

Andrew T. Mack
Commissioner
550 W. 7th Ave., Ste 1400
Anchorage, AK 99501
dnr.alaska.gov



Elizabeth Bluemink
Communications
Coordinator
907.269.8434
elizabeth.bluemink@alaska.gov

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DNR prepares for public impacts of potential government shutdown

(Anchorage, AK) – Natural Resources Commissioner Andy Mack announced today that the Department of Natural Resources is working with Department of Law to prepare for a potential government shutdown, which would likely require the suspension of all agency functions and services not essential to the life, health and safety of Alaskans.

DNR manages the State of Alaska's land, water and mineral resources. These resources supply most of the revenue for the state General Fund, endow the Permanent Fund, and support thousands of private sector jobs. Even a temporary shutdown could disrupt routine activities on state lands and collection of fees and royalties.

In the event of a government shutdown, DNR would likely continue wildland firefighting operations and operation of the Alaska Volcano Observatory. DNR is looking at the possibility that virtually all other DNR programs and activities involving state land, water, forestry, agriculture, geological and natural hazard research, oil and gas leases, pipeline right-of-way oversight, and state parks, could be suspended or experience significant interruptions. The following list describes potential impacts to DNR's functions, which could be shut down, delayed or interrupted if a fully funded budget is not passed before July 1:

- Issuance of DNR permits and authorizations
- Field inspections, timber and land sales, agricultural certifications, and DNR participation in planned research activities
- Operation of all Recorder's Office locations, which record documents necessary to complete real property sales and other commercial transactions
- Operation of public restrooms and state park visitor centers
- Park rangers, campground hosts or other personnel to assist visitors
- Operation of state park fee stations, water pumps and other systems that require routine maintenance
- State park lands and campgrounds could remain open for public use but without services

- Reservations for state park cabins via the Reserve America website
- Operation of public information center locations in Anchorage and Fairbanks, which handle customer service calls, visits, and payments

“I am very hopeful that the Legislature will pass a fully funded budget before July 1 so the Department of Natural Resources can continue to generate revenue for the State of Alaska, support Alaska’s resource-based economy, and facilitate public enjoyment of our state lands,” Commissioner Mack said.

This year’s preparations for a government shutdown are different than in 2015, when the legislature had passed a partially funded budget. This year, money has not been appropriated for any government services. As a government shutdown in Alaska is unprecedented, Department of Law is examining what money could be spent to continue vital state services if the legislature has not fulfilled its constitutional obligation to pass a budget.

CONTACT: Elizabeth Bluemink, 907-269-8434, elizabeth.bluemink@alaska.gov

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