

STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMISSION

SERC

April 03, 2026

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STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMISSION MEETING (SERC)

BUSINESS MEETING
APRIL 3, 2026

ATTENDEES

- Dave Reilly
- Sandra Moller
- Adam Weinert
- Ben Endres
- Katherine Keith
- George Vikalis
- Casey Cook
- Dave Donely
- Deena Bishop
- Torri Huelskoetter
- Megan Kohler - Co-chair
- Bryan Fisher - Co-chair
- Teresa Melville

- Erin Leaders
- Amanda Loach

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 SERC Co-Chair Bryan Fisher called the meeting to order at
3 1:00 p.m.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm going to
5 call this meeting of the Alaska State Emergency Response
6 Commission to order. It's Friday, April 3rd, 1:00 o'clock.
7 Thank you all for being here. Before we go into introductions,
8 I'm going to turn it over to the SERC coordinator Dave Riley
9 for roll call and administrative announcements. Dave.

10 ROLL CALL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

11 MR. RILEY: Good afternoon. Dave Riley, DHS&EM SERC
12 coordinator. We're going to do a roll call. If you could just
13 answer with your last name so we can just mark -- make sure we
14 mark you down for the right spot. DMVA.

15 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Brian Fisher here.

16 MR. RILEY: DEC?

17 CO-CHAIR KOHLER: Meg Kohler here.

18 MR. RILEY: Commerce.

19 MS. MOLLER: Sandra Moller here.

20 MR. RILEY: DFG? Health? Labor?

21 MR. WEINERT: Adam Weinert. Here.

22 MR. RILEY: DNR? DPS, we have Ben Endres on virtual.

23 DOT?

24 MS. KEITH: Katherine Keith.

25 MR. RILEY: Department of Administration?

1 MR. DONELY: Dave Donely.

2 MR. RILEY: Urban LEPC?

3 MR. VIKALIS: George Vikalis.

4 MR. RILEY: Urban LEPC second seat? Rural LEPC? Second
5 LEPC, rural LEPC is vacant as well. Local government.

6 MR. COOK: Casey Cook.

7 MR. RILEY: Second local government? Public at large is
8 actually on Zoom with Ben Knowles. Zoom function, we will not
9 be able to hear you. I am monitoring the chat box. If you
10 have anything to add, I can add it for you. We have a quorum.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any administrative announcements?

12 MR. RILEY: No.

13 QUORUM DETERMINATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

14 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Dave. Good afternoon,
15 everybody. I'm Bryan Fisher. I am -- my day job is as the
16 director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency
17 Management, and I am the Department of Military and Veteran
18 Affairs designee to co-chair of the commission. Thank you all
19 for being here. I sent this to most of you as you walked in
20 the room. It's a sunny Friday afternoon, so Director Kohler
21 and I will plan to make an efficient meeting for all of you.

22 A lot has been happening throughout the year. I'll just
23 say for now, thank you to each and every one of your agencies
24 and your teams for all of the support that you've provided
25 statewide, for all of the disaster response that we've done

1 this last year. I definitely appreciate all of you working
2 with us back in October to postpone that meeting just because
3 of the sheer pace of activity that we all were underway,
4 particularly the state and federal agencies, supporting the
5 response to the storm that hit the Northwest Arctic Borough and
6 then the remnant of Typhoon Halong.

7 It has -- there is no end in sight to that. That work is
8 still ongoing. Talk a little bit more about that later, but I
9 did want to take the chance to thank each and every one of you
10 for all of the support as we're trying to take care of our
11 neighbors that have experienced, in my estimation, and you guys
12 know I've been doing this for a long time, one of the worst
13 disasters that the state has faced since statehood. So thank
14 you for all of that support.

15 Just a couple of announcements. I'm going to have a
16 stickler for this. If you are going to come off of the silent
17 there and get on the microphone, please announce your name and
18 the agency or the seat that you represent on the commission for
19 our recorder. We need those to help make the minutes for the
20 next meeting or the minutes for this meeting accurate. So if
21 you don't say your name and who you're representing, I'm going
22 to call you on that.

23 We do have a number of business items for the commission
24 today that we're going to be asking for some motions to take
25 some votes on, not specifically called out in the agenda, but

1 we do have -- I think many of you that have been a member of
2 the commission for the last number of years know we've been
3 working very hard on updating this commission's bylaws and
4 policies and procedures. That is in the agenda. We have a
5 spot where we'll bring that up when we talk to our work plan
6 committee.

7 But if you are coming off to make a motion or a second or
8 any of that, please make sure to turn your microphone on. When
9 it's red, it's on. Speak into the microphone and state your
10 name and who you're representing and then go on with your, your
11 motion or your comments or anything. So, for that, I'm going
12 to -- I'll stop with my welcoming comments and turn it over to
13 our co-chair, Director Kohler from the Department of
14 Environmental Conservation.

15 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

16 CO-CHAIR KOHLER: Thanks, Director Fisher. Megan Kohler,
17 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. My day job is
18 admin services, director for the department. I am the SERC co-
19 chair designee for the department. I also want to say thank
20 you to everyone in the room assisting with the disasters this
21 year and prior years for DEC Halong and the storms continue to
22 be a large lift, a large amount of work that we're engaging
23 with the communities.

24 You'll hear more from SPAR, Spill Prevention and Response,
25 but also want to note that a huge amount of work went and is

1 continuing to go through and is getting ready for spring work
2 season for debris, pet care, water and wastewater, and all of
3 the other food safety as well. So we'll be out there and
4 getting ready for that. As well as kind of working through all
5 of the water and wastewater utility disruptions throughout the
6 year, working with our really fantastic partners and the
7 network that we have to support wastewater and water utilities
8 across the state, particularly in our rural regions. So that's
9 a little -- that's very SERC flavored.

10 Outside of the SERC flavored stuff, we're also working
11 through our administrative order 360 effort. There's a, I
12 believe a link in our brief, but we're excited about that.
13 It's been a really large lift for review of all of our
14 regulations, and kind of working towards efficiencies there.
15 So also an exciting effort that we invite folks to take a look
16 at the website and engage with. So with that, thank you,
17 Bryan. That's all I have.

18 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, Director Kohler. And I'll
19 just let you guys know, we did hear from, I'm sure you guys are
20 going to assume this, but our -- a couple of our ex-official
21 members that are under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
22 send their regrets. They are not allowed to be here because
23 the shutdown, the lack of funding for the Department of
24 Homeland Security. So the United States Coast Guard and the
25 Federal Emergency Management Agency both wish they could be

1 here for our meeting this week, but they're not allowed
2 because of the shutdown and they're all furloughed.

3 So with that, we'll move on. There was a printed copy of
4 the agenda. If you didn't grab one, our team can go grab -- go
5 out and grab one on the table for you there. But next we'd
6 like to move to Item 3, approval and changes to the agenda.
7 So, I will entertain a motion to accept the agenda as
8 presented.

9 APPROVAL AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

10 MR. VIKALIS: So, moved. Vikalis.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Do we have a second?

12 MR. COOK: Second. Cook.

13 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you. Any changes, additions?
14 Director Moller.

15 MS. MOLLER: Sandra with Commerce. I'm -- it's more of a
16 question, I believe. I'm very interested and concerned about
17 the LEPCs, and I looked, we haven't had a strategic plan, a
18 planning session since I think '96, a while back, but I wanted
19 to bring that up as a concern and didn't know if it needed a
20 subject on the agenda specifically, but I wanted to raise that
21 as a concern. Thank you.

22 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Yes, thanks for that. So we do have on,
23 and it'll be in Section 8, Tab 8. The local emergency planning
24 committee association is going to provide a report, so the co-
25 chairs of that association are going to come forward and talk

1 to us. We do have a number of written reports from the
2 committees, individual committees, listed under Tab 9, I
3 believe, that were submitted prior to the meeting. But the
4 association is going to come up and talk to us about what they
5 have been doing in terms of planning and some conversation
6 around some recommendations that they have. There's lots of
7 things going on. We'll save it till that point, but there's
8 some funding stuff that's happening down in Juneau and all. So
9 we'll give them an opportunity (Indiscernible - simultaneous
10 speech).

11 MS. MOLLER: And I appreciate that. This is Sandra again
12 with Commerce. I think it would be important for us to, as the
13 commission, think about a strategic planning session as well
14 because reviewing the mission and the bylaws, I think it's
15 really important that we -- all -- you know, we've got a lot to
16 work on and I think as we go forward, we're going to need and
17 want a stronger local government -- local LEPC presence. So I
18 was hoping we could have a discussion at what the commission
19 would do. And I do look forward to the reports from the LEPC.

20 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Yes. Thank you for that. And we will
21 under the item to talk to the commission's work plan committee.
22 We'll have further discussions about that, so thank you. Any
23 other changes, recommendations for the agenda? All in favor,
24 signify by saying aye.

25 BOARD: Aye.

1 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. The agenda is
2 approved.

3 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Next, Item 4, approval of the previous
5 meeting minutes. Those were also provided in the read ahead
6 materials for everyone. Did we have copies of those as well?
7 There was a printed copy of the last commission's meeting
8 minutes as well on the check-in table out front. So I will
9 entertain a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes.

10 MR. VIKALIS: So moved. Vikalis.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Second?

12 MS. MOLLER: Sandra. Commerce.

13 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you. Any discussion, any
14 additions, changes to the minutes? Sandra?

15 MS. MOLLER: Yeah. Sandra again with Commerce. And
16 reviewing the minutes, I do appreciate it. It felt like they
17 were a little like a type recording. I'm used to minutes that
18 are reporting actions and stuff, so I'm not sure if that's a
19 change or is that how the minutes are going to be in the
20 future?

21 CO-CHAIR FISHER: No, I do appreciate that. This is
22 Bryan. We had changed our vendors that were providing that
23 support to us from some previous vendors that we have. For the
24 future minutes going forward, we'll take the recorded minutes
25 or the recording of this meeting that we're going to get and

1 put it into meeting minute format that we're all accustomed to
2 seeing. So that's definitely going to happen for this -- the
3 minutes from this meeting. So I appreciate that. Any other
4 changes or additions to the previous meeting minutes? All in
5 favor of the motion to approve the previous meeting minutes
6 signify by saying aye?

7 BOARD: Aye.

8 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. The minutes
9 are approved.

10 PUBLIC COMMENT

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Moving right along into public comment.
12 We do have the opportunity to provide public comment to the
13 commission. Were there anybody's -- did anybody sign up for
14 public comment at the check-in table? No. We have one
15 opportunity for anybody in the room that wants to present for
16 up to five minutes public comment. Hello, ma'am.

17 MS. BISHOP: Hi, this -- my name is Deana Bishop. I'm the
18 Commissioner of Education for the Department of Education and
19 Development. And for correction of this minute, I walked in a
20 little bit late, but wanted to share that I am present.

21 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Commissioner. And thank you for
22 all your partnership in the response to Halong. Moving on to
23 Item number 6 (sic), the consent agenda.

24 CONSENT AGENDA

25 CO-CHAIR FISHER: I'll entertain a motion to approve the

1 consent agenda as provided in Tab 5 of the commission's
2 paperwork.

3 MR. VIKALIS: So moved. Vikalis.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Second?

5 MS. KEITH: Second. Keith.

6 CONSENT AGENDA

7 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you. Any discussion? And I did
8 just for purposes, because we're sending all this stuff
9 electronically, this -- the consent agenda for this meeting, we
10 did have a number of LEPC appointments transmitted to the
11 commission for Nome, Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula Borough. The
12 next meeting date for the commission is in the consent agenda,
13 that would be October 16th of this year, and it will be a
14 virtual meeting.

15 We did receive a volunteer to join the work plan committee
16 representing the Local Emergency Planning Committee
17 Association, Kate Janowski from Fairbanks. And we have a
18 recommendation for a new chair for the All-Hazards Plan Review
19 Committee, excuse me, and that happens to be our SERC
20 Coordinator, David Riley. So that is the entirety of the
21 consent agenda. Any discussion? All those in favor of
22 approving the consent agenda signify by saying aye.

23 BOARD: Aye.

24 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. We are moving
25 right along through here. Thank you, everybody.

1 STATE AGENCY REPORTS

2 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Now we're on Section 7, state agency
3 reports. I'm going to stay at the front of the table here. My
4 deputy director for the Division of Homeland Security and
5 Emergency Management, Tiffany Peltier, couldn't be here today
6 due to some medical issues, so I'll provide an update from our
7 division.

8 Obviously, we did not meet together in October because of
9 the response to the Typhoon Halong remnant and the other storms
10 that happened there. So as usual, the department and our
11 division has been extremely busy since last spring. There has
12 been -- I think we're -- right now we're at an average of
13 thirteen declared disasters in the state yearly. That's more
14 than one a month. That pace does not look like it's going to
15 be slowing down. So our division has been fully engaged in
16 response to many disasters throughout the state, whether it's
17 spring flooding, wildfire winter utility disruptions, the
18 disasters that have been declared by Governor Dunleavy
19 continue, I'll just characterize it as, at the same pace that
20 we've seen over the last number of years.

21 The storm that impacted starting in the Northwest Arctic
22 Borough in Kotzebue and then the remnant of Typhoon Halong that
23 impacted Southwest Alaska, like I mentioned earlier is, in my
24 thirty, almost thirty-two years of doing this is one of the
25 most significant disasters that this state has faced. Today,

1 we still have a number of households and almost 100
2 individuals from those households that are still in hotels in
3 Anchorage here in non-congregate sheltering.

4 I think we're not going to go into an in-depth thing on
5 the response to that disaster at this meeting. My agency will
6 be contracting to have -- get a vendor on board to do a full
7 statewide after-action report for all of the activities from
8 the response once the storms made landfall to date. So that
9 will be forthcoming. We haven't been able to do that yet just
10 because we're still in the throes of providing mass care
11 services to our -- the displaced survivors from that disaster.

12 I think you all are aware, you've seen the photos. We
13 tend to share one particularly poignant photo of a C-17, one of
14 our Alaska Air National Guard C-17s, full of folks on the floor
15 being evacuated. And I've shared that photo around the
16 country, and everybody immediately thinks that that is a
17 picture from the withdrawal from Afghanistan. It's clearly
18 not. That's our friends and neighbors, those are Alaskans that
19 were displaced and had to be evacuated from Southwest Alaska,
20 the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. In particular, the communities of
21 Kipnuk and Kwigillingok have been catastrophically impacted by
22 that disaster. The way I've characterized this is the response
23 to the Typhoon Merbach remnant in 2022 was larger in mileage
24 and area impacted, but this response to the disaster in October
25 is much more acute and much more catastrophic than what we saw

1 a couple of years ago on the west coast and the northwest
2 coast of Alaska.

3 The tribal councils for both of those particular
4 communities had passed resolutions following the storm
5 requesting the members of those tribes and the residents of
6 those communities not return home. It's that catastrophic, the
7 impacts that are out there.

8 We did receive -- you know, we received a federal disaster
9 declaration for that from the president, so we have been
10 working since that time directly with FEMA. Like I said, FEMA
11 couldn't be here today. The folks that are deployed to support
12 the recovery in response to that disaster, it's known as
13 DR4893, that's the federal disaster number. Here, they are
14 working. They're not impacted by the furlough. So just a
15 couple blocks down the road is the FEMA joint field office.
16 We're -- currently my third job, I guess, is serving as the
17 state coordinating officer for that disaster.

18 We did receive that. We are still waiting to hear on a
19 couple of real significant decision points from the federal
20 government on the response to that disaster. One is, and it
21 was in the news, Governor Dunleavy has appealed the president's
22 denial of his request for an adjustment to the federal cost
23 share for that. He initially requested hundred percent federal
24 funding and the president denied that. So we submitted -- the
25 governor submitted appeal in December requesting ninety percent

1 federal, ten percent state or non-federal share for the
2 response to that disaster, and we are waiting to hear back from
3 the president on that.

4 The other piece of that that we are waiting to hear from,
5 and it's going to impact lots of members of the commission and
6 the agencies that are represented here on the commission is a
7 request for what's called permanent housing construction
8 authority. That's an authority that FEMA has in the Stafford
9 Act, the federal law over disasters.

10 If we get a favorable decision that they're going to
11 invoke that authority, we're going to be able to run the gamut
12 from funding above what's normally allowed from FEMA's
13 individual assistance program, which is \$44,800 to help
14 somebody repair or replace their home. They'll be able to
15 provide funding over and above that, all the way up to building
16 new homes, complete, you know, hundred percent new home
17 construction for those homes that have been destroyed in the
18 impact area.

19 So pretty significant if that happens. If it doesn't, all
20 of us have been working throughout the winter with our
21 partners, with the Alaska -- the Association of Village Council
22 Presidents, with the AVCP Regional Housing Authority, rural
23 cap, housing and urban development, Bureau of Indian Affairs,
24 to come up with plans to try to pull resources across the
25 federal inter -- interagency, working with us state partners

1 and our tribal partners to come up with plans on how we're
2 going to be able to address that housing crisis that we have in
3 the region.

4 We are looking at roughly 350 households that need above
5 and beyond that \$44,000 that's available today. It's pretty
6 significant. So, you know, we're talking about hundreds of
7 millions of dollars just for the potential housing solution.
8 We are also working with those communities.

9 If you didn't see in the news recently, the village of
10 Kipnuk had taken a vote. The tribal council had taken a poll
11 of all the adult members of that tribe and they, to a very
12 large degree, 93 percent plus have voted to relocate the entire
13 community. So that's a pretty significant effort. I know
14 Director Moller and her team can talk about how complex it is
15 to relocate an entire community. You know, our real experience
16 with that is the move from Newtok to Mertarvik.

17 Our programs and FEMA's programs, my division's programs
18 and FEMA's programs don't relocate in entire communities, but
19 we are making plans and working hard and Deputy Commissioner
20 Keith's team at DOT and PF and their contractors today and all
21 winter have been making immediate repairs to infrastructure in
22 those communities and the others impacted to make that
23 infrastructure more resilient, to buy time for that community
24 to figure out all of the steps necessary to do whole community
25 relocation. So very complicated.

1 In the interim, there has been amazing support by all of
2 you and a number of other entities. So I do want to just shout
3 out and thank directly the Municipality of Anchorage, the
4 University of Alaska Anchorage. They immediately and with very
5 little notice were able to stand up shelters here in Anchorage
6 as we facilitated those evacuations. The United States Coast
7 Guard, the Alaska Army and Air National Guard, the Department
8 of Public Safety, the rescues that occurred during that storm
9 were nothing short of heroic. And the way I'll characterize
10 that, you know, we all remember seeing pictures of hoists,
11 helicopters with hoists rescuing people from rooftops in
12 Hurricane Katrina. Well, picture that, and then picture that
13 home floating out to the Bering Sea or floating up river. So
14 there was some incredible acts of heroism to rescue folks from
15 there.

16 And then the huge effort I talked about, evacuation and
17 taking care of those folks that are displaced to this day.
18 Most of the folks are in apartments and we're moving to get the
19 last -- the remaining households into apartments and out of the
20 hotel in the next couple of weeks.

21 But the municipality of Anchorage as a host city, if you
22 will, the University of Alaska and the Alaska Airlines Centre
23 with our partners, South Central Foundation, the Alaska Native
24 Tribal Health Consortium, all of the other entities, volunteer
25 organizations and nonprofits within the municipality, and it's

1 not just here, most of the folks came here, but it's really
2 statewide. A lot of folks went to Bethel, a lot of folks went
3 to Fairbanks, really stepped up to the plate to help our
4 friends and neighbors in that time of need. So I want to thank
5 them for that.

6 Commissioner Bishop and I have been doing just an
7 incredible amount of work with the school districts that were
8 impacted, the lower Kuskokwim and lower Yukon School Districts
9 primarily, and then directly with Dr. Bryan and the team at the
10 Anchorage School District. They opened their arms, they opened
11 their schools to make sure that there was a safe place for
12 learning to continue for the students that had been displaced
13 from their communities, brought their teachers in from the
14 schools to be able to continue some of that continuity. So
15 there has just been an incredible amount of work done by all of
16 you for the response to that one disaster that happened last
17 year and I -- and on behalf of Governor Dunleavy and General
18 Saxe, the adjunct general of the department I just want to say
19 thank you again for that.

20 A lot of changes in my organization. We're sixty-four
21 strong. We do have a number of vacancies. We're having some
22 significant changes in our leadership. I'm happy to announce
23 our SERC coordinator was recently hired -- promoted to be our
24 new planning program manager. My disaster assistant manager
25 unfortunately passed away in the middle of the response to

1 this, so we're looking to refill that position soon. But I
2 think that's kind of business normal for us that we have some
3 regular rotation through the staff there and we're trying to
4 hire new folks and get people trained up to continue all of
5 this work that we have.

6 Outside of that, there still continues to be uncertainty
7 with FEMA and National Emergency Management and the Federal
8 Emergency Management Agency itself. The president recently
9 issued an additional executive order extending the deadline for
10 the FEMA review council to submit their recommendations to him,
11 that's been extended to May 29th.

12 There's -- it's very, very dynamic and fluid. Obviously,
13 the department is shut down right now until Congress passes
14 either a continuing resolution or funding bill for DHS, which
15 severely impacts everybody. You all know TSA, FEMA, the Coast
16 Guard, the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency. And
17 just recently, the previous secretary of Homeland Security,
18 Kristi Noem was removed and there's a new secretary that was
19 confirmed a couple weeks ago, Markwayne Mullin, who was a
20 senator from Oklahoma and a member of the Cherokee Nation.
21 We're pretty confident that the president wanted to give the
22 new secretary some time to get his hands on that report before
23 it is presented up to the president for action.

24 Just recently, we were told this morning, as a matter of
25 fact, there was some really challenging issues for our division

1 and all of us to respond to these disasters. There was a
2 requirement in place from the previous secretary to review
3 every single contract or grant over \$100,000 personally before
4 it could be awarded. That really has put us in a pretty
5 significant bind. This morning we were told Secretary Mullin
6 has removed that requirement, so we are certainly hoping that
7 we can get back to kind of the normal way that FEMA has
8 operated in the past.

9 I think when we talked last year, they had -- the
10 president had just -- and FEMA had just cancelled some of the
11 preeminent grant programs that were available for us in terms
12 of both pre-and post-disaster mitigation. The big significant
13 one called Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities,
14 that grant was -- all the awarded projects were cancelled last
15 spring and they were not going to continue that program moving
16 forward.

17 Good news, lots of court orders that directed FEMA to
18 restart all of the programs that were cancelled last fall and
19 last week they just announced a notice of funding opportunity
20 for federal fiscal years 24 and 25. That program is back on.
21 Another \$1 billion is available across the country to support
22 pre-disaster mitigation activity. So I'm hopeful that we'll
23 continue to see FEMA get back to normal business once the
24 shutdown's over and like the post Katrina Emergency Management
25 Reform Act says, the DHS and the secretary should be hands off

1 for that agency because they're an independent agency housed
2 in DHS. So hopeful for that.

3 I don't think there's going to be a lot of movement on
4 anything else. There is a bill in Congress, HR 4669, the
5 Fixing Emergency Management for America Act, the FEMA Act. I
6 was at the -- on the hill a couple of weeks ago. Our
7 delegation and other members told me, there's not going to
8 likely be much action on that this year. It's midterm election
9 year, so we don't know that that Reform for FEMA is really
10 going to happen this year.

11 So I know that was a lot. Thank you for your indulgence.
12 There's been a lot going on, but again, thank you all for your
13 support for our division. The partnership with y'all, we can't
14 do anything alone, so everything that we're doing together as
15 partners to support our fellow neighbors is incredibly
16 important, so thanks for that.

17 And next we're going to hear from Spill Prevention and
18 Response Division. So Director Melville, I think is going to
19 come up and tell us what SPAR has been doing since we last met.

20 MS. MELVILLE: I am Teresa Melville. I'm the Division
21 Director for Spill Prevention and Response for the Department
22 of Environmental Conservation. I'm going to keep it kind of
23 short. So you guys have the read ahead packet, so you can go
24 ahead and do that.

25 Over the last year, our team has been very busy. We

1 helped with the Typhoon Halong response. We're averaging
2 about twelve drills a year, about twenty-four inspections
3 statewide, and then just really providing technical assistance
4 throughout the state as needed. We are working -- we have a
5 good collaboration going on with the state and federal agencies
6 on our area and regional planning efforts. The written brief
7 includes information about upcoming area meetings, which are
8 held in person and virtual. So those of you that want to join,
9 please do, because they will affect your communities, so that
10 you know what to expect, what's there. Please make sure you
11 guys join those.

12 We have some brochures that are sitting over here.
13 They're on our home heating oil tank program that we just
14 started this fiscal year. We have \$450,000 that was -- that we
15 appropriated out of our oil house fund to help residents be
16 able to respond to home heating oil tank spills as soon as they
17 happen versus just letting them happen and then not being able
18 to do anything because they didn't have the money to do it. So
19 they do need to respond to them within 48 hours, 24 to 48 hours
20 of the actual spill.

21 We will award them up to -- from 13 to \$17,000, depending
22 on where they're geographically located, because obviously off
23 the roadway is going to be a little bit harder to get to and a
24 little bit more expensive. So that has been a really huge
25 benefit that has come out of our division this year. We have

1 already, helped with over 15 spills. So -- and that just
2 started, this fiscal year, so that's been really big for our
3 team. And like I said, we do have the flyers over there, and
4 that's going to be my brief. So thank you, guys, very much.

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, Director. Any questions for
6 DEC's bar for us? Okay. Thank you, everybody.

7 LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE ASSOCIATION

8 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Next, Item 8 on the agenda, an update
9 from the Local Emergency Planning Committee Association. I
10 think you guys know we usually have these meetings at the end
11 of our annual emergency management conference. I do want to
12 take a chance to shout out, I think she's here, Michelle
13 Torres, on our staff at the division. I think she had a slide
14 up on day one when I did a keynote address that she's the queen
15 of preparedness, but I want to thank you, Michelle, for putting
16 on an outstanding conference this week for all of us. It's
17 always energizing to come to these meetings on Friday with the
18 association and with the commission after a whole week of
19 really awesome interaction with folks from around the state in
20 the emergency management field.

21 But now I'd like to bring up Brenda Ahlberg and Tom Vaden,
22 the co-chairs of the Local Emergency Planning Committee
23 Association to give us an update on their meeting and their
24 activities.

25 MR. VADEN: I'm Tom Vaden, co-chair of the Local Emergency

1 Planning Association.

2 MS. AHLBERG: Brenda Ahlberg, Kenai Peninsula Borough.

3 MR. VADEN: So we met this morning. You guys to get the
4 packet on our minutes and stuff, you know, it's fairly routine
5 stuff. We are still stressing the need for funding for the
6 LEPCs. And a thing to note this morning was all of the LEPCs
7 that were present representing the LEPCA, there was one that
8 wasn't funded, everybody else is funded by cities and had, you
9 know, tax space. The ones that don't have a tax space, they
10 weren't here.

11 So we wrote, we passed a message to you guys, you'll get
12 it in the mail, saying we were requesting that you would, you
13 know, talk to the SERC and your representatives about funding
14 for the LEPC. We also, this -- we've had three meetings since
15 the last meeting we had, not counting the formal meeting and
16 which we're doing like networking going, "What do we need to do
17 to get funding?" It's just not we -- you know, the LEPCA just
18 says, we can't show up every two -- you know, twice a year and
19 go, let's do something. We got to plan with this stuff and
20 work with this stuff all the time. It doesn't do us any good
21 to say, "Oh, have a meeting today," and go like, "We need money
22 from the legislatures, let's write a letter." Because the
23 legislature's almost over. By the time we got all the letters
24 done, it'd be over and not any good till next year.

25 We wrote letters to our legislators and included -- you

1 guys have got a copy in your packet. And a lot of man-hours
2 was put into that. A lot of various organizations wrote into
3 that requesting funding and in addition to requesting funding,
4 we're trying to educate our legislatures on what LEPCs do. I
5 mean, they don't have a clue. It's like, "Oh, I'm the LEPC, I
6 need money." And it's like, "Yes, everybody needs money." And
7 so it's like, this is our jobs to do this and we're looking
8 forward to the possibility the legislators are starting to
9 recognize what the LEPCs do.

10 The House Finance Committee put an amendment in for --
11 added an amendment for \$300,000 for support of the LEPCs. And
12 I know we're a long way from, you know, getting approved
13 anywhere, you know, going through that whole funding process,
14 but at least we're getting legislators to start thinking about
15 what LEPCs do. And if you look at the people that are not
16 funded as LEPCs, it's -- you know, and you look at the ones
17 where in this Halong disaster, there's not a LEPC in the
18 southwest, period. And there -- I don't even -- I don't know
19 if there's still one in Kotzebue and they've been hammered two
20 years in a row.

21 And so we're trying to do a study on, you know, how
22 effective is preparedness versus response and recovery. You
23 know, people -- if people have a plan to go someplace safe,
24 they will know to do this and while there might be more damage,
25 you don't have people panicking and being injured. So we're

1 working on that.

2 We're also -- we're recommending, or we recommended to the
3 SERC and since you guys are responsible for the unincorporated
4 boroughs, it's your job through Department of Homeland Security
5 and Emergency Management to provide all the emergency
6 management stuff for those unorganized boroughs.

7 So we're recommending to you and Department of Homeland
8 Security and Emergency Management that they assign one
9 individual per unincorporated area, so then they can be in
10 contact with the unincorporated area on a very routine basis
11 and say, "Hey, I'm here, this is what we're doing. My name's
12 Bob. You can do it, you know, twice a month telephonically,
13 and once they get to know you, then you know who to contact and
14 you know you have a working relationship." So when someone
15 calls and says, "What do I do?" And they went like, "Okay, I
16 can talk you through this procedure of what you do," instead of
17 going like, "Well, maybe you should go to this place or maybe
18 you should go to this place because there's a lot of, you know,
19 people kind of guessing on where you go and what you do." I
20 don't have anything else. Brenda?

21 MS. AHLBERG: So the letters that we are referencing,
22 there are some hard copies here for those who would like to see
23 them. We'll ask Ms. Kim to place them on the end of the table
24 for those who would like. Also of note today, we had the
25 Division of Home -- excuse me, the Division of Forestry and

1 Fire Protection present to us the Ready, Set, Go program as it
2 aligns to unified messaging that both the Alaska Emergency
3 Managers Association and this Division of Homeland Security,
4 Emergency Management, Fire Marshals Association, Fire Chiefs
5 Association, and many others who came to agreement in the use
6 of colors for operational maps.

7 Fast forward and we have Senate Bill 192 that has this
8 language now potentially going to be in statute, which includes
9 the Alaska Disaster Statute that states that anyone who has an
10 evacuation plan must use this language, so kind of a novel idea
11 to have unified messaging when it comes to asking folks to
12 evacuate out of harm's way.

13 They did a great job not only in recognizing the work
14 that's being done collaboratively amongst the state departments
15 and the association, but also with the products that are coming
16 out of it for this season to include common operating picture
17 amongst GIS platforms to show where within an impacted area
18 evacuation zones are and how they're indicated by the colors
19 that represent the different levels of evacuation. So great
20 work that's being done, I think it's going to be nice as we
21 roll into fire season.

22 The other part of those -- of this topic included how can
23 we incorporate this unified messaging from an all-hazards
24 perspective, depending on the type of evacuation, not just
25 wildfire. So that was a good portion, good conversation as

1 well, in addition to what Tom has provided to you today, and
2 we'll stand for any questions you might have.

3 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks for that. Just a couple of
4 comments. We are -- my agency is working directly with Mr.
5 Aden's discussion about representation and connection with the
6 folks in unincorporated areas, largely in the unorganized
7 borough, so we appreciate that.

8 I wanted to take a chance to personally thank Brenda
9 Ahlberg for her work on SB 192. She was really the driving
10 force on that. Got a sponsor from her district and that's
11 moving forward. If you're interested in that, my agency does
12 have a zero-dollar fiscal note against that bill. It's not
13 going to cost us anything to implement that if the bill does
14 pass. There is a hearing on April 10th, 3:30. The Senate
15 Resources Committee is the next committee of referral that's
16 going to be looking at that bill. We certainly support it.

17 We have all agreed, like Brenda said, to adopt those
18 colors, the Ready, Set, Go, the whole program prior to that.
19 And this is -- we all feel it's important to codify that in our
20 planning statutes under Title 26, Chapter 23 to make sure that
21 it's clear and consistent for all purposes, not just a wildland
22 fire thing. It's for evacuations for any threat or hazard that
23 we have out there. So I just wanted to thank you myself for
24 all your work championing that piece of legislation for all of
25 us here in Alaska. Any questions for Brenda or Tom from the

1 LEPC Association? Director Moller.

2 MS. MOLLER: Yes. Hi, Sandra from Commerce. Excuse me,
3 maybe it's for you, but I'm wondering they -- if there's a
4 letter request to the SERC and we only meet twice a year, and
5 you said that you're working with agencies on funding and to
6 their request. I'm just wondering how is the SERC involved
7 with ensuring that kind of gets done? Because I agree with Mr.
8 Vaden on, we only meet a couple times a year, and I think we
9 need to -- I don't know if we need to have quarterly meetings
10 or ways to engage more frequently.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks for that, Director. Bryan
12 Fisher. The co-chairs of the commission, Director Kohler and I
13 through Mr. Riley, the SERC Coordinator, we are the ones that
14 are in receipt of those letters as they come in. And I do want
15 to say thanks to every single Local Emergency Planning
16 Committee that wrote a letter. Many of them weren't addressed
17 directly to the commission. They were addressed to
18 legislators, but they shared every single one of those as they
19 were drafted directly with Director Kohler and I, through Dave
20 for that.

21 And I will just tell you, our department's position on
22 that is that we have -- and as I have always had a results
23 delivery unit, budget structure, but we have always had a spot
24 in the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs budget to be
25 able to accept that funding from the legislature or a federal

1 agency if that were to happen. And we still retain the
2 methodology and the scoring rubric that we agreed upon with Mr.
3 Vikalis and the SERC Finance Committee to be able to disperse
4 those funds to our committees, if the funding was made
5 available.

6 Mr. Vaden said -- you guys know what it is. I'm going to
7 get it wrong. HB 263 is the operating budget bill for state
8 fiscal year 27. And then like Tom mentioned, there was an
9 amendment in house finance just a couple of days ago that
10 reinstated that \$300,000. For those of you who haven't been
11 a member of the commission for a long time, that was the
12 baseline funding. It was all general fund dollars that we
13 received as an appropriation from the legislature in order to
14 fund the activities of all of the active Local Emergency
15 Planning Committees across the state. That funding went away
16 in 2019, and the committees have been -- like Tom said, some of
17 them are struggling if they don't have a revenue base. They
18 haven't been able to get much or any work done because they
19 lost that funding.

20 We've had lots of discussions over the last number of
21 years about the purpose, the bare bones purposes of Local
22 Emergency Planning Committees with the EPA laws and the
23 Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act, the Alaska
24 statutes in 26.23 on what they're supposed to do. And for the
25 last six, almost seven years now, it's become an unfunded

1 mandate from both the state and the federal government.

2 So, you know, we're -- I think we're encouraged that, just
3 like the association just testified that, the legislature is
4 hearing from them now. I think it has been a pretty unified
5 message from the committees that wrote individual letters to
6 our legislators on trying to restore that funding. We are --
7 my agency, the department is ready to go if that funding makes
8 it through the entire process. You know, at the end of the
9 day, once the budget bill is signed into law, whenever that
10 happens, we are ready to go and restore that program and get
11 notice awards out and all.

12 And again, I think we did send out copies of the letters
13 in the read ahead packet. So they came out in that format
14 because we're only meeting twice a year now. You know, we're
15 always happy if you want to have a conversation after that. I
16 think Director Kohler and I'd be happy to have interim
17 conversations, if you will, because we do only meet twice a
18 year now. So there's potential now. I think this is as far as
19 it's gotten in the last six or seven years that we've been
20 discussing this topic, so,.....

21 MS. MOLLER: One other question is, I noticed in the
22 reports, the people that were participating and not
23 participating at the Bethel area, which is obviously a high-
24 risk area, does not have an LEPC, and I'm -- I also know that
25 AVCP, Village Council Presidents, has effort going. Is there a

1 way or would it make sense for them to be the LEPC or is that
2 -- you're smiling, so it must be in the works.

3 CO-CHAIR FISHER: No, thank you. Director Kohler -- Brian
4 Fisher here again. We have been having that conversation with
5 the region for a couple decades actually. So there's an
6 emergency planning district in the area, but no functioning
7 committee. I would say, and actually Mr. Vaden can probably
8 speak to this, it's a similar situation in the Norton Sound
9 area. There is a local emergency planning committee for Nome,
10 not for the Kawerak region, right? The entire Norton Sound
11 area. We had reached out, our SERC and LEPC team has --
12 reached out, you know, I would say as far back as fifteen years
13 ago, to talk to regional leaders in the YK Delta on what -- who
14 could be the entity that would be the sponsor for that
15 committee to represent all of the communities in the region,
16 whether it's the AVCP region itself, that boundary or another
17 boundary for the district there.

18 A lot of -- I'll just -- I'll characterize it as fits and
19 starts, especially since there's no funding available now. So
20 -- but we have -- I mean, we've been to Bethel directly, you
21 know, in person a number of times to meet with the Association
22 of Village Council Presidents, the school districts, Yukon-
23 Kuskokwim Health Corporation, trying to find an entity that
24 could perform that service and organize the committee for that
25 planning district. So those conversations will continue. I'll

1 say \$300,000. This is what it is. That was the baseline
2 funding for, I don't remember, ten, fifteen years, something
3 like that.

4 MR. VIKALIS: Yes.

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Yes. You know, and those were 15-year
6 ago dollars. So, I mean, it's a start here, but whether or not
7 that funding comes, we will still -- our department will be
8 available along with DEC to support the efforts to form a
9 committee, get them to establish bylaws, all the things that a
10 local emergency planning committee has to do under the statute.
11 So we've definitely had lots of conversations with AVCP

12 MS. MOLLER: One more, honest. This is Sandra with
13 Commerce again. It reminds me of the work we're doing with the
14 outdoors because the state used to support, maybe it was 150 or
15 maybe 75,000 to operate the economic development orders. And
16 as that evolved and the state stopped funding them, they went
17 and found other sources with U.S. EDA. And I don't know if
18 there's a similar type thing that LEPCs can do maybe with FEMA
19 once FEMA gets rerouted and stuff. But definitely support more
20 local engagement as we can support that.

21 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Yes. No, thanks for those comments.
22 There is a program under FEMA called IRC, Interagency Recovery
23 Coordination. It's a long-term process to identify unmet needs
24 and tie it to potential funding sources past a disaster once we
25 get out of the here and now recovery piece. That could be a

1 part of that.

2 And I did want to just take a little bit of privilege here
3 to go back and talk about AVCP. Prior to -- you know, the
4 timing was what it was. But prior to this fall, AVCP as an
5 entity didn't have an emergency management program. They had
6 received some resiliency grants through the Alaska Native
7 Tribal Health Consortium just prior to the storms, and had
8 hired their first ever emergency managers and then the storm
9 happened. So, they were definitely in trial by fire.

10 Amy Hendricks and Natasha, the two fellows that are
11 working for AVCP to do that, did unbelievably incredible work.
12 Have been doing this for a long time. Having AVCP at the
13 table, leading the efforts on behalf of their compacted tribes
14 in the region to respond to this disaster, nothing short of
15 incredible.

16 We were pleased to be able to support AVCP in deploying
17 other tribal emergency management capacity in the state.
18 Primarily, we started with the Central Council of Tlingit &
19 Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, the Tlingit & Haida Tribe in
20 Juneau, who has a fairly mature tribal emergency management
21 program. I was able to support the deployment of them to help
22 build capacity at AVCP for their fledgling emergency management
23 program and help provide advice and counsel adjusted in the
24 response and recovery to Typhoon Halong.

25 The Inupiat community of the Arctic Slope has a pretty

1 robust tribal emergency management program. Still, again,
2 fledgling for the most part. But we certainly want to continue
3 to support from our department and I would say from the
4 commission here as well, the continued growth of those
5 partnerships with regional tribal health consortiums or the
6 nonprofit consortiums and entities that are out there to
7 develop that capacity. There's a great opportunity for us to
8 support that. And a lot of these entities just like AVCP is,
9 are in the unorganized borough. So for lack of having a formal
10 government structure, those are the folks that we continue to
11 partner with from our department to move the dime forward on in
12 terms of emergency management and disaster response and
13 recovery. So thank you for that, Director. Anybody, any other
14 questions?

15 MS. KEITH: Yes, thanks.

16 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Deputy Commissioner Keith.

17 MS. KEITH: Yes. Katherine Keith. So I have a couple
18 questions to follow-up. Thanks for your testimony. But you
19 know, the thing about mandates is that they don't care so much
20 about funding, funded or not. There's still mandates. And
21 this commission is still federally required to ensure that
22 these LEPCs are in compliance, which means active emergency
23 plans among other things. So my question is on funding, what
24 you're seeing on average. When you look at each of these areas
25 that are, you know, inactive right now, each of the LEPCs, what

1 would you think it would take to get them back into compliance
2 or to support them so that they could be inactive entity?

3 MR. VADEN: Tom in Nome. We are doing a lot of what the
4 laps are supposed to do with volunteers.

5 MS. KEITH: Okay.

6 MR. VADEN: We're probably the only LEPC that is not
7 funded. Okay. We do get a little bit of money from things.
8 Our biggest one to try to get compliance is the Tier II
9 reporting. People don't want to do it. So this year we
10 started saying, okay, do your Tier 2 reporting, and by the way,
11 we're going to write your underwriters and say, if you haven't
12 complied with the federal law, then probably your underwriters'
13 insurance don't have to pay.

14 You know, because they're just told be flat out, takes too
15 long to do it. I'm not going to do it. But for the most part,
16 like I said, we're not funded. We're about thirty-two members,
17 and most of us have been around for, since dirt. And you know,
18 we work really well together. I think we're very fortunate.
19 We've had a little bit of money from grants to do some stuff,
20 but not a lot. And like a newspaper ad would -- you know, two
21 newspaper ads would pretty much kill our budget, so we can't
22 afford that. Any other question?

23 MS. KEITH: Yes. How many of the LEPC emergency plans are
24 current, if you know that? Within a year?

25 MR. VADEN: In the LEPC meeting today.....

1 MS. KEITH: Yes.

2 MR. VADEN:a lot of people are working on it.

3 CO-CHAIR FISHER: (Indiscernible - away from the mic)

4 MR. VADEN: In the LEPCA meeting today, a lot of the
5 organizations are saying, we're working on our EOP. The
6 process for that is they're good for so long, and then they're
7 going like, I need to update it. But EOPs do not expire. So,
8 you know, you're still pretty good. What we worry about is the
9 hazard mitigation plans because if your hazard mitigation plan
10 expires and there's a disaster, you don't get paid. You know,
11 it's like, oh, you don't have a hazard mitigation plan. FEMA
12 won't come in. And I was told the state won't come in. So
13 we're just going like, you know, let's work on getting your
14 hazard mitigation plans done.

15 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks Tom and Deputy Commissioner.
16 I'll just add a little bit to that. We have twenty-one
17 emergency planning districts. Of those twenty-one districts,
18 there are only nine truly active committees still going on.
19 And the association and the individual committees have shared a
20 lot of information with each other about how they might be able
21 to sustain the work that they do without- with the absence of
22 that funding that has come. The municipality of Anchorage does
23 have a tax because they can, you know, unify home rural
24 municipality on.

25 Reporting facilities under the Tier 2 program that help

1 sustain some of their activities. The Aleutian-Pribilof
2 Island Local Emergency Planning Committee had come up with the
3 incorporation, a nonprofit -- incorporated as a separate
4 nonprofit to find a funding mechanism to receive grants. So I
5 would say the committees have done everything they can to try
6 to find alternative funding sources for that to happen.

7 And just like Tom said, emergency response plans or
8 emergency operations plans, small community emergency response
9 plans, there are no requirements for renewal for those. There
10 are a number of other ones that have that regulatory
11 requirement, whether it's bill prevention plans or contingency
12 plans. Hazard mitigation plans through FEMA have a regulatory,
13 a federal regulatory requirement for being updated every five
14 years. Those plans aren't owned by the committees themselves.
15 They're usually owned by the jurisdiction within the committee
16 or within the district and the committees provide advice on the
17 development of those plans. But that is another --

18 I would say that as we've had these discussions with the
19 lack of funding over the last six or seven years, the bare bone
20 minimum requirements for a committee under the Emergency
21 Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act is that Tier II
22 reporting the facilities that have certain thresholds of
23 extremely hazardous substances and all. So that work continues
24 to happen. And that is a separate regulatory process then than
25 a plan and its currency and all. The Department of

1 Environmental Conservation provides all of that support. And
2 we finally have, you know, more modern technology for people to
3 be able to submit the reporting requirements under those
4 regulations electronically. So that is still continuing to
5 happen.

6 But the other -- the additional activities, including
7 outreach and public education, the support on a volunteer basis
8 now to help do those plan reviews is happening with those
9 active committees. But in other places, they just -- without
10 funding, they're not able to continue to form. And we hear it
11 all the time. They heard it this morning. We get updates from
12 committees that they're reforming. They're still trying to get
13 membership to volunteer to participate in the committees and
14 all. So it's a kind of a never-ending effort for us to try to
15 continue to support that activity that's out there.

16 MS. AHLBERG: Brenda Ahlberg. Through the chairs, I
17 wanted to expound upon a couple questions as well as statements
18 that Ms. Moller made, and that was with regards to the work
19 plan. And I would like to think it was kind of a blessing in
20 disguise that we canceled the October 2025 fall meeting as a
21 result of the response because what it did is it became an
22 impetus for the LEPCA to meet in networking meetings, three
23 networking meetings that allowed us to really identify, all
24 right, what do we want to do and make -- done in an informal
25 fashion that's now coming forward to be something formalized.

1 And that included for us, well, what is our work plan as
2 an LEPCA and how is that done in coordination with SERC? And
3 so I'm really pleased to see, I think we're on the cusp of
4 potentially being able to really work solidly together, lock
5 step with SERC, but also that means having some really candid
6 conversations about what changes need to be made. And I'm
7 excited about that.

8 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any other questions from the commission
9 members for the association? Thank you both very much for your
10 service and coming to speak to us today. Moving on to Item 10,
11 old business.

12 OLD BUSINESS

13 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Our committee reports we had asked our
14 committee chairs to submit written reports where possible. I
15 do want to give an opportunity, however, for any of the chairs
16 of our committees to provide a verbal report at this time, if
17 they'd like. And I will start with the finance committee. Mr.
18 Vikalis? Sir.

19 MR. VIKALIS: Yes. Thank you. I'm not going to beat a
20 horse to death here, but the finance committee obviously has
21 not met. There has not been any funds to distribute nor has
22 there been any other funds that over and above what the state
23 used to fund that would be for special projects. So the
24 committee, you know, for months now has not been able to meet.
25 And for every time we have one of these meetings, you know, I

1 say the same thing. The LEPCs need the funding, some, a lot
2 more than others. But the bottom line is, it is a mandatory
3 requirement to have an LEPC. So at some point in time, at
4 least somebody needs to come forward and provide some funding.

5 If you remember back in the old days, the funding came as
6 a percentage of flowage fees, but that's only because the LEPCs
7 only dealt with hazardous materials and hazardous events. But
8 when they became all hazards then the rules of the game changed
9 as to how the funding would come down, and it was coming out of
10 the operating budget only. And from that time forward, it's
11 been kind of a challenge, although at least there was funding
12 that came through that could be distributed based on the valid
13 needs at that time for each one of the LEPCs.

14 So I would only encourage and hope that at some point in
15 time, in the very, very near future, there is some funding for
16 some of these LEPCs because there's an awful lot of things that
17 they can do if they have some type of funding. And I think we
18 all realize that that's been on this committee for -- on this
19 commission for years now. Some of them are good, of course,
20 have a funding base because they do have the tier reporting and
21 some of them also they have a funding base for taxes. A lot of
22 communities don't have that opportunity. And so I just think
23 that we need to really take a hard look. And I know you guys
24 have -- I'm preaching to the choir, but sometimes the choir has
25 to be more vocal to get things done, and I think we all know

1 that. That's all I have.

2 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, George. Any questions for SERC
3 Finance Committee?

4 MS. KEITH: Maybe a follow-up. Yes. Thank you. Could
5 you -- I should know this, but the structure of SERC, is it
6 hosted right now by the DMVA or DHSEM? So if there's funds to
7 go through the LEPCs, how do the other state agencies direct
8 that at this time?

9 CO-CHAIR FISHER: So, yes, thanks for that. So the
10 commission is housed within the Department of Military and
11 Veterans Affairs. And some of the responsibilities for LEPC is
12 housed with the Department of Environmental Conservation for
13 the Tier 2 reporting piece. But structurally, it comes through
14 DMVA. We have the budget structure to distribute those funds.
15 And this commission does that by way of the SERC Finance
16 Committee. We -- just like Mr. Vikalis said, we haven't had
17 funds for years. So the committee hasn't had a job to do
18 because there's no funds to disperse. But that all flows
19 through our budget structure.

20 MS. KEITH: Okay.

21 CO-CHAIR FISHER: We have a results delivery unit for --
22 specifically for LEPCs. It's still there. It just hasn't had
23 any funding put into it for a number of years. And I just will
24 say historically Mr. Vikalis and I have been doing this for a
25 very, very long time. Initially when we were only dealing with

1 oil and hazardous substance response, we did have funding from
2 the state's Spill Prevention and Response account. That
3 changed as this commission changed from only oil and hazmat to
4 all hazards when we received this general fund appropriation
5 for the activities of the committee, the Local Emergency
6 Planning Committees.

7 So we have never -- I will just say this again. We've
8 said this a lot over the years too. The requirements --
9 federal requirements under the law, SARA Title III, and the
10 Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act has always been
11 a federally unfunded mandate. So that funding has always come
12 from the state in some form or fashion. Like George said,
13 those requirements are still there, regardless of the funding
14 being there or not. But it's always been one of those many
15 unfunded federal mandates that we used to provide funding in
16 various mechanisms through the state. And that's where we're
17 at today. But any other questions? Okay.

18 I'm not going to go down the entire list here, but --
19 because I know Mr. Rockwell's not here, but Michelle, for the
20 Citizens Corps Committee, Mr. Riley, our new chair of All-
21 Hazards Plan Review Committee, Mr. Lafferty for training,
22 anything that you wanted to report? Okay. Thank you very
23 much. Mr. Cook, anything on the statewide mutual aid compact
24 committee?

25 MR. COOK: Nothing really to report, but I did submit a

1 recommendation to suspend that committee because it's.....

2 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Almost there.

3 MR. COOK: Cool.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: So now for the Business of today's
5 Commission meeting, I wanted to invite Ms. Erin Leaders from
6 the Department of Environmental Conservation up to the table to
7 give us a brief out on the Commission's Work Plan Committee.
8 And we're going to have a number of recommendations here that
9 we're going to work through. Erin?

10 MS. LEADERS: Thank you. Erin Leaders, the SERC Work Plan
11 Committee chair designee. And the SERC Work Plan Committee was
12 directed by the SERC to update the SERC Policy and Procedures
13 manual and the SERC Bylaws. The overall goal is to align the
14 policy and procedure manual with the bylaws and then deconflict
15 both with Alaska statute. The SERC PNPM bylaws in the read
16 ahead documents where -- reflect those changes and also
17 includes a list of the major changes to the policy and
18 procedure manual and the bylaws.

19 So these updates also include the recommendation by the
20 SERC Work Plan Committee to remove the Citizen Corps Committee
21 and then to suspend the AMOS and the Interoperable
22 Communications and Training Committees. So I would add just
23 the SERC Work Plan Committee recommends the suspension of those
24 and the approval of the policy and procedure changes as
25 presented and the bylaws as presented. End of my report.

1 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Ms. Leaders. So I will just
2 say, I want to thank you, I want to thank Ms. Shea from DEC,
3 Mr. Riley from DMVA, and the rest of the team that has -- they
4 have been working on revisions, so our policy and procedures
5 manual and our bylaws for a number of years here. And the
6 discussions that we've had and the recommendations that the
7 committee is presenting to us today are based on a lot of those
8 conversations about where we are at as a commission, the work
9 that we have to do under statute, and how we need to be
10 organized here as a commission.

11 There, I'd just say historically, a number of these
12 committees that were formed, when they were formed originally
13 ended up revolving around some new federal requirement or some
14 new federal grant that came into play. So I can tell you the
15 Interoperable Communications Committee of the SERC was formed
16 because we received a \$7.2 million grant in 2007 to be able to
17 support the build out of interoperable and operable
18 communications around the state. So at the time, the
19 commission had approved creating a committee to use as the
20 structure under state statute to work on that effort.

21 The Citizen Corps Committee, I can tell you same thing.
22 We created -- this commission created a committee to manage
23 that program when there was a discrete grant program for
24 Citizen Corps. That program has not existed and has not been
25 funded in years and years and years. So the committee, the

1 Work Plan Committee had conversations directly with the chairs
2 of all of our committees to get these recommendations on
3 whether they need to remain in existence, whether they need to
4 remain active or not. And Mr. Cook can talk about this for the
5 Statewide Mutual Aid Compact Committee.

6 This commission had done a lot of work with my department,
7 with my division on developing the state mutual aid system, the
8 policies and procedures that would support that, qualifications
9 under the National Incident Management System and the Incident
10 Command System. We have moved for that particular purpose to
11 using some tools provided by FEMA, the National Qualification
12 System and a piece of software called OneResponder.

13 So a lot of the work and the original charges that this
14 commission gave to these committees has been completed. So
15 I'll ask here in a minute for some motions to -- on some of the
16 recommendations from the committee. But I will tell you, we
17 had lots of hardworking conversations with the committee chairs
18 on where we want to move going forward.

19 We agreed after conversation with the chairs for some of
20 these committees, as Ms. Leaders mentioned, to suspend them.
21 Now we want to keep them as a part of the commission, but there
22 isn't any work for them to do today. It was their
23 recommendation to us that we suspend a few of these committees.
24 So in the future, if we need to resurrect them under the
25 direction of this commission, that we would be able to do that

1 without having to completely reform the committees and all
2 that. So that's kind of where we have gotten today.

3 Did anybody have any comments or questions before I ask
4 for some motions based on those recommendations? Okay. Put on
5 glasses on here. So I will entertain a motion to remove the
6 Citizens Corps Committee as a committee of the SERC effective
7 immediately. Do I have a motion?

8 MR. VIKALIS: So moved. Vikalis.

9 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Do I have a second?

10 MR. COOK: Second. Cook.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you for that. Any discussion?
12 And our current chair of that committee is in the room if you
13 have any questions, Ms. Torri. Any discussion or questions?
14 Seeing none. All in favor signify by saying aye.

15 BOARD: Aye.

16 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. The motion
17 passes. Thank you. Next I will entertain a motion to suspend
18 the following committees: Interoperable Communications,
19 Training and Statewide Mutual aid Compact effective
20 Immediately. Do I have a motion to suspend those committees?

21 MR. VIKALIS: So moved. Vikalis.

22 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Do I have a second?

23 MR. COOK: Second. Cook.

24 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you. Any discussion? We do have
25 the chairs of those committees here as well. Well, two of

1 them. Mr. Cook and Mr. Lafferty. Seeing none. All in favor
2 signify by saying aye.

3 BOARD: Aye.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. Thank you.
5 The motion passes. The last one I have for this part of the
6 meeting is I will entertain a motion for the approval and
7 adoption of the updated policy and procedures manual for the
8 State Emergency Response Commission and the commission bylaws.
9 Do I have a motion to?

10 MR. VIKALIS: So moved. Vikalis.

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Do I have second?

12 MR. DONELY: Second. Donely.

13 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Don. Any discussion? I do
14 again, want to thank -- I mean, it was a incredibly large
15 amount of work for everybody that participated in updating
16 those documents for us. Any discussion? Any questions?

17 MS. KEITH: Yes.

18 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Ms. Keith.

19 MS. KEITH: Yes. Thank you. Those can always be a lot of
20 effort. Are they online? Where would we find copies of them?
21 I didn't see them in the packet.

22 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Mr. Riley?

23 MR. RILEY: I can send them to you. They are not online
24 yet. They will be after the (Indiscernible - away from the
25 mic).

1 MS. KEITH: Just I'm not sure how we can approve them if
2 we don't have them in the packet. Do you have comments on
3 that? They are? Could you let me know what page? I'm sorry.
4 What's that? Thank you.

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: I will say -- this is Bryan. The DMVA,
6 Military and Veterans Affairs, my division does host all of the
7 online information for the commission. We have had many, many
8 changes in our IT staff and our webmaster and all. So if we do
9 adopt this as well as our membership roster, the minutes, all
10 of those things will definitely be on the commission's website
11 that is hosted by our agency. Any other questions or comments
12 on the policy and procedures manual or the bylaws? Seeing
13 none. All in favor of adopting the updated policy and
14 procedures manual and bylaws of the commission signify by
15 saying aye.

16 BOARD: Aye.

17 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Any opposed? Same sign. Motion
18 carries. Thank you all very much. And again, thank you for
19 the hard work for the entire staff team that has put all of
20 that together on our behalf. I'll just check -- do a pulse
21 check here real quick for all of you. Do you guys need a break
22 or do you want to continue pushing forward? Anybody need? You
23 need a break?

24 MR. COOK: Yes.

25 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Well, because Mr. Cook would like a

1 break, we'll take a 10-minute break real quick, and then we'll
2 move into our next piece of business, which is a presentation
3 by the EPA. So we're on break for 10 minutes. Back at, we'll
4 call it 2:20 p.m., please. Thank you.

5 MS. KEITH: Thank you

6 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Nine minutes. How's that?

7 MS. KEITH: That'll help me make sure I get the right
8 packet.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So we have a copy of that, but this is
10 (Indiscernible - simultaneous speech).

11 MS. KEITH: Thank you. I appreciate it. That explains a
12 lot.

13 MR. RILEY: I'm going to send them to you by email.

14 MS. KEITH: Thank you.

15 MR. RILEY: (Indiscernible - away from the mic)

16 MS. KEITH: Yes, I don't know what is happening

17 MR. RILEY: If that happens.

18 MS. KEITH: The old packet. Do you guys send out two
19 packets?

20 MR. RILEY: No. Just one.

21 MS. KEITH: Like how -- what is this packet?

22 MR. RILEY: So what it's going to do and how the packet
23 kind of works is there's going to be a title page and then
24 there's going to be.....

25 MS. KEITH: So if I click there, it says this page and

1 there's no content.

2 MR. RILEY: And then -- so yes. And then so there's going
3 to be tabs. So there should be a SERC PPM 12. That's weird.
4 So how -- yes. So how we set -- have it usually set, so
5 there's going to be that page that you're seeing and then A and
6 B is usually attachments. So we'll have 12A and 12B. Their
7 PDF, does that do something goofy with the system if it's.....

8 MS. KEITH: No.

9 MR. RILEY: Like you're in PDF, so that's weird. And then
10 as a -- it will be kind of a separate attachment, and that'll
11 have the -- I'll just send it to you and that way you have it.
12 That's weird.

13 MS. KEITH: Yes.

14 MR. RILEY: Because you have the other tabs there.

15 MS. KEITH: Well, I don't know. I think so. Yes, some of
16 the things have been coming through, but a lot of it just has
17 the headers. Like I see, we didn't get you anything it looks
18 like, but like.....

19 MR. RILEY: I will send it right over to you.

20 MS. KEITH: Yes. Like was there the work plan in the
21 updates?

22 MR. RILEY: Yes, there were. Okay. It'll be on its way.
23 I just sent another two.

24 MS. KEITH: Okay.

25 (Off the record)

1 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, everybody. We're going to go
2 ahead and bring the meeting back to order. Yes, it's mood
3 lighting now.

4 MS. KEITH: (Indiscernible - away from the mic)

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: It's fine by me. Thanks, Kathy. So I
6 did want to just say, well, I would recognize we missed this in
7 the roll call, but Torri came up to the table here kind of last
8 minute to represent the Environmental Protection Agency.
9 They're an ex officio member of the committee. But it is my
10 pleasure to introduce Torri. Torri's going to give the
11 commission a briefing on lithium-ion batteries.

12 I know we have heard as a commission multiple times over
13 the last number of years about this particularly emerging and
14 continuing to emerge threat with respect to lithium-ion
15 batteries and fires and toxins associated with all of that. So
16 I want to turn it over to Torri and she's going to give us her
17 presentation. Torri's one of our federal on-scene coordinators
18 with USEPA if you haven't met her before. So welcome.

19 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Thank you.

20 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you.

21 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Can I get my presentation up? Okay.

22 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Stand by for one moment as we get the
23 presentation up on the screen.

24 MS. HUELSKOETTER: So while he's doing that, I'll just
25 talk briefly. So EPA, we've learned a lot about lithium-ion

1 battery fire response over the last couple years, specifically
2 from the Maui wildfires and then again the California fires.
3 I'm going to kind of breeze through this really quickly. It's
4 a really high-level overview of the hazards associated with
5 lithium-ion battery fires. But I want to bring awareness to --
6 I did this for the LEPC and also, you know, for the SERC, just
7 the fact that these aren't normal fires. We cannot respond to
8 these as normal fires. And they're becoming more prevalent all
9 over the state in -- you know, from day-to-day use to battery
10 energy storage systems. I do plan to hit.

11 So you have your typical physical hazards associated with
12 irregular fire, but there's additional hazards associated with
13 battery fires; electrocution, thermal burns and explosions.
14 They give off more toxic gases and vapors. And let's see, I've
15 got my notes on here too. Some of the chemical hazards
16 associated with lithium-ion battery fires, we have flammable
17 combustible gases, corrosive gases, toxic gases, toxic liquids.

18 And we're going to jump real quick into the top four
19 flammable toxic vapors that are given off: hydrogen, carbon
20 monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrogen fluoride. Hydrogen gas is
21 the number one most common gas given off from a lithium-ion
22 battery fire or off-gassing event. What's really important to
23 remember here is that when a lithium-ion battery goes into
24 thermal runaway, which is either a manufacturing issue. It was
25 damaged somehow. It was thermally insulted, which it only

1 takes 140 degrees to thermally insult a lithium-ion battery to
2 cause it to go into thermal runaway. So that means it's --
3 thermally insulted means it's unstable and it could catch on
4 fire, start off-gassing or even explode at any point in time,
5 weeks, months, years later.

6 So hydrogen gas -- and all of this off-gassing starts
7 before an actual fire can begin. So if you know you have a
8 lithium-ion battery fire or lithium-ion battery off-gassing,
9 you need to proceed with caution. And I think this is just
10 information that most communities aren't aware of. So I wanted
11 to bring awareness because it's a conversation that needs to
12 start happening so we can keep our communities and our
13 responders safe.

14 Again, hydrogen is particularly dangerous in enclosed
15 spaces. In Surprise, Arizona, a few years ago, there was a
16 battery energy storage system that was off-gassing and on fire
17 in a closed container. The responders opened up the door and
18 allowing oxygen in with the hydrogen and caused an explosion,
19 hurting eight firefighters in that response. Carbon monoxide,
20 we all know that that's not great. So it's the second most
21 common gas generated. Also gas buildup in enclosed spaces is
22 dangerous.

23 Hydrogen fluoride is toxic and corrosive. And then also
24 when mixed with water makes a hydrogen fluoride acid of sorts.
25 So another thing to be concerned about with fire and off-

1 gassing. And then lithium hexafluorophosphate, another toxic
2 and corrosive liquid that is found inside the electrolyte
3 solution inside lithium-ion batteries. And so this is one of
4 those that if a battery is punctured or damaged and this is not
5 just like the large battery energy storage systems, this can be
6 your DeWalt reusable battery for your tools, your solar panel
7 rechargeable, you know, charging blocks and your phones and
8 things like that. All of this stuff can come from lithium-ion
9 batteries of any size.

10 So it's something to be aware of in our household day to
11 day, especially as more lithium-ion batteries are used for
12 remote cabins, on vessels. I think there's marine batteries
13 now, ATV lithium-ion batteries. All things to be concerned
14 about if something happens to them in storage or, you know,
15 everybody treats their ATVs super, you know, gentle, right?
16 And heaven forbid, you know, you've got a lithium-ion battery
17 in your ATV and it goes into thermal runaway where you're in
18 the middle of nowhere. Because there is literally no way to
19 put these out.

20 Water does not put these fires out. There is no way that
21 you can't smother them because they don't require oxygen to
22 burn. You cannot pour water on them to put them out. So it's
23 one of those things where we need to be aware as a community
24 has become more prevalent across the state.

25 Another thing they give off is metal particulates. During

1 Maui and California, we realized that there were in the air --
2 - personal air monitoring and air sampling packs that we had
3 our responders wearing. There was a high level of metal
4 particulates that were given off during these fires, and they
5 absorb into forest clothing and it's incredibly hard to
6 decontaminate. And those clothes then go elsewhere. And so we
7 -- I can talk about the PPE and decon aspect of that a little
8 bit later.

9 So, again, differences in lithium-ion battery fires. They
10 put off toxic gases. They burn at higher temperatures than
11 normal. Again, they can burn without oxygen, so you can't
12 smother them. You can't douse them with water. They have an
13 incredibly high explosive potential. And then thermal runaway,
14 again, just because a battery -- like the batteries in
15 California and in Maui, you could have electric vehicle that
16 was burnt to a crisp, unrecognizable, and the battery still
17 held the charge even after we would put it into an electrolyte
18 brine solution for about a week to try and de-energize it and
19 then roll it over with a steam roller.

20 We were trying to turn them into not batteries to ship
21 them off site, which is a whole other complication. But they
22 still held a charge and they were still off-gassing from there.
23 And so once they were turned into not batteries, steam rolled
24 and de-energized, they -- we had to put them in containers that
25 -- and create a ventilation system for those to continue off-

1 gassing to ship them off site. So these are incredibly
2 problematic. Once they are damaged, defective or thermally
3 insulted, and then trying to dispose of them is, like I said, a
4 whole other basket of convoluted, difficult regulatory things,
5 trying to dispose of them.

6 One of the things to be cognizant of during a lithium-ion
7 battery fire is air monitoring. It's a way to protect your
8 responders and your community, establishing hot zones and
9 evaluating potential for exposures to the community, even when
10 it comes to potential shelter in place or evacuation measures.
11 How the responders attack the fire can impact what kind of air
12 monitoring you need. If water is used for fire suppression,
13 you probably don't need large amounts of community air
14 monitoring, but sometimes, again, the best way to handle these
15 is just to let it burn so you're not having to deal with the
16 water runoff that might have metal particulates in it.

17 And so you're going to need broader air monitoring with --
18 when -- we can go over some of the equipment that's used. But
19 that's one of the ways that EPA, we have air monitoring
20 equipment for community. We have mobile and stationary
21 equipment that we can assist with air monitoring. But if you
22 have, you know, these BESS systems, like there's one in Kwig
23 and if that goes up, who's going to do the air monitoring out
24 there? And the fire department or whoever usually volunteers,
25 whoever the responders are going to treat this as a normal

1 fire.

2 And so this whole presentation is to really instigate that
3 discussion of how do we -- as more communities are trying to
4 put in place more EV, more EV and more lithium-ion battery use,
5 how do we prepare our communities to respond, to keep our
6 responders safe and to keep our community safe?

7 So again, you can have perimeter air monitoring for
8 smaller situations like in an electric vehicle fire. Or you
9 can have larger things like particulate dust monitoring, air
10 sampling, or gas meter. These are different air monitoring
11 sensors that you can use during a lithium-ion battery fire. We
12 won't go -- we don't need to get too much into this. But
13 particularly monitoring is useful to help indicate direction of
14 plume. And I'll put in a quick plug for the National Weather
15 Service because they have 24/7 capabilities to provide plume
16 modeling. So if there is a fire and you need immediate
17 assistance to determine if you should put out a shelter in
18 place or an evacuation notice to the communities, you can reach
19 out to National Weather Service and NOAA will you -- can also
20 help with their ALOHA model.

21 Weather Service is good because they're 24/7 and they can
22 give you immediate flue modeling. National -- NOAA is good for
23 bigger fires. They're going to be longer ongoing for like
24 larger BESS systems because they have specific chemical
25 profiles that they can put into their air monitoring that will

1 help prevent -- help provide information on hot, warm, cold
2 zones and community protections.

3 Scene management and post incident action. During a
4 response, these are the most typical challenges, assessing
5 public exposure and responder exposure. Because there are more
6 than just lithium-ion batteries out there, right? There are
7 several, several different kinds of batteries. So you need to
8 know what kind of battery you're dealing with, so what kind of
9 metals can be putting off, what kind of electrolyte solution
10 they have and how big they are.

11 PPE contamination. Again, decontamination is very
12 difficult with the metals and the porous materials of like
13 turnout gear. We started using, sorry, disposable fire-
14 resistant coveralls for our responders in Maui and in
15 California.

16 And yes, assessment of battery integrity. Most responders
17 are not electricians and not trained to evaluate battery
18 integrity when they should be moved, when they shouldn't,
19 making them non batteries so that they can be shipped. The
20 shipment of damaged batteries was a challenge no matter where
21 you're at. And then disposal and recycling. Obviously, they
22 can't go anywhere up here, so you have to pay to send them to
23 the lower forty-eight for a disposal or recycling facility.

24 Again, just going over PPE, I mean, what are the chances
25 that, you know, any -- most of our communities have all of this

1 stuff as PPE for responding to these. Or at least that
2 they're current or, you know, up to the latest safety regs.
3 Site footprint. ERG 147 is your best guide for a lithium-ion
4 battery fire. If -- so these -- each one of these buckets here
5 has one lithium-ion battery in it. And we have to keep them
6 separate because if one goes under thermal runaway, then the
7 next one, the next one, the next one, it's a domino effect. So
8 you have to keep them separated so that if it does reignite at
9 some point, then it doesn't cause a bigger problem and they
10 have to be under 24/7 surveillance, so if anything starts to go
11 off, you can get on top of it as fast as possible.

12 Storage and containers. You'll want to be able to have it
13 in the area that allows it to degas, to off-gas and do that
14 safely with air monitoring. You want to separate them, you
15 know, and clearly label everything. So one of these responses
16 if you're taking down a BESS system is going to take up a
17 significant footprint for the response and it's going to be a
18 long-term issue and a long-term response.

19 So decon. These yellow -- this is in California. Those
20 yellow coveralls that they're wearing are the disposable FR
21 coveralls. And they would take those off before they come out
22 of the hot zone, dispose of them, and then put the new ones on
23 for their next round. And everybody had half face respirators.
24 But again, it's really complicated to get -- I mean, turnout
25 gear is really expensive, and if you've got turnout gear that's

1 contaminated with metals, and the more responses you go on,
2 the more contaminated it becomes. So trying to figure out how
3 to safely and effectively decontaminate the turnout gear or
4 whatever the responders are wearing to keep them safe and
5 healthy long-term, and not bring that back to, you know, the
6 shop where they live, eat, work on a day-to-day basis or
7 spreading it to their homes.

8 Packaging and transportation. Again, it's incredibly
9 convoluted. My notes for this slide say, it's complicated.
10 Ask for help. You can either reach out to EPA, FENZO, DOT.
11 They -- this is all based -- varies based on the battery
12 condition and I know that there's some barges and shipping
13 companies that won't ship anything that is lithium-ion battery
14 at this point because of how unsafe it is. We can talk about
15 the Genius Star in 2024, Morning Midas in 2025. And again,
16 both of those vessels deployed their entire fire suppression
17 system on those batteries and on those vehicles, and it did
18 nothing. So just -- it's complicated to ship and package.

19 So we'll touch briefly a little bit more on battery energy
20 storage systems because they are becoming more widely used. It
21 wouldn't be a surprise to see a lot of hospitals and schools
22 move over to BESS systems instead of fuel because they can --
23 because it's just become more popular. It's supposed to be,
24 you know, cleaner in theory and, you know, fuel is very
25 expensive. So using these would be a very advantageous

1 looking.

2 That's what some of the large BESS systems look like and
3 it's just sell after sell after sell off, like, in each of
4 those racks are a bunch of little batteries. So it's not giant
5 batteries, there's a bunch of ton of little batteries all
6 wrapped up into those. And then they're all in -- there's
7 solutions or electrolyte solutions and then they're just in
8 bigger and bigger. So that's what some of them look like. I'm
9 getting ahead of myself.

10 So real -- touch on BESS failure events real quick. I
11 don't know why we have so many more events with younger
12 systems. I don't know if it's because they're becoming more
13 popular and more prevalent or maybe it's a wider swath of
14 manufacturing. So less eyes on or maybe less safety checks for
15 those manufacturers. I honestly don't know. In China in 2021,
16 it was a lithium-ion phosphate battery in a shopping mall.
17 They had caught fire in 2019 and then exploded in 2021, killing
18 two firefighters.

19 Again, Surprise, Arizona, it was a lithium manganese
20 cobalt battery that was installed two years earlier, caught
21 fire and exploded in a defecation event when the firefighters
22 opened the door after they cleared external air monitoring.
23 That's the other catch of this. They did external air
24 monitoring and it was all fine. They opened the door less
25 fine.

1 And then Chandler, Arizona, it caught fire prompting a
2 one-quarter mile evacuation. The indoor sprinkler system
3 activated, but the fire smoldered for more than two weeks.
4 Victoria, Australia, a BESS caught fire due to liquid coolant
5 leak resulting in arcing within a module. They applied water
6 to adjacent units to try and just not address the fire exactly,
7 but to cool off the surrounding units to prevent any thermal
8 runaway in a larger fire.

9 Moss Landing 2022 and then Moss Landing 2025. So it
10 burned in 2022, a smaller fire 2025, burned over two days with
11 a second flare up a month later. Just to reinforce that
12 thermal runaway can happen at any point later on. It was ill.
13 Anything lithium-ion batteries was one of our biggest hazards
14 responding in California and Maui. And the Moss Landing fire
15 in 2025, they had to close highway one, one mile North and one
16 mile South. And residents had to shelter in place due to a
17 toxic atmosphere. So that's a significant impact. And we are
18 getting more of these. We have one in Midtown Anchorage. The
19 largest BESS system we have is in Soldotna. The smallest one
20 we have is in Kwig. I'll -- I can get into more of that later.

21 Tactical considerations. Defensive operations are usually
22 your best bet to just shut off, isolate, protect it, protect
23 any surrounding infrastructure or systems from catching fire
24 due to thermal runaway or whatnot. Yes, this isn't a
25 firefighting class. Oh, that reminds me, EPA has a two-day

1 class that goes very in-depth on firefighting tactics,
2 response tactics, disposal and how they become thermally
3 insulted or damaged or go into thermal runaway. And we're
4 trying to do what we can to get it to as many people as
5 possible, because I know this is a very sought after training.

6 We are going to be at the Alaska State Firefighters
7 Conference in Kenai in September. We're going to provide a
8 brief, like one day, you know, or half day whatever class of
9 like, this is what we have to show you. This is, so at least
10 there's some basic information out there. But from then there
11 we're going to try and see if there's any desire for us to hit
12 like hub places, like go to Fairbanks and provide the full two-
13 day class, maybe in Palmer, maybe in Anchorage, Juneau. I know
14 there's some interest in Ketchikan for us to be able to go out
15 there and provide this class, but that will also depend on
16 funding availability for the EPA for training and outreach.
17 But this is something that I desperately would like to bring
18 out to as many people in our state and our community as
19 possible, so we can keep people safe.

20 There are some helpful links. The best one is this Region
21 4 lithium-ion battery outreach. It has -- we have -- EPA has
22 put out a whole guide on lithium-ion battery fire response. So
23 we have a guide out there that is -- all of this information is
24 available to anyone. And there is a number of other really
25 great documents and information out there on this lithium --

1 Region four lithium-ion battery outreach.

2 Then I'm going to jump into Liza Sandin, who's a
3 scientific support coordinator for NOAA. She is out in
4 Louisiana working shoreline cleanup assessment on an oil spill
5 down in Louisiana. So I'm going to do my best to take over for
6 her and give a brief on what she has. Again, there's a large
7 push to replace any lead acid batteries with lithium-ion
8 batteries. So in remote cabins, boats, ATVs, cars. And
9 there's a primary concern that there's a lack of awareness on
10 where all of these systems are, how many are out there and what
11 the hazards are for all of the communities and all of the
12 responders.

13 These are different battery systems. We have the marine
14 battery system. On the left is all of the BESS systems that we
15 know of in the state. And I'm sure that's going to continue to
16 increase. Again, our smallest one is in Kwig. Our largest one
17 is in Soldotna. But it's off-grid power that's in your home.
18 I mean, it's your phone. It's a -- Anchorage Fire Department
19 had a response to a RC rechargeable battery car in a garage
20 that blew off the garage door and almost injured a firefighter
21 just from one little rechargeable battery.

22 So you think about that, like how many times is your phone
23 overheated because of charging? Or have you dropped a battery
24 for one of your tools, a DeWalt tool or whatever and impacted
25 that battery? Or are you using an off-brand charger or, you

1 know, trying to save a few bucks to use something off brand
2 that then may not be safe for you to actually charge your
3 lithium-ion batteries with? And think about how many -- on
4 planes and stuff too, right? How many have heard about those -
5 - I think it's not the Faraday, but the packets, you know, to
6 try and stop all of these like lithium-ion battery fires on
7 planes and things like that.

8 It's a really serious concern like everywhere we go in our
9 everyday lives and we start to have these BESS systems which
10 are bigger and scarier. And even AFD was like, we don't really
11 know how to respond to these. And so I want to make sure that
12 we are having these discussions now before it gets out of hand
13 and we don't -- we just don't know how many are out there or
14 what the dangers are or how to safely respond.

15 This is a plume model that Liza put together. This is in
16 Galena and just to the east of the plume is an assisted living
17 home. And then just to the north of that is the school. So
18 your plume can change based on your wind direction and time of
19 year. But if there is a larger ongoing fire, having these
20 plume models from NOAA with the specific for -- you have
21 hydrogen gas and hydrogen fluoride gas, can be very helpful in
22 assessing community safety and putting out the necessary
23 messaging. Again, some of these gases are put off before there
24 is a fire, so you want to keep that in mind as a responder.
25 And we're almost done, I promise.

1 And these are the gas production by battery type. And
2 the hazard symbol refers to when vapor levels are at an
3 immediate hazard level. For hydrogen, that's the LEL. For
4 hydrogen fluoride, this refers to the -- or hydrofluoric acid,
5 not hydrogen fluoride. Hydrofluoric acid refers to the AEGL,
6 which is the acute exposure guideline level for ten minutes of
7 exposure. Needless to say, it's pretty scary.

8 So this is, like we said, the start of the conversation.
9 We want to do whatever we can to help people become aware and
10 knowledgeable. Like this made me reassess how I store -- my
11 husband's a carpenter. We have ungodly amount of DeWalt
12 batteries that we would just keep next to our front door on the
13 charging station. Not anymore. That's our primary ingress
14 egress, like if that caught on fire, then we're hosed. So just
15 for community awareness for building. And yes, that's it for
16 me if anybody has any questions.

17 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you for that, Torri. And I will
18 say this morning when Torri presented to the LEPC association,
19 I think she characterized it and summed it up as like, this
20 isn't great.

21 MS. HUELSKOETTER: This isn't great. This not great.

22 CO-CHAIR FISHER: And there is a -- you know, there is a
23 reason that we continue to have this conversation with the
24 commission here and in particular with our local emergency
25 planning committees. The threat and hazard here is just

1 continuing to grow like Torri talked about in her
2 presentation. I was talking earlier this morning about this
3 with some of our staff, you know, the Maui wildfire and the
4 challenge with lithium-ion batteries following that fire is one
5 of the biggest mission assignments and work that FEMA has ever
6 done with the EPA in terms of responding to that threat from
7 that fire. So this is not a hazard or a threat that's going
8 away. It's actually growing for all of us. And you can hear
9 the challenges and how complicated it is with respect to
10 responding to this threat that's out there. So thank you for
11 that. Any questions?

12 MR. WEINERT: Adam from the Department of Labor. Knowing
13 that these BESS systems are mostly maybe in homes or off-grid
14 homes or in utility systems, what's the use of these systems in
15 businesses?

16 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Sometimes they're just backup energy.
17 Like, you know, instead of a generator necessarily, if you can
18 store the power and stuff like that. And I'm not sure in what
19 like wide variety of, you know, they're used. I know Chugach
20 Electric has one in town. That's the midtown one I'm talking
21 about. And that one scares the crap out of me because it's
22 like close to the airport and things like that. But there's a
23 wide variety of them. We had a ton of them. If you have a
24 solar power, a solar generating system, all of the energy that
25 it generates goes into a lithium-ion battery system on the side

1 of your house. So that's the power storage packs and things
2 like that.

3 MR. WEINERT: So then you said that you were doing, or the
4 EPAs doing training for just responders. Are there any types
5 of training for staff in these workplaces or? I'd be happy --
6 love to have that conversation with you maybe later.

7 MS. HUELSKOETTER: We don't have -- we're trying to offer
8 it to pretty much anybody who will take it. But again, we're
9 limited because there's only one representative for each region
10 in our -- because I'm not the expert on this. Our expert is in
11 Idaho. And so we have -- you know, he's also a -- does oil
12 prevention inspections. We do emergency response. Like I'm
13 the FOSC for the Doyon spill right now, the rig thing.

14 So, we wear a lot of hats and do a lot of different
15 things. And so trying to get availability to go out there and
16 then trying to get funding, because our two-day class, we
17 actually set off different types of batteries outside and
18 display our air monitoring capabilities. We also have a
19 retired firefighter who will go over fire response tactics and
20 things like that because you don't want me talking about that
21 because I don't know what I'm doing, but --

22 So it's a big it's a big lift to get that anywhere. But
23 we're really trying to get it to as many people as possible.
24 So if we are able to do this road show thing that I've been
25 envisioning after the state firefighters council, we'll make

1 sure to reach out to the LEPCs and the SERC to make everybody
2 aware of where we're going to be and when we're going to be
3 there so we can try and get as many people as possible. And we
4 have -- we can scale it, we can do the full two-day, we can do
5 like a day and a half, a day, half day, whatever. But I would
6 start as far as a resource for workers who work around them to
7 look at our lithium-ion battery training guide.

8 MR. WEINERT: Okay.

9 MS. HUELSKOETTER: So that's a good starting point. But
10 feel free to reach out to me. I don't have a card. I'll write
11 down my email for you because my last name is atrocious. So,
12 if -- but yes, if you have any follow up questions, I'm happy
13 to coordinate those answers.

14 MR. WEINERT: Great. Thank you. I just think the
15 liability concerns for employers across the state is very
16 significant.

17 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Yes.

18 MR. WEINERT: So whatever we can do to help educate folks
19 and keep our workers safe would be important.

20 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Yeah. We might be able to help
21 coordinate a training.....

22 MR. WEINERT: Yes.

23 MS. HUELSKOETTER:to put -- help put that together
24 for worker safety.

25 MR. WEINERT: Great. Thank you.

1 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Yes.

2 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks for that. Yes. I figure Labor
3 Standards and Safety would have a high interest in that. I
4 definitely appreciate that. Any other questions before?

5 CO-CHAIR KOHLER: I don't know that I have a question.
6 Thank you. I really appreciate this presentation. I know I
7 can think back probably a decade -- a few minutes ago, not a
8 decade ago getting a call from this has been a developing
9 science and it's such a bummer where we've gotten the research
10 from and the information from. But fascinating to see how the
11 information has grown about it.

12 I want to say less than a decade ago, I got a call from
13 one of our interior firefighters at a wildland fire trying to
14 figure out what to do with the e-bike battery that was still
15 sparking after a wildland fire. So this is -- and we ended up
16 having to call down to firefighters in Seattle to try and get
17 some information. So that was fascinating.

18 I was frantically texting with our community Right-to-Know
19 Tier II guru Kathy Shea during this, because one of my
20 questions, you know, you had a map, but do we have these in our
21 Tier II reports? And the answer is that lithium-ion are not
22 within our Tier 2 reports. And one of the things that I'm
23 going to quote you, Kathy, my apologies. So we have cell
24 towers all over Alaska. And that there are cell towers who are
25 becoming no longer reportable, which is likely because they're

1 transitioning their lead batteries and lead acid is reportable
2 out to these lithium-ion power banks. So interesting -- just
3 interesting in the context of response and how it plays with
4 Tier II reporting.

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, Madam Co-Chair. I'd say, you
6 know, just here I have three. I got these two, actually four
7 because I have two batteries in this. So they certainly are
8 everywhere. Not best size of BESS systems and all. So
9 definitely prevalent and growing. So thank you very much for
10 your support. And you know, federal unseen coordinators and
11 EPA are busy every day of the year. They're very gainfully
12 employed. So thank you for the time this morning and this
13 afternoon to provide the update to us on lithium-ion batteries.
14 So, thank you.

15 Moving on to Section 7 -- I'm sorry, 12. Put my glasses
16 on. Other state agency and ex-officio agency reports. We did
17 receive written reports from DOT and from FEMA. We received a
18 last-minute report this morning from the Department of Public
19 Safety. We'll get -- we'll make sure to forward that from
20 Lieutenant Andres onto the commission. But I want to give
21 members of the commission an opportunity here, if you want, to
22 provide any updates from your agencies. Over here, Director
23 Moller.

24 OTHER STATE AGENCY AND EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

25 MS. MOLLER: Yes. Thank you. Sandra with Commerce.

1 Sorry, I didn't send it via email, but I did want to share and
2 let everybody know that I think a lot of our focus is on the
3 emergency response and wanted to fill in the back. When you're
4 in a community, there's also a section called recovery, and
5 that's where DCRA, Commerce gets involved in. I just wanted to
6 share that we've had grants approved for us for through HUD.
7 And that's again, only on the recovery, not on the response
8 side. So basically going in after all the health and safety is
9 under control and then they reach out and want to look at both
10 recovery and mitigation. And this is a fairly new avenue for
11 us.

12 Our first disaster grant we got was the 2018 earthquake.
13 And that is -- oh wow, small print. That was a grant of 35
14 million and that was designated for the three municipalities
15 most affected. It's not a grant program I really wanted, but
16 somebody needed to take it, right, Bryan? And -- but basically
17 it's a grant where we are able to work with the most affected,
18 most impacted communities, our regions. And the other -- so
19 that was a \$35 million grant. They had two grants. We also
20 got 2.2 million for mitigation, which we're working with the
21 Municipality Anchorage for updating their data, their -- I
22 can't remember what it is. Basically their elevation so that
23 we can -- and look at proper adjusting it to the national
24 standards instead of what Alaska kind of had it free floating
25 out there.

1 The other grants we've gotten are for other events. We
2 don't get a federal disaster grant for every disaster, but we
3 also got one for MEBAC, of course, that was 38 million. And
4 it's a HUD award, so it's very -- once the event happens, it's
5 up to two years before we get a grant, and they can last six
6 years once we get it. So a lot of planning. So we got 38
7 million from MEBAC and we also have 18 million for two events,
8 which is the Juneau floods and the Yukon floods that happened
9 in 2025.

10 Have not heard anything on Halong and what that looks
11 like. But all those four grants and events are in the action
12 phase. So we prepare an action, here's what we want to do with
13 the funds. And it's a weird way to do it, but we say, here's
14 what we're going to do, and then we truth it. So we have
15 amendments that say, okay, we thought we're going to do that
16 now we're going to change it. And it's really going to be
17 this. Some of the things from the earthquake is we've helped
18 cook and housing, create multifamily housing, and it's mostly
19 for low to moderate income.

20 So I just wanted to share that's a -- I'm not really doing
21 the whole program justice. We have eight people that work on
22 these programs. Our team just returned from Western Alaska for
23 the MEBAC response and gathering unmet needs and what possible
24 changes we can do to that grant to help assist those
25 communities. So it's a long process and I think we're kind of

1 getting up on step on delivering those services to those
2 regions. The Juneau flood was for the glacier outburst, and as
3 we have heard and know that that could be an annual event. And
4 so it's -- we all know it's out there. It's coming and just
5 wanted to share that this is kind of on the after the response
6 and recovery of communities. So, thanks.

7 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks for that, Director. Yes. I
8 would say if you go to Congress's website, to Sandra's website,
9 DCRA, upper right corner, there's a link grants -- I think
10 grants and loans or something.

11 MS. MOLLER: Grants and funding.

12 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Grants and funding.

13 MS. MOLLER: Yes.

14 CO-CHAIR FISHER: And you can see more details about those
15 programs through U.S. Housing and Urban Development. It's a
16 community development block grant, disaster recovery and
17 community development block grant mitigation. So it's always a
18 unique thing that's money that doesn't come through FEMA. Like
19 FEMA gets the response and initial recovery money, and then
20 this money comes from HUD.

21 Those programs don't even start until congress appropriate
22 money for this program to HUD for disasters, federal disasters
23 in every -- any given year. And like the director said, you
24 know, it usually starts two hours after, or two years after the
25 incident when the money becomes available. And then the action

1 plans have to be built and all. So it certainly isn't very
2 speedy, it's not very timely, but it is a significant amount of
3 money that has been coming to the state for us to help our
4 communities with all these unmet needs after the disasters and
5 all. So thank you for that, ma'am.

6 MS. MOLLER: Mm-hmm.

7 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Deputy Commissioner Keith, anything you
8 want to report out on DOT?

9 MS. KEITH: Yes. Thank you very much. Yes, public
10 facilities, we never want to forget that. Yes. A couple
11 thoughts for discussion when we can about the Typhoon Halong
12 and the response. What the department had seen as we've --
13 we're now entering close to 200 days of the response since the
14 initial West Coast storm ramp up. I think we're at maybe 180
15 days right now.

16 And as we began from the transportation perspective to go
17 into the communities to support board road construction, you
18 know, the amazing part was that it took months to get to that
19 point because just the constant failures that were happening
20 with infrastructure in the community, with the water treatment
21 freezing and the community, having no water, the power going
22 out the schools, which has been an excellent partnership. We
23 have an MOA to stay in the schools and provide the schools with
24 contract support to do repairs, but the school boilers would go
25 out and then there'd be more snow and it would start all over

1 again.

2 So that basic survivability of the community, it became
3 very important just how fragile that is. And so when we were
4 going into a community to just do construction on a portion of
5 a bared landing or to put in super sacks for erosion, we were
6 not able to do that. The places to stay for contractors, for
7 example, were insufficient. Trying to get the resources there
8 was a challenge.

9 So when we look at the LEPCs and the potential there for
10 increased planning, I think that's one focus area that is very
11 much in need, mostly because of the increase, the urgent -- the
12 increased number of events and significance of the impact being
13 increasing as it is. That local leadership has been extremely
14 critical. So it's easy for us as a transportation and public
15 facilities to be siloed, but certainly these other things had
16 to come first.

17 So we're finding ourselves delivering water and cooking
18 food and just the tribal police officers, the safety officers,
19 all of these functions are so critical throughout this ongoing
20 response. And I think this is something that we'll want to
21 care for in upcoming months and years. And it's a role of all
22 of our agencies, the DMVA. It's often like, you guys fix it,
23 you guys deal with it, but it's this commission that each of
24 our agencies has a responsibility here to support the
25 communities, with each of these things.

1 So I'd like for us to talk about how in upcoming
2 meetings, or we have extra work sessions or something, but we
3 have to figure out how we can do this more proactively because
4 the cost of doing it in that disaster mode are unbelievable.

5 And the other piece of that was local hire, because more
6 than other events when we respond, we've had a very, very high
7 percent intentionally of local hire. And we were using local
8 hire to help haul materials to this event. We've hauled over
9 about 14 million pounds of material out to the villages, but a
10 massive percentage of that, probably twenty-five percent has
11 been through local snow machines hauling 2000 pounds at a time,
12 you know. And every day they're out there, 5:00 in the
13 morning, and they're driving materials out to the communities
14 that they're helping to rebuild, and they're all very much
15 engaged. There's over -- well over 100, just snow machine
16 drivers alone. And so that model now has that ownership coming
17 back into the community.

18 But that is just something that we happen to do this time.
19 I'd love for it to be more of a best practice and start a
20 policy that we can follow that when future us comes, you know,
21 into these roles, that it's something that we can more
22 institutionalize just because of what we've seen in the power
23 of that. Not only to have effective work done, but then, you
24 know, these are the folks that know the routes, they know the
25 trails, they know what needs to get fixed in their communities.

1 So I think part of that can all go into, you know, more
2 improved planning for this where we're at in Alaska and right
3 now in this ever-increasing number of disasters that we're
4 facing. So a couple facets there.

5 The other thing would be this increased focus on
6 modernization of our tools. And it was fantastic working with
7 SEOC and FEMA on our damage assessments where we were all using
8 the same common operating picture because of what we can do now
9 with GIS with tools from our drones and this data being able to
10 get pushed in real time to DC, and I know there's some
11 presentations about that, but it's a pretty small number of
12 people that I feel have the tools and skill sets to be able to
13 do this and to replicate it. But we need to get that more into
14 the hands of the regions and at that local level so that it
15 doesn't depend just on us to make that work; more than just
16 flying the drones, but what do you do with that once you have
17 it.

18 So it's a lot of what we've been up to. We're coming into
19 spring, which means there's going to be flooding and other
20 significant events. There's avalanche, rock slides that we're
21 getting ready to respond for that. We know that they're going
22 to be keeping us all busy. But again, finding ways so that we
23 can all support each other. So there an overlap would be
24 great. The workforce development and training piece, I think
25 there's a lot of tie-ins there that we need to better utilize

1 and funding that you have that we -- I'm sure could play in,
2 in a big way. So I think that's it from DOT thanks to everyone
3 for doing what you do and keeping our folks safe out there too.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Deputy commissioner. And I'll
5 just say, you know, I think we all have a pretty good
6 understanding of our communities in rural Alaska, in
7 (Indiscernible - unclear) Alaska have a certain level of
8 capacity and capability on a good day, right on the blue sky
9 say. When a disaster happens, that limited amount of capacity
10 and capability sometimes isn't existent at all. For example,
11 we have the entire communities of Kipnuk and Kwigillingok
12 displaced and residing, you know, upwards of 500 miles away
13 from their home and their areas where they perform subsistence
14 activities and all.

15 If it weren't for the Department of Transportation and
16 Public Facilities and their contract partners throughout
17 Western Alaska, there wouldn't have been a lot of recovery
18 happening over this entire winter. Really, Deputy Commissioner
19 Keith and Commissioner Anderson's team and their contract
20 partners have been the ones out there all winter, and it has
21 been a heck of a winter out west, dealing with these
22 challenges, trying to get as much recovery done as possible so
23 when breakup happens and we can start doing additional
24 rebuilding, that we can get our friends and neighbors back home
25 and offer the road system back to where they want to be and

1 where they're used to being.

2 So I do want to thank DOT personally for all of the
3 effort. Really, the recovery that has happened all winter is
4 thanks to the Department of Transportation and Public
5 Facilities and their contract team out there working with local
6 hires, working with the regional organizations like the Housing
7 Authority and AVCP and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health and all. So
8 thank you for that. There's a heck of a lot more work coming.
9 It is never ending. There are, like the Deputy Commissioner
10 said, no end in sight of disasters increasing in their
11 frequency and intensity.

12 And then everything that they do with their unmanned
13 aerial systems and GIS is unbelievable. I feel like you guys
14 are probably preeminent in the country, from my perspective.
15 I'm a bias, but it is unbelievable. We were able to get
16 President Trump to declare a disaster in like a minute for this
17 disaster in the fall based on the imagery and the data that was
18 collected by DOT's and PF's aerial system, their pilots out
19 there working with some other local pilots and their
20 capabilities. So it is really just incredible. So thank you,
21 ma'am, for everything you guys are doing. I'm going to skip
22 over you. Adam, anything more from the Department of Labor and
23 Workforce Development?

24 MR. WEINERT: Yes. Adam Weinert from the Department of
25 Labor. Just to -- you know, a lot of our efforts do take a

1 while to support disasters, usually after the president issues
2 a disaster declaration. But just because it's top of mind
3 today, our disaster unemployment assistant for folks ends
4 today. That was -- but that was something that we've been able
5 to extend multiple times. As the disaster area grew, we've
6 been able to grow that for folks who've been impacted by the
7 disaster. And that unfortunately has a really tight parameters
8 for folks who qualify for that type of assistance. But that's
9 something that we've been able to put out there.

10 On the workforce development side, we do have a dislocated
11 worker grant that we received from the U.S. Department of Labor
12 that is intended to directly support individuals who need
13 training to do cleanup and recovery efforts. So that's funding
14 that we have. We have received \$1 million initially. The feds
15 were very quick to unlock that resource for us, up to, I
16 believe, an additional 4 to \$7 million. That, we're not
17 entirely sure how we can spend that amount of money. But if
18 there are folks that from those affected areas that need a bit
19 of training to go work in those areas, we have this dedicated
20 source of funding that's separate from our normal tranches of
21 dollars that, that we can use to support that. And we'd like
22 to get that out there as quickly as possible.

23 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you for that, sir. Deputy
24 Commissioner Donley, Department of Administration.

25 MR. DONELY: We don't have any update from the Department

1 of Administration. Thank you.

2 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

3 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, sir. Well, thank you all for
4 that. We are getting right near the end here. So I'll just
5 call members' attention to the informational items that were
6 sent out on Item 13 on the agenda here in Tab 12 in the packets
7 that were sent out. It was the old policy and procedures
8 manual and the bylaws. Always include the ethics information
9 from the Department of Law. You need to refresh yourself, go
10 to the Department of Law's website. They have a separate page
11 for ethics and information, specifically for members of boards
12 and commissions.

13 Next meeting -- prior to the next meeting in the read-
14 ahead materials, you'll have the new shiny policy and
15 procedures manual and bylaws that you -- we as a commission
16 just approved earlier in the meeting there today. So, thank
17 you for that.

18 Moving on to Item 14. Another opportunity for public
19 comment. Did we have anybody sign up for public comment?
20 Anybody in the room? Public comment? Please come forward.
21 You have five minutes.

22 PUBLIC COMMENT

23 MS. LOACH: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Amanda Loach.
24 I am the co-chair of the LEPC in the Municipality of Anchorage.
25 I just wanted to make a comment regarding all of the support

1 for the LEPCs in the wake of the recent disasters. And with
2 Anchorage acting as the host city for the evacuation for
3 Typhoon Halong, I do understand that there's been a lot of work
4 with all the local communities that have been involved. I also
5 understand what goes into local emergency management and the
6 fact that the state of Alaska represents a lot of the
7 unorganized borough.

8 And the support for local emergency planning that has
9 dwindled in recent years is, I think as the commissioner of DOT
10 put it, extremely expensive and in technical analysis, way more
11 expensive than preparedness is. And you know, the
12 administration from the federal level right now supports
13 handling disasters on the local level. As a local emergency
14 manager for more than twenty years across the United States, I
15 can tell you that is how emergencies are handled first in the
16 streets and communities that are affected.

17 So when you ask questions like, how can we support local
18 LEPCs? And what is the market analysis behind how do we make
19 sure the LEPCs can do the baseline of maintaining compliance?
20 I would ask that we just do that research. It's not hard to do
21 in the modern era. So I am encouraged by the discussion that
22 we're having here. But I would really like to see us move
23 forward with a work plan that we can work together on before
24 we're here for the next major disaster. Thank you.

25 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Director Loach. I appreciate

1 those comments. I will say on the emergency management side,
2 on the national stage, if you will, there's a group, we kind of
3 call it the big three. So the National Emergency Management
4 Association is trade organization, a professional organization
5 made up of state emergency management directors from around the
6 country. The International Association of Emergency Managers
7 is representative of a lot of local emergency managers and
8 private sector emergency managers. And then there's a smaller
9 group called BCEM, the Big City Emergency Managers.

10 The three of those associations, I'm a member of one of
11 them, have a unified voice in DC and have been discussing the
12 fact. Just like Ms. Loach said, they have an expectation that
13 local -- emergencies and disasters are going to be handled at
14 the local level. They absolutely are and have been. We have
15 some pretty robust statistics about the number of incidents
16 that have been handled at the tribal, municipal, borough, or
17 county, or parish level, or at the state level without a single
18 request to the federal government for assistance. We do that
19 day in day out in this country.

20 So the discussion about state and locals doing more, you
21 know, we take exception to that because we do, and the funding
22 that we do get from the federal government is important to
23 continue to have some of that coming. I think with respect to
24 some longer conversations and changes that may be happening
25 inside the beltway, my position, and I've testified to the FEMA

1 Review Council a number of times, I've had conversations on
2 the hill about this. From my perspective, the states need more
3 funding to pass through their local and tribal government today
4 to build more capacity.

5 If the federal government's going to expect us to do more
6 of their job, then we need more funding now to build that
7 capacity at the local level and in the state to be able to take
8 on some of those things if we're not going to get as many
9 declared disasters from FEMA, if they're going to raise
10 thresholds and all the conversations that are happening there.
11 So thank you for that, Ms. Loach. No other public comments.
12 We'll move to the last item on the agenda, commission member
13 closing comments. I will just go around the horn and see if
14 anybody has anything additional they want to say. Start
15 George.

16 COMMISSION MEMBER CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

17 MR. VIKALIS: Nothing additional to what I've already
18 said, but we really need to think about doing some funding for
19 these LEPCs. And you've heard me say it over and over again
20 and offline I've talked to you about it. Some of these need it
21 a lot more than others quite frankly, because of where they're
22 located, and they don't have a large support base. And those
23 are the ones that really need it the most. However, they all
24 could use additional funding, and we know that, you know that,
25 we've talked about this for years. So I -- my -- I would just

1 encourage everyone in this room to whatever you can do to
2 influence decision makers to at least try to put some more
3 money into the coffers for our local emergency planning
4 committees so that they can adequately do the job that is
5 mandated. Thank you.

6 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, sir.

7 Mr. Cook?

8 MR. COOK: I do. Casey Cook. I want to preface this with
9 -- I'm recovering from pneumonia, so if my voice cracks, it's
10 not that I'm scared of Bryan. So I just wanted to -- so
11 touching back, you asked a question about the cost of LEPCs,
12 and just to follow up on what George and Amanda said, the
13 \$300,000 that was there has been there, was minimal at best. I
14 mean, it's great to have, but it's like getting, you know,
15 \$100,000 for \$1 million project. You really can't do a lot of
16 stuff without all of the funds needed. And so I'd like to push
17 that back onto the SERC, through the LEPCA to come up with how
18 much does it cost to run, because George can probably tell you
19 exactly what those benchmarks were. I think it was anywhere
20 from \$3,000 to \$25,000 in that range for each LEPC. And so,
21 again, I just wanted to answer your question really bluntly in
22 that regard. We appreciate the \$300,000, but it's not enough
23 to do the job that we need to do. That relates into, you know,
24 all these disasters coming more locally, just anecdotally.

25 With that shift to local government, through the state

1 government, it's incumbent upon you guys as commissioners and
2 deputy commissioners of state departments, when you see a need
3 in the community to figure out how to fund that through
4 whatever budgetary mechanisms you use. And then I would hope
5 that through DEC and DHS&EM, you'd say, okay, here's how we can
6 send money from DOT to DHS&EM to support whatever it is,
7 whatever that looks like, right? And so, as a local government
8 representative and as a citizen of Alaska, that's my
9 expectation of government is to say, there's something going on
10 in the community. Here's what my department can do to help
11 that community, to make them stronger, more resilient, all
12 those types of things.

13 And so that leads into my second one or my third point.
14 There's still a lot of missing commissioners, deputy
15 commissioners, there's a lot of missing members from this SERC
16 that are supposed to be here. That's -- they're supposed to be
17 here; you're supposed to be here talking about these things
18 that are happening in the community in Alaska. And so it's
19 really frustrating for me as a citizen and a local government
20 representative that there's other people that are supposed to
21 be here that are not here. So I'm just going on record for
22 that.

23 In that regard, I'd like to maybe have a conversation on
24 the agenda for our next SERC meeting to talk about moving it
25 from the Fridays of the conferences to a Tuesday on the

1 conference, because you're going to get more people come in.
2 I mean, it's a beautiful Friday. I'm surprised I'm not taking
3 vacation for a three-day weekend. Right.

4 So that being said, logistically, I'd like to have that
5 conversation to talk about moving it to the beginning of the
6 conferences as opposed to the end of the conferences, because
7 that's another way that you're going to get more local folks in
8 the room. I mean, we're having this meeting for twelve people
9 in the room, statewide emergency conference -- statewide
10 emergency response conference. There's people that should have
11 been here to listen to Torri's presentation about lithium
12 batteries. And if they're all flying back on Friday, you've
13 just missed that opportunity to see that important information
14 to get it back to the local level. So we can talk about that
15 on the next one.

16 And I think there's -- and what you'll see, I think in the
17 next packet from the LEPCA is they've done the letters, they've
18 done the legislative action to get this message to the SERC.
19 But they've also provided mechanisms in which to fund LEPCs and
20 LEPCA because other states are doing it. So those mechanisms
21 have already been established, they've been practiced, they've
22 been implemented, and it's working. The point is how do we
23 make it work here in Alaska to be able to do that? So if we're
24 not going to get FEMA money, if we're not going to get
25 operating budget money from the state, there's other ways to do

1 that. And so how do we support that in making that forward?

2 So I know I'm putting a lot on Dave's replacement moving
3 forward and DHS&EM and DEC, but those mechanisms are there, and
4 it's a matter of becoming a working group, which we've talked
5 about in the past as well. How do we do that? And so, again -
6 - yes, I think that's about it. But I hate to throw people
7 under the bus, but as a citizen and as a local government
8 representative, my expectation of government is to show up to
9 the table and do the work. And this is probably the fifth
10 meeting I've made this comment. And I don't know who that
11 comes to, TEC, DHS&EM, whomever. I don't have a direct line to
12 the government to make sure that his commissioners are showing
13 up to do their job, but it's not being done.

14 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, sir. Deputy Commissioner.

15 MR. DONELY: Yes. The department administration continues
16 to maintain the Alaska Rural Communication System. We
17 completed eight-year FCC licenses on 128 sites spread out
18 across rural Alaska. We're working with our contractor to
19 upgrade some of those sites now, moving up from 10-watt
20 transmitters to 100-watt transmitters, including spanning us
21 from four to six channels of programming. Those sites support
22 28 rural public radio stations with programming, which then sub
23 -- have sub transmitters spread out all over the place, too. I
24 -- we don't even have a complete sense of how many sub
25 transmitters we all have out there that are utilizing ARCS

1 programming through the public radio system. So that
2 continues to -- we're working on improvements to it and
3 maintaining it, and of course, it applies to the emergency
4 broadcasting system to all those communities.

5 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, Deputy Commissioner. I will
6 say that the Alaska Rural Communication System is one of our
7 backbones for public alert warning in the state to get messages
8 out, particularly to rural Alaska. So I appreciate that
9 update. Thank you. Anything else? Torri, anything?

10 MS. HUELSKOETTER: Nothing from me. Thank you,

11 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Director?

12 MS. MOLLER: That just sparked my memory. In the
13 department, we've received the BEAD funding for the broadband,
14 and we hope as that's deployed, the grants will come through
15 our office. But we've got a lot of money coming and a lot of
16 contracts. I think there's twenty-two contractors and entities
17 that are doing all of the work. And also on the Department of
18 Commerce website you can find more details on that. But that
19 was a big win. We've got that award and are proceeding with
20 sending those out to the qualified bidders, I suppose. So
21 hopefully that will help enhance our communication across the
22 whole state.

23 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thanks, Sandra. Anything else? Closing
24 comments from DOT, Deputy Commissioner?

25 MS. KEITH: Yes, thank you. I think my final comment is

1 about risk. One of the things that as state agencies, we're
2 not always very comfortable with risk. There's a lot that
3 comes to the decisions that we make. But one thing -- you
4 know, some folks in this room, I see Mark back there, who's
5 trying to hide, but -- and DMVA, like, they took a lot of risks
6 on Halong to allow all of us to keep going and to have that
7 response. It takes a lot of trust between our agencies and
8 absolute willingness to take some risks.

9 So I think as part of SERC, what this body could do is
10 perhaps help provide some cover to risks that we all may need
11 to take as there are agencies. And I'm not sure if in the
12 bylaws or any of the policies and procedures or something that
13 this group can do when an event happens to help provide some of
14 that cover, that the actions that were all collectively taken
15 are within the oversight or at least the bounds of what's
16 reasonable in a response. And that's perhaps something for a
17 different agenda item. But I appreciate it when we can take
18 risks even when we fail, you know, but we're -- I think we all
19 have the right intent there, but this body could certainly
20 help. That's it.

21 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you for that. Co-Chair.

22 CO-CHAIR KOHLER: Thank you, Director Fisher. I think
23 there's a -- I was -- I am really excited about the policies
24 and procedures getting that updated from 2018, which I
25 recognizes might feel like an administrative push, but that

1 took a huge amount of effort and really thoughtful
2 conversations among this group and previous members of the SERC
3 on how to move forward and where do we continue to head. I
4 also really appreciated the conversation in the room today. It
5 was a really engaged group, and I appreciate that. So I don't
6 think I have any additional comments. I look forward to our
7 next meeting and some of the items for discussion that have
8 come through.

9 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Thank you, Director. One last thing.
10 Did I miss anything? How bad did I screw up the meeting?
11 Good. Okay. Thank you. I do want to say thank you to Dave
12 Riley, the SERC Coordinator. I want to thank Kim Berenberg on
13 our staff for helping put this together. Kathy Shea from DEC
14 and the team. Erin Leaders, she had to leave. But the work
15 that they put in to make sure that our meetings can happen and
16 we get the venue and all of those things. Have a recorder,
17 have the Zoom or Teams or whatever. There's a lot of work that
18 goes on behind the scenes to do that. So thank you all for
19 supporting the commission here.

20 For what it's worth, if you know a friend that is -- could
21 fill the seat for one of the local emergency planning committee
22 representatives, is that the rural one that's vacant right now?
23 I think. I can't see it on the board's site here. Or a local
24 government representative, if you know somebody that may have
25 interest in joining us on the commission, there is an

1 application process on the Governor's website for the office -
2 - the boards and commission's office. We do have a couple of
3 vacancies. It outlines the process on how somebody could apply
4 to volunteer to be on this commission. And we're certainly
5 willing to work with anybody who you know that may fit into
6 those criteria that want to apply. We're certainly happy to
7 help them through that process with boards and commissions. So
8 you know, we definitely want to have a full table here with all
9 of the representatives that are in the statute that should be
10 here at the commission.

11 This isn't my last commission meeting, but it's my last
12 in-person commission meeting. I think most of you know that
13 I'm going to be retiring at the end of the administration here.
14 So I did want to take a chance just as it's our last commission
15 meeting in-person that I'll be in attendance. I have 241 days,
16 one hour, 57 minutes, and 35 seconds left in my state service.
17 So I did just want to take the opportunity to say thank you to
18 all of you. I will be here for the fall meeting, which is on,
19 again, a reminder October 16th. It'll be a virtual meeting.

20 I just want to thank you for the opportunity to serve
21 alongside you and to help all of the folks, whether it's the
22 LEPC members or the association members or the commission here
23 to work together as we move forward for both oil and hazmat
24 response and all-hazards response and recovery in the state.
25 So it's been an honor to serve with you all, and I definitely

1 look forward to our next meeting. And with that, I will
2 entertain a motion to adjourn.

3 MR. COOK: Cook. So moved.

4 CO-CHAIR FISHER: Second?

5 MS. KEITH: Keith. Second.

6 CO-CHAIR FISHER: We are adjourned. Thank you everybody.

7 MEETING ADJOURNMENT

8 The meeting was adjourned at 03:39 p.m.

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<hr/> \$ <hr/>	192 27:7 28:9	<hr/> 4 <hr/>	Act 15:9 20:25 21:5 30:23 38:21 43:10
\$1 20:21 82:14 87:15	1:00 2:3,6	4 9:4 64:21 82:16	acting 84:2
\$100,000 20:3 87:15	<hr/> 2 <hr/>	4669 21:4	action 19:23 21:8 59:3 74:11,12 75:25 89:18
\$17,000 22:21	2 36:10 37:25 42:13 71:22	48 22:19	actions 9:18
\$25,000 87:20	2.2 73:20	<hr/> 5 <hr/>	activated 63:3
\$3,000 87:20	200 76:13	5 11:1	active 30:14 35:22 37:18 39:9 46:4
\$300,000 25:11 30:10 33:1 87:13,22	2000 78:11	500 80:12	activities 13:7 23:24 30:14 38:1 39:6 43:5 80:14
\$35 73:19	2007 45:16	5:00 78:12	activity 4:3 20:22 39:15
\$44,000 16:5	2018 73:12	<hr/> 6 <hr/>	acts 17:14
\$44,800 15:13	2019 30:16 62:17	6 10:23	actual 22:20 54:7
\$450,000 22:14	2021 62:15,17	<hr/> 7 <hr/>	acute 13:25 67:6
\$7 82:16	2022 13:23 63:9,10	7 12:2 72:15	ad 36:20
\$7.2 45:16	2024 61:15	75,000 33:15	Adam 2:21 68:12 81:22, 24
<hr/> 1 <hr/>	2025 39:20 61:15 63:9, 10,15 74:9	<hr/> 8 <hr/>	add 3:10 37:16 44:22
10 40:10 50:3	23 28:20	8	added 25:11
10-minute 50:1	24 20:20 22:19	8 7:23 23:8	addition 25:3 28:1
10-watt 90:19	24/7 58:15,21 60:10	<hr/> 9 <hr/>	additional 19:9 39:6 53:12 80:23 82:16 86:14, 17,24
100 13:1 78:15	25 20:20	9 8:2	additions 7:13 9:14 10:4
100-watt 90:20	26 28:20	93 16:12	address 16:2 23:14 63:6
10th 28:14	26.23 30:24	96 7:18	addressed 29:16,17
12 51:3 72:15 83:6	263 30:7	<hr/> A <hr/>	Aden's 28:5
128 90:17	27 30:8	absence 37:21	adequately 87:4
12A 51:6	28 90:22	absolutely 85:14	adjacent 63:6
12B 51:6	29th 19:11	absorb 56:5	ADJOURNMENT 86:16
13 22:21 83:6	2:20 50:4	accept 7:7 29:25	adjunct 18:18
14 78:9 83:18	<hr/> 3 <hr/>	account 43:2	adjusted 34:23
140 54:1	3 7:6	accurate 4:20	adjusting 73:23
147 60:3	35 73:13	accustomed 10:1	adjustment 14:22
15 23:1	350 16:4	acid 54:24 65:7 67:4,5 72:1	admin 5:18
15-year 33:5	360 6:11		administration 2:25 82:24 83:1 84:12 90:15
150 33:14	38 74:3,6		
16th 11:13	3:30 28:14		
18 74:7	3rd 2:6		
180 76:14			

administrative 2:9,10
3:11,13 6:11
adopt 28:17 49:9
adopting 49:13
adoption 48:7
ads 36:21
adult 16:11
advantageous 61:25
advice 34:23 38:16
AEGL 67:5
aerial 81:13,18
AFD 66:10
Affairs 3:18 15:23 29:24
42:11 49:6
affect 22:9
affected 73:15,17 82:18
84:16
afford 36:22
Afghanistan 13:17
after-action 13:7
afternoon 2:4,11 3:14,
20 72:13 83:23
agencies 3:23 4:4 15:6
22:5 29:5 42:7 72:22
77:22,24
agency 4:18 6:25 12:1,2
13:5 19:8,16 21:1 28:4,
11 30:1 31:7 49:11 52:8
72:16,24
agenda 4:25 5:4 7:4,6,7,
9,20 8:23 9:1 10:23,24
11:1,6,9,12,21,22 23:8
83:6 86:12 88:24
agree 29:7
agreed 28:17 30:2 46:19
agreement 27:5
ahead 9:5 21:23,24
31:13 44:16 52:2 62:9
83:14
Ahlberg 23:21 24:2
26:21 28:9 39:16
aid 43:23 46:5,7 47:19

air 13:14 17:7 56:1,2
57:7,11,13,17,19,21,23
58:7,9,10,25 60:14
62:22,23 69:18
Airlines 17:22
airport 68:22
Alaska 2:5 5:17 12:23
13:14,19 14:2 15:21
17:4,7,22,23 27:2,9
28:25 30:23 34:6,19
44:15 64:6 71:24 73:24
74:22 79:2 80:6,7,17
84:6 88:8,18 89:23
90:16,18
Alaskans 13:18
Aleutian-pribilof 38:1
align 44:13
aligns 27:2
All- 43:20
all-hazards 11:18 27:23
allowed 6:22 7:1 15:12
39:23
allowing 54:18
ALOHA 58:20
alternative 38:6
Amanda 83:23 87:12
amazing 17:1 76:18
amendment 25:10,11
30:9
amendments 74:15
America 21:5
AMOS 44:21
amount 5:22,25 18:7,15
48:15 67:11 76:2 80:9
82:17
amounts 57:13
Amy 34:10
analysis 84:10,18
Anchorage 13:3 17:3,4,
5,21 18:10 37:22 63:18
64:13 65:18 73:21 83:24
84:2
Anderson's 80:19

Andres 72:20
anecdotally 87:24
announce 4:17 18:22
announced 20:19
ANNOUNCEMENT
3:13
announcements 2:9,
10 3:11 4:15
annual 23:11 75:3
answers 70:13
anybody's 10:13
anymore 67:13
apartments 17:18,19
apologies 71:23
appeal 14:25
appealed 14:21
applied 63:5
appointments 11:10
appropriated 22:15
appropriation 30:13
43:4
approval 7:6,9 9:3,4
44:24 48:6
approve 9:9 10:5,25
49:1
approved 9:2 10:9
25:12 45:19 73:6 83:16
approving 11:22
April 2:6 28:14
arcing 63:5
ARCS 90:25
Arctic 4:5 12:21 34:25
area 13:24 15:18 22:6,7
26:9,10 27:17 31:23,24
32:6,9,11 60:13 77:10
82:5
areas 28:6 35:24 80:13
82:18,19
Arizona 54:15 62:19
63:1

arms 18:10
Army 17:7
aspect 56:7
assessing 59:4 66:22
assessment 59:16 65:4
assessments 79:7
assign 26:8
assignments 68:5
assist 57:21 74:24
assistance 15:13 22:3
58:17 82:8 85:18
assistant 18:24 82:3
assisted 66:16
assisting 5:20
association 7:24,25 8:4
11:17 15:21 23:7,9,18,23
24:1 27:3,4,5,15 29:1
31:3 32:21 37:19 40:9
67:18 85:4,6
associations 85:10
assume 6:20
atmosphere 63:17
atrocious 70:11
attachment 51:10
attachments 51:6
attack 57:11
attention 83:5
ATV 55:13,17
ATVS 55:15 65:8
Australia 63:4
authority 15:8,11,22
81:7
availability 64:16 69:15
avalanche 79:20
AVCP 15:22 31:25 32:16
33:11 34:3,4,11,12,16,22
35:8 81:7
avenue 73:10
average 12:12 35:24

averaging 22:1
award 22:21 74:4
awarded 20:4,14
awards 31:11
aware 13:12 54:10
 55:10,23 67:9 70:2
awareness 53:5 54:11
 65:9 67:15
awesome 23:19
awful 41:16
aye 8:24,25 10:6,7
 11:22,23 47:14,15 48:2,3
 49:15,16

B

back 4:2 7:18 15:2 20:7,
 20,23 32:12 34:3 36:1
 41:5 50:3 52:2 61:5 71:7
 73:3 78:17 80:24,25
 87:11,17 89:12,14
backup 68:16
banks 72:2
bar 23:6
bare 30:21 38:19
bared 77:5
barges 61:12
base 30:17 41:20,21
 86:22
based 41:12 45:7 47:4
 61:11 66:18 81:17
baseline 30:12 33:1
 84:19
basic 64:10 77:2
basically 73:8,16,22
basis 26:10 39:7 61:6
basket 57:4
batteries 52:11,15 55:3,
 9,11,12,13 56:14,20,23
 59:6,7,19,20 61:17 62:4,
 5 63:13 65:7,8 66:3
 67:12 68:4 69:17 72:1,7,
 13 89:12

battery 53:1,5,9,13,16,
 22,23 54:1,8,16 55:4,5,6,
 16 56:9,14,16 57:7 58:4,
 11 59:8,16,17 60:4,5
 61:11,13,19 62:16,20
 64:21,22 65:1,13,14,19,
 21,23,25 66:6 67:1 68:25
 70:7 71:14

BCEM 85:9
beat 40:19
beautiful 89:2
began 76:16
begin 54:7
beginning 89:5
behalf 18:17 34:13
 49:20
beltway 85:25
Ben 2:22 3:8
benchmarks 87:19
benefit 22:25
Bering 17:13
BESS 57:22 58:24 60:16
 61:22 62:2,10 63:4,19
 65:14 66:9 68:13 72:8
bet 63:22
Bethel 18:2 31:23 32:20
bias 81:15
big 20:12 23:2 59:10
 69:22 80:2 85:3,9
bigger 58:23 60:9 62:8
 66:10
biggest 36:8 63:13 68:5
bill 19:14 21:4 27:7
 28:12,13,16 30:7 31:9
 38:11
billion 20:21
bind 20:5
Bishop 10:17 18:6
bit 4:8 10:20 22:23,24
 34:2 36:7,19 37:16 56:8
 61:19 82:18
blessing 39:19

blew 65:20
block 75:16,17
blocks 14:15 55:7
blue 80:8
bluntly 87:21
board 8:25 10:7 11:23
 13:6 47:15 48:3 49:16
 76:17
boards 83:11
boats 65:8
Bob 26:12
boilers 76:24
bone 38:19
bones 30:21
borough 4:5 11:11
 12:22 24:2 28:7 35:9
 84:7 85:16
boroughs 26:4,6
bottom 41:2
boundary 32:16,17
box 3:9
brand 66:1
break 49:21,23 50:1,3
breakup 80:23
breeze 53:3
Brenda 23:21 24:2
 26:20 28:8,17,25 39:16
Brian 2:15 32:3
briefing 52:11
briefly 52:25 61:19
brine 56:18
bring 5:5 7:19 23:21
 52:2 53:5 54:11 61:5
 64:17
broader 57:17
brochures 22:12
brought 18:13
Bryan 2:2 3:15 6:17 9:22
 18:9 29:11 49:5 73:16
 87:10

buckets 60:4
bucks 66:1
budget 29:23,24 30:7
 31:9 36:21 41:10 42:14,
 19 89:25
budgetary 88:4
build 34:22 45:17 86:4,6
building 15:15 20:13
 67:15
buildup 54:21
built 76:1
bummer 71:9
bunch 62:4,5
Bureau 15:23
burn 55:22 56:10,11
 57:15
burned 63:10
burns 53:13
burnt 56:16
bus 90:7
business 4:23 19:2
 20:23 40:11,12 44:4 50:2
businesses 68:15
busy 12:11 21:25 72:11
 79:22
buy 16:23
bylaws 5:3 8:14 33:9
 44:13,14,15,18,25 45:5
 48:8 49:12,14 83:8,15

C

C-17 13:13
C-17S 13:14
cabins 55:12 65:8
California 53:2 56:1,15
 59:15 60:19 63:14
call 2:5,9,10,12 4:22
 50:4 52:7 71:8,12,16
 83:5 85:3
called 2:2 4:25 15:7
 20:13 33:22 46:12 73:4

85:9	challenging 19:25	cleared 62:22	Commerce 2:18 7:15 8:12 9:12,15 29:2 33:13 72:25 73:5
calls 26:15	championing 28:24	click 50:25	commission 2:6 3:18 4:18,23 5:2 8:13,18 10:13 11:11,12 15:5,6 23:18 29:12,17 30:11 35:4,21 40:8 41:19 42:10,15 43:3 44:5 45:8, 10,19,22 46:6,14,21,25 48:8 49:7,14 52:11,12 67:24 72:20,21 77:23 83:15 86:12,16
canceled 39:20	chance 4:9 23:12 28:8	close 63:15 68:22 76:13	commission's 5:3 8:21 9:7 11:1 44:7 49:10
cancelled 20:10,14,18	chances 59:24	closed 54:17	commissioner 10:18, 21 16:19 18:6 35:16 37:15 76:7 80:4,18,19 81:9 82:24 84:9 90:14
candid 40:5	Chandler 63:1	closing 86:13,16	commissioners 88:1,2, 14,15 90:12
cap 15:23	change 9:19 66:18 74:16	clothes 56:6	commissions 83:12
capabilities 58:15 69:18 81:20	changed 9:22 41:8 43:3	clothing 56:5	committee 5:6 7:24 8:21 11:15,16,19 23:7,9, 22 25:10 28:15 29:16 30:3 32:7,9,15,24 33:9, 10 38:2,15,20 40:13,14, 17,20,24 41:18 42:3,16, 17 43:5,20,21,24 44:1,7, 11,20,23 45:7,15,19,21, 22,25 46:1,5,16,17 47:6, 12 52:9
capability 80:8,10	channels 90:21	clue 25:5	committees 8:2 30:4, 15,16,22 31:5 37:18,19 38:5,14,16 39:9,12,13 40:16 43:6 44:22 45:12 46:2,14,20,23 47:1,18, 20,25 67:25 87:4
capacity 34:17,22 35:7 80:8,9 86:4,7	Chapter 28:20	co- 5:18 7:24	common 27:16 53:21 54:21 79:8
car 65:19	characterize 12:19 17:9 32:18	co-chair 2:2,4,15,17 3:11,14,18 5:13,16 6:18 7:11,13,22 8:20 9:1,4,11, 13,21 10:8,11,21,25 11:4,7,24 12:2 23:5,8,25 28:3 29:11 32:3 33:5,21 35:16 37:3,15 40:8,13 42:2,9,21 44:2,4 45:1 47:9,11,16,22,24 48:4, 11,13,18,22 49:5,17,25 50:6 52:1,5,20,22 67:17, 22 71:2,5 72:5 75:7,12, 14 76:7 80:4 82:23 83:3, 24 84:25 87:6 90:14	Communication 90:16
carbon 53:19,20 54:19	characterized 13:22 67:19	co-chairs 23:22 29:12	communications 44:22 45:15,18 47:18
card 70:10	charge 56:17,22 66:2	coast 6:24 14:1,2 17:6 19:15 76:14	communities 5:23 13:20 14:4,6 16:8,18,22 18:13 20:13 22:9 32:15 41:22 54:10,12 58:3,5,18 59:25 65:11 73:18 74:25 75:6 76:4,17 77:25 78:13,25 80:6,11 84:4,16
care 4:10 6:2 13:10 17:17 35:19 77:21	charger 65:25	cobalt 62:20	
carpenter 67:11	charges 46:13	codify 28:19	
carries 49:18	charging 55:7 65:23 67:13	coffers 87:3	
cars 65:8	chat 3:9	cognizant 57:6	
Casey 3:6 87:8	check 49:20,21	cold 59:1	
catastrophic 13:25 14:6	check-in 9:8 10:14	collaboration 22:5	
catastrophically 13:21	checks 62:14	collaboratively 27:14	
catch 54:3 62:23	chemical 53:15 58:24	collected 81:18	
catching 63:23	Cherokee 19:20	colors 27:6,18 28:18	
caught 62:17,20 63:1,4 67:14	Chiefs 27:4	combustible 53:17	
caused 54:18	China 62:15	Command 46:10	
caution 54:9	choir 41:24	comment 10:10,11,12, 14,16 83:19,20,22,25 90:10	
cell 71:23,24	Chugach 68:19	comments 5:11,12 28:4 33:21 47:3 49:2,11 85:1 86:11,13,16	
Central 17:23 34:18	cities 24:8		
Centre 17:22	citizen 44:20 45:21,24 88:8,19 90:7		
chair 5:19 11:18 43:20 44:11 47:12	Citizens 43:20 47:6		
chairs 7:25 39:16 40:14, 15 46:1,17,19 47:25	city 17:21 84:2 85:9		
challenge 41:11 59:20 68:4 77:8	class 63:25 64:1,8,13,15 69:16		
challenges 59:4 68:9 80:22	cleaner 61:24		
	cleanup 65:4 82:13		
	clear 28:21		

community 16:13,15,
23,24 30:23 34:25 38:8,
21 43:10 55:23 57:8,9,
13,20 58:6 59:2 64:18
66:22 67:15 71:18 73:4
75:16,17 76:20,21 77:2,4
78:17 88:3,10,11,18

compact 43:23 46:5
47:19

compacted 34:13

companies 61:13

complete 15:16 90:24

completed 46:14 90:17

completely 47:1

complex 16:14

compliance 35:22 36:1,
8 84:19

complicated 16:25
60:24 61:9,18 68:9

complication 56:21

complied 36:12

concern 7:19,21 65:9
66:8

concerned 7:16 54:25
55:13

concerns 70:15

condition 61:12

conference 23:11,16
64:7 89:1,9,10

conferences 88:25
89:6

confident 19:21

confirmed 19:19

congress 19:13 21:4
75:21

Congress's 75:8

connection 28:5

consent 10:23,24 11:1,
6,9,12,21,22

Conservation 5:14,17
21:22 39:1 42:12 44:6

considerations 63:21

consistent 28:21

Consortium 17:24 34:7

consortiums 35:5,6

constant 76:19

construction 15:7,17
76:17 77:4

contact 26:10,13

container 54:17

containers 56:24 60:12

contaminated 61:1,2

contamination 59:11

content 51:1

context 72:3

contingency 38:11

continue 5:21 12:19
18:12,14 19:4 20:15,23
32:25 35:2,10 39:10,15
49:22 56:25 65:15 67:23
85:23

continued 35:4

continues 19:6 38:23
90:15

continuing 6:1 19:14
39:4 52:14 68:1

continuity 18:14

contract 20:3 76:24
80:16,19 81:5

contracting 13:6

contractor 90:18

contractors 16:20 77:6

control 73:9

conversation 8:5 27:25
31:15 32:4 46:19 54:11
67:8,23 69:6 88:23 89:5

conversations 31:17
32:25 33:11 40:6 45:8
46:1,17 85:24 86:1,10

convoluted 57:4 61:9

cook 3:6 7:12 43:23,25
44:3 46:4 47:10,23 48:1
49:24,25 74:18 87:7,8

cooking 77:17

cool 44:3 63:7

coolant 63:4

coordinate 70:13,21

coordinating 14:17

coordination 33:23
40:2

coordinator 2:8,12
11:20 18:23 29:13 65:3

coordinators 52:17
72:10

copies 9:6 26:22 31:12
48:20

copy 7:3 9:7 25:1 50:9

corner 75:9

Corporation 32:23

Corps 43:20 44:20
45:21,24 47:6

correction 10:19

corrosive 53:17 54:23
55:2

cost 14:22 28:13 78:4
87:11,18

council 15:21 16:10
19:10 31:25 32:22 34:18
69:25 86:1

councils 14:3

counsel 34:23

counting 24:15

country 13:16 20:21
81:14 85:6,19

county 85:17

couple 4:15 6:20 14:1,
15,19 17:20 19:19 21:6
28:3 29:8 30:9 32:5
35:17 39:17 53:1 76:10
79:4

court 20:17

coveralls 59:14 60:20,
21

cracks 87:9

crap 68:21

create 56:25 74:18

created 45:22

creating 45:19

crisis 16:2

crisp 56:16

critical 77:14,19

currency 38:25

current 36:24 47:12
60:2

cusps 40:3

Cybersecurity 19:16

D

damage 25:24 79:7

damaged 53:25 55:4
57:2 59:20 64:3

dangerous 54:14,22

dangers 66:14

data 73:21 79:9 81:17

date 11:12 13:8

Dave 2:8,9,11 3:1,14
29:19

Dave's 90:2

David 11:20

day 3:15 5:17 17:17
23:14 31:9 55:10,11
64:8,13 70:5 72:11 78:12
80:8 85:19

day-to-day 53:9 61:6

days 30:9 41:5 63:10
76:13,15

DC 79:10 85:11

DCRA 73:5 75:9

de-energize 56:18

de-energized 56:24

deadline 19:9

deal 57:15 77:23

dealing 42:25 59:8
80:21

dealt 41:7	65:18 68:12 72:18 76:12	directed 20:17 44:12	distributed 41:12
Deana 10:17	80:15 81:4,22,24 82:11, 24,25 83:9,10 88:10	direction 46:25 58:13 66:18	district 18:10 28:10 32:6,17,25 38:16
death 40:20	90:15	directly 14:10 17:3 18:9 28:4 29:17,19 32:20 46:1 82:12	districts 18:7,8 32:22 37:17
debris 6:2	department's 29:21	director 3:16,20 5:13, 16,18 6:18 7:14 12:4 16:14 21:18,21 23:5 29:1,11,12,19 31:16 32:3 35:13 72:22 75:7,23 84:25	division 3:16 12:4,7,11, 15 19:25 21:13,18,20 22:25 23:13 26:25 27:3 46:7 49:6
DEC 2:16 5:21 33:8 45:2 88:5 90:3	departments 27:14 88:2	directors 85:5	division's 16:17
DEC's 23:6	depend 64:15 79:15	dirt 36:17	DMVA 2:14 42:6,14 45:3 49:5 77:22
decade 71:7,8,12	depending 22:21 27:24	disaster 3:25 13:5,11, 22,24 14:8,12,13,17,20 15:2 18:16,24 25:17 27:9 33:24 34:14 35:12 37:10 73:12 74:2 75:16 78:4 80:9 81:16,17 82:2,3,5,7 84:24	DNR 2:22
decades 32:5	deployed 14:11 61:16	disasters 4:13 5:20 12:13,16,18,25 15:9 20:1 75:22 76:4 79:3 81:10 82:1 84:1,13 85:13 86:9 87:24	documents 44:16 48:16 64:25
December 14:25	deploying 34:16	discrete 45:23	dollars 16:7 30:12 33:6 82:21
decision 14:19 15:10 87:2	deployment 34:21	discussing 31:20 85:11	domino 60:7
declaration 14:9 82:2	deputy 12:4 16:19 35:16 37:15 76:7 80:4,18 81:9 82:23 88:2,14 90:14	discussion 8:18 9:13 11:7,21 28:5 47:11,13,24 48:13,16 58:3 76:11 84:21 85:20	Don 48:13
declare 81:16	designated 73:14	discussions 8:22 30:20 38:18 45:6 66:12	Donely 3:1 48:12 82:25 90:15
declared 12:13,18 86:9	designee 3:18 5:19 44:11	disguise 39:20	Donley 82:24
decon 56:7 60:19	desire 64:11	dislocated 82:10	door 54:17 62:22,24 65:20 67:12
deconflict 44:14	desperately 64:17	disperse 30:3 42:18	DOT 2:23 16:20 61:10 72:17 76:8 80:2 81:2 84:9 88:6
decontaminate 56:6 61:3	destroyed 15:17	displaced 13:11,19 17:17 18:12 80:12	DOT's 81:18
decontamination 59:11	details 75:14	display 69:18	douse 56:12
dedicated 82:19	DETERMINATION 3:13	disposable 59:13 60:20	Doyon 69:13
defecation 62:21	determine 58:17	disposal 59:21,23 64:2	DPS 2:22
defective 57:2	develop 35:7	dispose 57:3,5 60:22	DR4893 14:13
Defensive 63:21	developing 46:7 71:8	disruptions 6:5 12:17	drafted 29:19
degas 60:13	development 10:19 15:23 33:15 38:17 75:15, 16,17 79:24 81:23 82:10	distribute 40:21 42:14	drills 22:2
degree 16:12	Dewalt 55:6 65:24 67:11		drivers 78:16
degrees 54:1	DFG 2:20		driving 28:9 78:13
delegation 21:7	DHS 19:14 20:25 21:2		drones 79:9,16
delivering 75:1 77:17	DHS&EM 2:11 88:5,6 90:3,11		dropped 65:23
delivery 29:23 42:21	DHSEM 42:6		due 12:6 63:4,16,24
Delta 13:20 32:13	differences 56:9		Dunleavy 12:18 14:21 18:17
denial 14:22	difficult 57:4 59:12		
denied 14:24	dime 35:11		
department 2:25 3:17 5:13,17,18,19 6:21,23 10:18 12:10 17:7 18:18 19:13 21:21 26:4,7 29:24 31:7 33:7 35:3,11 38:25 42:10,12 44:6 46:6 57:24	dioxide 53:20		
	direct 42:7 90:11		

dust 58:9
dwindled 84:9
dynamic 19:12

E

e-bike 71:14
earlier 12:23 62:20 68:2 83:16
earthquake 73:12 74:17
east 66:16
easy 77:14
eat 61:6
economic 33:15
EDA 33:17
educate 25:4 70:18
education 10:18 39:7
effect 60:7
effective 25:22 47:6,19 78:23
effectively 61:3
efficiencies 6:14
efficient 3:21
effort 6:11,15 16:13 17:16 31:25 39:14 45:20 48:20 81:3
efforts 22:6 33:8 34:13 81:25 82:13
egress 67:14
eight-year 90:17
election 21:8
electric 56:15 58:8 68:20
electricians 59:17
electrocution 53:13
electrolyte 55:2 56:17 59:9 62:7
electronically 11:9 39:4
elevation 73:22

email 50:13 70:11 73:1
emerge 52:14
emergencies 84:15 85:13
emergency 2:5 3:16 6:25 7:23 11:16 12:5 19:7,8 20:24 21:5 23:7,9, 11,20,22,25 26:5,8 27:2, 4 29:15 30:14,22,23 32:6,9 33:10 34:5,8,17, 20,22 35:1,12,22 36:23 37:17 38:2,7,8,20 43:5, 10 48:8 67:24 69:12 73:3 84:5,8,13 85:1,3,5,6,7,8, 9 87:3 89:9,10
emerging 52:13
employed 72:12
employers 70:15
enclosed 54:14,21
encourage 41:14 87:1
encouraged 31:2 84:21
end 4:7 23:10 26:23 31:8 44:25 81:10 83:4 89:6
ended 45:13 71:15
ending 81:9
Endres 2:22
ends 82:3
energizing 23:17
energy 53:10 54:16 55:5 61:19 68:16,24
engage 6:16 29:10
engaged 12:15 78:15
engagement 33:20
engaging 5:22
ensure 35:21
ensuring 29:7
entering 76:13
entertain 7:7 9:9 10:25 47:5,17 48:6
entire 16:12,15,18 31:8 32:10 43:18 49:19 61:16 80:11,18

entirety 11:20
entities 17:2,24 35:6,8
entity 32:14,23 34:5 36:2
Environmental 5:14,17 21:22 39:1 42:12 44:6 52:8
envisioning 69:25
EOP 37:5
EOPS 37:7
EPA 30:22 50:3 52:25 57:19 61:10 63:25 64:16, 21 68:6 72:11
EPAS 69:4
equipment 57:18,20,21
era 84:21
ERG 60:3
Erin 44:5,9,10
erosion 77:5
establish 33:9
established 89:21
establishing 57:8
estimation 4:11
ethics 83:8,11
EV 58:4
evacuate 27:12
evacuated 13:15,19
evacuation 17:16 27:10,18,19,24 57:10 58:18 63:2 84:2
evacuations 17:6 28:22
evaluate 59:17
evaluating 57:9
event 53:22 62:21 74:4 75:3 78:8
events 41:7 62:10,11 74:1,7,11 77:12 78:6 79:20
ever-increasing 79:3
everyday 66:9

evolved 33:16
ex-official 6:20
ex-officio 72:16,24
excellent 76:22
exception 85:21
excited 6:12 40:7
exciting 6:15
excuse 11:19 26:25 29:2
executive 19:9
existed 45:24
existence 46:3
existent 80:10
expect 22:10 86:5
expectation 85:12 88:9 90:8
expensive 22:24 60:25 61:25 84:10,11
experience 16:15
experienced 4:11
expert 69:10
expire 37:7
expires 37:10
explains 50:11
explode 54:4
exploded 62:17,21
explosion 54:18
explosions 53:13
explosive 56:13
exposure 59:5 67:6,7
exposures 57:9
expound 39:17
extend 82:5
extended 19:11
extending 19:9
external 62:22,23
extra 78:2
extremely 12:11 38:23

77:13 84:10
eyes 62:14

F

face 60:23
faced 4:13 12:25
facets 79:4
facilitated 17:6
facilities 37:25 38:22
 76:10 77:15 80:16 81:5
facility 59:23
facing 79:4
fact 19:25 53:7 84:6
 85:12
failure 62:10
failures 76:19
Fairbanks 11:11,17
 18:3 64:12
fairly 24:4 34:20 73:10
fall 20:18 34:4 39:20
 81:17
fantastic 6:6 79:6
Faraday 66:5
fascinating 71:10,17
fashion 39:25 43:12
fast 27:7 60:11
favor 8:23 10:5 11:21
 47:14 48:1 49:13
favorable 15:10
FCC 90:17
federal 4:4 6:25 14:8,13,
 19,22,23 15:1,9,25 19:7
 20:20 22:5 29:25 31:1
 36:12 38:13 43:9,15
 45:13,14 52:17 72:10
 74:2 75:22 84:12 85:18,
 22 86:5
federally 35:21 43:11
feds 82:14
feel 28:19 70:10 79:12
 81:13

fees 41:6
fellow 21:15
fellows 34:10
felt 9:16
FEMA 14:10,15 15:8
 19:7,10,15 20:7,10,17,23
 21:5,9 33:18,19,22 37:11
 38:12 46:11 68:5 72:17
 75:18,19 79:7 85:25 86:9
 89:24
FEMA's 15:12 16:18
FEMAS 16:17
FENZO 61:10
field 14:15 23:20
fifteen 32:12 33:2
figure 16:24 61:2 71:2,
 14 78:3 88:3
fill 73:3
finally 39:2
finance 25:10 30:3,9
 40:17,20 42:3,15
find 32:23 38:4,6 48:20
finding 77:17 79:22
fine 52:5 62:24,25
fire 27:1,4,21 28:22 34:9
 53:1,12,22 54:4,7,8,16,
 25 57:7,11,12,24 58:1,8,
 11,16 60:4 61:16 62:17,
 21 63:1,3,4,6,8,10,14,23
 64:22 65:18 66:19,24
 67:14 68:4,7 69:19
 71:13,15
fire- 59:13
firefighter 65:20 69:19
firefighters 54:19
 62:18,21 64:6 69:25
 71:13,16
firefighting 63:25 64:1
fires 52:15 53:2,5,7,8,
 13,16 55:20 56:4,9 58:23
 66:6
fiscal 20:20 22:14 23:2
 28:12 30:8

Fisher 2:2,4,15 3:11,14,
 15 5:16 6:18 7:11,13,22
 8:20 9:1,4,11,13,21 10:8,
 11,21,25 11:4,7,24 12:2
 23:5,8 28:3 29:11,12
 32:3,4 33:5,21 35:16
 37:3,15 40:8,13 42:2,9,
 21 44:2,4 45:1 47:9,11,
 16,22,24 48:4,11,13,18,
 22 49:5,17,25 50:6 52:1,
 5,20,22 67:17,22 71:2
 72:5 75:7,12,14 76:7
 80:4 82:23 83:3 84:25
 87:6 90:14
fits 32:18
fix 77:22
fixed 78:25
Fixing 21:5
flammable 53:16,19
flare 63:11
flat 36:14
flavored 6:9,10
fledgling 34:22 35:2
floating 17:13 73:24
flood 75:2
flooding 12:17 79:19
floods 74:8
floor 13:14
flowage 41:6
flows 42:18
flue 58:22
fluid 19:12
fluoride 53:20 54:23,24
 66:21 67:4,5
flyers 23:3
flying 79:16 89:12
focus 73:2 77:10 79:5
folks 6:15 13:14 14:11
 17:14,17,18 18:1,2 19:4
 23:19 27:11 28:6 35:10
 70:18 78:24 80:3 82:3,6,
 8,18 89:7
follow 70:12 78:20
 87:12

follow-up 35:18 42:4
food 6:3 77:18
footprint 60:3,17
forbid 55:16
force 28:10
forest 56:5
Forestry 26:25
forget 76:10
form 33:8 39:10 43:12
formal 24:15 35:9
formalized 39:25
format 10:1 31:13
formed 45:12,15
forthcoming 13:9
fortunate 36:18
forty-eight 59:23
forward 7:25 8:16,19
 9:24 20:16 25:8 27:7
 28:11 35:11 39:25 41:4,
 10 46:18 49:22 72:19
 83:20 84:23 90:1,3
FOSC 69:13
found 33:17 55:2
Foundation 17:23
FR 60:20
fragile 77:3
frankly 86:21
frantically 71:18
free 70:10 73:24
freezing 76:21
frequency 81:11
frequently 29:10
Friday 2:6 3:20 23:17
 89:2,12
Fridays 88:25
friends 13:18 18:4 80:24
front 9:8 12:3 67:12
frustrating 88:19

fuel 61:22,24
full 13:6,14 64:12 70:4
fully 12:15
function 3:8
functioning 32:6
functions 77:19
fund 22:15 30:12,14
 40:23 43:4 88:3 89:19
funded 24:8 25:16 35:20
 36:7,16 45:25
funding 6:23 8:8 14:24
 15:12,15 19:14 20:19
 24:5,13,17 25:3,13 29:5,
 25 30:4,12,15,19 31:6,7
 32:19 33:2,7,16,24
 35:20,23 37:22 38:4,6,19
 39:10 41:1,4,5,9,11,15,
 17,20,21 42:23 43:1,11,
 13,15 64:16 69:16 75:11,
 12 80:1 82:13,20 85:21
 86:3,6,18,24
funds 30:4 40:21,22
 42:6,14,17,18 74:13
 87:16
furlough 14:14
furloughed 7:2
future 9:20,24 41:15
 46:24 78:20

G

gainfully 72:11
Galena 66:16
game 41:8
gamut 15:11
garage 65:19,20
gas 53:20,21 54:6,21
 58:10 66:21 67:1
gases 53:14,17 56:10
 66:23
gassing 55:1 57:1
gathering 74:23
gave 46:14

gear 59:13 60:25 61:3
general 18:17,18 30:12
 43:4
generated 54:21
generates 68:25
generating 68:24
generator 68:17
Genius 61:15
gentle 55:15
geographically 22:22
George 3:3 42:2 43:12
 86:15 87:12,18
giant 62:4
GIS 27:17 79:9 81:13
give 8:9 19:21 23:23
 40:15 44:7 52:10,16
 53:14 55:25 58:22 65:6
 72:20
glacier 75:2
glasses 47:5 72:15
goal 44:13
good 2:4,11 3:14 20:17
 22:5 24:20,24 27:25
 37:6,8 41:19 58:21,22
 70:9 80:5,8 83:23
goofy 51:7
government 3:5,7 8:17
 14:20 31:1 35:10 85:18,
 22 86:3 87:25 88:1,7,9,
 19 90:7,8,12
government's 86:5
governor 12:18 14:21,
 25 18:17
grab 7:4,5
grant 20:3,11,14 45:14,
 16,23 73:12,13,15,17,19
 74:2,5,24 75:16,17 82:11
grants 34:6 36:19 38:4
 73:6,19 74:1,11 75:9,10,
 11,12
great 27:13,19 35:7
 54:20 64:25 67:20,21
 70:14,25 79:24 87:14

grew 82:5
group 85:2,9 90:4
grow 68:1 82:6
growing 68:8 72:9
grown 71:11
growth 35:4
Guard 6:24 13:14 17:7
 19:16
guess 14:16
guessing 26:19
guide 60:3 64:22,23
 70:7
guideline 67:6
guru 71:19
guys 4:11 6:19 21:23
 22:11 23:4,10 24:3,11
 25:1 26:3 30:6 41:23
 49:21 50:18 77:22,23
 81:13,21 88:1

H

Haida 34:19
half 60:23 64:8 70:5
Halong 4:6 5:21 10:22
 12:9,22 22:1 25:17 34:24
 74:10 76:11 84:3
hammered 25:19
hand 66:12
handle 57:14
handled 84:15 85:13,16
handling 84:13
hands 19:22 20:25
 79:14
happen 10:2 21:10
 22:17 30:1 38:6,24 39:5
 63:12 78:18
happened 12:10 18:16
 34:9 74:8 81:3
happening 3:22 8:8
 39:8 50:16 54:12 76:19
 80:18 85:24 86:10 88:18

happy 18:22 31:15,16
 69:5 70:12
hard 5:3 16:19 26:22
 41:23 49:19 56:5 84:20
harder 22:23
hardworking 46:17
harm's 27:12
hate 90:6
hats 69:14
haul 78:8
hailed 78:8
hauling 78:11
hazard 28:22 37:9,11,14
 38:12 67:2,3,25 68:7
hazardous 38:23 41:7
 43:1
hazards 41:8 43:4,21
 53:4,11,12,15 63:13
 65:11
hazmat 43:3
HB 30:7
headers 51:17
health 2:20 17:24 32:23
 34:7 35:5 73:8 81:7
healthy 61:5
hear 3:9 5:24 6:19 14:18
 15:2,4 21:17 39:10 68:8
heard 39:11 52:12 66:4
 74:10 75:3 86:19
hearing 28:14 31:4
heating 22:13,16
heaven 55:16
heck 80:21 81:8
held 22:8 56:17,22
helicopters 17:11
helped 22:1 23:1 74:17
helpful 64:20 66:21
helping 78:14
Hendricks 34:10
heroic 17:9

heroism 17:14	house 22:15 25:10 30:9 69:1	18:8 27:17 65:24 73:18 82:6	individuals 13:2 82:12
hexafluorophosphate 55:1	housed 21:1 42:10,12	impacts 14:7 19:15	indoor 63:2
Hey 26:11	household 55:10	impetus 39:22	indulgence 21:11
high 56:3,13 71:3 78:6	households 13:1,2 16:4 17:19	implement 28:13	influence 87:2
high- 31:23	housing 15:7,22,23 16:2,7 74:18 75:15 81:6	implemented 89:22	informal 39:24
high-level 53:4	How's 50:6	important 8:12,15 21:16 28:19 53:22 70:19 77:3 85:22 89:13	information 22:7 37:20 49:7 54:10 59:1 64:10, 23,25 71:10,11,17 83:8, 11 89:13
higher 56:10	HR 21:4	improved 79:2	informational 83:2,5
highway 63:15	hub 64:12	in-depth 13:4 64:1	infrastructure 16:21,23 19:16 20:13 63:23 76:20
hill 21:6 86:2	HUD 73:6 74:4 75:20,22	inactive 35:25 36:2	ingress 67:13
hire 19:4 78:5,7,8	HUELSKOETTER 52:19,21,24 67:21 68:16 69:7 70:9,17,20,23 71:1	incident 46:9 59:3 75:25	initial 75:19 76:14
hired 18:23 34:8	huge 5:25 17:16 22:24	incidents 85:15	initially 14:23 42:25 82:14
hires 81:6	hundred 14:23 15:16	include 27:16 44:19 83:8	injured 25:25 65:20
historically 42:24 45:11	hundreds 16:6	included 24:25 27:22 40:1	inside 55:2,3 85:25
hit 4:5 53:10 64:11	Hurricane 17:12	includes 22:7 27:8 44:17	inspections 22:2 69:12
hoists 17:10,11	hurting 54:19	including 39:6 90:20	installed 62:20
home 14:6 15:14,16 17:13 22:13,16 26:25 37:23 65:17 66:17 80:13, 24	husband's 67:11	income 74:19	instigate 58:2
Homeland 3:16 6:21,24 12:4 19:17 26:4,7 27:3	hydrofluoric 67:4,5	incorporate 27:23	institutionalize 78:22
homes 15:16,17 61:7 68:13,14	hydrogen 53:19,20 54:6,14,18,23,24 66:21 67:3,4,5	incorporated 38:3	insufficient 77:7
honest 33:12		incorporation 38:3	insult 54:1
honestly 62:15	I	increase 65:16 77:11	insulted 53:25 54:3 57:3 64:3
hope 41:14 88:4	Idaho 69:11	increased 77:10,12 79:5	insurance 36:13
hopeful 20:22 21:2	idea 27:10	increasing 77:13 81:10	integrity 59:16,18
hoping 8:18 20:6	identify 33:23 39:23	incredible 17:14 18:7, 15 34:11,15 81:20	intended 82:12
horn 86:13	II 36:8 38:21 71:19,21 72:4	incredibly 21:15 48:14 56:5,13 57:1 61:8	intensity 81:11
horse 40:20	III 43:9	incumbent 88:1	intentionally 78:7
hosed 67:14	ill 63:12	independent 21:1	inter 15:25
hospitals 61:21	imagery 81:17	Indian 15:23 34:19	interaction 23:19
host 17:21 49:6 84:2	immediately 13:16 17:4 47:7,20	indiscernible 8:9 37:3 48:24 50:10,15 52:4 80:7	interagency 15:25 33:22
hosted 42:6 49:11	impact 15:5,18 57:11 63:17 77:12	individual 8:2 15:13 26:9 31:5 37:19	interest 64:14 71:3
hot 57:8 59:1 60:22	impacted 12:21,23 13:21,24 14:14 16:22		interested 7:16 28:11
hotel 17:20			interesting 72:2,3
hotels 13:2			interim 17:1 31:16
hours 22:19 75:24			

interior 71:13
International 85:6
interoperable 44:21
 45:15,17 47:18
introduce 52:10
INTRODUCTION 5:15
introductions 2:7
Inupiat 34:25
invite 6:15 44:5
invoke 15:11
involved 29:6 73:5 84:4
IRC 33:22
irregular 53:12
Island 38:2
isolate 63:22
issue 53:24 60:18
issued 19:9
issues 12:6 19:25 82:1
item 7:6 8:21 9:4 10:23
 23:8 40:10 83:6,18 86:12
items 4:23 83:2,5

J

Janowski 11:17
job 3:15 5:17 14:16 26:4
 27:13 42:17 86:6 87:4,23
 90:13
jobs 25:7
join 11:15 22:8,11
joint 14:15
jump 53:18 65:2
Juneau 8:8 34:20 64:13
 74:8 75:2
jurisdiction 38:15
justice 74:21

K

Kate 11:17

Katherine 2:24 35:17
Kathy 52:5 71:19,23
Katrina 17:12 20:24
Kawerak 32:10
keeping 79:22 80:3
Keith 2:24 11:5 35:15,
 16,17 36:5,23 37:1 42:4,
 20 48:17,18,19 49:1
 50:5,7,11,14,16,18,21,25
 51:8,13,15,20,24 52:4
 76:7,9 80:19
Keith's 16:20
Kenai 11:11 24:2 64:7
Ketchikan 64:14
keynote 23:14
kill 36:21
killing 62:17
Kim 26:23
kind 6:4,14 19:2 20:7
 21:22 26:19 27:10 29:7
 39:14,19 41:11 47:2
 50:23 51:10 52:7 53:3
 57:11 59:8,9 73:24 74:25
 75:5 85:2

kinds 59:7

Kipnuk 13:21 16:10
 80:11

Knowing 68:12

knowledgeable 67:10

Knowles 3:8

Kohler 2:17 3:20 5:13,
 16 6:18 29:12,19 31:16
 32:3 71:5

Kotzebue 12:22 25:19

Kristi 19:18

Kuskokwim 18:8 32:23

Kwig 57:22 63:20 65:16

Kwigillingok 13:21
 80:11

L

label 60:15

Labor 2:20 68:12 71:2
 81:22,25 82:11

lack 6:23 35:9 38:19
 65:9

Lafferty 43:21 48:1

landfall 13:8

landing 63:9,14 77:5

language 27:8,10

laps 36:4

large 3:7 5:22 6:13
 16:12 48:14 55:5 57:13
 62:2 65:6 86:22

largely 28:6

larger 13:23 58:9,24
 63:8 66:19

largest 63:19 65:16

last-minute 72:18

late 10:20

latest 60:2

law 15:9 31:9 36:12 43:9
 83:9

Law's 83:10

laws 30:22

lead 65:7 72:1

leaders 32:13 44:5,10
 45:1 46:20

leadership 18:22 77:13

leading 34:13

leads 88:13

leak 63:5

learned 52:25

learning 18:12

left 65:14

legislation 28:24

legislative 89:18

legislators 24:25 25:8,
 14 29:18 31:6

legislature 29:25 30:13
 31:3

legislature's 24:23

legislatures 24:22 25:4

LEL 67:3

LEPC 3:2,4,5 8:17,19
 11:10 24:14 25:5,17 29:1
 31:24 32:1,11 36:6,23,25
 41:3 42:11 53:6 67:18
 83:24 87:20

LEPCA 24:7,17 37:4
 39:22 40:2 87:17 89:17,
 20

LEPCS 7:17 24:6 25:4,9,
 11,15,16 33:18 35:22,25
 41:1,6,13,16 42:7,22
 70:1 77:9 84:1,18,19
 86:19 87:11 89:19

letter 24:22 29:4,16

letters 24:23,25 26:21
 29:14 31:5,12 89:17

letting 22:17

level 56:3 67:3,6 79:14
 80:7 84:12,13 85:14,17
 86:7 89:14

levels 27:19 67:2

liability 70:15

licenses 90:17

Lieutenant 72:20

lift 5:22 6:13 69:22

lighting 52:3

limited 69:9 80:9

link 6:12 75:9

links 64:20

liquid 55:2 63:4

liquids 53:17

list 43:18 44:17

listed 8:2

listen 89:11

literally 55:18

lithium 55:1 62:19 64:25
 89:11

lithium-ion 52:11,14,25
 53:5,16,21,23 54:1,8
 55:3,8,11,13,16 56:9
 57:6 58:4,11 59:6 60:3,5

61:13 62:16 63:13 64:21,
22 65:1,7 66:3,6 68:4,25
70:7 71:21 72:2,13

live 61:6

lives 66:9

living 66:16

Liza 65:2 66:15

Loach 83:23 84:25
85:12 86:11

loans 75:10

local 3:5,7 7:23 8:17
11:16 23:7,9,22,25 29:15
30:14,21 32:9 33:10,20
38:2 43:5 67:24 77:13
78:5,7,11 79:14 81:5,19
84:4,5,8,13,17 85:7,13,
14 86:3,7 87:3,25 88:7,
19 89:7,14 90:7

locally 87:24

locals 85:20

located 22:22 86:22

lock 40:4

logistically 89:4

long 4:12 25:12 30:11
34:12 36:15 37:6 42:25
74:25

long-term 33:23 60:18
61:5

longer 58:23 71:25
85:24

looked 7:17

lost 30:19

lot 3:22 8:15 18:2,20
21:3,11,12 25:1,2 26:18
32:18 35:8 36:3,20 37:2,
4,20 41:1,16,21 43:8
45:7 46:6,13 48:19 50:12
51:16 52:25 61:21 69:14
73:2 74:6 79:18,25 80:17
81:8,25 84:3,6 85:7
86:21 87:15 88:14,15
90:2

lots 8:6 15:5 20:17 30:20
33:11 46:17

Louisiana 65:4,5

love 69:6 78:19

low 74:19

lower 18:8 59:23

M

machine 78:15

machines 78:11

Madam 72:5

made 13:8 30:4 39:18
40:6 67:10 85:5 90:10

mail 24:12

maintain 90:16

maintaining 84:19

major 44:17 84:24

make 2:13 3:21 4:19 5:7,
8 16:22 18:11 22:10
28:20 32:1 39:24 50:7
66:11 69:25 70:1 72:19
79:15 83:25 84:18 88:11
89:23 90:12

makers 87:2

makes 31:7 54:24

making 16:19,21 59:19
90:1

MALE 50:9

mall 62:16

man-hours 25:1

manage 45:22

management 3:17 6:25
12:5 19:7,8 20:24 21:5
23:11,20 26:5,6,8 27:4
34:5,17,20,22 35:1,12
46:9 59:3 84:5 85:1,3,5

manager 18:24 84:14

managers 27:3 34:8
85:6,7,8,9

mandate 31:1 43:11

mandated 87:5

mandates 35:19,20
43:15

mandatory 41:2

manganese 62:19

manual 44:13,14,18
45:5 48:7 49:12,14 83:8,
15

manufacturers 62:15

manufacturing 53:24
62:14

map 71:20

maps 27:6

marine 55:12 65:13

mark 2:13,14

market 84:18

Markwayne 19:19

Marshals 27:4

mass 13:10

massive 78:10

material 78:9

materials 9:6 41:7
59:12 78:8,13 83:14

matter 19:24 59:20 90:4

mature 34:20

Maui 53:2 56:1,15 59:14
63:14 68:3

means 35:22 40:5 54:2,
3 79:19

measures 57:10

MEBAC 74:3,7,23

mechanism 38:4

mechanisms 43:16
88:4 89:19,20 90:3

medical 12:6

meet 12:8 29:4,8 31:17
32:21 39:22 40:24

meeting 2:2,5 3:21 4:2,
20 7:1 8:3 9:3,5,7,9,25
10:1,3,4,5 11:9,12,14
13:5 23:23 24:15,21
31:14 36:25 37:4 39:20
44:5 48:6 52:2 83:13,16
88:24 89:8 90:10

meetings 22:7 23:10,17
24:14 29:9 39:22,23

40:25 78:2

Meg 2:17

Megan 5:16

Melville 21:18,20

member 5:1 19:20
30:11 52:9 85:10 86:12,
16

members 6:21 14:5
15:5 16:11 21:7 36:16
40:9 72:21 83:11 88:15

members' 83:5

membership 39:13
49:9

mentioned 12:23 30:8
46:20

Merbach 13:23

Mertarvik 16:16

message 24:11 31:5
89:18

messaging 27:2,11,23
66:23

met 21:19 24:3 40:21
52:18

metal 55:25 56:3 57:16

metals 59:9,12 61:1

meter 58:10

methodology 30:2

mic 37:3 48:25 50:15
52:4

Michelle 23:12,15 43:19

microphone 4:17 5:8,9

Midas 61:15

middle 18:25 55:18

midterm 21:8

midtown 63:18 68:20

mile 63:2,15,16

mileage 13:23

miles 80:12

Military 3:17 29:24
42:10 49:6

million 45:16 73:14,19,
20 74:3,7 78:9 82:14,16
87:15

millions 16:7

mind 66:24 82:2

minimal 87:13

minimum 38:20

minute 10:1,19 46:15
52:8 81:16

minutes 4:19,20 9:3,5,8,
9,14,16,17,19,24 10:3,4,
5,8,16 24:4 49:9 50:3,6
67:6 71:7 83:21

missed 52:6 89:13

missing 88:14,15

mission 8:14 68:5

mitigation 20:12,22
37:9,11,14 38:12 73:10,
20 75:17

mixed 54:24

Mm-hmm 76:6

MOA 76:23

mobile 57:20

mode 78:4

model 58:20 66:15
78:16

modeling 58:16,22

models 66:20

moderate 74:19

modern 39:2 84:21

modernization 79:6

module 63:5

Moller 2:19 7:14,15 8:11
9:12,15 16:14 29:1,2
31:21 33:12 39:18 72:23,
25 75:11,13 76:6

moment 52:22

money 22:18 24:21 25:6
36:7,19 75:18,19,20,22,
25 76:3 82:17 87:3 88:6
89:24,25

monitoring 3:9 56:2

57:7,12,14,17,19,21,23
58:7,9,10,13,25 60:14
62:22,24 69:18

monoxide 53:20 54:19

month 12:14 26:12
63:11

months 40:24 54:5
76:18 77:21

mood 52:2

morning 19:24 20:5
24:3,6 39:11 61:15 67:18
68:2 72:12,18 78:13

Moss 63:9,14

motion 5:7,11 7:7 9:9
10:5,25 47:5,7,16,17,20
48:5,6,9 49:17

motions 4:24 46:15
47:4

move 7:3,6 16:16 35:11
46:18 50:2 61:22 84:22
86:12

moved 7:10 9:10 11:3
46:10 47:8,21 48:10
59:18

movement 21:3

moving 10:11,22 11:24
17:18 20:15 28:11 40:10
72:15 83:18 88:24 89:5
90:2,19

Mullin 19:19 20:5

multifamily 74:18

multiple 52:12 82:5

municipal 85:16

municipalities 73:14

municipality 17:3,21,25
37:22,24 73:21 83:24

mutual 43:23 46:5,7
47:19

N

name's 26:11

Natasha 34:10

Nation 19:20

national 13:14 17:7 19:7
46:9,11 58:14,19,22
73:23 85:2,3

Native 17:23 34:6

necessarily 68:17

needed 7:19 22:4 73:16
87:16

Needless 67:7

neighbors 4:11 13:18
18:4 21:15 80:24

network 6:7

networking 24:16
39:22,23

never-ending 39:14

news 14:21 16:9 20:17

newspaper 36:20,21

Newtok 16:16

nice 27:20

ninety 14:25

NOAA 58:19,22 65:3
66:20

Noem 19:18

Nome 11:11 32:9 36:3

non-congregate 13:3

non-federal 15:1

nonprofit 35:6 38:3,4

nonprofits 17:25

normal 19:2 20:7,23
53:7,8 56:11 57:25 82:20

north 63:15 66:17

northwest 4:5 12:21
14:1

Norton 32:8,10

note 5:25 24:6 26:24
28:12

notes 53:15 61:9

notice 17:5 20:19 31:11
58:18

noticed 31:21

number 4:23 5:2 8:1
10:23 11:10 12:20 13:1

14:13 17:2 18:21 30:20
32:21 38:10 42:23 44:8
45:5,11 52:13 53:21
64:24 77:12 79:3,11
85:15 86:1

O

occurred 17:8

October 4:2 11:13 12:8
13:24 39:20

off- 54:25 56:25

off-brand 65:25

off-gas 60:13

off-gassing 53:22 54:4,
6,8,16 56:22

off-grid 65:17 68:13

offer 69:7 80:25

office 14:15

officer 14:17

officers 77:18

officio 52:9

offline 86:20

oil 22:13,15,16 43:1,3
65:4 69:11

Oklahoma 19:20

on-scene 52:17

one-quarter 63:2

Oneresponder 46:12

ongoing 4:8 58:23
66:19 77:19

online 48:20,23 49:7

opened 18:10 54:17
62:22,24

operable 45:17

operate 33:15

operated 20:8

operating 27:16 30:7
41:10 79:8 89:25

operational 27:6

operations 38:8 63:21

opportunity 8:9 10:12,
15 20:19 35:7 40:15
41:22 72:21 83:18 89:13

opposed 9:1 10:8 11:24
47:16 48:4 49:17 89:6

order 2:2,6 6:11 19:9
30:13 52:2

orders 20:17 33:15

organization 18:20
85:4

organizations 17:25
25:2 37:5 81:6

organize 32:24

organized 45:10

original 46:13

originally 45:12

outburst 75:2

outdoors 33:14

outreach 39:7 64:16,21
65:1

outstanding 23:16

overheated 65:23

overlap 79:23

overview 53:4

owned 38:14,15

ownership 78:16

oxygen 54:18 55:21
56:11

P

p.m. 2:3 50:4

pace 4:3 12:14,19

package 61:18

Packaging 61:8

packet 21:23 24:4 25:1
31:13 48:21 49:2 50:8,
18,21,22 89:17

packets 50:19 66:5 83:6

packs 56:2 69:1

paid 37:10

Palmer 64:13

panel 55:6

panicking 25:25

paperwork 11:2

parameters 82:7

parish 85:17

part 27:22 34:1 35:2
36:15 46:21 48:5 76:18
79:1

participate 39:13

participated 48:15

participating 31:22,23

particulate 58:9

particulates 55:25 56:4
57:16

partner 35:11

partners 6:6 15:21,25
16:1 17:23 21:15 80:16,
20

partnership 10:22
21:13 76:22

partnerships 35:5

pass 28:14 86:3

passed 14:4 18:25
24:11

passes 19:13 47:17
48:5

past 20:8 33:24 90:5

pay 36:13 59:22

PDF 51:7,9

Peltier 12:5

Peninsula 11:11 24:2

people 17:11 19:4
25:15,23,25 26:19 31:22
36:9 37:2 39:2 64:4,18,
19 67:9 69:23 70:3 74:21
79:12 88:20 89:1,8,10
90:6

percent 14:23,25 15:1,
16 16:12 78:7,10

percentage 41:6 78:10

perform 32:24 80:13

perimeter 58:7

period 25:18

permanent 15:7

person 22:8 32:21

personal 56:2

personally 20:3 28:8
81:2

perspective 27:24
76:16 81:14 86:2

pet 6:2

PF 16:20

PF's 81:18

phase 74:12

phone 65:18,22

phones 55:7

phosphate 62:16

photo 13:13,15

photos 13:12

physical 53:11

picture 13:17 17:12
27:16 79:8

pictures 17:10

piece 15:4 28:24 33:25
42:13 46:12 50:2 78:5
79:24

pilots 81:18,19

place 18:11 20:2 26:17,
18,23 57:10 58:4,18
63:16 90:23

places 39:9 64:12 77:6

plan 3:21 5:5 7:17 8:21
11:15 24:19 25:23 27:10
37:9,11 38:25 39:8,19
40:1 43:21 44:7,10,11,
20,23 46:1 51:20 53:10
84:23

planes 66:4,7

planning 7:18,23 8:5,13
11:16 18:24 22:6 23:7,9,
22 24:1 28:20 29:15
30:15,22,23 32:6,9,25

33:10 37:17 38:2,21
43:6,10 67:25 74:6 77:10
79:2 84:8 87:3

Planreview 11:18

plans 15:24 16:1,19
35:23 36:23 37:9,14
38:7,8,9,11,12,14,17
76:1

plate 18:3

platforms 27:17

play 45:14 80:1

plays 72:3

pleased 34:16 40:3

pleasure 52:10

plug 58:14

plume 58:14,15 66:15,
16,18,20

pneumonia 87:9

PNPM 44:15

poignant 13:13

point 8:7 41:3,14 54:4
60:9 61:14 63:12 70:9
76:19 88:13 89:22

points 14:19

police 77:18

policies 5:4 46:8

policy 44:12,14,17,24
45:4 48:7 49:12,13 78:20
83:7,14

poll 16:10

popular 61:23 62:13

porous 59:12

portion 27:25 77:4

position 19:1 29:21
85:25

possibility 25:8

post 20:24 59:3

post-disaster 20:12

postpone 4:2

potential 16:7 31:18
33:24 56:13 57:9,10 77:9

potentially 27:8 40:4
pounds 78:9,11
pour 55:22
power 65:17 68:18,24
 69:1 72:2 76:21 78:22
PPE 56:7 59:11,24 60:1
PPM 51:3
practice 78:19
practiced 89:21
pre-and 20:12
pre-disaster 20:22
preaching 41:24
preeminent 20:11
 81:14
preface 87:8
prepare 58:5 74:12
preparedness 23:15
 25:22 84:11
presence 8:17
present 10:15,20 24:7
 27:1
presentation 50:2
 52:17,21,23 58:2 68:2
 71:6 89:11
presentations 79:11
presented 7:8 19:23
 44:25 67:18
presenting 45:7
president 14:9,24 15:3
 19:8,21,23 20:10 81:16
 82:1
president's 14:21
Presidents 15:22 31:25
 32:22
pretty 15:19 16:5,13
 19:21 20:4 31:4 34:25
 36:21 37:8 67:7 69:8
 79:11 80:5 85:15
prevalent 53:8 55:24
 62:13 72:9
prevent 59:1 63:7

prevention 5:24 21:17,
 21 38:11 43:2 69:12
previous 9:3,4,9,23
 10:4,5 19:17 20:2
primarily 18:9 34:18
primary 65:9 67:13
print 73:13
printed 7:3 9:7
prior 5:21 8:3 28:18
 34:3,4,7 83:13
private 85:8
privilege 34:2
proactively 78:3
problem 60:9
problematic 57:2
procedure 26:16 44:14,
 18,24
procedures 5:4 44:12
 45:4 46:8 48:7 49:12,14
 83:7,15
proceed 54:9
process 25:13 31:8
 33:23 37:6 38:24 74:25
production 67:1
products 27:15
professional 85:4
profiles 58:25
program 15:13 18:24
 20:15,20 22:13 27:1
 28:18 31:10 33:22 34:5,
 21,23 35:1 37:25 45:23,
 24 73:15 74:21 75:22
programming 90:21,22
programs 16:17,18
 20:11,18 74:22 75:15,21
project 87:15
projects 20:14 40:23
promise 66:25
promoted 18:23
prompting 63:1
proper 73:23

protect 57:7 63:22
Protection 27:1 52:8
protections 59:2
provide 7:24 10:12 12:6
 15:15 26:5 34:23 38:16
 40:16 41:4 43:15 58:15
 59:1 64:7,12,15 72:13,22
 76:23
provided 3:24 9:5 11:1
 28:1 46:11 89:19
providing 9:22 13:10
 22:3
public 3:7 10:10,11,12,
 14,16 17:8 39:7 59:5
 72:18 76:9 77:14 80:16
 81:4 83:18,19,20,22
 86:11 90:22
pull 15:24
pulse 49:20
punctured 55:4
purpose 30:21 46:10
purposes 11:8 28:21
 30:21
push 65:7 87:16
pushed 79:10
pushing 49:22
put 10:1 20:4 25:2,10
 42:23 47:4 49:19 55:19,
 20,22 56:10,17,24 58:4,
 14,17,25 60:22 64:22
 66:15,23 70:23 72:15
 77:5 82:9 84:10 87:2
putting 23:15 59:9
 66:22 90:2

Q

Qualification 46:11
qualifications 46:8
qualify 82:8
quarterly 29:9
queen 23:14
question 7:16 31:21
 35:23 36:22 71:5 87:11,

21
questions 23:5 28:2,25
 35:14,18 39:17 40:8 42:2
 43:17 47:3,13 48:16
 49:11 67:16 68:11 70:12
 71:4,20 84:17
quick 49:21 50:1 53:18
 58:14 62:10 82:15
quickly 53:3 82:22
quorum 3:10,13
quote 71:23

R

racks 62:4
radio 90:22
raise 7:20 86:9
ramp 76:14
range 87:20
RC 65:19
reach 58:18 61:10 70:1,
 10 73:9
reached 32:11,12
read 9:5 21:23 31:13
 44:15
read- 83:13
ready 6:1,4 27:1 28:18
 31:7,10 79:21
real 14:19 16:15 49:21
 50:1 53:18 62:10 79:10
realize 41:18
realized 56:1
reason 67:23
reassess 67:10
rebuild 78:14
rebuilding 80:24
receipt 29:14
receive 11:15 14:8,18
 38:4 72:17
received 14:8 30:13
 34:6 43:4 45:16 72:17
 82:11,14

recent 84:1,9	regrets 6:22	32:15 52:8	respond 20:1 22:16,19 34:14 53:7 58:5 66:11,14 78:6 79:21
recently 16:9 18:23 19:8,17,24	regs 60:2	representation 28:5	responder 59:5 66:24
rechargeable 55:7 65:19,21	regular 19:3	representative 69:9 85:7 88:8,20 90:8	responders 54:13,17 56:3 57:8,11,25 58:6 59:14,16 61:4 65:12 69:4
recognize 25:9 52:6	regulations 6:14 39:4	representatives 24:13	responding 60:1 63:14 68:6,10
recognizing 27:13	regulatory 38:10,12,13, 24 57:4	represented 15:6	response 2:5 3:25 4:5 5:24 10:22 12:9,16 13:5, 8,22,24 14:12,20 15:2 18:16,25 21:18,21 22:1 25:22 34:24 35:12 38:7,8 39:21 43:1,2 48:8 53:1 54:19 59:4 60:17,18 64:2,22 65:19 69:12,19 72:3 73:3,7 74:23 75:5, 19 76:12,13 77:20 89:10
recommendation 11:18 44:1,19 46:23	reignite 60:8	representing 4:21 5:10 11:16 24:7	responses 60:15 61:1
recommendations 8:6,23 19:10 44:8 45:6 46:2,16 47:4	reinforce 63:11	represents 84:6	responsibilities 42:11
recommended 26:2	reinstated 30:10	request 14:22 15:7 29:4,6 85:18	responsibility 77:24
recommending 26:2,7	relates 87:23	requested 14:23	responsible 26:3
recommends 44:23	relationship 26:14	requesting 14:5,25 24:12 25:3	rest 45:3
record 51:25 88:21	relocate 16:12,15,18	require 55:21	restart 20:18
recorded 9:24	relocation 16:25	required 35:21	restore 31:6,10
recorder 4:19	remain 46:3,4	requirement 20:2,6 38:11,13 41:3 45:13	result 39:21
recording 9:17,25	remaining 17:19	requirements 38:9,20 39:3 43:8,9,13	resulting 63:5
recovering 87:9	remember 17:10 33:2 41:5 53:23 73:22	rerouted 33:19	results 29:22 42:21
recovery 14:12 25:22 33:22,25 34:24 35:13 73:4,7,10 75:6,16,19 80:17,22 81:3 82:13	reminds 33:13 63:25	rescue 17:14	resurrect 46:24
recycling 59:21,23	remnant 4:6 12:9,22 13:23	rescues 17:8	retain 30:1
red 5:9	remote 55:12 65:8	rescuing 17:11	retired 69:19
referencing 26:21	remove 44:20 47:5	research 71:9 84:20	return 14:6
referral 28:15	removed 19:18 20:6	residents 14:5 22:15 63:16	returned 74:22
refers 67:2,4,5	renewal 38:9	residing 80:12	reusable 55:6
refill 19:1	repair 15:14	resiliency 34:6	revenue 30:17
reflect 44:16	repairs 16:21 76:24	resilient 16:23 20:13 88:11	review 6:13 19:10 20:2 43:21 86:1
reform 20:25 21:9 47:1	replace 15:14 65:7	resistant 59:14	reviewing 8:14 9:16
reforming 39:12	replacement 90:2	resolution 19:14	reviews 39:8
refresh 83:9	replicate 79:13	resolutions 14:4	revisions 45:4
regard 87:22 88:23	report 7:24 13:7 19:22 40:16 43:22,25 44:25 72:18 76:8	resource 70:6 82:15	revolving 45:13
region 16:3 32:5,10,15, 16 34:14 64:20 65:1 69:9	reportable 71:25 72:1	resources 15:24 28:15 77:7	
regional 15:22 22:6 32:13 35:5 81:6	reporting 9:18 36:9,10 37:25 38:22 39:3 41:20 42:13 72:4	respect 52:14 68:9 85:23	
regions 6:8 73:18 75:2 79:14	reports 8:1,19 12:1,3 31:22 40:13,14 71:21,22 72:16,17,24	respirators 60:23	
	represent 4:18 27:19		

rig 69:13		section 7:23 12:2 72:15 73:4	Shea 45:2 71:19
Right-to-know 30:23 38:21 43:10 71:18	S	sector 85:8	sheer 4:3
Riley 2:8,11,16,18,20, 22,25 3:2,4,7,12 11:20 29:13 43:20 45:3 48:22, 23 50:13,15,17,20,22 51:2,9,14,19,22	sacks 77:5	Security 3:16 6:21,24 12:4 19:16,17 26:4,8 27:3	shelter 57:10 58:17 63:16
risk 31:24	safe 18:11 25:23 54:13 58:6 61:4 64:19 66:2 70:19 80:3	sell 62:3	sheltering 13:3
river 17:13	safely 60:14 61:3 66:14	Senate 27:7 28:14	shelters 17:5
road 14:15 69:24 76:17 80:25	safety 6:3 17:8 60:2 62:14 66:22 70:24 71:3 72:19 73:8 77:18	senator 19:20	shift 87:25
roadway 22:23	sampling 56:2 58:10	send 6:22 31:12 48:23 50:13,18 51:11,19 59:22 73:1 88:6	shiny 83:14
robust 35:1 85:15	Sandin 65:2	sending 11:8	ship 56:20 57:1 61:13,18
rock 79:20	Sandra 2:19 7:15 8:11 9:12,14,15 29:2 33:12 72:25	sense 32:1 90:24	shipment 59:20
Rockwell's 43:19	Sandra's 75:8	sensors 58:11	shipped 59:19
role 77:21	SARA 43:9	SEOC 79:7	shipping 61:12
roles 78:21	save 8:7 66:1	separate 38:3,24 51:10 60:6,14 82:20 83:10	shop 61:6
roll 2:9,10,12 27:21 52:7 56:19	Saxe 18:18	separated 60:8	shopping 62:16
rolled 56:23	SB 28:9	September 64:7	shopline 65:4
roller 56:19	scale 70:4	SERC 2:2,8,11 5:18 6:9, 10 11:19 18:23 24:13 26:3 29:4,6,13 30:3 32:11 40:2,5 42:2,5,15 44:10,11,12,13,15,20,23 45:15 47:6 51:3 53:6 70:1 87:17 88:15,24 89:18	short 17:9 21:23 34:14
rooftops 17:11	scared 87:10	service 32:24 40:10 58:15,19,21	shout 17:2 23:12
room 3:20 5:20 10:15 47:12 83:20 87:1 89:8,9	scares 68:21	services 5:18 13:11 75:1	show 24:18 27:17 64:9 69:24 90:8
roster 49:9	scarier 66:10	servicing 14:16	showing 90:12
rotation 19:3	scary 67:7	session 7:18 8:13	shut 19:13 63:22
roughly 16:4	Scene 59:3	sessions 78:2	shutdown 6:23 7:2
round 60:23	school 18:7,8,10 32:22 66:17 76:24	set 27:1 28:18 51:4 69:17	shutdown's 20:24
round 60:23	schools 18:11,14 61:21 76:22,23	sets 79:12	sic 10:23
routes 78:24	science 71:9	severely 19:15	side 68:25 73:8 82:10 85:1
routine 24:4 26:10	scientific 65:3	share 10:20 13:13 14:23 15:1 73:1,6 74:20 75:5	sight 4:7 81:10
row 25:20	scoring 30:2	shared 13:15 29:18 37:19	sign 9:1 10:8,13 11:24 47:16 48:4 49:17 83:19
rubric 30:2	screen 52:23		signed 31:9
rules 41:8	Sea 17:13		significance 77:12
run 15:11 87:18	season 6:2 27:16,21		significant 12:25 14:19 15:19 16:6,13 18:22 20:5,12 60:17 63:17 70:16 76:2 79:20
runaway 53:24 54:2 55:17 56:13 60:6 63:8, 12,24 64:3	seat 3:4 4:18		signify 8:24 10:6 11:22 47:14 48:2 49:14
runoff 57:16	Seattle 71:16		silent 4:16
rural 3:4,5 6:8 15:22 37:23 80:6 90:16,18,22	secretary 19:17,18,22 20:2,5,25		siloed 77:15

similar 32:8 33:18
simultaneous 8:9
 50:10
single 20:3 29:15,18
 85:17
sir 40:18 82:23 83:3 87:6
 90:14
site 56:21 57:1 60:3
sites 90:17,19,21
sitting 22:12
situation 32:8
situations 58:8
sixty-four 18:20
size 55:9 72:8
skill 79:12
skip 81:21
sky 80:8
slide 23:13 61:9
slides 79:20
Slope 34:25
slowing 12:15
small 38:8 73:13 79:11
smaller 58:8 63:10 85:8
smallest 63:19 65:16
smiling 32:2
smoldered 63:3
smother 55:21 56:12
snow 76:25 78:11,15
software 46:12
solar 55:6 68:24
Soldotna 63:19 65:17
solidly 40:4
solution 16:7 55:3
 56:18 59:9
solutions 62:7
someplace 25:23
sorts 54:24
sought 64:5

Sound 32:8,10
source 82:20
sources 33:17,24 38:6
South 17:23 63:16
southwest 12:23 13:19
 25:18
space 24:9
spaces 54:15,21
spanning 90:20
SPAR 5:24 21:19
sparking 71:15
speak 5:9 32:8 40:10
special 40:23
specific 58:24 66:20
specifically 4:25 7:20
 42:22 53:1 83:11
speech 8:10 50:10
speedy 76:2
spend 82:17
spill 5:24 21:17,21 22:20
 43:2 65:4 69:13
spills 22:16 23:1
sponsor 28:10 32:14
spot 2:14 5:5 29:23
spread 90:17,23
spreading 61:7
spring 6:1 12:11,17
 20:15 79:19
sprinkler 63:2
staff 19:3 23:13 49:8,19
 68:3 69:5
Stafford 15:8
stage 85:2
stand 17:5 28:2 52:22
standards 71:3 73:24
Star 61:15
start 25:14 33:6 40:17
 54:4,12 66:9 67:8 70:6
 75:21 76:25 78:19 80:23
 86:14

started 22:14 23:2 34:18
 36:10 59:13
starting 12:21 25:8 70:9
starts 32:19 54:6 60:10
 75:24
state 2:5 4:4,13 5:9 6:8
 12:1,2,13,16,25 14:17
 15:1,25 22:4,5 23:19
 27:14 30:7,15 31:1
 33:14,16 34:17 37:12
 40:22 42:7 43:12,16
 45:18,20 46:7 48:8 53:9
 55:24 64:6,18 65:15
 69:25 70:15 72:16,24
 76:3 84:6 85:5,17,20
 86:7 87:25 88:2 89:25
state's 43:2
statehood 4:13
statements 39:17
states 6:24 17:6 27:9
 84:14 86:2 89:20
statewide 3:25 13:7
 18:2 22:3 43:23 46:5
 47:19 89:9
station 67:13
stationary 57:20
stations 90:22
statistics 85:15
statute 27:8,9 33:10
 44:15 45:9,20
statutes 28:20 30:24
stay 12:3 76:23 77:6
steam 56:19,23
step 40:5 75:1
stepped 18:3
steps 16:24
stickler 4:16
stop 5:12 66:6
stopped 33:16
storage 53:10 54:16
 55:5,14 60:12 61:20 69:1
store 67:10 68:18
storm 4:5 12:21 14:4

17:8 34:8 76:14
storms 5:21 12:9 13:8
 34:7
strategic 7:17 8:13
streets 84:16
stressing 24:5
strong 18:21
stronger 8:17 88:11
structurally 42:13
structure 29:23 35:10
 42:5,14,19 45:20
struggling 30:17
students 18:12
study 25:21
stuff 6:10 8:8 9:18 11:8
 24:4,5,19,20 26:6 33:19
 36:19 55:8 60:1 66:4
 68:18 87:16
subject 7:20
submit 19:10 39:3 40:14
 43:25
submitted 8:3 14:24,25
subsistence 80:13
substance 43:1
substances 38:23
summed 67:19
sunny 3:20
super 55:15 77:5
support 3:24 4:10,14
 6:7 9:23 14:11 17:1
 20:21 21:13,15 25:11
 28:16 33:8,14,19,20
 34:16,21 35:3,8 36:2
 39:1,7,15 45:17 46:8
 65:3 72:10 76:17,24
 77:24 79:23 82:1,12,21
 83:25 84:8,17 86:22 88:6
 90:1,21
supporting 4:4
supports 84:12
supposed 30:24 36:4
 61:23 88:16,17,20

suppression 57:12
61:16
surprise 54:15 61:21
62:19
surprised 89:2
surrounding 63:7,23
surveillance 60:10
survivability 77:2
survivors 13:11
suspend 44:1,21 46:20,
23 47:17,20
suspension 44:23
sustain 37:21 38:1
swath 62:13
symbol 67:2
system 46:7,9,10,12
51:7 54:16 56:25 60:16
61:17 63:2,19 65:14
68:24,25 80:25 81:18
90:16
systems 53:10 55:5
57:22 58:24 61:20,22
62:2,12 63:23 65:10,13,
14 66:9 68:13,14 72:8
81:13

T

Tab 7:23 8:2 11:1 83:6
table 7:5 9:8 10:14 12:3
26:23 34:13 44:6 52:7
90:9
tabs 51:3,14
Tactical 63:21
tactics 64:1,2 69:19
takes 36:14 54:1
taking 17:17 60:16 89:2
talk 4:8 5:5 7:25 8:4,21
16:14 24:13 26:16 32:13
34:3 46:4 52:25 56:7
61:14 78:1 88:24 89:5,14
talked 17:16 20:9 68:1
86:20,25 90:4

talking 16:6 68:2,20
69:20 88:17
tank 22:13,16
tax 24:9 37:23
taxes 41:21
teachers 18:13
team 7:4 16:14,20 18:9
21:25 23:3 32:11 45:3
49:19 74:22 80:19 81:5
teams 3:24
TEC 90:11
technical 22:3 84:10
technology 39:2
telephonically 26:12
temperatures 56:10
ten 15:1 33:2 67:6
tend 13:13
Teresa 21:20
terms 8:5 20:11 35:12
68:6
testified 31:3 85:25
testimony 35:18
texting 71:18
that'll 50:7 51:10
theory 61:24
there'd 76:25
thermal 53:13,24 54:2
55:17 56:13 60:6 63:7,
12,24 64:3
thermally 53:25 54:1,3
57:2 64:2
thing 13:4 24:6 28:22
33:18 35:19 41:1 45:21
54:25 55:25 69:13,24
75:18 79:5
things 8:7 33:9 35:23
36:7 41:16,25 49:10
51:16 55:8,13,23 57:4,6
58:9 66:7 68:22 69:1,15,
20 71:22 74:17 77:15,25
86:8 88:12,17
thinking 25:14

thinks 13:16
thirteen 12:13
thirty 12:24
thirty-two 12:24 36:16
thought 74:15
thoughts 76:11
threat 28:22 52:14 67:25
68:6,7,10
three-day 89:3
thresholds 38:22 86:10
throes 13:10
throw 90:6
tie 33:24
tie-ins 79:25
tier 36:8,10 37:25 38:21
41:20 42:13 71:19,21,22
72:4
Tiffany 12:5
tight 82:7
till 8:7 24:24
time 4:12 14:10 16:23
18:4 19:22 24:20,23
30:11 34:12 39:11 40:16,
25 41:3,10,13,15 42:8,25
45:18 54:4 66:18 72:12
78:11,18 79:10
timely 76:2
times 29:8 32:21 52:12
65:22 82:5 86:1
timing 34:4
title 28:20 43:9 50:23
Tlingit 34:18,19
today 4:24 12:5,25
14:11 16:5,20 24:21
26:24 28:1 36:25 37:4
40:10 43:17 45:7 46:22
47:2 82:3,4 83:16 86:3
today's 44:4
told 19:24 20:5 21:7
36:14 37:12
Tom 23:21,25 28:1,25
30:8,16 36:3 37:15 38:7

ton 62:5 68:23
tool 65:24
tools 46:11 55:6 65:24
79:6,9,12
top 53:18 60:11 82:2
topic 27:22 31:20
Torres 23:13
Torri 47:13 52:7,10,16
67:17,18 68:1
Torri's 52:10,17 89:11
touch 61:19 62:10
touching 87:11
towers 71:24
town 68:20
toxic 53:14,17,19 54:23
55:1 56:10 63:17
toxins 52:15
trade 85:4
trails 78:25
trained 19:4 59:17
training 43:21 44:22
47:19 64:5,16 69:4,5
70:7,21 79:24 82:13,19
tranches 82:20
transitioning 72:1
transmitted 11:10
transmitters 90:20,23,
25
transportation 61:8
76:16 77:14 80:15 81:4
treat 57:25
treatment 76:20
treats 55:15
trial 34:9
tribal 14:3 16:1,10 17:24
34:7,17,20 35:1,5 77:18
85:16 86:3
tribe 16:11 34:19
tribes 14:5 34:13,19
Trump 81:16

truth 74:14
TSA 19:15
Tuesday 88:25
turn 2:8 5:8,12 52:16
 56:20
turned 56:23
turnout 59:13 60:24,25
 61:3
twelve 22:2 89:8
twenty 84:14
twenty-five 78:10
twenty-four 22:2
twenty-one 37:16,17
two- 64:12
two-day 63:25 69:16
 70:4
type 9:17 27:24 33:18
 41:17 67:1 82:8
types 69:4,17 88:12
Typhoon 4:6 12:9,22
 13:23 22:1 34:24 76:11
 84:3
typical 53:11 59:4

U

U.S. 6:21 33:17 75:15
 82:11
unbelievable 78:4
 81:13,15
unbelievably 34:11
uncertainty 19:6
unclear 80:7
understand 84:3,5
understanding 80:6
underway 4:3
underwriters 36:11
underwriters' 36:12
unemployment 82:3
unfunded 30:25 43:11,
 15

ungodly 67:11
UNIDENTIFIED 50:9
unified 27:2,11,23 31:4
 85:11
unify 37:23
unincorporated 26:3,9,
 10 28:6
unique 75:18
unit 29:23 42:21
United 6:24 17:6 84:14
units 63:6,7
University 17:4,22
unlock 82:15
unmanned 81:12
unmet 33:23 74:23 76:4
unorganized 26:6 28:6
 35:9 84:7
unrecognizable 56:16
unsafe 61:14
unseen 72:10
unstable 54:3
upcoming 22:7 77:21
 78:1
update 12:6 23:8,23
 37:7 44:12 72:13 82:25
updated 38:13 48:7
 49:13
updates 39:11 44:19
 51:21 72:22
updating 5:3 48:15
 73:21
upgrade 90:19
upper 75:9
upwards 80:12
urban 3:2,4 15:23 75:15
urgent 77:11
USEPA 52:18
usual 12:10
utilities 6:7

utility 6:5 12:17 68:14
utilize 79:25
utilizing 90:25

V

vacancies 18:21
vacant 3:5
vacation 89:3
Vaden 23:21,25 24:3
 29:8 30:6 32:7 36:3,6,25
 37:2,4
valid 41:12
vapor 67:2
vapors 53:14,19
varies 61:11
variety 68:19,23
vehicle 56:15 58:8
vehicles 61:17
vendor 13:6
vendors 9:22,23
ventilation 56:25
verbal 40:16
versus 22:17 25:22
vessels 55:12 61:16
Veteran 3:17
Veterans 29:24 42:11
 49:6
Victoria 63:4
Vikalis 3:3 7:10 9:10
 11:3 30:3 33:4 40:18,19
 42:16,24 47:8,21 48:10
 86:17
village 15:21 16:9 31:25
 32:22
villages 78:9
virtual 2:22 11:14 22:8
vocal 41:25
voice 85:11 87:9
volunteer 11:15 17:24
 39:7,13

volunteers 36:4 57:24
vote 16:10
voted 16:12
votes 4:25

W

waiting 14:18 15:2,4
wake 84:1
walked 3:19 10:19
wanted 7:18,20 10:20
 19:21 28:8,23 39:17
 43:22 44:5 54:10 73:3,5,
 15 74:20 75:5 83:25
 87:10,21
warm 59:1
wastewater 6:2,5,7
water 6:2,5,7 54:24
 55:20,22 56:12 57:12,16
 63:5 76:20,21 77:17
ways 29:10 57:19 79:22
 89:25
wear 69:14
wearing 56:3 60:20 61:4
Weather 58:14,19,21
webmaster 49:8
website 6:16 49:10 75:8
 83:10
week 7:1 20:19 23:16,18
 56:18
weekend 89:3
weeks 17:20 19:19 21:6
 54:5 63:3
Weinert 2:21 68:12 69:3
 70:8,14,18,22,25 81:24
weird 51:3,9,12 74:13
welcoming 5:12
west 14:1 76:14 80:21
Western 74:22 80:17
whatnot 63:24
who've 82:6

whomever 90:11
wide 68:19,23
widely 61:20
wider 62:13
wildfire 12:17 27:25
68:3
wildfires 53:2
wildland 28:21 71:13,15
wind 66:18
winter 12:17 15:20
16:21 80:18,20,21 81:3
withdrawal 13:17
without- 37:21
wondering 29:3,6
work 4:7 5:5,22,25 6:1
8:16,21 11:15 18:7,15
19:5 24:20 27:13,20
28:9,24 30:18 33:13
34:11 36:18 37:13,21
38:23 39:18 40:1,4 44:7,
9,10,11,20,23 45:8,20
46:1,6,13,22 48:15 49:19
51:20 61:6 68:5 70:6
73:17 74:21 78:2,23
79:15 81:8 82:19 84:3,23
89:23 90:9
worker 70:24 82:11
workers 70:6,19
workforce 79:24 81:23
82:10
working 4:1 5:3 6:4,6,
10,14 14:10,14 15:20,25
16:8,19 22:4 26:1,14
28:4 29:5 34:11 37:2,5
45:4 65:4 73:20 79:6
81:5,6,19 89:22 90:4,18
workplaces 69:5
works 32:2 50:23
worry 37:8
worst 4:12
wow 73:13
wrapped 62:6
write 24:22 36:11 70:10

written 8:1 22:6 40:14
72:17
wrong 30:7
wrote 24:11,25 25:2
29:16 31:5

Y

y'all 21:13
year 3:22 4:1 5:21 6:6
11:13 18:17 20:9 21:8,9,
10,25 22:2,14,25 23:2
24:18,24 29:4,8 30:8
31:14,18 36:9,24 66:19
72:11 75:23
yearly 12:13
years 5:2,21 12:20,24
14:1 20:20 25:20 30:21,
25 31:19 32:12 33:2
38:14,19 41:19 42:17,23
43:8 45:5,25 52:13 53:1
54:5,15 62:20 74:5,6
75:24 77:21 84:9,14
86:25
yellow 60:19,20
YK 32:13
younger 62:11
Yukon 18:8 74:8
Yukon- 32:22
Yukon-kuskokwim
13:20 81:7

Z

zero-dollar 28:12
zone 60:22
zones 27:18 57:8 59:2
Zoom 3:8