**STATE EMERGENCY PLANNING RESPONSE COMMISSION (SERC)**

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**April 22, 2022**

**1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Hotel Captain Cook - Discovery Ballroom

Anchorage, Alaska

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

State Department Members

Bryan Fisher DMVA (Acting Co-Chair)

Jason Brune DEC (Co-Chair)

Heidi Hedberg DHSS

John Rockwell DPS

John Clendenin DOT&PF

Public Members

George Vakalis LEPC/URBAN - Anchorage

David Miller LEPC/RURAL - Sitka

Michael Paschell LEPC/RURAL - Delta Junction

Casey Cook LOCAL GOVERNMENT - MatSu Borough

Simon Brown LOCAL GOVERNMENT - Wasilla

PUBLIC MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Ex-Officio Members

Paul Valley (ph) FEMA

Don McKay ALASKAN COMMAND

Mary Goolie EPA

**1. CALL TO ORDER: State Emergency Planning Response Commission (SERC)**

**Co-Chair, Commissioner Saxe, department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)**

Acting Co-Chair Bryan Fisher called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Acting Co-Chair Bryan Fisher welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated that he is Commissioner Torin Saxe’s alternate for the Commission. Commissioner Saxe has been having a lot of travel recently for both his military and state commissioner roles. He sincerely regrets that he couldn’t be here today. So, on behalf of Governor Dunleavy, Commissioner Brune and myself, welcome.

It’s been a long time since we’ve done one of these in person. Our last four meetings have been a hundred percent virtual. Today’s meeting is a hybrid. We have folks online through the Microsoft Teams platform as well as in the room.

Co-Chair Brune added that he is excited to be here today in person. Thank you all so much for everything you do. It’s so good to see so many smiling faces. Welcome back.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked participants who speak today to make sure you announce your name and your role on the Commission before you speak. He introduced SERC Coordinator, JJ Little, and asked JJ to take roll call of the members to establish a quorum.

**A. Roll Call - JJ Little, SERC Coordinator**

Roll call was taken of the commissioners.

**B. Quorum Determination - JJ Little, SERC Coordinator**

A quorum was established.

**C. Administrative Announcements - JJ Little, SERC Coordinator**

Mr. Little stated that due to the nature of this meeting in both the virtual platform and in-person, we, again ask that you please state your name at the beginning of each of your comments. For the virtual participants, if you will make a public comment, please use the chat feature in Teams.

**II. Welcome and Introductions - Membership List - TAB 2**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked everyone for participating in today’s meeting. We had a great meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Committee Association this morning. He appreciates everyone hanging in there after a long week. This week our agency hosted an in-person Emergency Management Conference—the first in over a couple of years--at the Hotel Captain Cook. So, I appreciate all of your participation throughout the week and in particular the commission members for joining us today.

A personal thanks to our finance committee co-chair George Vakalis having the time to come in this morning to listen to the LEPCA and what their concerns are.

It’s been a heck of a few years here. For our agency, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and my division specifically. We have all been in the throes of responding to the pandemic. Director Hedberg and Commissioner Crum from Health and Social Services. Herculean task to help lead us through that effort. Our agency, emergency operations center, at the state level was stood up for over a year and a half. And we continue to support Commissioner Crum and Dr. Zink and Director Hedberg with the continued things that are occurring with the pandemic.

In addition to that, there’s another big change to DHSS coming up. I just want to recognize and appreciate all of the work that all of you have done. Particularly those at the local level with LEPCs or with local government and our volunteers that are out there. You have put in as much time as we have responding to the pandemic and the other disasters that we’ve seen. I really do appreciate that.

We’re hoping to continue the dialog that we’ve had for a couple of years with Commissioner Brune and Commissioner Saxe about the future of the commission and the local emergency planning committees. A lot of good discussions this morning. We want to continue that dialog as everybody knows, everyone who’s participated in the commission over the years, the funding, the general fund funding allocated for LEPCs has not been there for the past few years.

I think you have all demonstrated the incredible value of those committees as a planning body. Also, a coordinating body throughout the pandemic and the other disasters that we’ve seen. So, very encouraged to hear a little more throughout the commission meeting and look forward to being able to support all of you at the ground level in moving forward.

From our agency, in addition the pandemic response, we have had ten declared disasters since Halloween. It has been quite a few months for of. Seven of these were state declared disasters by Governor Dunleavy. Out of the seven, three have also become federally declared disasters. Some breaking news, the interior, the Mat-Su windstorms were just approved this morning for a small business administration administrative declaration for economic injury. So, our private businesses impacted by the windstorms and the storms in the Delta Area all the way up to Fairbanks and down the other highway through Denali, the private businesses are now eligible for economic injury, low interest loans from the federal government to help recover from that.

Our agency continues to be incredibly busy in responding and recovering from those disasters with local jurisdictions impacted. We’re right on the cusp of our annual break-up on the major river systems and the potential for ice jams induced flooding as well as snow melt flooding this year.

The prediction is not the best. There is a lot of snow in central and eastern interior all the way into the Yukon Territory. The ice is about average thickness on our major rivers, but the temperature outlook is that we may be a little bit colder, longer into the spring. Turning to summer temperatures pretty rapidly. Those are the three ingredients that calls for a potential dynamic break-up year. So, our teams at the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs and the Alaska National Guard are preparing to mobilize to Bethel to support the Kuskokwim and Lower Yukon as the ice breaks up. Providing that river watch program that provides surveillance and early warning to the communities about ice jams and potential flooding that’s going to occur.

Outlook doesn’t look great. We’re all tired. We’ve been going non-stop since the earthquake in 2018. Throw in all the other things, including a pandemic, it’s just been a tough time for our department.

The Alaska National Guard is mobilizing out to southwest again this year with a helicopter with hoist capability to support any rescue efforts that need to happen in association with flooding on the rivers. So, Commissioner Saxe is proud to continue to support those efforts. To have assets pre-positioned in key areas for seasonal threat that’s out there. Now I’ll pass the mic to Commissioner Brune for any comments he’d like to make.

Commissioner Brune took this opportunity to commend all the folks at DMVA for the amazing work that they’ve done, for the amazing partnership that we have between DEC and DMVA is fantastic. JJ, welcome aboard. It’s great to have you. Thank you for all the work. And Kathy and SPAR team, thank you for all the work and preparing us for this meeting.

I too, want to take this opportunity to thank Heidi, to thank Dr. McLaughlin, Dr. Zink, Commissioner Crum. We honor them with DEC honor coins for their amazing efforts. Each of you has done yeoman’s work in your communities during this pandemic. It has not been fun. It’s not been what I expected. But we’ve done a great job. And huge kudos to the folks that have led this effort. Thank you.

I also, again, want to reiterate the gratitude that I have in seeing all of you in person. I’m sick of looking at a screen. I’m sorry for those of you that are on the screen. I don’t mean that in a derogatory way to you. But I loke seeing people in person and I like seeing their smiling faces.

From DEC perspective, we’re, obviously, transitioning from a lot of work we were doing using teams and digital communications back to in-person. One of the things we’ve learned from this pandemic is to use virtual meetings. It’s going to help with our efforts from an emergency response perspective, from a compliance perspective, working with regulated communities. We’ve actually used this as an opportunity to grow for the better as an organization. So, I’m excited about that.

Our staff attended this week’s emergency management conference. And they also recently attended the Tsunami Operations workshops in collaboration with our partners at DHA and emergency management. I’m looking forward to the shift from pandemic thoughts and am excited, like Bryan said, what is the foundation of SERCs and LEPCs and how they are such a big part in emergency planning. A big thank you to those of you who traveled from out-of-state to be here.

One of the things that General Saxe and I focused on, obviously, is trying to shorten these meetings and not go through what’s already been presented in the packets. Hoping many of you have read what’s been provided. If you want to look in our packets, you can see we provided updates on the federal responsibilities for contaminated lands in Alaska. A big deal for us.

We issued 548 notices of intent to sue the federal government for their lack of effort for contamination on Alaska Native Corporation lands, as well as forthcoming efforts for nearly 100 federally contaminated sites on State of Alaska lands.

We also have updates to our oil discharge and contingency plan updates; we’re working on that as we speak. Lots of comments came forward and the hope is to have that out by 3rd quarter. Modernity of the spill reporting system. And realignment of our spill prevention and response program. There are some strategic planning sessions going on this week and next week from the SPAR team in Anchorage that are focusing on that.

I think that’s good for me for opening comments. But again, so happy to see all of your faces again. I’m looking forward to a productive meeting.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher, thank you Mr. Co-Chair. At this point, member introductions. To save some time, I’ll ask members of the commission itself, if you have any introductions or comments in addition to your name, agency you work for at this time, please share.

Hearing none, we’ll move on.

Point out commission does have one vacancy for a local government representative that we’re trying to fill. It previously was filled by Abner Hogue (ph), chief in Ketchikan. So, if anyone is interested and fits that title as local government representative, let us know. We want to keep this commission fully engaged and interested. If you’re interested, please reach out to JJ Little, as he’s the point of contact for the commission. He can walk you through the process to get appointed.

**III.** *APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES -- TAB 3 - SUSPENDED*

**IV. Public Comment - Five (5) minutes per speaker - TAB 4**

Mr. Little sated that the virtual connection will be monitored in case anyone has comments to share. Please indicate that in the chat room.

For those in the room, there was a sign-up sheet in the back of the room. No one has signed up to speak. There is a second opportunity to provide public comment at the end of the meeting. So, anyone in the audience or online, please sign the sheet at the back of the room or signify in chat.

**V. Consent Agenda - TAB 5**

**A. Approval of and changes to the Agenda (by item)**

Mr. Little asked if there are any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**MOTION:** George Vakalis, Municipality of Anchorage, moved to approve the agenda as presented. It was seconded by Heidi Hedberg, Department of Health and Social Services. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Appointments**

Mr. Little asked for a motion to confirm the LEPC appointments for Juneau and Fairbanks. He also wanted to highlight the Tribal Representation by Juneau.

Mr. Vakalis stated point of order. Motion was to approve the Agenda.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher responded that the motion to approve the Agenda included the agenda for the meeting as well as the appointments that are listed in the binder and the email that was mailed to commissioners.

**C. SERC Meeting dates (approval required for adjusted date for fall SERC)**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher noted that the place for the fall meeting is to be determined but the meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 14, 2022.

VI. *State Agency Reports Suspended*

*A. DHS&EM Updates: Mr. Bryan Fisher, Director (written report provided)*

*B. DEC Division of Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) Tiffany Larson (written report provided)*

Acting Co-Chair Fisher stated that these reports have been suspended. There were written reports by both DEC and the Division of Spill Prevention and Response as well as the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in the packets distributed electronically to everyone.

VII. *Local Emergency Planning Committee Association (LEPCA) - TAB 7 Suspended*

*A. Status Report - Suspended (Reports by exception only)*

*B. LEPCA Agenda - Suspended (written copy provided)*

*C. LEPCA Previous Meeting Minutes - Suspended. Provided on DHS&EM webpage*

Acting Co-Chair Fisher stated that pre-pandemic these reports are provided to the Commission. We expect to return to this format in future meetings. However, for today, he asked if LEPCA Co-Chair Tom Vaden had anything he wanted to provide to the commission from this morning’s meeting.

Mr. Vaden stated that we don’t have meeting minutes to review. However, he did want to address, as he did earlier today, the thousand-pound polar bear that is under the rug in the living room and is being ignored. Currently the LEPCs have no funding from the state. In today’s LEPCA meeting he recommended, and we’re looking into it, how do we gain funding. A couple of ideas are out there. There is a mandatory requirement to review emergency plans annually. We can charge for that, as it’s not against the law to do so. The same for oil spill response plans. We can charge to review those as well to make sure it meets the local requirements.

Currently, he doesn’t see a lot of funding coming from the state. So, he really thinks we need to hold on to the LEPCs, especially those not associated with large municipal organizations, who just don’t have any funding. Plan review can be a lot of bread and butter for these remote LEPCs. Through this pandemic, they still had the plans and they responded to other emergencies.

Mr. Tim Gablehouse, who will be presenting here soon, stated that other LEPCs collect money from private businesses. Not a lot, but something. So, we want to be more proactive in determining funding to support the LEPCs. Are there any questions from the commission?

Unidentified Voice thanked Mr. Vaden for that report and for his service. When you say there are some LEPCs in the lower 48 that collect money from private businesses, is that on a voluntary basis or do we target specific businesses. How does that occur?

Mr. Vaden responded that he didn’t know. He was told that the LEPC asks for donations from local businesses. So, he doesn’t think they’re trying to strong arm anybody. It’s more like we’re helping you out or we reviewed your spill plan or something like that.

Unidentified Voice asked what kind of dollar amount are you hoping for statewide?

Mr. Vaden responded that a common number in providing an emergency operations plan is $15,000. If you have to write a new one, that’s a completely different activity than let me review your oil spill plan for $200-$300. Or let me review your Hazard Mitigation Plan or let me write your Hazard Mitigation Plan. A lot of that stuff can be done through templates and a lot are not complicated to do.

Mr. Vakalis commented that about $300,000 has been used for several years as the funding amount. A formula was devised by the LEPCs and sanctioned by the SERC to make the distributions to the LEPCs in a fair and honest manner. And it’s unfortunate that for the last three years there hasn’t been funding for the LEPCs. As was mentioned, a lot of the larger LEPCs have the wherewithal to provide some funding. But the smaller one, especially in the unincorporated areas, don’t have that wherewithal. I think it behooves the SERC and the State to do whatever they can to provide the funding. At least bring it back to the $300,000 level.

The other thing in reference to being created and to receive funding from other sources, other than the government, from private sector, primarily, years ago, Anchorage petitioned the SERC and the legislature and DEC to allow them to charge for Tier II reporting and placarding. And they’ve been doing that for a number of years now. So, there is precedent in the state for that to occur. I would strongly recommend that those organizations that have the wherewithal to be able to manage that at least look at that as a possible funding source.

As far as the other funding sources mentioned, I’m unaware about what would be required to make that happen. I would think though, if you’re in an unincorporated jurisdiction, it may be a little difficult without getting some type of state statute to allow you to do that. And those organizations that are home rule charter organizations, that may be a different story. They may have the wherewithal to be able to do that through ordinances from their assembly. Those are my two cents. I strongly urge that the SERC and the leadership of DEC and also DMVA petition the legislature for funding for our LEPCs. Thank you.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Mr. Vakalis and recognized Mr. Cook.

Mr. Cook thanked Mr. Vakalis for his comments. This may be a good time for the DMVA and DHS to look at the EMPG possibility. He knows in the past those EMPG funds have been severely limited to one type of recipient. For personnel, not for products or tools or equipment. So, maybe that would be another way to look at this Bryan. To look at what that EMPG allows. If it can go to an LEPC to do exactly what Tom is taking about in doing those planning activities, which is part of the performance grant. But I don’t think LEPCs have ever been eligible to accept EMPG funds. So that might be something to look at as well.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Mr. Cook and asked if anyone else had any questions. Hearing none, he re-stated that this is Bryan Fisher from Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DMVA). As many of you know, the Commission has been talking about this and in the Local Emergency Management Planning Committees and their association have been talking about this for the last three years, since the funding was cut out of the state budget.

His department, DMVA, is where the budget component lives in the state budget system. For the last few years, the Emergency Planning Committee Association, and our agency along with Commissioner Brune’s staff in SPAR have done a lot of work together to identify the minimum requirements for LEPCs to operate under both federal and state regulation, as well as this Commission’s direction, to transition the Commission and LEPC’s from oil and hazardous substance response and planning and preparedness to all hazards. We have done a lot. The Association developed a white paper. We’ve looked at some of the business justifications there. From my perspective, I feel the time is right to approach that request, like both Mr. Vaden and Mr. Vakalis spoke about, to have state general funds for the effort.

I appreciate the dollar amount. Historically, the baseline has been $300,000 that the finance committee of our Commission has used the share system to split that out amongst the different active committees across the emergency planning districts. So, I’m happy to hear that request. Our budget process will start in earnest in August for the next fiscal year. So, I’m happy to carry that forward and have further conversations with the LEPCs, the Commission and with Commissioner Saxe and Commissioner Brune to see if we can go there.

Thank you Mr. Cook on the talk about the EMPG or Emergency Management Performance Grant. That EMPG is a federal grant that we administer to fund baseline emergency management capacity to certain jurisdictions in the state. There is some flexibility there through the pandemic, though the America Rescue Plan Act. We just received notice of what funds are available for next year. There’s a little bit more money coming to the State of Alaska than what has traditionally been allocated. That’s another potential for funding that I’ll take back to my staff to see if we can use any of those dollars for a funding source. It does require a 50/50 match, so there is a local cost. So, we’ll have to look at ways we can use that funding. I appreciate that, Mr. Vaden. Any other questions or comments?

Michael Paschell, Rural LEPCs, stated that he will do this in the form of a motion, if needed. Can we draft a letter to send to the legislature and Governor from this committee and have it included in the October meeting agenda for review and approval?

Acting Co-Chair Fisher, thanked Mr. Paschell for his suggestion. With the Commission’s permission, we’ll take that as an action item to draft a letter on behalf of the Commission before the October meeting and will distribute the letter to the Association and LEPCs to get the discussions started so the letter says what we need it to say.

**VIII.** Local Emergency Planning Committee Status Reports - TAB 8 Suspended (Reports by exception only)

**IX. *Old Business - TAB 9 Suspended***

Acting Co-Chair Fisher stated that written reports were provided in the packets that were sent out. As a refresher for those in the audience and in virtual land, we have a number of committees under the Commission’s auspices that do a lot of good work. He then read off the committees from the list below.

The work continues. Some of the committees don’t have a lot to do--such as the finance committee because there are no funds. However, other committees continue their work and have provided written reports. Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked if there were any questions from the Commission Members for any of the committee chairs in attendance today. Hearing none, he moved on to the next agenda item.

*Committee Reports (written reports provided)*

*A. Finance Committee - Mr. George Vakalis, Chairperson*

*B. Work Plan Committee - Open Chair*

*C. Interoperable Communications Committee - Mr. John Rockwell, Chairperson*

*D. Citizen Corps Committee - Michelle Torres, Chairperson*

*E. All-Hazards Plan Review Committee - Mr. Richard Hildreth, Chairperson*

*F. Training Committee - Mr. Jeff Lafferty, Chairperson*

*G. Disaster Search and Rescue Committee - Lt. Paul Fussey, Chairperson*

*H. Statewide Mutual Aid Compact - Casey Cook, Chairperson*

**X. New Business - TAB 10**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher stated that while the goal is to not repeat the same information from the Local Emergency Planning Committee Association this morning, we do have some experts that have traveled to Alaska to provide a refresher as part of our ongoing discussions about what are the minimum requirements for the Commission and Emergency Planning Committees to do with respect to that overall conversation that we need to build a good business case on what we’re going to do.

So, to help us with that, we have some speakers that have traveled up to Alaska. We’ll go into these presentations now. First will be Mr. Timothy Gablehouse. He is here to talk to us about healthy Local Emergency Planning Committees.

**A. Healthy LEPCs - Timothy Gablehouse (30 minutes)**

Mr. Gablehouse introduced himself. He is a board member and past president of NASTTPO, for National Association of Sera Title Three Program Officials, which was created in 987 as an advocacy group on behalf of SERC and LEPCs. To work with federal partners who represent the interests of those groups. It’s an organization that will lobby on behalf of those groups with Congress. We’re not a classic non-profit in that regard.

He is a member of the Colorado SERC, same body as this one. He’s been a member of that SERC since 1988. He chairs a Local Emergency Planning Committee, which includes everything from wildland-urban interface to rural areas, which are not as rural as many of you. He comes at this primarily because there are some common issues that face SERCs across the country. So, that’s where he wants to spend his time. Before he began his presentation on *Minimizing Liability and Demonstrating Success in Emergency Preparedness Programs,* he wanted to discuss a few items with commission members.

If you’re a local citizen and mad at an LEPC because it’s not doing its job, you feel that there isn’t adequate emergency planning being done, and you want to sue somebody, you can’t sue the local government, that is the host of the LEPC. You can’t sue the LEPC directly. You sue the SERC.

Those of us on SERCs end up being ground zero for complaints about the procedures and policies. What kind of litigation do we see across the country? We see litigation based primarily on civil rights violations. Also, with the Americans Disability Acts claims thrown in. What that’s about is whether or not your emergency planning activities serve the entire community. The only way to demonstrate that your emergency planning activities serve the entire community is if, in fact, you can document outreach to that entire community. Where communities get in trouble on these topics is failure to do adequate outreach. To be able to document that they’re talking to everyone in the community impacted by the emergency plan. If you read a lot of federal resources, you’ll get the sense that there are standards here that you can’t possibly meet. That is true.

If you look at Department of Justice web page for the Americans with Disabilities Act, emergency preparedness activities, there is no way. In fact, across the country, nobody really can comply with that. But on the other hand, if there are complaints, you don’t get sued by the department of justice if you’re making an effort. What the department of justice looks for in terms of an effort, are you involving people in the community that are protected by these programs in emergency planning activities. Do they get a voice? Do they get to participate? Are you reaching out to them? That is where folks fall down. That’s how they get themselves in trouble.

Not included in this presentation are the role of the SERC. In general, SERCs end up doing a lot of support, a lot of cheerleading, a lot of running interference, providing resources and advice. That goes with the requirements under the Emergency planning Community Right to Know Act to manage the activities of the LEPCs.

SERCs can provide direction. Lots of SERCs in the country provide direction to LEPCs to pursue all hazards planning. Rather than the stove pipe to view of the emergency planning community right to know act that is advocated by EPA. With due deference to our friends at the EPA regional office, they’re not the problem. The problem is very much back at headquarters inside the beltway. Where reality doesn’t quite penetrate.

Most of the country LEPCs are doing all hazards kinds of work. They’re performing the all hazards planning across the country. The LEPC is the core of the all hazards planning effort and in other places they support it. It will depend on the local community.

The other thing that SERCs do, is help LEPCs find the resources to do the things the LEPCs are trying to do. He stated it that way primarily because he wanted to emphasize that this is a community directed bottom-up process. He’ll talk about how to evaluate success, to make sure LEPCs feel successful in a minute. He thinks the role of SERCs is to make sure the LEPCs recognize that they are the ones trying to satisfy and serve their communities. What’s important to their community should be their focus rather than what they’re hearing from the federal government. Potentially what they’re hearing out of state government in terms of what they’re priority should be. We need to honor local conditions as LEPCs and focus on those because that’s where the rubber meets the road.

Resources and funding are always a tricky proposition. Frankly, these days, most of the advice going to LEPCs from SERCs about funding is to turn around and look to their local community for that funding. Some communities have created nonprofits for the purpose of soliciting funds locally. More often, than not, it’s about having an idea about a project you want to run as an LEPC and then going to people within the community and looking for the funds necessary to do that. It’s often quite successful to go to a local or regional business and state we have the project that we want to run. It will cost this much money and that’s what we’re looking for. LEPCs have been successful in being able to raise that money from local business for a couple of reasons. One, it’s money that stays at home. It’s not going to state or federal government for something that may never happen.

Businesses like to get credit for participation within their community. That’s become rather powerful. There are a number of LEPCs across the country that have raised thousands of dollars for project. It’s a donation and ends up being deductible to the business, which is a useful thing.

The other source is the philanthropic community. A vast amount of work being done in inter-mountain west on LEPC activities, looking at risk, filling capability gaps is being funded by philanthropic groups--big foundations. They tend not to ear mark funds for certain activities. They’re not looking for matching funds. They’re looking for credit and a nice report when you’re done. But they want people that have skin in the game. They want people to feel like they are really making a commitment to their local community. So, telling LEPCs that they should go raise money based on having skin in the game is useful. Big philanthropic organizations say if you can raise $500 locally, we might give you thousands. It is the kind of thing that can be very successful.

Mr. Gablehouse began his presentation by discussing the problems that create liability--such as focusing on response instead of preparedness and planning. The community doesn’t have a sense of responsibility and preparedness, if regulatory compliance is meaningless.

Discussed the *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans* guide from FEMA and pointed out how they spent eight pages discussing compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Discussed HazMat Roundtable Report and highlighted that the role of the Local Emergency Planning Commissions and Tribal Emergency Response Councils is a critical and foundational element in providing the hazard, risk and capability assessments needed by the response community.

Mr. Gablehouse discussed where the courses of liability in the planning process come from such as civil rights claims and how planning can’t be done in a vacuum. He further discussed what is the LEPC role and why you should use an LEPC in your planning process.

The golden rules: know the risks/capabilities in your community; educate public and businesses; create participation and cooperation. Going forward, how do you measure the success of the planning process? By determining what are the risks, what are the current community capabilities, then match risks with capabilities (both private and public). This identifies gaps in current preparedness, which leads to community based strategic plan. Measure the success of your plan by closing gaps and measure and evaluate your plan through exercises.

Mr. Gablehouse commented that he heard about a lot of great projects at the community level. He asked what gaps those projects address within your community. Are they priority capability gaps? He sees across the country people doing great projects because they received money to do so. Not because it necessarily was money focused on an important capability gap. If it doesn’t complete a capability gap, it’s unfortunate because it diverts people from other things.

He concluded that this process is your defense to civil rights claims for failure to plan. There are plenty of cases where people feel they are not being adequately served by emergency management as part of the emergency preparedness system. They feel like their situation is being ignored and will not be adequately served. The process where you engage them, talk about the risks and capability doesn’t lead to litigation. You’re not scaring them; you’re telling them realistically what you’re capable of and what they need to do. Let’s talk about how to find the resources to fill that capability gap. You can make it your problem, or you can make it a community problem . He would suggest that it is vastly more useful to make it a community problem than to make it your responsibility.

The NASTTPO board does outreach without cost to LEPCs and SERCs all over the country. We run an email list of all things related to emergency planning community right to know. Relevant to LEPCs. Some people in this state are on the list. If you want to be on that list, drop him an email and he will be happy to add you to the list along with several thousand other folks from across the country.

We try to keep LEPCs and SERCs aware of what’s going on in the country from both the policy and legal points of view. It’s really easy for LEPCs to feel like they’re mushrooms in the dark because there is not good communication. In his opinion, federal agencies aren’t the best at communicating with LEPCs about what’s going on.

For example, right now there is rulemaking underway by EPA regarding worst case scenario releases that may have an impact to water. That rulemaking is open for comment until the end of May. SERCs and LEPCs ought to weigh in on that proposed rulemaking because facilities subject to those requirements are going to generate emergency plans and they’re supposed to consult with you about those emergency plans.

Also, American Society Testing Materials (ASTM) standard recently adopted on coordination and cooperation between facilities that are subject to hazardous waste rules, community right to know rules, to risk management plan rules. And how they should be consulting with LEPCs and local responders. Those are requirements in those regulations.

What’s the point of that consultation? It’s so the LEPCs and first responders actually understand the risks from those facilities. What do they have, what are they doing to manage their materials in a responsible way? Are they creating unnecessary risk to the community? Do they have reasonable expectations that the community can support them, if they have a release? It’s rare that a facility that does has a reasonable expectation of what local resources are going to do to help them if they have an accident. That is a significant problem we should be able to solve by coordination and cooperation. If you want more information on that, just let us know. We answer questions from LEPCs constantly from across the country. It’s free. Ask for help.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked if there were any questions for Mr. Gablehouse. Seeing none, he thanked Tim for coming up here. He is a national expert in these areas and appreciates his wisdom and guidance on these issues.

**B. EPCRA - Erin Williams, EPA (30 minutes)**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher introduced Erin Williams from the Environmental Protection Agency. She has a presentation on the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA). Ms. Williams introduced herself and stated that she is the EPCRA Coordinator for EPA-Region 10 in Seattle.

Ms. Williams stated that the Environmental Protection Agency is divided into 10 regions. She is with Region 10, which consists of Alaska, Idaho, Orgon and Washington. They do have some operation offices in these states, but they mostly work out of Seattle. She is located in the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division (ECAD) in the Air and Land Enforcement Branch (ALEB) and the Land Enforcement Section (LES), and she is the Emergency Planning Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) Coordinator. She works closely with Javier Morales, our Risk Management Plans (RMP) Coordinator. RMP is Section 112R of the Clean Air Act that focuses on risk management plans for facilities that store hazardous chemicals.

For background, the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) came into effect in 1986 as Congress passed the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA) after the incident in Bhopal, India. The Community Right to know provisions help increase the public’s knowledge and access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and releases into the environment.

Basically, a community has the right to know what is in their backyard because most people are clueless when it comes to facilities in their neighborhood. So EPCRA provides information to the community and to LEPCs for emergency planning. Our goal is preparedness, planning and what can we do ahead of time to prevent releases.

EPCRA requires facilities to report chemical information including inventories, spills and releases of hazardous substances and emergency response planning side for local emergency responders and planners. It also has a toxics release inventory requirement.

Key provisions of EPCRA include:

* Emergency Response Planning
  + Section 301 - formation of SERCs and LEPCs.
  + Section 302 - What substances facilities are required to report, including extremely hazardous substances, to LEPCs for planning purposes.
  + Section 303 -- Comprehensive Emergency Response Plans
* Emergency Release Reporting
  + Section 304 partners with CERCLA 103 to create federal, state and local reporting requirements for facilities when releases occur.
* Hazardous Chemical Inventory Reporting, the Tier II reports for hazardous chemical inventories.
  + Section 311 (M)SDS
  + Section 312 Emergency and Hazardous Chemical Inventory Reports
* Toxics Release Inventory (TRI).
  + Section 313 Form R

Ms. Williams went through these provisions in more detail in reverse order starting with the annual reports, then the releases, then some of the emergency response planning information. There is a National LEPC-TEPC Handbook developed by the EPA as a resource for LEPCs and TEPCs. It can be found at www.epa.gov/epcra/national-lept-tepc-handbook. There are additional tools and resources available for planning.

Ms. Williams discussed the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) program, which tracks the management of certain toxic chemicals that may pose a threat to human health and the environment. More information about this program can be found at https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program or contact Elizabeth (Elly) Walters, (206) 553-6317 or email walters.elizabeth@epa.gov.

The Risk Management Program (RMP) contains regulations and guidance for chemical accident prevention at facilities with greater than a threshold quantity of an acutely toxic or flammable chemical in a process. RMPs are available to the public to foster communication and awareness to improve accident prevention and emergency response practices at the local level.

Additional information can be found at https://www.epa.gov/rmp or by contacting Javier Morales, RMP Coordinator, (206) 553-1255 or email morales.javier@epa.gov.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Chemlock is a completely voluntary program, which provides no-cost services and tools to facilities that possess dangerous chemicals. They want to help facilities better understand the risks. EPA’s CISA contact is James (Jim) Harksen, (202) 821-9905 or by email at james.harksen@cisa.dhs.gov.

Ms. Williams concluded her presentation by stating that EPAs goals are to protect human health and the environment; to develop more of a presence in remote areas; have better communication and coordination to identify delinquent facilities, initiate off-site compliance monitoring and General Duty Clause (GDC) audits to make sure they are meeting requirements; have on-site inspections if you have a facility in your jurisdiction that you’re having problems with or think something is going on, we do come up to Alaska to perform inspections. If an LEPC wants us to come into their area for inspections, we can prioritize the area. We also provide presentations at LEPC meetings.

For any questions or additional discussion, please contact Erin Williams at

(206) 553-4627 or email Williams.erin@epa.gov. Ms. Williams asked if there were any questions.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Ms. Williams for her presentation and the information provided. He appreciates the partnership they have at the regional and state level and for all the work they’ve done together. He also appreciated the update and refresher on what the EPA can do for LEPCs in Alaska. He asked if the Commissioners had any questions.

Co-Chair Brune thanked Erin for her presentation. He believes that it is good for the public to know and for meeting participants to know that we are constantly dealing with the issue of anhydrous ammonia and ammonia refrigeration ongoing spills by the fish processing industry. They’re justification for said spills. They have come to us recently stating that EPA allows 100 pounds, and the State of Alaska only allows 1 pound. And they’re frustrated that they have to constantly be reporting to us those releases. And they’re trying to justify them and they’re saying brand new out of the box there are leaks happening on an ongoing basis.

So, he’s told them to fix the equipment. He also told them that he would contact the manufacturers, if they’re leaking out of the box, that’s not appropriate. So, just a heads up for everyone in the room, he’s very happy that there’s an emphasis on refrigeration. Using anhydrous ammonia is a big deal. They try to justify it and this stuff, in a contained space, it will kill people. He thinks important for folks to know that the fish processing industry is having significant issues with that. We meet with them regularly and we call them out on it. Obviously, there is significant fish processing in Alaska. So, we’re appreciative of EPA’s emphasis on it. He looks forward to talking about this further with Erin.

With respect to TRI, he knows Erin is just the messenger, but Alaska has two of the top five most toxic release sites in the state. We as a state have disagreed with the EPAs approach on toxic release inventory. The number one toxic release inventory in the United States is Red Dog Mine, the number five is Greens Creek Mine. They get called out for moving overburden from here to here in a permitted facility. In his opinion, that is not a toxic release in a permitted facility. It is not aimed at Erin. But State of Alaska having two of the top five toxic release inventory items. It pushes the entities that are actually releasing pollutants inappropriately in the environment lower on the list so the attention isn’t given to them, when it should be.

These are permitted facilities that DEC permits and they’re not the same type of releases that TRIs should be focusing on. So, he thinks it’s important for those in the crowd to understand what a toxic release is and what a permitted release is that not really impacting human health or the environment. Erin responded that the TRI program is like their program, to find the facilities that are not reporting correctly or are under-reporting, underestimating their numbers or are not following their permits. There’s always going to be facilities that are on the radar across the board. But the goal is to find the ones that are not doing what they’re supposed to be doing.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked if any other commission members had any questions. Hearing none, he moved on to the next presentation.

**C. Area Planning - Mary Goolie (10 minutes)**

Ms. Mary Goolie thanked Acting Co-Chair Fisher and the Commission for having her here today. She stated that she the RRT Coordinator from EPA, but just one of three. We have Coast Guard and DEC. Allison Hatcher is the RRT Coordinator from DEC. Also here today is one of our Tri-Chairs and Alternates for RRT, Tiffany Larson and Graham Woods. Coordinators report to our Tri-Chairs of our Regional Response Team.

The reason why we’re talking about planning for oil and hazardous substance here at the SERC and the LEPCs, we’d like to have your participation at our area committee meetings. So, thank you for the cards and invitations to attend LEPC meetings that I received this morning.

Looking at the EPCRA requirements within the local emergency plans--local response plans that require mention of oil and hazardous substance, specifically hazardous substance under EPCRA. For those plans to reach and link to our Area Contingency Plans that are already published in place, led by Coast Guard, DEC, EPA, but with partners as well. Just wanted to touch upon that.

Ms. Kathy Shea joined Ms. Goolie and will briefly discuss a checklist that has been created to help all our local emergency response plans, operations plans reference the area contingency plans and the work of the area committees that we have ongoing in Alaska. A way to be efficient with the small work force in the large space that we have.

Besides doing emergency response, Ms. Goolie does planning. We’re also inspectors under the oil program. For some of you in the rural areas, there may be some oil inspections this summer for fuel storage with Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is another partner and they invited us to join them on these inspections. When we mentioned Tier II reporting for Alaska, it’s in addition to the hazardous substance, there’s also a requirement for reporting oil as well.

The tie-in to LEPCs is we partner together for responding to spills. We provide a federal on-scene coordinator for the incident command. You have emergency operations plans and emergency response plans and you have this requirement to have that hazardous substance component of your plan. In tying in or being aware of the planning we already do under hazardous substance or oil; you can link your plans to that and become aware of it. Kathy will talk about that in more detail. How we can help you have these components in your plans, and we can help you meet those requirements under EPCRA.

They function under the National Contingency Plan, 40 CFR 300, and the EPCRA regulations are within the National Contingency Plan. It outlines how we are to follow the Clean Water Act and CERCLA, the superfund law. Alaska has its own RRT, regional response team Tri-Chaired by Coast Guard, EPA and DEC.

In addition to Coast Guard and EPA, our partner is DEC, our state. We don’t do anything without Alaska. Tying in the state of Alaska to our SERCs and our LEPCs. There’s a national Contingency Plan, with a national response team that meets at headquarter level of all the different agencies involved. Specific to Alaska, we have regional response team for oil and chemical hazard. We meet two times a year.

We have a regional contingency plan. We have area contingency plans for spill response and our area committees. In Alaska there’s four--one inland and three coastal, Alaska Inland, Arctic Western Alaska, Prince William Sound and Southeast. We partner with LEPCs on these area contingency plans. We are to be involved and do outreach with our local emergency planning committees. We had a reinvigoration right before COVID of updating our plans. We really need to get out there and get to the LEPCs either virtually or in person to make sure we’re sharing information, if we have anything that can help you, such as upcoming tabletop drills or training. And for you to share with us.

Being involved in the geographic response strategies, which is looking at when we do respond to a spoil we are paying attention to what’s there of vital concern to the community economically, culturally, for subsistence activities. The more we can routinely connect and get to know each other through drills or tabletop exercises the better we will know how we fit in to the incident command and how we will respond.

She wanted to point out our EPA travel consultation and coordination with tribes website. The actual coordination as EPA and Coast Guard federal agencies, we have trust responsibility in working government to government with our tribes. Within Alaska, for a spill response, in addition to a federal on-scene coordinator, a state on-scene coordinator, a local on-scene coordinator, there could be a tribal on-scene coordinator that has vital interest in being part of the response in the unified command. If there isn’t that person that has the ICS training, then have a tribal member in the environmental unit to help make planning decisions.

Kathy Shea, DEC, wanted to plug the checklist that was sent out to meeting participants in the last October meeting. This checklist has all of the elements of an emergency operation plan that Erin mentioned. It refers you to the appropriate area plan that Mary just spoke about. She encouraged everyone to participate in area committee meetings if you can. They have topics on their agendas like cultural resources and how we’re trying to improve protection of these resources in community in a spill response. For example, you don’t want the boom dragging through your berry patch or your archeological sites. So, you can get some good information about things that will affect you locally.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked both Mary and Kathy for their presentation. All presentations from today will be available to participants for your reference. It’s been many years participating in the Alaska Regional Response Team. Between himself and Director Larson from Spill Prevention and Response we have an opportunity now that we’re doing virtual or hybrid meetings to get the local emergency planning committees engaged and involved with these area committees.

We have had many discussions in the past about funding for the local emergency planning committees, especially the lack of travel funding to be able to participate in some of these area committee meetings in person. One of the benefits transitioning to a virtual or hybrid platform is that more folks can participate. Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked if there were any questions or comments from Commission members. Hearing none he moved on to the next presentation.

**D. Juneau LEPC Representatives (15 minutes)**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher welcomed the LEPC members from Juneau to provide an update.

Michelle Brown with the Juneau LEPC introduced herself and stated that they were asked to talk about including tribal representation in their LEPCs and how that came to be in Juneau. For background, it started back in the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) grant about 10-11 years ago. Juneau was designated a regional hub. So, we were required to set up a steering committee made up of folks from all over southeast Alaska. We asked committee members to tell us what their needs were and then we voted on those needs to meet the state’s requirements.

That brought us together to set up shelters with the people designated by communities all over the region. We brought together 70-90 people into small remote communities to learn to set up shelters, to work together to have a metropolitan medical response or shelter in that community. The VPSO program needed specific ETT training. So, we worked really hard with Roberta Karney (ph) to set that up and that brought the VPSOs into the fold in 2011.

Through this required process, we were able to connect with a lot of communities and build relationships. These relationships have lasted through the years to today. These relationships are very important because we don’t know how they will affect us into the future.

Michelle had a call from Corey Padrone asking if we have an active LEPC and if he could come. She was so excited to have him attend. It has been difficult to get the right people in the room to help us build relationships with our sovereign tribes.

How did it change things? It gave us regional sovereign governments that collaborate with us. They’ve been involved in exercises that have helped both groups improve our preparedness as a community. Our trust has been improved and grown. Our partnerships with them and their organizations have also grown.

One of the things that Sabrina told me was that when a tribal entity was invited to the table, they would only come if they felt like they had something to give. It’s a tradition for them to give as much as they would receive. It’s very important to their hearts that they do that. So, when you reach out to your tribal entities, make sure that they understand that they have a value.

Our process was interesting. Corey attended several meetings. He asked how they could have a seat on the committee. They did have a few open seats, but they weren’t the right fit. His tribal leaders were directing him to have a seat that was specific to the tribal entities and their voice. So, we took this question to the legal department. They got involved in naming the seat, so it was inclusive. We wanted it called tribal representation and we finally got that.

They have been amazing partners. It has been successful to not be exclusive. We have developed a way for the next tribal entity that wants to join us to have their own seat with separate voting rights. The whole process took six months to accomplish.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Michelle for her presentation. For the City and Borough of Juneau, their LEPC is an advisory committee to the Assembly. There were some challenges to formally recognize and embrace and adopt tribal representation on their local emergency planning committee. They spent a lot of time with municipal attorneys to make sure everything was correct. For example, the correct name for the seat on the committee so it doesn’t conflict with other tribal entities.

This is something to look at. There are opportunities to have eager volunteers join our committees under Alaska statute. Having formal recognition and work together with tribal representation is great Michelle and her colleagues did the yeoman’s work and figured it out, so the other committees in the state have a model to follow. Are there any questions from Commission members? Hearing none, he moved on to the next agenda item.

**XI.** *Other State Agency and Ex-Officio Reports - TAB 11 Suspended*

*(no written reports were received)*

*A. DOTs report*

Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked if any Commission members wanted to share any updates.

Mr. John Clendenin, DOT, received some updates in the last couple of days that might be of interest to the commission. DOT is working on evacuation tsunami routes. Currently, there isn’t a good place to have all these brought together in a collaborative, collective fashion. So, we’re looking at re-establishing the signage and evacuation routes for tsunami and community evacuation routes. DOT would like to use some of our resources to bring this into a GIS platform to where we have access as community to find those evacuation routes when we need them rather than go plan by plan to find them.

DOT is creating a resilience improvement plan. Also updating the hydraulics design manual to address extreme weather events that we’ve been having and sizing culverts appropriately for extreme weather events going forward.

Reinstating the seismic program. Looking at bridges to withstand earthquake activity. A lot of our old bridges won’t. So, going forward this program will make our bridges more resilient.

Design project for traffic incident management mitigation. An afterthought from the bridge strike on the Glenn Highway. We’re looking at putting in turnarounds so we can avoid those miles and miles long traffic delays that we incurred. That’s in project design right now.

Lastly, we’ve been brought into the Turnagain Pass Access 9-1-1 issue. There may be some ways we can work that into the federal requirements to have electric vehicle charging stations through an area of where we have no power. We can line up some 9-1-1 access as well. That’s it.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked John. Any other state agencies on virtual or other agency directors want to share at this time?

Paul Valley from FEMA Region 10 Alaska Area office here in Anchorage. We’ve had a lot of changes recently, both regionally and in the office. He wanted to make sure folks were aware of these changes.

Staffing, we have a new regional administrator for Region 10, Willie Nunn (ph). He was appointed in February of this year. While new to our office, he has been a federal coordinating officer with FEMA and Region 10 for several years working with us and the state. So, we’re very fortunate to have him as our new regional administrator.

Within the Alaska Area office, we’re very small with four positions, Robert Forged (ph), manager of the office, is retiring by the end of April. Paul is a state liaison, he works with operational planning and other operational issues within the office and will be acting manager in Robert’s place until that position is filled.

We also have two more, Zach Katzenberger (ph) is our logistics management specialist. He’s been with us a few years. He manages our warehouse, our facilities and our main office. Lastly, personnel change, Ramona Van Cleeve (ph), our tribal liaison officer in Alaska Area office. She retired in December, 2021. So, we’re in process of filling that position. We have 229 federally recognized tribes within Alaska, which represents approximately 40% of the nation’s tribes. A very important position and we look forward to filling that position as soon as possible.

Update with respect to our office. We were heavily involved in COVID event for the past couple of years, as a federally declared disaster. A lot of coordination with our federal and state partners. The staff of the office was deployed during most of that time. We are no longer deployed to that disaster, yet we continue to support it. There are some open mission assignments and coordination that we’re doing with the state. We continue supporting that effort as well. One of the main reasons we are in Alaska is to support the state and communities in times of a disaster. Currently, because of the three recent federally declared disasters that Director Fisher mentioned earlier, we have 12 recovery division FEMA 10 representatives working public assistance issues in our office as we speak. Our office serves as an interim operating facility or a small joint field office during any federally declared event.

The main reason other than operational support, we continue our collaboration with the state, the local communities, our regional partners, our local emergency support function partners, inter-agency partners on a regular basis. We try to participate in regional response team meetings and other local and regional meetings that we can. A lot of coordination goes on there. Also, we’re also monitoring the spring flooding reiver watch situation as we move forward into the spring and monitor for wildfires in the summer. Just wanted to make sure you are aware of our staff changes and our programs.

Lastly, mark your calendars if you are interested. On July 19-20, we will host a regional inter-agency steering committee meeting here in Anchorage, in-person for the first time in what seems like forever.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Mr. Valley for his update and asked if there were any other ex-officio comments or updates to share.

Mary Goolie, EPA ex-officio, for DEC and EPA partners, wanted to remind everyone of the Regional Response Team meeting September 22, 2022, in Anchorage. Meeting location to be determined.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Mary for that reminder.

**XII.** *Informational Items (provided only as reference material) - TAB 12 Suspended*

Acting Co-Chair Fisher pointed out that Commission members can review these items either in their hard copy binder or in the email that was sent out prior to the meeting. He stated that there is a working group looking to update the policies and procedures manual before the next meeting. They will also look at by-laws. So, this will be an action item for our meeting on October 14th.

*A. SERC Policies and Procedures Manual 2018*

*(includes Ethics Information for Members of Boards and Commissions)*

*B. SERC Bylaws*

*C. State Homeland Security Grant allocations 2021*

**XIII. Public Comment - Five (5) minutes per speaker - TAB 13**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher opened the floor for public comment.

Casey Cook is taking off his SERC hat and speaking on behalf of President of AKEMA, Alaska Emergency Management Association. We’ve given brief updates previously about our organization, where we are with the steps we have taken and want to continue that today. We had a membership drive, which closed yesterday. Did a lot of work for our credentialling to become a State of Alaska emergency management partner with State of Alaska DHS and EM. With a MOU or Memorandum of Understanding with you guys and your support.

We’ve had 25 people take the test, which is the first step of that credentialing process. And a couple people have turned in their packets. We’re also partnering with International Association of Emergency Managers for some reciprocity with that and what that will look like in the qualifications system that we’re looking at. To be able to do EMAK or emergency management assistance compact requests throughout the nation. So, we’re really making some big strides. We’ve got about 75 active members and about a third of those are super active in making sure that AKEMA is making forward progress.

Happy to take any questions. It's open to anybody to join and be the voice of emergency management in Alaska.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher asked Commission members if they had any questions for Casey about AKEMA. Hearing none, he stated that he appreciates the partnership with AKEMA, the Alaska Emergency Management Association. It’s important to recognize the professional development and the professional capability of our emergency managers across the state. So, thrilled that your membership drives are going well and that you have the testing and the certification process well under way. Appreciate all those efforts by you and the other board members of AKEMA.

Are there any other comments? Any online? Hearing none, we will close public comment.

**XIV. Commission Member Closing Comments and Adjournment - TAB 14**

Acting Co-Chair Fisher went around the table to ask if Commission members have any comments.

Michael Paschell, Rural LEPC - looking forward to serving on the SERC, having attended for 15 years. With the recent events over Christmas, working with the division, some of the agencies, identified points for future work to improve ability to respond to events in the unorganized borough and the connections there. DOT was publicly criticized in our area, but, for the most part, the response was very good. It’s just that it was difficult to get to Fairbanks. We all know that. But we were able to identify a lot of things across the board on how we can work to help the largest area of the state with the least population, which is part of the challenge.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Mr. Paschell for his comments and gave the floor to Co-Chair Brune.

Co-Chair Brune stated it was a great meeting. Thanks for the awesome presentations. He learned a lot from them. He thinks we all benefitted from them. He looks forward to our next meeting and, again, appreciates seeing everyone in person.

Acting Co-Chair Fisher thanked Commissioner Brune for his time today and his participation. We have a lot of action items for our October 14th meeting. He anticipates that it will be busy with commission activity as opposed to presentations.

He’s been saying this for a few months, since the Infrastructure Investment in Jobs Act passed, we have an incredible opportunity in the state now to look at all of this funding that’s coming in to build new infrastructure and improve our existing infrastructure. Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities gets quite a bit of that funding coming through Commissioner Anderson’s department.

Now is the time for all of us to look at that funding that’s coming in and make sure that we are preaching the message of resilience, as we’re building or upgrading or improving the infrastructure around the state. I, personally, as the Director of the Emergency Management for the state don’t want this new infrastructure to become my next project worksheet in the next declared disaster, whether it be from floods, fires, or any other consequences we’ve seen around the state.

I want to thank everyone in the audience for staying with us on a Friday afternoon. Again, on behalf of Commissioner Saxe, the Commissioner of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Governor Dunleavy, thank you all very much. I will entertain a motion for adjournment.

**MOTION:** Mr. George Vakalis moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Casey Cook.

Thank you everybody. We are adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

***Next meeting - Friday, October 14, 2022 in Anchorage***