

# Bill would eliminate Department of Environmental Conservation

## Editorial

The "super agency, watch dog" attitude by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has convinced Nenana Senator Jack Coghill that the department should be eliminated.

He introduced legislation on March 8 which would abolish the department and transfer its functions to other departments.

Coghill's bill also would do away with the Environmental Procedures Coordination Act.

Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Coghill asserts, should be put back into departments that are more legitimately concerned with such issues as health, water standards, trails, rights-of-way, facility con-

struction and operation.

"The concept of my bill," Coghill said, "is to do away with a 'super agency' that attacks us daily. 'I want to take the 'sting' out of doing business in Alaska.

I want to eliminate the mental trauma that many Alaskans are subjected to by DEC.

"Those of us who want to develop our state and create a healthy sound economy are hampered too much by this strong DEC advocacy approach."

He continued, "If we put our many serious environmental concerns back into the 'legitimate' departments, those 'stings', or rulings, will have been filtered through a more sound and objective review process.

"And, by the time the rulings

reach respective department heads, there will be a certain semblance of reasonableness to them."

"I want to see Alaska government work with development concepts instead of stagnating our growth."

The Nenana Legislator, using the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as an example, said, "Follow this scenario: The Division of Lands may be advocating a certain position on

Issue No. 1. The division of Water Quality in DNR is advocating another position on Issue No. 1. Then here come more DNR divisions like Agriculture, Water Management, Forestry, Geological Surveys, Geophysical Surveys, Oil and Gas, Mining, Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Even the Commissioner's office could be establishing a position on Issue No. 1.

"When these dozen or so divisions, all within one department,

talk about the same subject, Issue No. 1, in this case, we can be assured that Issue No. 1 has been well reviewed, discussed and recommended. The Commissioner will have had all possible options laid out before her so a reasonable and acceptable decision is handed down."

"My intent is to put our environmental concerns back into agencies where they belong and where they will be worked on as a function of that agency."