8 wanted to bring that to your attention, and I think  
9 there's something -- and I don't -- I'm not blaming  
10 anybody. I'm saying these things kind of happen  
11 sometimes.

12           It doesn't -- it's not been  
13 conveyed well to industry when you've got some of  
14 the folks that are major players being impacted by  
15 these things more than anybody who don't even know  
16 what's happening and have not chimed in at all.  
17 well, I shouldn't -- I won't say they haven't  
18 chimed in at all. I don't believe they have chimed  
19 in at all with comments on any of this because they  
20 only found out about it just recently.

21           So I think that goes back to that  
22 I think we need to focus on reaching out to people,  
23 extending public comment, and creating an avenue  
24 for dialogue that allows us to talk about why  
25 things are done. And if comments are not taken

1 into consideration or adopted, you know, some  
2 reasoning, justification why because, again, a lot  
3 of these things do cost -- they may not cost DEC  
4 money, but they're costing our customers money  
5 whenever we have to deal with these things, you  
6 know, hourly rates for the engineers. It's costing  
7 the general public a lot of money.

8                   So I want to do what we can to  
9 make this better, and I speak as somebody who has  
10 been heavily involved with the regulatory rewrite  
11 in the Municipality of Anchorage. And I can tell  
12 you that I'm not smart enough to do it on my own.  
13 I really am not, and it takes a team. It takes a  
14 bunch of people to put their heads together and  
15 look at unintended consequences of things, look at  
16 their experience, and chime in and get us all  
17 working together. And we will be able to develop a  
18 regulation that will be better for everybody,  
19 particularly Alaskans, the people that have to live  
20 with these regulations.

21                   So I'm not being critical; I'm  
22 just here to help. Like I said, I'm not smart  
23 enough to write these regulations on my own, and I  
24 would hope that we would regroup here and take  
25 another shot at this. That's my comment.

1                   JEFF GARNESS: Jeff Garness. I'd  
2 like to make another comment. One thing I would  
3 like to point out, too -- and we've all been  
4 handicapped by this -- is COVID. It's just created  
5 a much more difficult environment to communicate,  
6 people not meeting in person, and some folks, you  
7 know, not doing the Teams meetings, Zoom meetings  
8 and things like that. So, you know, in your guys'  
9 defense, it's created a little bit more difficult  
10 situation, where we would have, you know, been able  
11 to much more easily have public meetings where we  
12 got together and discussed these things.

13                   So I don't want to be overly  
14 critical, but I think it's important to recognize  
15 that COVID has changed things for everybody here,  
16 and I think we need to take that into consideration  
17 as we move the path forward with this regulation  
18 and the fact that -- you know, back to my earlier  
19 comment and the one that Mr. Pannone just made too.  
So thank you again.