**April 18, 2025**

**1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order – Co-Chair, Craig Christensen, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
2. Roll Call – State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Coordinator
   1. Commerce and Community Economic Development - Sandra Moller
   2. Department of Health - Eugene Wiseman
   3. Department of Labor - Adam Weinert
   4. Department of Natural Resources - N/A
   5. Department of Public Safety - N/A
   6. Department of Transportation - Katherine Keith
   7. Urban LEPC - George Vikalis
   8. Second Urban LEPC - N/A
   9. Rural LEPC - N/A
   10. Second Rural LEPC, Local Government - Jason Bauer
   11. Second Rural LEPC, Second Local Government - Casey Cook
   12. Department of Administration - Dave Donley
   13. Department of Fish and Game - Doug Vincent, Shannon Mason
   14. Department of Education and Early Development - N/A
   15. FEMA Alaska Command - Paul Valley
   16. US Coast Guard and EPA - N/A
3. Quorum Determination – SERC Coordinator
   1. Have enough for a quorum
4. Administrative Announcements – SERC Coordinator
   1. There are virtual participants.
5. Welcome and Introductions – Membership List – **TAB 2**
6. Opening Comments by Co-Chairpersons – Craig Christensen DMVA, and Acting Deputy Commissioner Megan Kohler as designee for Department Environmental Conservation (DEC)
   1. Megan Kohler comments
      1. Working on updating SERC work plans
7. Member Introductions – Craig Christensen DMVA
   1. No additional comments
8. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
9. George Vikalis move to approve
10. Katherine Keith, second.
11. Approved.
12. Public Comment – Five (5) minutes per speaker
13. None
14. Consent Agenda – **TAB 5**
15. Approval of, and changes to the Agenda (by item)
    1. Approve of current meeting minutes
16. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Appointments
    1. Fairbanks North Star Borough will be Nathan Smoot.
    2. Caitlin Wilson, Amy Galloway, Michael Sanders, Charles Mercer, Wendy Cloyd.
    3. For Nome, it will be Sheila Meeks and April Shradrack.
17. SERC Meeting dates
    1. October 24, 2025.
18. State Agency Reports – **TAB 6**
19. DHS&EM Updates, Mr. Bryan Fisher, Director
20. Submitted written report that is in binder.
21. Quick updates
    1. Thank you to all agencies working with State Emergency Operations Center as well as representing DHS&EM in terms of disaster response.
    2. Has had one declared emergency a month since the last meeting.
    3. There is a hole in the disaster relief fund budget
    4. Funding continues to grow every year. Will have $10 million for the upcoming fiscal year.
    5. Still focused on the division and on critical infrastructure protection and cybersecurity and homeland defense planning.
    6. Threats to the US and AK include Russia, North Korea, Iran and China.
    7. Threats include serious impacts to critical infrastructure and the utility sector, water and waste water, and electricity.
    8. The military in AK will most likely be activated and have been planning with the National Guard Joint Staff and Department of Defense for these types of disasters.
    9. Emergency Management Conference 2025 took place this week at the Egan.
    10. Director Fisher had met with Secretary Noem, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and she was very candid about President Trump’s desire to eliminate FEMA.
    11. The agency has not been paid through grants from FEMA.
    12. Working with local jurisdictions to continue their operations funding wise.
    13. Funding from federal agencies will most likely go away and will have to have tough conversations with state agencies.
    14. FEMA eliminated the biggest grant program. The Department of Homeland Security eliminated the biggest grant program that FEMA has had. Called Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities. The Bric program. That was announced just a couple of weeks ago that that program has been canceled.
    15. No funding for this federal fiscal year. Any funding that was awarded and not obligated or liquidated from federal fiscal year 2020 through for federal fiscal year 2023. If it hasn't been spent, it's being clawed back. We have some open projects in Alaska. Particularly for the municipality of Skagway Borough will be able to continue a little bit of the planning and the design and engineering for a mitigation project for a rockfall landslide in Skagway.
22. DEC Division of Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR),
23. Graham Wood to represent the Division of Spill Prevention and Response in the Department of Environmental Conservation.
24. Overview of what is included in written report includes
    1. This week, the prevention, preparedness and Response program met for three days here in Anchorage. We have five offices across the state, Juneau, Fairbanks, here, Valdez & Soldotna, we brought everybody here for three days of professional development. That was really great. Like most other departments, we have a ton of new staff.
    2. Collaboration with state and federal agencies continues in our in the world of regional and area planning. Most recently, the public comment for the Arctic and Western Alaska Area plan, which is the coastline of the entire state, with the exception of Prince William Sound and, southeast closed for public comment. There was two highlights from that public comment period.
    3. 1 - Job aides updated to the liaison officer section and a job aide for what's called the regional Stakeholder committee. That committee, the regional stakeholder committee is unique to Alaska, and it gives, residents of the state who have a vested interest in a spill or response, a way to interject their opinions through a liaison officer through that committee into their response.
    4. 2 - Encouraging organizations to report spills.
25. Western State SERC Meeting Update – Dave Reilly, Kathy Shea
    1. JJ little, Kathy Shay and Dave Reilly traveled down to the lower 48 for the Western State SERC conference. All the states pretty much west of Texas. We met with other state certs and LEPC representatives. And it's, a meeting that we get training from EPA, several other, federal partners as well as the other state partners in what what are what is working what is not working for the local for their SERCs and and their LEPCs.
    2. We saw that the other SERCs and LEPCs are having some of the same challenges as we are here, especially with participation and funding obviously being a big part.
    3. Anchorage LEPC is how to get industry to participate in their LEPC. We had a brief update with them at their last meeting. And that's something we talked about this morning at the LEPC meeting, as well as how to get industry to participate and what their actual requirements to do so are. Funding is a concern.
    4. Creative solution - created 501C3 in the Aleutians to assist with securing funding from different sources.
26. *Local Emergency Planning Committee Association (LEPCA) –* ***TAB 7***
27. *Status Report*
28. *Tom Vaden and Brenda Ahlberg include:* 
    1. *And basically we get the same a lot of the same reports you do from Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, DEC and stuff like that. We did discuss a couple of things of importance.*
    2. *We're going to update the 2018 local emergency planning committee Handbook. It hasn't been updated since 2018. And we're hoping to have it done before our meeting in October. We're having a meeting the same time you are in October. That's going to be virtual.*
    3. *The second thing we discussed was, sending a letter to all of, you know, everybody. Getting together, writing a letter to all of the legislators in Alaska, representatives telling them exactly what the LEPC does.*
    4. *Director Fisher said that this year's budget in Alaska did not even mention LEPCs, and, we think it's important, with all the growing amount of disasters within the state, that our legislators know exactly what you know, who's doing this and what.*
    5. *And like I told you last time I briefed you guys was, you know, we're seeing LEPCs that are that have a tax base or funded are doing okay. But the LEPCs that don't have a tax base are either nonexistent or struggling.*
29. *LEPCA Agenda- (written copy provided)*
30. *LEPCA Previous Meeting Minutes*
31. *Local Emergency Planning Committee Status Reports –* ***TAB 8***

1. *Old Business –* ***TAB 9***

*Committee Reports (Written reports provided where available)*

1. *Finance Committee – Mr. George Vakalis, Chairperson*
   1. Vikalis from the finance committee. The only thing I'd like to highlight, I mean, you just heard it here. And for the last several years now, we've heard about the same thing. And in the written report that I provided, In the verbal report I provided last, SERC meeting, highlighted the fact that as was just reiterated, it's the folks that don't have a local tax base that's hurting the most, those that have a local tax base, and have charters they're required to do emergency preparedness, period.
   2. Expecting some of these other organizations that don't have the wherewithal as far as the tax base to be able to support it, I think it's awfully difficult for them to be able to achieve the mission. I understand about nonprofit forming a nonprofit. I understand about getting donations, but that's never a sure thing.
2. *Work Plan Committee – Erin Leaders, Chairperson*
   1. *Erin Leaders, DEC, Work plan Committee chair for the SERC Work plan committee. Since the last meeting, the SERC work plan committee made changes to the SERC policy and procedures manual and to the SERC bylaws. We did draft changes as previously directed, and this was to update the bylaws to deconflict with the Alaska statute.*
   2. *So the updated policy, procedure manual and bylaw drafts are included in the SERC read-ahead and in the process of reviewing those documents, our committee identified areas that may need major revisions. However, that would require direction from the SERC. In addition to support and input from SERC members and committee chairs or their designees to verify that those respective sections are still relevant as currently identified in the Policy and Procedure Manual.*
   3. *So at this time, the SERC Work Plan Committee would like to ask the SERC to entertain a motion, to direct our the work plan committee to continue working on those policy and procedure manual and bylaws for a full review and rewrite with assistance from SERC committee chairs, DHS&EM and others as deemed appropriate. And I think we saw in some of those written reports that there were some recommendations made by some of the committees for, you know, that they were non-viable.*
   4. *Moved Erin’s motion to vote on Erin’s recommendation.*
   5. *George Vikalis moved*
   6. *Casey Cook seconded the motion.*
   7. *Motion passes via majority vote.*
3. *Interoperable Communications Committee – Mr. John Rockwell, Chairperson*
   1. *N/A*
4. *Citizen Corps Committee – Michelle Torres, Chairperson*
   1. *Michelle Torres, and I'm with the Citizen Core Committee. There is a read ahead if you had an opportunity to read it, so I'll be very, very brief. We have 13 active teams right now. Most of them sent in, written report. So you guys can go ahead and take a look at those. With those 13 active teams, we are seeing two potential new teams coming on board this year.*
   2. *The main issue is that there is no funding and the communities take on the liability and the workman's comp, if a volunteer was injured.*
   3. *Other than that, we have the national CERT conference coming up in August, and I anticipate about 4 to 5 Alaskans heading to this conference in Indianapolis this year, which is by far the most we've ever had to attend.*
   4. *Adam with the Department of Labor - thanked Michelle for supporting workers compensation and making sure that the volunteers are protected and safe in the work that they do. My one question is, I believe that volunteers are covered under worker's compensation, because they're considered employees. Is that a burden to the work that you're doing?*
   5. *Michelle - So what happens with liability, it's on the communities. And so some of the communities are funding or they pay for liability when the team is activated for a disaster, if they're doing volunteer work, like running a booth or a fair, they're not covered. But if they're activated for actual emergency work, they're covered. Other communities are looking at what we call a hold harmless clause, and it goes to their legal saying that if something happens and it's up to that individual to cover their own insurance.*
5. *All-Hazards Plan Review Committee – Mr. Richard Hildreth, Chairperson*
   1. *Richard Hildreth with the DHS&EM. I am the all hazard Plan review Committee chair, and I think the report out to the SERC on this, report is the primary mission so far of the, all hazards plan review committee is to review, the scripts that are produced within House within the DHS&EM, there's an audience of, division participants from various state departments that provide, input to those reports, reported for a number of years that we don't receive any jurisdictional EOPs or evacuation plans.*
   2. *We made a request for a number of years to receive plans. And we've in the last seven years that have been reporting this activity, the only, EOP we've received to date has been from the city of Kenai a number of years ago. So this activity's primary mission only is to do the script review.*
   3. *So we announce every year we're open to receive plans for review as the committee is, chartered to, review it, but we don't receive any feedback. And so I think, to echo some of Jeff's concerns that this committee potentially is written in statute, but it doesn't perform its primary function because of lack of participation.*
6. *Training Committee – Mr. Jeff Lafferty, Chairperson*
   1. *Jeff Lafferty, preparedness program manager. Also chair of the training committee. Madam chairperson, committee members, if you've done your read ahead for the training committee itself, you'll see the recommendation that we placed there is to disband this committee. Reason being it is a committee in name only. As long as I have been here, which is coming up on ten years plus, the training committee hasn’t done much.*
   2. *DHS&EM has created training teams and constantly host trainings including the Integrated Preparedness Planning Meeting each year and therefore no longer need the training committee.*
7. *Disaster Search and Rescue Committee – Lt. Ben Endres, Chairperson*
   1. *N/A*
8. *Statewide Mutual Aid Compact – Casey Cook, Chairperson*
   1. *N/A*
9. New Business – **TAB 10**
10. Work Plan Committee update. – *Erin Leaders, Chairperson*
11. *Other State Agency and Ex-Officio Reports –* ***TAB 11***
12. *Informational Items* ***(provided only as reference material)*** *–* ***TAB 12***
13. *SERC Policies and Procedures Manual 2018*
    1. *Reviewing at next meeting*

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

1. *SERC Bylaws*
2. Public Comment – Five (5) minutes per speaker – **TAB 13**
3. None
4. Commission Member Closing Comments and Adjournment – **TAB 14**
5. Craig Christenson closing comments include
   1. Reiterated that Bryan Fisher gave a detailed report and eyes are looking at 2027 time frame regarding China moving on Taiwan.
   2. Reiterated that preparedness for upcoming pending disasters.
6. Casey Cook closing comments include
   1. Disappointed in the number of attendees / representatives in the meeting.
7. Katherine Keith closing comments include
   1. Voicing similar concerns about funding and lack of funding available.
   2. Reiterating that communication and coordination between departments and cities and boroughs is very important.