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FROM: Representative Norman Rokeberg 
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RE: March 2004 Westside Pulse Article

UPDATE ON SAND LAKE GRAVEL PIT ISSUES
By Representative Norman Rokeberg
House District 27

One of the major issues in our area concerns questions surrounding the impacts new development will have on water and water wells in Sand Lake, particularly in the area of the Sand Lake gravel pit.

Your legislative delegation has been working on these issues for some time and shares the neighborhood's concerns. We question the validity of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) assessment of May 12, 2003. The assessment itself, combined with the Freedom of Information Act analysis of the background information compiled by the excellent work of the South Anchorage Concerned Coalition, Inc., exposes the lack of scientific rigor on the part of the ADEC.

In December, I met Will Watson, Professor Anne Pasch and Andrew Halcro to consider how to proceed. The consensus was to work toward a third party review of the record including an analysis and critique of the May 12, 2003 ADEC assessment.

During January and February, Mr. Watson, representatives of the Mayor's office, Senator Ben Stevens and I have worked on developing a plan to fund and

complete the third party review. When Mayor Begich was in Juneau in late January, I met with him on the matter.

Last session, Senator Stevens and I worked to obtain \$375,000 for the Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility for Sand Lake Area Water Extension. The information on this grant indicates that the funds are to be used to “partially” finance studies with the purpose and goal of investigating the engineering aspects affecting potable water supply in the Sand Lake area and formulating a recommended implementation program for achieving public water service in the Sand Lake area. There are two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to be issued by the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) – one for watershed and one for water and sewer. The Mayor and I agreed that we explore expanding the watershed study to include the review of the record and other available data.

I remain in close contact with the Mayor’s Office concerning the RFPs and think that we finally have an agreement to amend the watershed RFP to call for a phased project. Phase I would hopefully consist of an in-depth review of the record conducted by a third party and it would be due out in an early time frame. The scope and requirements for the RFP have not been firmed up yet but I remain in close contact with the Mayor’s Office (as are Will Watson and others). The current plan calls for a public review during the scoping of the study and some possible participation on the selection committee.

Also, the \$2 million in federal funds that Senator Ted Stevens was working on for Sand Lake water projects appears to be secure.

If you wish to contact me during the 2004 legislative session, please: write me at: State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801-1182; telephone: 1-800-773-4968 or 907-465-4968; fax: (907) 465-2040; e-mail: Representative_Norman_Rokeberg@legis.state.ak.us; or call 269-0111 and send a public opinion message.