

Appendix A: Summary of Comments and Responses

AS 38.05.035(e)(7)(B) requires that final written findings include a summary of agency and public comments received and the department's responses to those comments. This appendix summarizes agency and public comments timely received in response to DO&G's request for comments on the proposed Southwest Cook Inlet exploration license.

1. Commenter name: United Utilities, Inc. (UUI) Terra-SW Office

Comment Summary: In 2011, UUI installed fiber optic cable within Cook Inlet that provides broadband service to the Bristol Bay and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta regions of Southwest Alaska. Portions of the cable are buried on the sea floor within the license area. The cable emerges from Cook Inlet in Iliamna Bay at Williamsport. UUI installed the cable under Land Use Permit ADL No. 230875 issued by ADRN-DMLW and utility permits issued by ADOT&PF. UUI is concerned that equipment may contact the cable during exploration work. Consequences of damaging or severing the existing cable would be severe for Southwest Alaska's infrastructure (hospitals and schools) and UUI financially.

UUI requests that any license issued contain a special stipulation prohibiting license holders and their agents, employees, contractors, subcontractors, invitees, assigns, or licensees from contacting or interfering with the operation of the cable, and requiring license holders to maintain a one km buffer on each side (two km buffer total) of the charted submarine cable. UUI also requests that notice of the cable route and location be provided to all such persons.

ADNR Response: It is the best interest of the state of Alaska to protect the UUI fiber optic cable that provides broadband internet service to communities in southwest Alaska. Information regarding the presence and location of the cable has been included in Chapter Five (Current and Projected Uses of the License Area) of this Best Interest Finding. The licensee is advised of the implications of damage to the cable, to limit the potential of any activity that could damage the cable or interrupt the service. However, Stipulation Nine (Reservation of Rights) of the Land Use Permit (Early Entry Authorization) ADL # 230875 states that the Division reserves the right to grant additional authorizations to third parties for compatible uses on or adjacent to the land covered under this authorization. Authorized concurrent users of state land, their agents, employees, contractors, subcontractors and licensees shall not interfere with the operation or maintenance activities of authorized users, and therefore, the one km buffer on either side of the cable will not be mandated in this Best Interest Finding.