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# BE A PART OF THE PROCESS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

### AGENCY DECISIONS AND ACTIONS AFFECT YOU

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) works to conserve, improve and protect Alaska's natural resources and environment. DEC controls water, land and air pollution by issuing permits and adopting regulations. Projects and permits regulated by DEC have the potential to impact you and the area you live in.

### YOUR CONCERNS AND OPINIONS ARE VALUABLE FOR INFORMING DEC DECISION-MAKING

Proposed projects and permits are subject to public review and input during a set public notice period. The public notice period is an opportunity to ask questions and comment on proposals. Your involvement, concerns and traditional knowledge provide DEC decision-makers with information and perspectives they otherwise might not have access to.

### HOW DEC EVALUATES AND PROCESSES YOUR COMMENTS

Evaluating comments is a critical part of the decision-making process. DEC takes comments seriously and evaluates changes to permits or regulations based on comments received. Comments are formally responded to in a "Response to Comments" document before making a final decision.

### HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

The public notice announcement will detail when and where to send comments. Comments can be made verbally during public hearings or through fax, email, mail, or hand delivery. They must be postmarked or submitted before the end of the comment period for formal consideration. Comments become part of the public record and are subject to Public Records requests.





# TIPS FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS

## UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSAL IN THE PUBLIC NOTICE

Read the proposal and ask questions if you do not understand something. A contact person and their contact information is provided in the public notice.

## PROVIDE LEGIBLE COMMENTS

DEC needs to clearly understand the comment. Organize with headings, sections or page numbers of the proposal. Allow time to type your comments. Have someone else read them over to make sure they are clearly written.

## BE BRIEF AND SPECIFIC

Keep the focus on your concerns or questions as they relate to the proposal.

## BE RELIABLE

Base comments on facts, information the agency had not considered in the draft proposal, or local or traditional knowledge.

## SUPPORT YOUR COMMENT

Focus on parts of the proposal that affect you or that you have specific knowledge about or experience with. Clearly express concerns, suggestions and recommendations. Provide relevant studies, research, legal citations, or information, or relay relevant local or traditional knowledge. Identify missing information necessary for an informed decision. Correct incomplete or incorrect information, such as typographical or factual errors. Discuss potential impacts to local uses, resources or people and include specific examples that illustrate your concerns. Provide your relevant experience.

## PROPOSE REASONABLE SUGGESTIONS

Suggest an alternative if you do not agree with a proposal and explain how it can meet the same objective. Comments that propose reasonable alternatives are more likely to be influential and effective.

## MEET DEADLINES

Comments must be postmarked or received before the close of the public notice period. If you need additional time to review or comment, request it in writing during the public notice period.

