

# Assembly on 2016-02-23 6:00 PM

Meeting Time: 02-23-16 18:00

02016-03

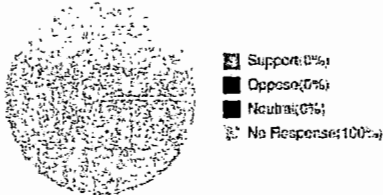
## eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Assembly on 2016-02-23 6:00 PM	02-23-16 18:00	61	2	0	0	0

### Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

#### Overall Sentiment



Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
J. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA	1	0	0	0
2. 2016-03 An Ordinance Amending KPB Chapters 21.44 and 21.46 Regarding Local Option Zoning, and Repealing KPB 21.50.050 Relating to Fines and Reenacting as KPB 21.50.055 (Johnson, Mayor)	1	0	0	0

### Rebecca Hinsberger

Location:

Submitted At: 12:55am 02-24-16

I am commenting on the overreach and environmental destruction being perpetrated on highway right of ways by the local DOT. The DOT may have a specified right to do anything they please within these areas without oversight or input from environmental experts and stakeholders, government agents (such as Fish and Game and Wildlife experts), borough governing bodies, or community bodies and impacted land owners, but is this right? I don't think it is. A solution to reign in the tyranny of the DOT must be found.

Assembly member Brent Johnson has brought to my attention that the Borough Assembly passed a resolution for the highway department to reduce the width of the clearing on the right of ways, after the wanton destruction took place on the east side of the highway between Clam Gulch and Ninilchik a few years ago. The DOT has ignored that resolution. Some sort of further pressure must be brought to bare, or an avenue to reign them in at the state legislative level must be found. Meanwhile, we locals in the Kenai Peninsula Borough are speaking loudly to this

issue now, because of this continued destruction.

When the cutting between Clam Gulch and Ninilchik took place, several residents were greatly upset and at least one sold out. I understand that the community at that time was given no opportunity to have input or influence over the permanent damage to their locale and negative impacts to property values that created. Most assumed that the extreme width cut was needed for the installment of the gas line, but such was not the case. According to Carl High, who is in charge at Soldotna's DOT, the purpose was to allow for better sunlight exposure onto the pavement surface, and secondly to help with moose visibility. This could have been accomplished with a cut area a fraction of the width installed. Also, we all know that because the DOT only initially trims the existing brush, it surges right back, luring more moose and concealing them as well. They cannot, and historically have not, maintained these extensive cut areas. Removing more forest only increases these brush dense areas. It looks terrible to residents and tourists alike, and is an environmentally unsound approach to accomplishing the goals Carl describes.

Recently, the Dot has been clearcutting rights of way along the Sterling highway south of Soldotna, as well as borough maintained side roads everywhere. Residents aren't not made aware until equipment is already at work. This has to change. Brian Gabriel, in charge of the project in Carl High's absence, brushes off upset residents along the right of ways. Some of those residents had homes in their current locations before the highway even existed in proximity to them. Trees could be limbed and/or thinned where moose visibility is an issue. This brings me to the purpose of this project.

Brian Gabriel states that this project is seeking to create better moose visibility, more sunlight on the pavement, and better sight corridors for traffic traveling along the highway. He states that the straight aways do not need to be cut for any reason except to create moose visibility, and on the east side for sunlight penetration, and that he has instructed Carlos Tree Service, the subcontractor hired by the DOT to cut trees down, to leave intermittent healthy trees to "soften the harshness of the cut areas". Only the insides of curves need to be trimmed back to afford better sight distance around the curve for traffic. This is Brian's statement to the people. To Carlos Tree Service, he has commanded to clear cut the entire length of the right of ways to the surveyed edge, with no mention of "leaving intermittent healthy trees" at all. The result is a raggedy, demolished looking area, with the forest unnecessarily clear cut to an extreme distance. The brush will surge back and attract moose.

The DOT continues to demolish forested habitat, without any environmental expertise or oversight, nor any community input, on our highway right of ways. They are accountable to no one. Or is this really true? Aren't they a department installed by we the people of Alaska to build and maintain "our" highways? They serve the people of Alaska, in this way. The people deserve a voice in the carrying out of that purpose. The DOT has expertise in highway building, safety issues, and maintenance- they have no understanding of botany or environmental impacts and stewardship, aesthetics, tourism, real state values, and other stakeholder issues, They need to be overseen and made accountable by experts in these areas. Alaska is known for its freedoms and lack of government regulations in many areas, and most of us deplore having to create more regulations for any entity, but when freedoms of one entity are infringed by another entity, it has to be addressed.