

**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
2002 Survey
Numeric Results**

In January 2002, PEER mailed surveys to Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation employees. 423 of current employees received surveys, of which 30% (132) responded.

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

"No Opinion" includes declined to answer.

I Organization & Resources

Question #1 The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has sufficient resources to fulfill its environmental mandates:

1	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	10	8
<i>Agree</i>	17	13
No Opinion	11	8
<i>Disagree</i>	60	45
Strongly Disagree	34	26

Question #2 ADEC efficiently uses the resources allocated to it:

2	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	11	8
<i>Agree</i>	47	36
No Opinion	19	14
<i>Disagree</i>	44	33
Strongly Disagree	11	8

Question #3 The latest ADEC reorganization (under the Knowles administration) has improved agency operations:

3	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	11	8
<i>Agree</i>	27	20
No Opinion	38	29
<i>Disagree</i>	31	23
Strongly Disagree	25	19

II Agency Performance

Question #4 ADEC is doing an effective job protecting Alaska's natural resources:

4	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	9	7
<i>Agree</i>	48	36
No Opinion	26	20
<i>Disagree</i>	39	30
Strongly Disagree	10	8

Question #5 ADEC Administration view the primary "customer" to be the individuals and businesses that seek permits rather than the public or the resource:

5	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	24	18
<i>Agree</i>	52	39
No Opinion	16	12
<i>Disagree</i>	30	23
Strongly Disagree	10	8

Question #6 In its decision-making, ADEC Administration often puts more weight on economic development than on resource protection:

6	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	19	14
<i>Agree</i>	50	38
No Opinion	19	14
<i>Disagree</i>	34	26
Strongly Disagree	10	8

III Permit Decisions

Question #7 ADEC fairly considers public input received during public notice processes:

7	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	14	11
<i>Agree</i>	64	48
No Opinion	23	17
<i>Disagree</i>	24	18
Strongly Disagree	7	5

Question #8 I know of instances in which permit applicants have received preferential review after they have met with the Administration regarding a proposed project:

8	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	15	11
<i>Agree</i>	36	27
No Opinion	58	44
<i>Disagree</i>	13	10
Strongly Disagree	10	8

Question #9 I know of instances where permit applicants have unduly influenced ADEC Administration's assignment of specific DEC staff to specific permits:

9	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	18	14
<i>Agree</i>	31	23
No Opinion	54	41
<i>Disagree</i>	18	14
Strongly Disagree	11	8

IV Enforcement

Question #10 ADEC's Administration consistently enforces Alaska's environmental laws:

10	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	7	5
Agree	38	29
No Opinion	16	12
Disagree	51	39
Strongly Disagree	20	15

Question #11 I am aware of cases in which the ADEC Commissioner or Division Directors have blocked enforcement against politically influential members of the regulated community:

11	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	16	12
Agree	29	22
No Opinion	75	57
Disagree	15	11
Strongly Disagree	11	8

Question #12 I am aware of cases in which the ADEC Commissioner or Division Director has settled enforcement cases with members of the regulated community without the participation of the staff assigned to the case:

12	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	17	13
Agree	35	27
No Opinion	59	45
Disagree	16	12
Strongly Disagree	5	4

V Agency Management

Question #13 ADEC's Commissioner and Directors support employees who make difficult and controversial decisions:

13	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	10	8
Agree	25	19
No Opinion	31	23
Disagree	41	31
Strongly Disagree	25	19

Question #14 I am aware of at least one situation in which staff were ordered to take actions that violate State law:

14	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	12	9
Agree	16	12
No Opinion	62	47
Disagree	22	17
Strongly Disagree	20	15

Question #15 *If you are familiar with the work* of any of the following ADEC Management, please choose the most appropriate grade to describe the quality of their environmental leadership:

Commissioner Average Grade = 72 (C)	Number of Responses (101)	% of Total Responding
A	19	19
B	21	21
C	25	25
D	28	28
F	8	8

Deputy Commissioner Average Grade = 72 (C)	Number of Responses (83)	% of Total Responding
A	16	19
B	18	22
C	21	25
D	19	23
F	9	11

Director of Administrative Services Average Grade = 66 (D)	Number of Responses(78)	% of Total Responding
A	7	9
B	14	18
C	20	26
D	15	19
F	22	28

Director of Air and Water Quality Average Grade = 73 (C)	Number of Responses(71)	% of Total Responding

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A	9	13
B	20	28
C	27	38
D	12	17
F	3	4
Director Environmental Health Average Grade = 73 (C)	Number of Responses (83)	% of Total Responding
A	17	20
B	16	19
C	29	35
D	13	16
F	8	10
Director of Facility Construction and Operation Average Grade = 80 (B)	Number of Responses(56)	% of Total Responding
A	22	39
B	14	25
C	20	36
D	0	0
F	0	0
Director Spill Prevention and Response Average Grade = 70 (C)	Number of Responses(74)	% of Total Responding
A	9	12
B	27	36
C	11	15
D	9	12

Director Spill Prevention and Response Average Grade = 70 (C)	Number of Responses(74)	% of Total Responding
F	18	24
Director of Statewide Public Service Average Grade = 80 (B)	Number of Responses (65)	% of Total Responding
A	26	40
B	19	29
C	16	25
D	4	6
F	0	0

VI Politics

Question #16 The ADEC Administration gives equal weight to the interests of ordinary citizens and small businesses versus those of large businesses in Alaska:

16	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	5	4
<i>Agree</i>	31	23
No Opinion	26	20
<i>Disagree</i>	52	39
Strongly Disagree	18	14

VII Morale

Question #17 ADEC Commissioner and Directors do not hold the Alaskan oil industry to the same environmental standards as other, small industries in the State:

17	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	22	17
<i>Agree</i>	34	26
No Opinion	34	26
<i>Disagree</i>	31	23
Strongly Disagree	11	8

Question #18 Political appointees in ADEC's Administration are selected for their knowledge and experience in environmental protection:

18	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	5	4
<i>Agree</i>	21	16
No Opinion	37	28

18	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
<i>Disagree</i>	36	27
Strongly Disagree	33	25

Question #19 Employee morale is good at DEC:

19	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	5	4
<i>Agree</i>	28	21
No Opinion	12	9
<i>Disagree</i>	50	38
Strongly Disagree	37	28

Question #20 ADEC's administration has reassigned or changed responsibilities of staff for doing their job "too well" on a controversial project:

20	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	37	28
<i>Agree</i>	32	24
No Opinion	43	33
<i>Disagree</i>	12	9
Strongly Disagree	8	6

Question #21 I fear job-related retaliation for openly advocating policy or permitting decisions that are unfavorable to major industries:

21	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	21	16
<i>Agree</i>	24	18
No Opinion	44	33
<i>Disagree</i>	31	23
Strongly Disagree	12	9

VI Ethics

Question #22 The ADEC Administration consistently meets high standards for environmental ethics:

22	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	9	7
Agree	33	25
No Opinion	43	33
Disagree	34	26
Strongly Disagree	13	10

Question #23 At ADEC, I could refuse an order that violates professional ethics or state law without fear of job-related retaliation:

23	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses (132)
Strongly Agree	10	8
Agree	34	26
No Opinion	35	27
Disagree	31	23
Strongly Disagree	22	17

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation 2002 Survey

Written Responses To The Question: *The greatest challenge facing ADEC and Alaska's environment is...*

Grouped by Subject

Each Response is Verbatim

Each Paragraph Indicates A New Response

Politics

DEC managers are so afraid of offending big lobbyists - (both industry and environmental) that the only clear path is to try and soothe them at the expense of offending smaller borough government, tribes, and the individual. However, given the political difficulties (fear of legislature, etc.). I believe staff do make the best of situation and that lower level management deals effectively with environmental tasks with only occasional hiccup. I also feel that employees are only held to certain rules. If they are considered to

be problem and then the employee is scrutinized for each and every potential violation of personnel rules.

We need a governor that will replace all political appointees and start over. Brad Hahn, Prevention & Emergency Response Program, Program Manager, has consistently made decisions based upon political and self-serving interests rather than based upon human health and the environment. Mr. Hahn is currently taking advice from the Phillips Petroleum lawyers on what our (ADEC spill response) regulation revisions should look like.

Fending off the influence of the oil and gas industry. Management standing behind employees doing a good job enforcing regulations and guidances.

Undue political influence of large businesses in Alaska and Alaska's reliance upon extractive industries, such as logging, mining, fishing, and oil for economic support. These industries, together with a population who are heavily reliant upon these narrow sectors place Alaska's environment under constant assault with air, water, and terrestrial degradation.

Oil companies and fish industry have the legislature under their influence via politically supporting them with contributions. Legislature basically abhors state workers and thus budgets are under constant cutting. This is the only state where violators of the enviro/health laws are treated or rewarded for their actions. We're constantly reminded to "work with industry." Enforcement is not actively pursued thus workers know that they won't be backed and overlook key enviro/health violations. Enforcement personnel have been cut and responsibilities diluted.

The certainty that the State's next governor will be Murkowski, a pro-industry Republican. As ADEC's administration braces itself for removal from their positions and the influx of a relatively environmentally hostile new administration, ADEC may start passing pro-industry policies to guarantee its former administration high paying jobs in the private sector.

1) Attacks on ADEC by conservative Republican Legislators. 2) The oil industry has undue economic influence on state politics.

Maintaining high environmental standards in spite of cutbacks by republican (conservative) - dominated legislature and pressures from industry.

Various boards are staffed by the very industries they regulate. British Petroleum and other major players oversee the regulation of their own industries. Its kind of like the fox guarding the chicken coop. Term limits for board members. Need one board member for each large entity. Not several as to compose a majority rule on issues brought forward that impact say the "oil" industry.

Strong anti-government sentiment of the state residents, so it is hard to get public buy in for spending money to oversee the environment, and to set limits on what individuals and business do that affects everybody.

Lack of legislative support for specific function staff need to move forward in environmental conservation.

Big oil! And the Republican-led, pro-development lawmakers (not DEC admin.) that don't care one bit about the environment, but rather developing our resources to generate revenue to keep from having to implement new taxes!!

Poor Agency Leadership

ADEC's management and leadership. I recognize that a balance must be met regarding regulations and enforcement toward industry, but I have repeatedly seen regulatory requirements be ignored in order to move a project forward. I have been told not to be too "nit picky" with the regulations without any guidance about what "too nitpicky" would look like. I am very uncomfortable about relaxing a regulatory requirement when I don't believe I have the authority to do so.

Poor managers make poor environmental leaders. Holding the line on environmental protection as more resource development occurs. Weather the political storm pending with new governor elected in 2002.

Getting rid of political appointees who break the law and use HIRD against technically competent employees -- Larry Dietrick's needs to go he has beat up employees for over 15 years!!

Lack of credible and competent leadership.

The risk of the continual dysfunctional leadership of Larry Dietrick (director of spill prevention and response). In addition, to being a poor manager with poor judgement Larry appears to have been bought by "Big Oil" or perhaps Larry recent siding with Big Oil on many controversial issues is due to the upcoming governors election of which Sen. Frank Murkowski is a huge favorite and huge supporter of Big Oil. Also, DEC's commissioner Michelle Brown and DEC's Deputy Commissioner Kurt Fredericks are corrupt and "in bed" with industry as well. When industry and government become too friendly the public and the environment loose. The recent events within DEC's oil spill contingency planning program are illegal and shameful. How in the world will the public have confidence to open ANWR if we cannot provide quality legal oversight.

Leadership (management). Some programs have more management, support staff and program development staff, than people doing the actual work. More attention is given to political issues (issues that will make news) regardless of their environmental impact, than actual public health issues (issues with severe environmental impact). For example, more attention is devoted to the cruise ships than to Alaskan villages with severe environmental issues.

Having a Director (Administration) that is working for the people and employees of AK and not DEC or her pocketbook or reputation. Upper management of DEC is terrible. People are leaving left and right...

Obtaining management and administration who are competent and able to provide sound financial management and spending practices. Need a "watchdog" committee for spending practices like the federal GAO.

Poor management of programs and lack of knowledge by managers.

Management (including top management) should come from within, not outside, the agency.

That compromises in environmental ethics will be detrimental to the environment. Public employees should be encouraged to do their duties without fear of imposition. I will not feel good about my job if I have to bend the rules every once in a while to make my supervisors happy.

1) Public Trust 2) Improve employee morale 3) Have leaders capable of making decisions consistent with facts provided 5) Retaining qualified employees.

Lack of enforcement. Most citizen complaints are either not followed up or are looked at weeks after the fact. Greed within divisions. Some divisions will not lend a hand when needed. Money is more important than having the job done right. Some divisions are fat while others starve.

Budget

Trying to find a balance between progress and protecting the environment without adequate funding. For the past few years there have been large cuts to ADEC's budget affecting numerous programs adversely. Unfortunately government requires a lot of paper pushing and accounting -- there is enough administrative staff -- this puts increased burden on technical staff -- driving down moral and productivity.

Strong anti-government sentiment of the state residents, so it is hard to get public buy in for spending money to oversee the environment, and to set limits on what individuals and business do that affects everybody.

Lack of funds to maintain programs and support personnel. Lack of legislative support for specific function staff need to move forward in environmental conservation.

Trying to find a balance between progress and protecting the environment without adequate funding. For the past few years there have been large cuts to ADEC's budget affecting numerous programs adversely. Unfortunately government requires a lot of paper pushing and accounting -- there is enough administrative staff -- this puts increased burden on technical staff -- driving down moral and productivity.

Staffing

1) The inability to hire and retain talent environmental professionals to carry out State Environmental Laws, due to poor management, low pay and extremely low morale. 2) Special "favours" to big industry. 3) DEC's Spill Prevention and Response Director's inability to support and implement a credible oil spill prevention program (too focused on oil spill response). 4) DEC's Air and Water Quality Director's inability to fairly and consistently implement State and Federal Air and Water Quality Protection. 5) Lack of any hazardous material prevention programs. 6) Declining state revenues and the inevitable environmental compromises to increase economic oil and gas development. 7) Lack of an enforcement program with real "teeth".

The ability of the Department to address environmental issues that arise. We have large staff shortages and are facing increasing regulations. The staff we have are becoming overwhelmed with work. We are losing staff to much better paying jobs and can not replace vacancies because our salaries are well below the private sector. We are downgrading job descriptions just to fill them. Therefore, the environment suffers and issues become increasingly harder to address.

Serving the environmental protection needs of the state with fewer and fewer "worker" employees and more and more managers. Many sections have been reduced (mostly by attrition) to one worker at the same time as layers of manage have been added. In my one person section I have no power to push ahead regulations changes that the public and permittees and industry all want but management has held up for over a year. It gets very frustrating.

Application of laws/regs evenly. ADEC is full of people with no or poor past history for the job.

Hiring qualified individuals.

DEC working together as a team. Morale is seriously low.

The inability to hire and retain talent environmental professionals to carry out State Environmental Laws, due to poor management, low pay and extremely low morale.

We don't have a large applicant pool -- we often get employees that can't get, or keep employment at a private sector company. Also labor unions require a long, difficult process to discipline the losers.

Middle Management. Commissioner and directors appear to be making consistent choices toward appropriate and consistent environmental policies. Middle management, though, (Including managers between directors and staff) are degree holding idiots, blow-hards and yes-men. These are not people who are creatively looking to hire and utilize talented people. Rather they hoard information and excuse their own resources excesses while demanding the highest standards from both staff and directors.

Industry/Environment Balance

The permittees that don't want to spend money to protect Alaska's environment don't want to be regulated. The worst are the permittees with lots of money, because they hire lawyers and spend resources against ADEC.

Finding a way to balance industry's needs for cost-efficiency with public health and environment needs. Since industry will always have more political clout.

Meeting it's trustee obligations as an advocate for air and water quality, public health, and health of forests, fish and wildlife rather than economic health of a handful of wealthy foreign corporations who view Alaska's environment as part of their "waste disposal infrastructure."

Finding a way to balance industry's needs for cost-efficiency with public health and environment needs. Since industry will always have more political clout.

Balancing perceived economic advancement by industry with sustainable resource extraction.

Prioritization of environmental impacts and determining what provides "most bang for the buck" when it comes to protecting the environment.

Agency Structure/Reorganization

Under a new administration ADEC should be reorganized back to its former design of "regions". ADEC is the only dept. in AK to drop regions and districts. Each region in AK is extremely diverse and should be handled by staff living in and familiar with a particular region. Fairbanks staff overseeing projects in SE AK is not a fiscally sound way of doing business.

The current structure where political appointees are able to enforce (and force) political agendas on field staff. In a regional structure there was a buffer (the Regional /Programs manager) between the appointees and field staff. The Hickle administration had a goal to have political appointees as Regional administrators which was partially successful (35%) not counting the PCRO. Knowles has succeeded. This is also the only reorganization in DEC history that was formally signed off on by the Governor.

The change from different sections in environmental health has resulted in Inspectors being tasked with becoming generalists versus specialists. This has resulted in many jobs being done at sub-standard levels. This dumbing down of the work force has short changed the people of the State when it comes to food safety protection. Federal efforts to take over the work of state employees has also reduced the safety of the food supply. It is most universal in management that the primary mandate of protection of the consuming public is circumvented or side tracked for political reasons.

The inefficiency of using funds, bureaucracy and lack of communication between regional offices.

Getting an administration which supports environmental enforcement and a commissioner that is a strong manager for environmental issues. The Knowles Administration effectively diminished the strength of ADEC's enforcement capabilities through its reorganization. Through the reorg, ADEC lost several enforcement programs and doesn't even have a hazardous waste (RCRA) program at all. Enforcement is often referred to EPA to Administration.

Lack of EPA Program Support

Alaska is so far behind the rest of the United States. If we are lucky enough to be granted travel to the lower 48 states for training, we feel silly that we are so far behind on many issues (i.e. recycling, environmental management systems knowledge, health & safety issues). We need to bring back a hazardous waste program because the EPA isn't doing a very good job and we continuously are asked for help by the public and told no from our division management because no money. These businesses need help now, and need it continuously.

Finding the backing for extensive prevention and monitoring programs. Because much of Alaska is sparsely populated much of the environmental problems found elsewhere in the country do not exist. The challenge is to be proactive and stop the degradation of the environment instead of trying to just clean it up. This can be illustrated by looking at the dollars that EPA allocates to Alaska for things like surface water monitoring or beach monitoring even though Alaska has more shoreline and surface water than any other state.

Environmental Concerns

Clean up of military sites. Diesel has been leaking into Cold Bay since the 1950's. Drums in the hundreds are leaking at abandoned PET4 project sites. Unexploded ordnance has been documented throughout the Aleutians but no one is even protecting the public from detonating it. Not to mention thinking of cleaning it up.

Future energy crisis with the decline of hydrocarbons.

Dealing with the sanitation infrastructure (water, sewer, solid waste, tanks etc.) and environmental protection in rural Alaska. Villages have cultural and subsistence ties to the land, but lack the resources and capacity to develop, maintain, and operate the infrastructure needed to protect their environment.

The fact that Alaska is so spread out and resources may not be readily available or very expensive. For example: getting rid of the honey-bucket everywhere in Alaska is not possible because of permafrost, remoteness and cost.

The oil spills all over Alaska are also causing serious damage to habitat, without a way to fix it. Oil Spills are now common to Alaska, mostly by accident.

Inventory of environmental resources (no idea).

Permit tracking (who, what, where).

Comments About the PEER Survey

In addition, I am dismayed by your questions. Firstly, DEC's mission is not only to protect AK's environment. We are not a Department of Env. Protection. I also believe DEC has its hands tied because

of how the legislature directs us to use funds and how the legislators appropriate the funds. It is apparent that your questions stem from a dissatisfied few (or many) ...

Your survey sucks -- its biased.

Extremist organization such as yours. Please keep this trash out of Alaska.