English: Uh, I ask that as I call on your position, you state your name very loudly, very clearly, uh -- so, that this can be transcribed, and, uh -- we'll move forward. Uh, it looks like we have a few people still coming in, uh -- uh -- we'll go through rollcall real quick and then go back and if there's anyone I missed -- we'll see if they joined, uh, late. All right, starting off now. We have (inaudible - 00:00:33) representation, DEC?

Anderson: Yes, this is, uh, Commissioner Anderson.

English: Okay. (Inaudible - 00:00:49) okay. DFG. Green?

Green: Did you say Fish and Game, Green?

English: DFG? Department of Fish and Game.

Green: Rick Green.

English: Have a little echo here. I'm going to mute some of the calls, uh -- if you need to unmute, uh, *6. Okay.

DHSS? Department of Labor? DNR?

Dabney: Good afternoon, this is Tim Dabney. I am the deputy director for the Division of Forestry representing DNR Commissioner Corri Feige. Tim Dabney. Thanks.

English: Thank you. Department of Public Safety? DOT, I saw that you had joined.

Clendenin: John Clendenin.

Vakalis: George Vakalis.
English: Okay. Urban LEPC? We have a vacancy in the rural LEPC. Moving onto rural LEPC?
Miller: Dave Miller.
English: Got you. Local government?
Cook: Casey Cook from Mat-Su Borough.
English: Thank you. Another vacancy for the other position, local government. Public at Large? Moving onto ex officio. DOA?
Donley: This is Dave Donley.
English: Thank you. DEED?
Johnson: Uh, Michael Johnson, commissioner here.
English: Thank you, sir. FEMA?
Valley: Good afternoon. Paul Valley from the FEMA Region 10 Alaska area office.
English: Thank you. Alaska Command? Coast Guard?
Smith: Smith (inaudible - 00:04:49)
English: EPA.
Goolie: Hi, this is Mary Goolie with EPA in the Anchorage office. Our RT coordinator, Alaska area planner. We also have our federal on scene coordinator for Alaska, Torri Huelskoetter is, uh, on the line as well, if you want to show your camera, Torri, if you have a chance?
Huelskoetter: Hey, I'm here.
Goolie: Thanks.
Huelskoetter:  Thanks, Mary.

Goolie:  Thank you.

English:  Okay, uh -- going back through some of the ones that
may have came in late, uh -- just to make sure, uh --
DCCD?  DHSS?  Department of Labor?  DPS?

(CROSSTALK)

English:  Sorry, go ahead.

Anderson:  Hi, this is Julie.  Did you not hear me earlier when I
said I was present?  Commissioner Anderson with DCCED.

English:  Did not.

Anderson:  Okay.  Yep, I'm here.

English:  Perfect.  Okay.  Uh, and we'll move onto the, uh,
Urban LEPC and the Public at Large.  Okay, that brings
us to nine members.  We have a quorum.

Christenson:  Okay, good.  So, uh -- I'm going to open it up and
I'm going to just read, uh, comments from Commissioner
Saxe, so -- bear with me here.  I'd like to thank
everyone for attending today's SERC meeting.  I'd like
to extent my personal appreciation to the emergency
managers across the state that have dedicated so much
time and effort to managing the ongoing pandemic and
the delta variant surge.  I know this response has put
extreme demands on all of our time.  We've streamlined
the format for this meeting, so as to minimize the
time and impact upon you, as -- and as you may have
noticed on the agenda, there's information on
(inaudible - 00:07:04) safe water ha- -- and hazmat
response checklist and we'll have comments from the
Local Emergency Planning Association and the SERC
group -- workgroups during this meeting. We also want
to allow an opportunity for you to provide any lessons
learned or identify outstanding issues, needs for
response, or vaccination efforts that the SERC may be
able to assist with. The COVID pandemic has been a
primary focus since March of 2020 as we all know, uh,
for most of the state, local government, commu- -- and
communities, uh -- and we'd like to thank DHSS, uh,
for their ongoing efforts and work to mitigate and
manage the response, uh -- throughout the COVID
response, Department of Heal- -- of, uh -- DH- --
DHS&EM has continued to, uh, meet the needs and
support the communities as we're responding to other
disasters, what we call naturally occurring disasters,
and just to, uh, highlight a few of those that --
that, uh -- we've been dealing with, uh, back in July
we had that magnitude 8.2 earthquake and tsunami
warning out by Chignik, and the tsunami warning went
from McCloskey (ph), uh, through the Kenai Peninsula.
Uh, multiple volcanic eruptions in the Aleutians.
Mass care support for multiple arson fires in the Two
Rivers and Pleasant Valley area in July, August. Uh, the unclean water system issues in July. Mass care support for Munson Creek and Chena Hot Springs, (inaudible - 00:08:35) wildland (ph) fire in June. Some graveside erosion coordination in Clark's Point in June. Water systems issues in Emmonak (ph), uh -- Buckland Ice Jam flooding in May, and then, uh, of course you know, our annual river water, Yukon (inaudible - 00:08:52) river breakup in May. So, uh -- I'm going to pass it over to Tiffany (ph) if you have any comments.

Larson: Yeah, thanks, Deputy Commissioner, uh, Christenson. Uh, first, I'll read some comments just -- just as you did from, uh, Commissioner Brune. Uh, I'm pleased to welcome everyone to the October 2021 SERC meeting, uh -- thank you for taking the time to join us today, and, I'm happy to be sitting in for Commissioner Brune. So, we're also welcoming, uh, Kara Kusche (ph), who is on this call, uh -- Kara, if you've got your camera, you can pop on and say hi. Kara, you're on mute.

Kusche: Oh, gosh. Sorry, guys. Hello. I'm Kara Kusche, program manager here with SPAR, uh -- SPAR division. I am doing prevention and technical support program management, and happy to be here and look forward to
working with you all.

Larson: Thanks, Kara. Uh, other remaining remarks. Our village safe water program and rural maintenance worker program we'll be presenting later on in this meeting about how we and our partners work with community statewide to deal with freeze up and water issues during the winter months. Uh, our inner-agency coordinator unit, Kathy Shea (ph), who's also on this call, will be presenting later in this meeting about the DEC hazmat response plan checklist, which has been recently -- is a recently developed new tool to assist planners in ensuring that their hazmat response plans meet consent -- uh -- content requirements. We encourage you to check out the checklist, uh -- and to help in creating or updating your plan. Uh, we have a lot of disaster and other resources on our DEC website. Please encourage individuals, businesses, and communities to check them out. We've provided links to a variety of those tools in our write up in the SERC binder, uh -- despite the ongoing pandemic, DEC remains fully functional in our day to day activities with most staff working between home and the field office as needed. Uh, generally, uh, specific information about DEC's 50th anniversary, winter storms and freeze up, emergency planning,
significant spills that have occurred since the last SERC meeting, and other items of note are included in the ADC, uh, write up in the binders. Thank you, again, for joining us today, and I look forward to a productive meeting.

Christenson: Thanks, Tiffany. Uh, want to just, uh, welcome, uh, two new members to the SERC, although I think they're both being represented today, and that would be, uh, the DOT and PF Commissioner Anderson and also, uh, the DOA Commissioner Verana (ph). Uh, and I also wanted to, uh, just foot stomp what Roy mentioned earlier, where we do have two vacancies to the SERC and, uh -- we're actively looking to fill those, so that would be the LEPC rural, and, uh, the local government representatives, so if you have any, uh, nominees for that, please get with Roy English. The next thing on the agenda would -- would have been the approval of previous minutes, but I think due to a transcript problem, they ended up not being available, so we'll, uh, suspend that, and -- and attend to that at next -- at -- at the next meeting, uh -- and then that brings us to the first public comment period. And, uh -- I think Roy's going to monitor it to see if there's anyone. We would ask that you keep your comments to three to five minutes, uh -- so, I'm going
to pass over to you Roy, to -- to, uh, see if we have any public comment.

English: No immediate public comments at this time.

Christenson: Okay, so that'll bring us to the consent agenda, and I'm going to need a -- uh -- a motion to approve the, uh -- in a second to approve the agenda for today.

Green: Motion to approve the agenda, Rick Green, DFG.

Larson: Seconded.

Christenson: Okay, and then we're supposed to do a voice vote. I guess, uh -- we can just all speak up. Uh -- because I -- I -- if you guys use the little hand thing, I can't see them all, so -- is there anyone that doesn't -- is there any -- how about let's do it this way. Is there anyone that does not approve the minutes?

Vakalis: I have -- I have a question, uh --

(CROSSTALK)

Christenson: -- the agenda. Yes?

Vakalis: Yeah, this is George Vakalis, uh -- on Item 10 Delta, uh -- this is George Vakalis again. I do not plan on giving a presentation. I thought they had already taken this off but, uh, I will address different issues as they come up.

Christenson: Noted. Okay. With those chang-- -- with that
change, striking 10 Delta, is there anyone that
objects to approving the agenda? Hearing nothing,
we'll -- the agenda's approved, uh -- the next thing
would be the LEPC appointments, uh -- and I'd like to
entertain a motion and a second to confirm, uh, an
LEPC appointment from Juneau, Christopher Russel (ph).
Vakalis: Vakalis, uh -- so moved.
Green: Green, second.
Christenson: Okay, so since -- since voting on Teams or Zoom or
whatever we're on is a little difficult, I'm going to
-- I'm going to by exception too. Is there any --
any, uh -- any nays? Anyone who objects to the -- to
that nomination? Okay. Then, hearing none, uh, that
motion is -- is approved, uh -- third thing on here is
the dates for future SERCs, uh -- spring we have
slated for 22 April, 2022 and there may have been a
date put out there for October, uh -- in the fall,
2022, but, uh -- it's so far out that we're not going
to actually schedule the date right now. Uh -- my
notes say we need to vote on that. Is that true, Roy?
English: Yes, sir.
Christenson: Okay. Do I have a -- a motion and a second?
Vakalis: Vakalis, so moved.
Green: Green, second.
Christenson: Anyone object? Okay, April 22nd, 2022. And then
fall will be to de- -- be determined. The state
agency reports, uh -- from Mr. Fisher and from DEC,
uh, are -- have been provided in materials, and so
we're not going to, uh -- discuss them here unless
there's any -- anyone has any comments or discussion
on them. Okay. Uh -- next, Local Emergency Planning
Committee Association -- the status report, uh, I had
-- the note I have says that there will be comments in
New Business. Uh, the LEPCA agenda written copy was
approved and the previous mini- -- meeting minutes,
uh, I don't -- I think that was the same transcript
issue, because it says the wri- -- written copy for
approval will be in the spring. The next item would
be the Local Emergency Planning Committee Status
Reports, and that notes that that is suspended and the
reports are by exception only, uh -- do we have any
LEPCs that would like to speak and, uh -- uh -- in
this is- -- in this, uh, section? Hearing none, we'll
move onto Old Business, and, uh -- in the agenda it
shows the, uh, workgroups and the committee reports
that have been provided.

Watkins: Can I please say something?

Christenson: Yes, you can.

Watkins: Okay, it's Kathy Watkins (ph). I'm the, uh, current
chair for the, uh, citizen core (ph) for the SERT
program, and I just --

Christenson: Hi, Kathy.

Watkins: I want to say three things. One is that I did resign, uh, as the committee chair effective this month, uh -- and I want to tell Kevin Reed (ph) thank you so much for the opportunity that he gave me to serve on this commission. It was a -- truly an honor to do that. And that, uh, I just hope that the new chair in the future, whoever the -- you guys choose will still continue to, uh, include the Alaska state SERT newsletter in the report. I think it's been -- uh -- I hope it's been a valuable tool for some people out there who didn't know what SERT was and have now -- have a better understanding of what SERT is and the -- and the benefits that it can bring to your community. So, I want to tell the board thank you so much and everybody on the committee for the -- the opportunity that I had to serve with you guys. So, thank you very much.

Christenson: Well, thank you, Kathy, and you've done a lot of great work up there in -- in Willow with the SERT team, so much -- uh -- and the work with the community, so really -- it's really been appreciated. Thank you. Any other, uh, comments before we move onto New Business? Okay, uh -- I'll pass this over to
Bohan: All right, good afternoon. Uh, this is Carrie Bohan with, uh, the DEC Facilities Programs, which does include Village Safe Water, and, uh -- I'm going to test my technology skills here and attempt to share a slide presentation with you. Uh -- let's see if I can make it work here. And I think I'm going to lose sight of you all, uh -- so, maybe someone could confirm for me that you're seeing just the slide presentation, not the notes section and all that?

Larson: That's correct, Karen.

Bohan: Excellent. All right. So, uh -- thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon and share a little bit of information about our programs. Uh, as I said, my name is Carrie Bohan. I'm the Facilities Programs Manager within the Division of Water at DEC, uh, and I'm sharing a little bit of an org chart here as far as the structure of my section, uh -- we're made up of three programs, Village Safe Water, Technical Assistance Program, and the State Revolving Fund Program. And I'm planning to give you kind of a broad overview of rural sanitation funding, and then also speak a little more specifically to the programs in our, uh -- in our section. And I would welcome
questions or -- or comments throughout, uh -- I'm fairly casual and I like to make sure that I'm hitting on the right topics that are of interest to you all, so please feel free to hop in if you have a question. Uh -- so, while I -- I'm mostly meant to focus on the work of our DEC programs, it's really important to acknowledge that we're just part of a much larger team, uh -- for overall sanitation funding and, uh -- and support. So, this group of blocks that I've put up here, uh -- are meant to reflect our funding partners. Indian Health Service, USDA Rural Development, Environmental Protection -- Protection Agency, and then the State of Alaska is responsible for providing, uh, matching funds to many of these federal funding sources, uh -- it -- in most cases, the funding comes through those federal agencies and -- and then is distributed to either the state of Alaska, uh -- Village Safe Water Program, or the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, primarily in the case of the Indian Health Service funding. And collectively, we are all working towards a shared goal of protecting public health and the infrastructure investments that have been made, uh -- in rural sanitation over the past, uh, 40 years, and also, uh -- working with the communities to help build
technical, managerial, and financial capacity. And so, both the state through DEC and -- and other agencies and ANTHC have programs that work towards these goals. So, for the state of Alaska, the remote maintenance worker program, which I'll talk a little bit more about, uh -- as we move through the presentation is our Technical Assistance Program and ANTHC has a similar but slightly different Tribal Utilities Support Program. Uh, we do work really closely to make sure that we're complementing each other, but not being duplicative of our efforts, uh -- so it's -- it's a really great collaboration, uh -- both -- both agencies also have a -- uh -- an organization -- a program that focuses on assisting communities with the financial and managerial capacity building. For ANTHC this is a program called the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative. It's an opportunity for communities to work directly with ANTHC and join in with the other, uh -- I think there's, uh, 35 to 40 communities right now participating, and in -- in essence they're contracting ANTHC to take on the financial and managerial components of operating their water and wastewater utilities. And so, they do have some efficiencies gained in that, and some financial
savings. Uh, at the same time they work with the communities to keep building that local capacities in those areas. And then, at the state, uh -- in the Department of Commerce Community and Economic Developments, uh -- Community and Regional Affairs Division, the remote maintenance workers' sister program, uh -- Rural Utility Business Advisor Program, works directly with rural communities on financial and managerial aspects. Uh, things like, uh -- creating budgets and maintaining their, uh -- collection policy and, uh -- just a-- -- all the bits and pieces that are required to maintain a sustainable, uh, utility. So, uh -- many of you may have heard through various, uh, means a little bit about the work that Village Safe Water and ANTHC do. Uh -- and I don't really have a gauge on -- on how familiar everyone is, so I apologize if I'm diving a little too deeply here, but, uh -- we together support about 200 rural communities, uh -- and we divvy up our support for engineering services. Uh, so, ANTHC provides support to about, uh, two thirds of the communities, and Village Safe Water provides engineering support to about the other third, uh, so we -- we provide support to all the, uh, communities that don't have, uh, primarily an -- uh -- uh -- native Alaskan population, but, uh, we sort of
have a -- a hodge podge of communities spread all across the state, uh, and that primarily is based on the staffing levels at the two agencies. Uh -- so, as we move forward into the next couple of slides, it starts to get a little confusing, but, uh -- regardless of which agency is supporting the community, if they're eligible for -- for one of the funding sources that are identified across the top here, then -- then they're eligible. Uh, there's often some confusion, uh -- people will hear well, that's a -- that's an ANTHC community and have the perception that they don't have access to resources and funding that are administered through VSW, so, uh -- just want to make that point clear, that, uh -- communities get -- are -- are equally eligible for the support and services, uh, despite which lead agency is providing, uh, their engineering support. And this group of agencies, uh -- work together on a very regular basis. I probably speak to each of the funding agencies at least once if not more a week, and we, uh -- get together on a monthly basis to talk about ongoing projects and community needs. So, it's a very regular and ongoing conversation. So, as I was saying, trying to not make it too convoluted here, but, uh -- on the -- the left hand side, you'll see
these three sort of barrels of funding. The state of Alaska, USDA, and EPA. They all feed into what we call the Capital Improvement Project Funding System that is administered through Village Safe Water. Uh, adjacent to that, to the right, you'll see these other barrels -- Indian Health Service, and a couple of EPA barrels. Uh -- they feed into a separate funding system that's administered through IHS, Indian Health Service, and ANTHC, uh -- that's the Sanitation Deficiency System. So, both of these funding systems function similarly, have slightly different eligibility criteria, slightly different, uh -- evaluation criteria for projects, but we, uh -- all the agencies get together in the spring to evaluate projects for funding under both systems. So, again, we have, uh -- really strong collaboration on making sure that we're seeing a holistic picture of the project needs for all communities, and, uh -- and then making decisions that ensure no community is getting left out. Uh -- so, uh -- each of these funding agencies provide funding, uh -- collectively we're at about $100 million a year. Uh -- of course, if the infrastructure bill that we're hearing about passes, that will bump up, uh, exponentially, uh -- and the funding can be used for planning, uh -- design, and
construction. So, the typical process for a project is that, uh -- the assigned engineer from either VSW or ANTHC will work with the community to identify project needs, uh -- the information pertaining to that particular project is entered into the Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System Database, uh, and then one of the agencies -- uh -- the -- the community will apply for funding from one of the agencies for a planning project that usually takes about two years and results in a document that lays out the different alternatives for resolving the issue, and cost estimates. That planning document, then, also gets entered into the SDS system, and is sort of the golden ticket for applying for construction, uh -- and so construction can take, well -- design is maybe a one to two year process, and construction can take one to five years, depending on the complexity of the project. So, it is one thing that we often, uh, are faced with, is a very clearly identified project that -- in -- in an ideal world, we could fund and resolve instantaneously, and the reality is it's somewhere between a three to five year project to secure funding, conduct planning, design, and implement the project. So, I'll take just a minute to elaborate a little bit on Village Safe Water
specifically. Uh -- we have two main functions. One is as I've just described, to provide funding for capital improvement projects. But once those projects are funded, uh, for those communities in which VSW is the lead agency, our engineering staff will provide project management and oversight for those capital improvement projects. And -- and, uh -- I assume you guys can all guess, but up here in the -- the top corner, that is a honey bucket hopper, uh -- and this is their wastewater operator, who is emptying the hopper in the middle of the winter, uh -- and then the photo below is, uh -- a couple gentlemen who are getting ready to -- to hook up a honey bucket hopper, uh, not in the winter. So, for each of the items I'm going to talk about moving forward, I'm trying to call out, uh, specific, uh -- maybe takeaways that I think are pertinent to this group when considering emergency response. Uh -- so, things that Village Safe Water has to offer up, I think, for the good of the group is we have very consistent routine, uh, conversations and contact with community leaders and water system, wastewater system operators. Uh, and so, often the engineers either at VSU or ANTHC, uh -- have better knowledge than -- than most about what's going on in the community, particularly in regards to the
sanitation system. Also, we maintain historical records, uh -- plant drawings, distribution system drawings, uh, that may be helpful in an emergency circumstance, uh, I'll be referring to the Tuluksak water treatment fire -- water treatment plant fire, uh, in a future slide, and one of the things that we were able to provide last winter when that was all happening was a planning document that had some really great, uh, reference materials that could be used while folks were making plans with how to move forward. Also, depending on the time of year, we may have crews on site in communities, uh, who are actively working on a project that's being funded by one of the agencies I -- I shared before and so we may be able to leverage those individuals in a community to help address an ongoing circumstance. Uh, also, we have a lot of historical knowledge within the group, uh -- as -- as a -- uh -- whole, on previously identified issues and perspectives. I think one aspect that is a big challenge in, uh, dealing with emergency circumstances, especially winter issues in our rural communities or their sanitation systems is that, uh -- yeah, some of these things maybe go-- have been going on for a much longer time for, uh -- or are caused by, uh, something that we were already
well aware of, but to somebody who is new to the situation, it may not be that evident, and so we can offer some historical reference and perspective to some of the situations that are going on. Also, we're on the path to funding, uh, through those agencies that I described earlier, so ultimately, it's important that we're in the know about what remaining needs haven't been met, so that we can tee up a project for -- for future funding. So, I'm going to, uh -- kind of shuffle over to our technical assistance program and talk for a minute about the remote maintenance workers, uh -- I think they're pretty well known throughout the state for -- for folks who deal with rural communities, uh -- so, this is a team of folks who provide onsite training and technical assistance and also emergency response to the 200 or so rural communities, uh -- it's jointly funded by EPA and DEC. And we here at DEC, uh, grant a good portion of money to five different regional tribal health consortiums, uh, as a -- a partnership opportunity. So, here is a slightly outdated map but, uh -- give you just a sense of our partners. Uh, the dark purple out of Kotzebue up at the top -- we have one RMW that works there in Kotzebue for the Maniilaq Association. Uh, and then moving down to the brown area. In Nome, we fund one
and a half RMW positions with Norton Sound Health Corporation, and then they fund, uh, the other half position. In Fairbanks, the turquoise area, we've got three RMWs that work, uh, for Tanana Chiefs Conference. In the red section, uh -- so, the -- the blue starts, which I appreciate may be a little harder to see here, but they indicate where the RMW actually resides. So, we have a grant with Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, and they have two individuals that are physically located in Bethel, but the other three are living and working out of Emmonak, St. Mary's, and Holy Cross. Then we have one RMW with Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation in Dillingham. And then the remaining part of the state -- the kind of south central, southeast Kodiak, Aleutian, Pribilof, uh -- we have DEC employees who live and work out of the Anchorage office that support these communities, and those are regions where, uh, we don't presently have a -- an external partner who is interested or willing to take on the -- the work in those regions, so we have, uh -- three and a half fulltime positions out of Anchorage, plus a supervisor who provides support not only to our staff but, uh -- to work with the supervisors at the health corporations to -- to make sure everybody's got what they need. And so, we're
always begging the RMWs to send us photos of their work, but, uh -- there's usually just such a small crew working on, uh -- emergencies that there's nobody to take a photo, so, uh -- a couple of them now are, uh -- showing their sense of humor and sending us selfies. So, this is Billy Westlock (ph). He, uh, lives in Emmonak, and this is actually a waterline break in Emmonak that he was responding to. Uh, this is a unique circumstance in that Billy lives in Emmonak. That's not, uh -- most communities don't get that -- that level of response, that quickly, but in almost all cases, when something's not functioning correctly in the water -- wastewater system, the RMW is the first person that the operator or the city manager or the city administrator will call for assistance. Uh, so this is, uh, a photo of Steve Evervoldt (ph), who just recently retired after 20 some years with DEC's RMW program and they're, uh, putting a repair clamp on a wastewater sewer line, uh -- and so again, just -- just reiterating that, uh -- the RMWs are really the first responders in sanitation emergencies. Uh, this final picture is, uh -- Shane McIntyre (ph). He lives in Bethel, and, uh -- the equipment that's behind Shane is a jetter and a hotbox and what they're doing is shooting high pressure hot
water into a frozen water line in Chefornak last year. 
Uh -- but the -- the takeaway that I -- I want to 
point out is that we have RMWs who -- who have, uh -- 
worked with the same group of communities -- they're 
all assigned 10 to 15 specific communities, so they 
don't really cross over, uh -- unless there's a -- an 
extenuating circumstance, so we have RMWs that have 
worked with the same group of communities for 25 or 
more years, uh -- so they have very longstanding 
relationships with people in the communities, uh -- 
they have generally more experience with the water and 
wastewater systems than anyone else in the community 
due to frequent turnover and the positions that -- 
that deal with the utilities, and so they're just, uh 
-- really incomparable resource. They're -- they're 
really invaluable to emergency response. Uh -- so 
while I've been focusing really on the programs within 
our division, I -- I want to make sure and acknowledge 
that we do have a group of programs focused 
specifically on wastewater within the Division of 
Water, and so whenever there is a wastewater 
emergency, they're very actively involved as well. 
But then we partner very closely with the Division of 
Environmental Health here at DEC, primarily the 
Drinking Water Program, uh, but also solid waste and
others when there's an emergency, uh -- the program
manager at the Drinking Water Program, uh -- she and I
talk multiple times a week and certainly water is an
emergency going on. We're in constant contact, uh --
they have both an environmental program specialist and
an engineer assigned to each community. They work in
a -- a regional fashion, but each community has a
particular individual that's assigned to them, and in
most cases they're all on a first name basis, uh --
very good working relationships in almost all cases,
so when things start to -- to, uh -- to go south if
you will, the operators are quick to reach out to the
Drinking Water Program for assistance, uh, and they
also have a 24 hour emergency phone number. They're
responsible for issuing boil water notices and other
health advisories when there is an emergency. Uh, so
we're in very close contact with them in all cases.
So, just quickly, uh -- go through what I would call a
typical emergency response circumstance. So, uh -- if
you can imagine in the middle, the community
identifies that there's a problem, generally the first
response is that the operator or somebody in the
community calls the remote maintenance worker.
They'll begin identifying what materials are needed to
resolve the issue and -- and procuring those
materials, and then getting out on site. Uh, the
folks in the (inaudible - 00:40:39) region use our own
snow machines, uh -- we use boats and planes and what
have you, uh -- but we base them regionally so they
can respond in a very short timeframe. Uh -- also, if
there's a need, uh -- the community will reach out to
RUBA for assistance with drafting emergency ordinances
and di- -- disaster declarations and things of that
nature. At the same time, the operators likely call
the Drinking Water Program, and they'll issue a boil
water notice if it's warranted, help develop a set --
sampling plan for, uh -- taking whatever samples are
needed to demonstrate that the system can come off the
boil water notice, and also doing engineering review
of any plans or system modifications that need to take
place. Uh, generally about this time, the Village
Safe Water or ANTHC engineer is also informed of the
ongoing circumstance, and they'll start to work with
the community on developing long-term solutions, and
pursuing funding opportunities. And while all of this
is going on, obviously we're feeding information to
Megan so she can share it with others. So, I'll just,
uh -- use again, as an example, the water treatment
plant (inaudible - 00:41:56) fire in Tuluksak, uh,
back in January. Uh -- I have a very clear
recollect this circumstance. I was at Home Depot on a Saturday, walking down the aisle, got a
text message from Megan that said she'd been informed
by the Village Safe Water engineer assigned to work
with Tuluksak that, uh -- that the (inaudible -
00:42:13) was on fire. I reached out to the remote
maintenance worker program manager who in turn reached
out to the assigned RMW out of Bethel, uh -- within
seconds, he was sending us photos, uh -- and so, we
had a pretty clear picture of what was going on. I
reached out by text to ANTHC, and to our EPA funding
partner, and, uh -- you know, in the span of about
five minutes, the folks in our, uh -- larger team if
you will, uh -- I could confirm that everyone who
needed to know was in the loop and -- and of course,
the community had reached out to the RMW directly, and
also to -- to our Village Safe Water engineer, uh --
and then, uh -- Megan and Cindy Christian (ph), who's
the Drinking Water Program Manager, and I started to
coordinate from there, so, uh -- it doesn't take but a
couple of minutes to get our whole group rallied and-
- and, uh -- moving forward. And then, uh -- as we
saw, particularly with this instance, the health
corporations have their own set of responsibilities as
the public healthcare provider in the regions, and so
even outside of the scope of what they do under their remote maintenance worker grant through DEC, they take on, uh -- additional responsibilities and start to take action where it's needed. So, while I have everyone's attention, I thought I would also just share a little bit more information about a couple of the other programs, uh -- and -- and why they might be relevant to the conversation of -- of emergency response. So, going back to our technical assistance program, and their, uh, operator certification program, this is a group that is responsible for certifying water and wastewater operators, uh -- so all water systems that serve 25 or more individuals but then also the larger wastewater systems that serve, uh -- 500 or more individuals, and that certification -- there's four levels for each water and wastewater -- and it's based on the complexity of the system, so we have a lot of information about each specific system in order to make that classification, uh, and that -- that may be relevant information to share in an emergency circumstance. Uh, we also facilitate operator training and other, uh, support that can -- can go to, uh, assist the communities and the operators in being successful and operating their systems and just as an example, uh, in the last couple
of years, the team has started producing these calendars, uh -- each year, and I appreciate it's really small here, but, uh -- the text in the -- in the boxes for each day reflect things that the operator or maybe the city clerk or the administrator need to be aware of, uh -- and plan for. So, whether it's paying their taxes, or turning in water samples, or submitting a report, uh -- and I primarily bring this up because we are finalizing this calendar for this year, uh -- for two -- or pardon me, 2022. And, uh -- we have some flexibility about adding additional things, so if there is some type of reminder that this group feels would be useful to include in a calendar like this for rural communities, uh, we do have an opportunity to -- to make some additions here and we'd be happy to have discussions about other reminders that -- that y'all might think could fit in here. Uh -- other ta- -- takeaways are, again, we have constant contact with operators and owners of water and wastewater systems, and we maintain a database with contact information, uh -- and specific data about those systems and that may be useful to others in an emergency circumstance. And then, uh -- again, I think the Village Safe Water program rightfully so gets a lot of attention, uh -- but we also have
another funding program that I think is -- is a little bit, uh, less promoted, less well known and that's our state revolving loan fund. And this is something that's funded primarily through grants from EPA, uh, with state match and it allows us to offer very low interest loans to water and wastewater utilities, uh, and public water systems and municipalities, to do water, wastewater, and water quality improvement projects, uh -- the interest rates these days are somewhere, uh, around 2%. And we can make loans of up to 30 years, and in some cases, we're able to subsidize those loans, uh, at -- at a very substantial rate, so we do that by reducing the principal that's, uh, due for repayment, uh -- I think I've mentioned that, that we -- we actually bring back loan payments from previous loans and add them to our, uh -- fund so we -- that's where you get the -- the term revolving is we're continuing to grow the loan fund as, uh -- older loans are repaid. And there's been a -- a substantial amount of work done at the federal level between EPA and FEMA to make sure that this is a -- a valuable funding source, uh, when working in emergency circumstances, uh -- I think after super storm Sandy, there was a recognition that there needed to be an improved relationship there, so, uh -- the -- the SRF
funds can be used as a bridge loan for communities until FEMA funds become available, and there had been some, uh -- challenges to making that work and -- and EPA and FEMA have done a really great job of trying to smooth that out so states can navigate that process a little more easily, uh -- so we can make funds available for emergency circumstances. Again, we have existing relationships with communities and, uh -- and the systems. So, just a couple of, uh, last thoughts because I know you, uh -- you have a big agenda today.

I don't want to take too much time, uh -- I guess I just want to reinforce that within this larger network, uh, that I've described, we have a really strong established network for responding to sanitation emergencies, uh -- we do have funding for long-term capital improvement projects, uh -- unfortunately, we don't really have access to much in the way of emergency funding, but ANTHC does have a small bit of emergency funding each year. I think they limit each individual allocation to around $5,000, but, uh -- we can certainly help facilitate getting in touch with them if -- if a circumstance is appropriate. I think -- so, that's all I have. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Christenson: Okay, I'm not hearing any questions.
Bohan: Fair enough.

Christenson: Thank you -- thank you, Carrie.

Bohan: Sure. Thank you.

Christenson: I think next up, we have Kathy Shea. She's going to talk about haz-- -- the -- hazmat's -- hazmat response plan checklist. Kathy?

Shea: Good afternoon, everybody. Uh, thank you, Carrie, that was really great, uh, information for us, and while Roy is pulling up my presentation, uh, I just wanted to note Carrie, you mentioned that you reached out to Meg during some of the, uh -- during the -- especially I think it was the Tuluksak response, and that's Meg Coller (ph) at DEC, who's our disaster coordinator, if that wasn't clear to everybody who was listening. Excuse me. And I know Roy is working on the presentation that I have. Perfect. It's not -- that'll work. Uh, so yeah, so good afternoon, I'm Kathy Shea with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. I do, uh, the community right to know coordination for DEC, including the Tier 2 reporting, and I just wanted to present a little bit on a new tool that we've developed over the past couple of years to help LEPCs develop their hazardous materials emergency response plan. Uh, Roy, if you could go to the next slide, please? Uh, you know, one of the key
responsibilities that LEPCs have in, uh -- you know, as part of their -- their ongoing activities is the development of an emergency response plan. Uh, they're meant to -- specifically for hazardous materials, and they're meant to review it annually or, uh, as community conditions change. You know, if they get a giant new facility with a -- an extremely hazardous substance in the middle of their review process, uh, they might want to do their planning a little earlier. Uh, they usually should submit that plan to the SERC for review, and then they evaluate whether or not they have the resources, uh, to implement the plan, they implement the plan, and then they exercise the plan, and -- you know, they go in that circle. Uh -- the facilities with extremely hazardous substances also have the responsibility to share their emergency response coordinator's name with the LEPC, and they're supposed to participate in the planning process. Uh -- so, that's just a little history of what the LEPCs are supposed to do, and the facilities, uh -- next slide, please. And then, the next two slides are just -- you know, I'm not going to read them, but they are the nine mandatory and minimum requirements that are meant to be in the plan per federal and state statute. Uh -- next slide, and then
go ahead onto the next one, too, please. And so, we developed this checklist, and what it does is helped provide an outline that the LEPCs can use if they want to meet their hazardous materials response plan requirements. I think I'll just state plan from now on. Uh, so if you can go to the next slide, that would be great. It's a little bit of a closer look at what information is required -- or is outlined on this plan, and basically all -- each of the sections in blue is one of those mandatory requirements that was on the previous, uh, couple of slides. And below that, you have ABC, which, uh -- which directs the planners and the readers to where they might find some of that information. And so, we refer people to the area and regional response plans that the Coast Guard, EPA, and DEC work on together, uh -- we refer to existing emergency plans that the LEPCs might already prepare, uh -- you know, the intent is that this checklist might be used as an appendix to those existing emergency plans, uh -- it's not meant to be a cumbersome process or just another -- you know, another plan. Uh -- we're hoping to make it easier, uh -- you know, by incorporating the work into the planning activities that are already going on, rather than having an entirely separate, uh -- planning
process just for hazardous materials. And so it's a tool, it's not required. Uh, we sent you a copy of the checklist. It's three pages long. I'm just showing you Page 1 today in the slides, uh -- but you can look, you know, in your meeting invite. If you would like to see the full checklist, I welcome and hope for comments on it. On its usability and what could make it better, uh, because I'm sure it's not perfect. It -- it's version one. So, that I think is all I have unless there are any questions if you want to go -- yeah, thanks.

Christenson: Well, thank you, Kathy, uh -- I'm not hearing any questions. Let's move onto Tom Vaden, uh, LEPC -- LEPCA co-chair, and going to talk about, uh, the LEPCA workgroup.

Vaden: LEPCA -- can you hear me?

Christenson: Uh, I heard you then.

Vaden: Okay, so at Tab 10C shows us, uh, we want to do the primary (inaudible - 00:56:53) for the LEPC survey we did, and we did -- what we did is we, uh, had 18 of the 21 LEPCs respond to the survey, and, uh -- and then that's the results. And this is what we're trying to do, is give you a higher overview of you know -- of -- of what's going on with the LEPCs, and we'd like to address this at the LEPCA meeting in
April, and then forward it more to the SERC to kind of figure out how, you know -- if -- what we can do to come up with some solutions to the, uh -- workgroup findings and recommendations. Is there any questions? Well, if no questions, I'm going to go back on mute.

Christenson: Okay, thank you, Tom. Uh -- so, uh -- 10D was stricken from the agenda, uh -- George, did you have any -- anything to add?

Vakalis: Yes, thank you very much. So, if -- if you had the chance to look at some of the issues that was outlined, uh, you know, by the LEPC committees that worked on this, the workgroup, uh, these -- these really have been around since the very, very beginning. These same type of issues. Uh -- when the LEPCs and the SERC was first formed, it was to take care of, uh -- SERC (ph) Title 3, the community right to know. And it was funded primarily from DEC, and it was, uh -- a percentage of the funds generated from oil -- oil flowage, and as a result of that, uh -- the LEPCs, uh -- were not quite as encumbered, uh, as they are now, and I -- I'll explain why that is. So, just dealing with the community right to know, uh -- and you saw on the previous chart, uh, by the previous, uh, speaker, some of the requirements just under the community right to know that the LEPCs are required to
do -- and they were doing that to the best of their ability. They were getting funding from, uh, the flowage fund, uh -- they were hiring, uh, contractors -- a lot of them hired outside contractors because they did not have the expertise, and for the most part, they got buy-in from the local jurisdictions. Keeping in mind that some of the LEPCs are a part of an LEPD, and so, uh -- that makes it a little bit more complicated, uh, but, uh, they -- they -- they were able to go ahead and do the most -- for the most part, and of course, uh -- you know, the -- the Department of, uh -- Military and Veterans Affairs assisted wherever they could in that endeavor. But at some point, uh -- in, uh -- a few years ago, it was determined that you know, uh -- first of all, the -- the oil flowage funds had started to dry up. If you look at the state of Alaska, and you look at everything that you have to deal with when it comes to potential dangers, you know -- certainly chemical spills and material spills, uh -- certainly are -- are one of the dangers, but you also have dangers of forest fires. You also have -- in some areas you have hurricane winds. Uh, in other areas you have tsunamis. Uh, you have massive flooding throughout the state, in an awful lot of flooding prone areas.
And I can go on and on, uh -- snow load problems. Uh, you name it. And so, as a result of that, uh -- the LEPCs, uh -- were getting more involved in some of these other activities, because, uh -- you know, in some of the communities, the, uh -- the materials or the hazardous materials part was not really a major, major threat. And so, it was decided, uh -- based on communities from LEPCs as well as the SERC as a whole, to become all hazards. And when they started to become all hazards, uh -- I think the difficulty became more and more clear for these LEPCs for the same reasons that they were having difficulties with just dealing with the hazardous materials. Now that was compounded but yet most of their time was dealt with all these other type of dangers. Uh, one of the things that, uh -- is prevalent -- and that is that your smaller communities or those places where you have an LEPD, they -- they really just can't, uh -- they don't have the resources available that the larger communities do, uh -- both in manpower and also monetarily. Uh, larger communities that are organized, communities from the standpoint of they're an actual government entity, they have a tax base, et cetera -- they -- they're able to go ahead and do what has to be done to protect the public, to include, uh --
- you know, the mandates of -- as -- as outlined by SERC Title 3 as well as all the other dangers out there. But where you really run into the problem is your smaller, smaller communities, and those communities that are so separated under the LEPD, uh, system that, uh -- it -- it's just a challenge, and I think, you know, the workgroup, what they've come up with, clearly outlines what that challenge is, and so I think you know, from our perspective as a SERC, uh, we certainly ought to allow them to come up with what they think suitable recommendations would be as to how to solve some of these problems, but I do think also as a SERC, since the SERC -- just its entity itself -- you know, covers -- has an awful lot of resources available to it, and has to prioritize what's the most important thing. Yes, we have to comply with the federal law, that's a given. But there's other things out there, so I think we really need to see what kind of suggestions they come up with as far as solutions, and then we as an L- -- uh -- as a SERC figure out how we can help them, uh, in -- in orchestrating these solutions, or perhaps even changing the format of the LEPC, because it's pretty flexible as to how your LEPCs can operate. The one thing in the -- in the title is clear. You have to have one SERC and at
least one LEPC. So, I think what we need to do is based on recommendations coming forward, uh -- next spring, I think we really need to take a hard look and figure out what should, uh -- this really look like going forward? And what should the missions be going forward for the LEPCs? So, that's -- that's -- that's my piece. Uh -- and that's my comment on it. Uh, it is -- it is a challenging issue. And then, with the funding drying up, uh, like it has, uh -- you know, that makes it even more difficult for some of these communities, smaller communities. I will tell you that some of the things -- I looked at, uh -- you know, what the spending plans were in 2019, uh -- but when we were using operating dollars and they had operating dollars available to them, for the most part, all of those endeavors, uh, that they undertook with those funds were actually authorized because they had to come forward with a plan as to how they were going to spend those monies and, uh -- even though in today's times, when the money is, uh -- definitely not there, or -- or short in a lot of areas, uh, maybe we need to relook at what's authorized for them to actually spend the money on as well. So, I -- I think it's -- I think it's a complete reevaluation of the LEPCs and -- and what we really expect from them. Uh
-- and that's the end of my comments.

Christenson: Those are really good comments, George. Thank you. Any other -- does anyone else have any comments?

Okay, uh -- next we have a listening session regarding ongoing COVID impacts and, uh -- it's not really a formal presentation, it's just an opportunity for SERC members to voice any concerns or issues. Hearing nothing, uh -- other state agency and ex officio reports, uh -- we received a DOT written report. I don't know if anyone is discussing that or if it's just available. Okay, well, it's Tab 11, so it's available to the commission. Informational items, uh -- they were provided as reference material. There's SERC policies and procedures manual from 2018, the SERC bylaws and the State Homeland Security Grant Allocations for 2021. Which brings us to our second public comment period. Roy, do we have anyone on for public comment?

English: I'm checking now. I do not see anyone wishing to participate for public comment.

Christenson: Okay. Well, that brings us to closing comments.

Uh -- so, first of all, I really appreciate the presentations that we had. I know it takes a lot of time to put those together, but, uh -- you know, I know I learned something, and I think probably
everyone else did. It was, uh -- really good material
be -- for the -- for this group here. Uh -- so, I
want to just pass over really quick, Tiffany, uh --
did you have any closing comments?
Larson: Yeah, thanks, Craig. Uh, I also really appreciate the
presentations here today, and as the, uh, two
presenters from DEC stated, that if you've got any
follow up questions, please do reach out to them, uh --
-- or myself or the commissioner, and we'd be more than
happy to help answer those questions. So, thank you.
Christenson: Okay. Well, I guess that concludes this meeting.
I don't have a gavel, but if I did I would rap it on
the table. Uh -- Roy, am I missing anything? Is
there anything else before we let people go and enjoy
the snow?
English: Uh, no, sir. Uh, that -- that would be it. Uh -- so,
at this point, I guess we're looking for a motion to
close the meeting.
Christenson: Okay, sounds good. Do we have a motion and a
second to close the meeting?
Vakalis: Vakalis, so moved.
Christenson: Can I get a second?
Larson: Tiffany Larson (ph), seconded.
Christenson: Is there any objections to closing the meeting?
Okay. Well, everyone have a good weekend, and we're
out of here. See you later.
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DATED this 16th day of November, 2021.

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