



CONSERVATION VOTER

Alaska Conservation Voters

www.acvoters.org

Summer 2005

ACV Celebrates Pesticides Campaign Victory!

A walk through the park will be a little more relaxing now, since Alaska Conservation Voters' Pesticides Right to Know Bill (HB 19) became law, giving Alaskans on-site notification about when and where pesticides are applied in many places where we live, work and play.

The bill passed with resounding bipartisan support in the Legislature, and Governor Murkowski signed it into law on June 7. This health-protecting legislation marked the conservation community's first statewide collaboration with its sponsor, Representative Kevin Meyer (R-Anchorage).

"Rep. Meyer recognizes that we have a responsibility to safeguard our families and communities from toxic chemicals. That's why we approached him about sponsoring this bill," said Matt Davidson, former Legislative Director of ACV. "It was great to work with him and help diminish this public health hazard."

The Right to Know law directs the Dept. of Environmental Conservation(DEC) to develop regulations that require on-site notification for pesticide applications in public places such as government buildings, common areas of apartment buildings, parks, plazas, and public sports fields. The law also requires training before spray-



Governor Murkowski, Representative Kevin Meyer, ACV Executive Director Tom Atkinson, and Varsha Mathrani from Alaska Community Action on Toxics at signing of the bill

ing pesticides in these public places.

"Protecting Alaskans' health—especially kids' health—is not a partisan issue," said Tom Atkinson, Executive Director of ACV. "ACV thanks legislators from both parties for supporting this measure."

In addition to safeguarding public health, the Right to Know law is fiscally responsible, and helps relieve

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Anchorage Municipal Election Delivers Mixed Bag



Brian Whittle

The Anchorage Assembly became less friendly to conservation as a result of the elections April 5, which saw two pro-conservation incumbents defeated. Voters also passed the entire slate of proposed bond measures, including a conservationist-backed transit bond and a new convention center.

East Anchorage incumbent Brian Whittle, a conservation champion on the Assembly these past three years and sponsor of landmark

pesticides Right to Know legislation, fell 173 votes of recapturing his seat. Whittle was defeated by Paul Bauer, an airport catering security manager backed by site condo developers.

South Anchorage pro-conservation incumbent Dick Tremaine lost by a wider margin to Chris Birch, an engineer and former Fairbanks Assemblyman also backed by site condo developers.

ACV-endorsed incumbent Allen Tesche won a third term in his downtown district. Allen will continue to be a steadfast pro-conservation vote.

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Alaska Conservation Voters protects Alaska's environment through public education and advocacy, and supports pro-conservation candidates for public office.

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Letter from the Director

Yes, I'm smiling. Grinning, even. And why?

Well, partly just because it's summer in Alaska. I can swim across Whisper Lake, gawk at a double rainbow arching over the Chugach Mountains, marvel at a humpback whale sounding in Kachemak Bay, and listen to Bear Creek's murmuring lullaby. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't repress the joy of living here. And I don't want to.

No, I want to conserve the real Alaska and pass this joy on to future generations.

So I'm smiling because at Alaska Conservation Voters we're doing just that: keeping Alaska healthy for future Alaskans. As the political arm of Alaska's conservation movement, ACV is the only organization dedicated to electing state and local candidates who will take care of Alaska.

I'm grinning because many other Alaskans—like you—are so proud of our unique home that they're making generous donations that enable ACV to recruit, train, contribute to, and campaign on behalf of, pro-conservation candidates. ACV membership grew by 50% last year alone!

I'm smiling because ACV runs Alaska's only statewide conservation lobby, and we're influencing more legislators on both sides of the Juneau aisle to keep Alaska healthy. Big majorities in the House and Senate passed our pesticides right to know bill. Exhilarated by this win, Alaska conservation groups are envisaging more victories next session, and are more coordinated for legislative action than ever before. ACV's Juneau staff is already building strategic alliances to assure wins.

I'm grinning because ACV helped create conservation majorities on borough assemblies from Juneau, to Kenai to the Mat-Su, and we're gearing up to preserve or expand municipal wins. We work local races because municipal officials make very real, close-to-home decisions that affect daily quality of life—the Anchorage Assembly re-confirmed our pesticides notice law this spring—and they frequently go on to run for higher office. The relationships we build with them now bear more fruit later.

I'm smiling because we're winning on defense—our radio ads helped stymie aerial pesticides spraying near Ketchikan—and on offense—momentum is building for wind power on Fire Island.

Yes, I'm grinning. In short because I see good things happening at, and because of, Alaska Conservation Voters. We're broadening our bi-partisan outreach, allying with more Alaskans, getting good press, improving our image, building power...and winning.

None of our success is possible without your advice, your questions and your generous support. We're happy to hear from you. What do you think of our re-designed web site? Let us know your opinion of our revamped legislator ratings.

Thank you so much for playing your part in our success.
 Keep smiling.

Alaska Conservation Voters has accomplished much to keep Alaska healthy, but none of our great work would be possible without your generous support. Please help ensure a safe, healthy environment for years to come by contributing today.



To make a donation, please go to our on-line contributions page at www.acvoters.org, mail your contribution in the enclosed envelope, or telephone Bobi Rinehart at 258-6171.

From Our Juneau Office:**Riding the 2005 Legislative Rollercoaster**

Advocating conservation in the Alaska Legislature can feel like a rollercoaster ride – exhilarating highs when conservation bills pass, depressing lows when lawmakers whack our environment. Unlike most rollercoaster riders, however, Alaska conservationists are not merely passengers. We actually influence how high we climb and help prevent or mitigate our falls.

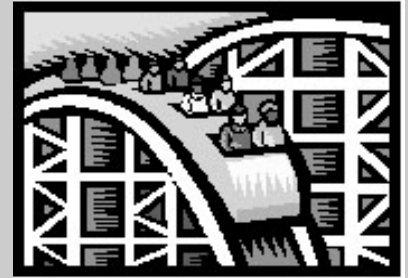
During the first session of the 24th Alaska Legislature, an overall anti-environmental ethos still permeated the Capitol, but this year's session gave hope that conservation ideals resonate, and that legislators recognize keeping Alaskans and our environment healthy is everyone's responsibility.

The University Lands (HB 130) bill, which gave 260,000 acres to the University for revenue-generating development, dominated the conservation community's defensive efforts this session. While conservationists had successfully stymied previous versions of the bill, the consensus was that we would not be able to stop it this year, so our strategy was to improve the measure as much as possible. We rallied grass roots and non-conservation allies and brought constituents, including well-known dog musher, Vern Halter, to Juneau to testify. ACV-endorsed

Republican legislators removed parcels with the highest habitat value, and improved the public process for steering development of the lands.

Climbs included new laws requiring genetically modified seafood product labeling (SB 25) and renewable energy legislation progressing. Big drops include a bill giving the state power to issue Clean Water Act permits and a bill that sunsets the coastal zone management program in 2011. Conservationists' efforts successfully stalled bills to open the Dalton Highway to unregulated ATV use, dramatically change fish and game management, and limit citizen abilities to challenge poor government decisions.

Energized from this year's successes, ACV is looking forward to next session for new pro-conservation legislation. Some ideas on the table for proactive bills include renewable energy promotion and keeping toxic mixing zones out of salmon streams. Want to help with proactive legislation? Email Britt@akvoice.org.



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Pesticides Victory

some of the state's General Fund burden. HB 19 authorizes DEC to collect a reasonable fee from chemical manufacturers to cover the cost of the state's entire pesticide program, which includes chemical registration and inspections.

"Protecting the public health of Alaskans costs money. Asking the chemical companies that profit from the sale of their product to pay for the cost the state incurs is reasonable," said Rep. Meyer. "In addition, Alaskans have a right to know if they are exposing themselves, their children, or their pets to a chemical that could spawn an asthma attack or allergic reaction."

The Pesticides Right to Know law represents a huge success, for both the conservation community and the Alaskan public. ACV will stay engaged through the year to ensure that DEC's notification regulations adequately protect your health. To get involved in advocacy for the regulatory process, email Britt@akvoice.org.

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Anchorage Elections

First time candidate Matt Claman, trained and backed by ACV, garnered 40% against two-term West side incumbent Dan Sullivan, whose father was a long-time Anchorage mayor.

Voters approved building a new \$93 million convention center that ACV endorsed and campaigned for. Conventioneers often take jaunts into wild Alaska before or after their conventions, thus strengthening our eco-tourism economy and building the constituency for ecosystem protection. Voters also approved a bond to improve public transportation.

Bond issues approval was a boost for Mayor Mark Begich's vision for Anchorage, but losing two Assembly allies could slow Begich's—and the municipality's—progress.

This autumn, ACV will help protect pro-conservation majorities on the Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai Peninsula and Juneau borough assemblies, and try to help elect more pro-conservation candidates to the Fairbanks assembly.

ACV Member profile: Judge Thomas Stewart

At a time when environmental protection and development often seem at odds, Judge Thomas Stewart is living proof that the two are not always mutually exclusive. His father, Benjamin Stewart, was well known as a prime mover in Alaska's mining industry. Now, after a long and distinguished career as a jurist, Judge Stewart, 86, is an



ardent conservationist. He says he understands the importance of resource use but he also worries about its impact: "I want to do whatever I can to keep our environment healthy."

Stewart grew up in Juneau, where he still lives today. As a youngster, he got to see Alaska's pristine wilderness first hand as he traveled by boat with his father, exploring prospective mining sites all over Southeast.

Upon graduating from Yale Law School in 1950, Judge Stewart moved back to Alaska where he served as a mem-

ber of the Territorial Legislature. Then, as the Executive Officer of the Alaska Statehood Committee, he played an important role in writing our constitution, and later was elected as one of the Alaska's first State Senators. He retired as a Superior Court Judge in 1984.

Judge Stewart raised six children with his late wife, Jane. He was an avid skier, and as a certified ski instructor, he taught many of Juneau's youth. He was also an intrepid hiker, spending much of his time climbing the mountains around Alaska's capital city.

Today, Judge Stewart remains actively involved in civic life and is a big supporter of environmental organizations that work to protect Alaska's clean water, wild lands and quality of life. He gives generously to Alaska Conservation Voters and serves on the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Land Trust.

He still lives in the house his parents built in Juneau, a few blocks from the governor's mansion. Walking past it, you might hear the raucous calls and flapping wings of the great blue herons that, year after year, use the tall spruce trees in his yard as their rookery. Judge Stewart is as enthusiastic about playing host to the herons as he was when he tagged along with his father on those wilderness mining surveys many years ago.



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