

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement for SB 356

General Permit for Water/Waste Disposal

“An Act relating to the authority of the Department of Environmental Conservation to issue general and individual permits for waste disposal; and providing for an effective date.”

By: Senator Gene Therriault

What Are General Permits?

- General permits (GPs) apply to a class or group of operations that are similar—from an operational and waste discharge perspective. GPs contain specific performance or operational requirements, and can be applied statewide or limited to a specific geographic or environmental setting. Some GPs incorporate site-specific requirements relevant to a location or receiving environment.
- GPs go through public review at the time they are proposed. In most cases, operators who wish to discharge or dispose of waste under the terms of a GP are required to receive written authorization from DEC in order to proceed.
- GPs are widely used by both federal and state agencies. DEC, like most other states, has used GPs for years, however state law regarding discharges of wastewater and solid waste does not specify procedures for general permits.

What Type Of Operation Uses A General Permit?

- Remote camps and lodges
- Fish hatcheries
- Sewage treatment for communities with fewer than 1,000 people
- Oil well drilling operations

Why Are General Permits Valuable?

- GPs allow DEC to avoid duplication by creating one permit instead of multiple identical permits for activities where the risk and impact to the environment is either low or can be easily mitigated with common treatment practices.
- GPs save DEC and the regulated community time and money while accomplishing the goal of environmental protection. GPs go hand in hand with the permit fees structure created by the Legislature in 1999 with HB361 by allowing the resource agencies to establish fixed fees for GPs.
- GPs allow DEC to allocate more resources to field site visits and inspections — the agency's best opportunity to make sure the permits are working as designed and that the public health and environment are being protected.

What Does SB 356 Accomplish?

- [The bill](#) establishes procedures for developing and issuing GPs in DEC's water and solid waste divisions.
- The bill requires clear public access to information about which facilities and activities are operating under the terms of a GP.