

Testimony
CSHB 77- Land Disposals/Exchanges: Water Rights
Friday, March 14, 2014

Good evening Madam Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for extending public testimony so we all have an opportunity to speak. For the record, my name is Rachael Petro and I serve as the president and CEO of the Alaska Chamber. You have maybe heard us referred to as corporate skills earlier in testimony. So, to be clear, I am a proud skill of every sole proprietor, small, medium and large business that is a member of the Alaska Chamber.

Our primary mission is to advocate for policies that improve Alaska's business climate. We are the most diverse statewide pro-business organization. With that come serious challenges... not unlike those you face among your colleagues here in this committee and in the Legislature. When the diverse membership of the Alaska Chamber agree on an issue – it's a little bit amazing. One thing Alaska Chamber members do agree on is that efficient, predictable and common sense regulations and permitting processes are integral in creating an environment in which businesses, new and old, can succeed.

Every single member of the Alaska Chamber who lives here in Alaska represents a family, children, and grandchildren. And, gosh darn it we work hard to make sure that we can have a strong, healthy economy that really allows us not only to use our resources, but to protect them. Because we selfishly want to keep living where we love.

We supported HB 77 initially; we have looked at the changes brought about earlier this week – and we support those. We support the current changes introduced today. Ultimately the changes that Sen. Micciche and members of the committee made improved the bill and certainly address the comments we heard last session.

Many have testified the past few days about the dismay with the committee substitute process. As far as I can tell you are following the established process you always follow. I will note that action alerts from statewide organizations as early as March 7 basically asked folks to prepare to testify and to be sure to oppose HB 77 regardless of what the changes were. Thank you. We ask you to please support the HB 77 for the good of all Alaskans.