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Minority Leader



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Representative Ethan Berkowitz  
District 13

News from Anchorage

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**Berkowitz Bulletin**  
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Greetings from Anchorage, where the summer faces interruption from the airport and the ballot box.

As part of its 1996 Master Plan, Anchorage International Airport (AIA) recently applied to the Army Corps of Engineers for a 10-year permit allowing it to develop 240 acres of wetlands. This includes the Postmark Bog wetland directly adjacent to the main north-south runway, portions of the Turnagain Bog wetland, and other wetlands, including a small part of Connor's Bog. Meanwhile, AIA continues work on a new Master Plan, which they hope to complete sometime next year. Airport officials indicate that development is needed for the growing cargo business.

A group of neighbors, however, believe that the growth and changes contemplated in this wetland permit have significant impacts on Sand Lake, Spenard, and Turnagain. Specific concerns have been raised regarding increased noise, increased traffic, degradation of the Coastal Trail, increased air and water pollution, impacts on the water table, and destruction of wildlife habitat.

At this point, there are no impending construction projects, allowing time to resolve concerns and improve neighborhood relationships with the airport. However, the official public comment time on the wetland permit application ends September 16. Comments should be directed to:

Ms. Mary Plumb-Mentjes  
Alaska District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Regulatory Branch, P.O. Box 898  
Anchorage, AK 99506-0898

Secondly, the ballot box disruption involves the September 14 vote on the Permanent Fund. In fielding questions, I find that the more people understand the plan, and the extent of Alaska's fiscal dilemma, the more likely they are to either favor the plan or come up with thoughtful alternatives.

As the vote draws closer, I encourage you to gather as much information as possible before making your decision. My web site includes numerous links to opinions and information on both sides of the debate. Take a look at:

<http://www.akdemocrats.org/bios/berkfiscal.htm>

If you have more questions or solutions please give me a call. As always, I appreciate you keeping in touch.

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