

Good afternoon - Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Energy issues in Rural Alaska. My name is Robert Keith. I am President of the Native Village of Elim and Chairman of Kawerak Inc., the tribally authorized non-profit regional consortium serving the Bering Straits region of Alaska.

Like the rest of rural Alaska, our region has experienced ever-escalating costs for fuel and energy production. Over the past five years, we estimate energy costs have doubled, if not tripled, in most of our villages. Currently fuel prices in the Bering Straits Region range from \$5-\$8 a gallon. Over the long term, we see fuel prices only going up. We need to develop other, low cost means of generating energy in Rural Alaska. In light of this, we recommend the state of Alaska undertake the following:

- 1) Expand and continue the P.C.E. Program to offset the high cost of electricity until such time as alternative energy is developed ~~to offset the cost~~ in Rural Alaska;

- 2) explore and set in place means to assist rural communities to purchase fuel when the price is low, as opposed to the summer high;
- 3) explore and set in place means to ^{reduce} ~~the~~ the cost of transporting fuel to rural Alaska;
- 4) should the State of Alaska make additional resources available to homeowners for energy assistance, we recommend that the state issue energy vouchers ^{similar to the CITGO model} as opposed to checks;
- 5) establish a state office to provide technical expertise in planning, installing, implementing and managing alternative energy technology - we can't afford to constantly recreate the wheel - or make mistakes along the way;
- 6) ~~the~~ ^{create a} ~~state~~ ~~clearinghouse~~ clearinghouse on alternative energy approaches and technology in terms of what works ~~in~~ in the arctic, ~~the~~ ease of operation, cost of equipment, maintenance and upkeep;
- 7) develop plans, material lists and provide low interest loans to enable rural Alaskans to install proven alternative Energy technology in their homes;

- 8) Develop a long term alternative energy plan ~~and~~ for the state of Alaska to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels; and
- 9) Appropriate ^{dedicated alternative energy} funds such that we can implement and achieve all of the above!

Quianna!