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WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

SOUTHCENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

3601 "C" Street
SUITE 370
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-2798
PHONE: (907) 561-6131
FAX: (907) 561-6134

CENTRAL OFFICE

P.O. BOX AW
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0165
PHONE: (907) 465-3562
FAX: (907) 465-3075

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

675 SEVENTH AVENUE
STATION H
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-4596
PHONE: (907) 451-2818
FAX: (907) 451-2814

July 7, 1992

John Morehead
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Morehead:

The State of Alaska is concerned about the fast pace and inadequate public process associated with National Park Service plans to build a number of public use cabins on national parklands in Alaska.

The State is highly supportive of new public use cabins, but important issues are being overlooked which will likely reduce the public benefit this program is intended to provide. Based on the Environmental Assessments (EAs) reviewed to date, the following examples of problems have been identified:

- * Few, if any, alternative locations are considered; and proposed sites aren't always in the most desirable locations, e.g. Exit Glacier cabin is situated inside NPS compound.
- * Public access opportunities and constraints are not adequately addressed, possibly jeopardizing the intended use of the cabins, e.g. Nuka Bay cabin has no easements for public access.
- * Land status issues are ambiguous, e.g. there is no certainty about the use or management of the proposed cabin at Nuka Bay if it is subsequently conveyed to the Natives.

Unfortunately, the State has not had an opportunity to raise these issues prior to release of the EAs. The compressed schedule to complete these cabins has precluded public scoping

and interagency consultation -- which could have identified these problems earlier so that they could be addressed before firm proposals were made.

Furthermore, the State and public have not been given the minimum 30-day public comment period which is customary for draft EAs. At this point it appears that NPS will be able to make few changes to accomodate the accelerated planning process.

The State requests that the National Park Service take the additional time necessary to address concerns raised by the State and the public before finalizing the public use cabin plans. In the long run the public will be much better served by a program which will have fewer flaws and greater public appreciation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Rusanowski, Ph.D.
Director

cc:

James Ridenour, Director, National Park Service
Senator Ted Stevens, Washington, D.C.
John Katz, Governor's Office, Washington, D.C.
Glenn Olds, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
Carl Rosier, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
John Sandor, Commissioner, Department of Environmental
Conservation
Frank Turpin, Commissioner, Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities
Richard Burton, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety

CSU Distribution List
NPS Cabin Process: State Letter
July 8, 1992

Tina Cunning, Department of Fish & Game, Anchorage
Terry Haynes, Department of Fish & Game, Fairbanks
Priscilla Wohl, Dept of Environmental Conservation, Anch
Rob Walkinshaw, Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage
Jenny Olendorff, Dept of Transportation/Public Facilities, Anch
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Steve Jacoby, Division of Governmental Coordination, Juneau
Connel Murray, Division of Tourism, Juneau
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Stan Leaphart, CACFA, Fairbanks
Mike Strunk, NPS Planning, Anchorage
Joan Darnell, Environmental Compliance, NPS, Anchorage
Curtis V. McVee, Department of the Interior
Ron McCoy, Department of the Interior
Lisa Sutherland, Senator Steven's Office, Washington, D.C.