



BERTA'S BRIEFINGS

REPRESENTATIVE BERTA GARDNER

Serving Geneva Woods, College Village, Green Acres, Tudor, Taku & Campbell Park

SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

Hearing on Local Hire Tomorrow Let's Hire More Alaskans

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

One of the big secrets during all the ongoing oil and gas tax debate is that oil field employment is at near record levels. Sadly, the Alaska Department of Labor statistics show that half the workforce is now from other states. This is unacceptable to those of us who want to support Alaskan hire.

I am pleased that the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee is holding public hearings in Fairbanks and Anchorage, trying to understand why hiring from out of state is increasing, and how the state can encourage the hiring of Alaskans.

Interested Alaskans can attend the Anchorage hearing tomorrow. Public testimony will be taken at 5:30 PM, so you will have the opportunity to make your voice heard. If you are unable to attend in person you can also listen in at <http://alaskalegislature.tv/>. Here are the details:



The Trans-Alaska Pipeline

Photo by Ryan McFarland, www.zieak.com

**Senate Labor and Commerce Committee
Anchorage Legislative Information Office
716 West 4th Avenue, Second Floor Conference Room
Thursday, September 8
1:30-3:30 Invited Testimony
5:30-7:30 Public Testimony**

It is important that Governor and Legislature hear from the public that any changes to our tax **must include provisions to promote Alaskan employment in Alaskan oil fields.**

I have been working with colleagues Rep. Chris Tuck (Anchorage) and Rep. Scott Kawasaki (Fairbanks) on legislation to provide oil production tax incentives to encourage companies to hire Alaska residents. We already have similar laws on the books for the motion picture industry, and our bill why not extend the incentives to other industries? The bill we file, HB 82 does not exactly nail the issue but it starts a conversation about it and underscores our commitment to the premise that Alaska's resources should benefit Alaskans so that these good jobs will allow us to better provide for our families and keep money flowing in our great state.

ANOTHER BIG ISSUE

One big problem in developing our North Slope resources is that smaller companies (those outside the major players: BP, ConocoPhillips and Exxon) have had great difficulty being able to use existing North Slope infrastructure. If a company finds oil and wants to develop a new field, they have to negotiate access to the roads, pipelines and processing facilities owned by the majors. Without such agreements, they are unable to cost effectively move their oil into the pipeline and to market. Many smaller companies are eager to explore for and develop the smaller fields which do not interest the majors. Without cooperation and agreements, this oil could just sit in the ground to the detriment of Alaska.

According to Alaska Journal of Commerce (ACJ) reporter Tim Bradner, "Facility access has been a problem on the North Slope." Bradner noted, "It took a long time, but Pioneer Natural Resources was able to successfully negotiate a facility access agreement with ConocoPhillips and other Kuparuk River field owners to process and ship its oil from the small Ooguruk field through Kuparuk field processing plants and pipelines. However, it took Pioneer several years to get an agreement."

I am pleased to report that, according to ACJ, the Parnell Administration has now agreed with us that "facilities access" is an issue that needs to be addressed. [Click here to read the entire article.](#)

There are different approaches to opening up the North Slope infrastructure to smaller companies by encouraging facilities' sharing. HB220, which I introduced last year with Representatives Les Gara and Beth Kerttula, is one proposal to encourage facility sharing. HB138 by Representative David Guttenberg is another. We are all hoping that the Administration's new interest in the issue will help us make headway in the coming year.

I'm Berta and I'm still listening,


