ATTACHMENT A

MEMORANDUM State of Alaska

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

TO: Laurel Murphy
Minerals Adjudicator Manager
Div. of Minerals & Energy Mgt.

DATE: March 31, 1982

FILE NO:

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FROM: Roy D. Merritt
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SUBJECT: Evaluation of Alaska's Coal Potential

As per your request, we have completed a preliminary evaluation of the coal potential of Alaska's patented and tentatively approved lands. However, this evaluation is very generalized; if you require a more detailed study of specific blocks (i.e., certain townships), please let us know.

A modification of the coal-potential-rating system developed by Eakins and Clough for evaluating applications for coal prospecting permits was used for this assessment. As you know, this method ranks four grades of relative coal potential:

1. Indicates a high potential for coal development and includes areas where reserves have been proven by drilling or detailed field investigations.

2. Indicates areas of moderate potential for coal development and probably warrants exploration. This classification may refer to areas that are reasonable distances from coal outcrops or drill holes so that significant reserves can be projected and inferred to be present; or the area is rated as such due to remoteness, complex geology (structure), or other constraints.

3. Indicates areas where available evidence for the presence of significant coal at mineable depths is either lacking or suggests that the area has a low potential.

4. Indicates areas where coal-bearing formations are absent and hence, there exists no possibility for coal production.

The coal resources for areas of state patented and tentatively approved land have been classified by quadrangle (see appended generalized state-land-activity map). The coal potential has been evaluated for those areas with reported coal occurrences or known fields and overlapping state patented or tentatively approved lands.

Detailed reserve figures and resource evaluations, in the manner of the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines, cannot be computed at this time for Alaskan coal deposits. A data base must be

developed in these regions, and this will require a long-term commitment by the State of Alaska for coal-field investigations.

This obviously is a hasty assessment of the overall coal-development potential in Alaska, and we must emphasize the preliminary nature of this work. It is definitely open to question, and refinements in rankings can be made as further information becomes available. Because of the lack of subsurface data in most areas of Alaska, significant undetected coal resources may exist.

The coal-potential lines shown on the quadrangle maps only broadly outline coal basins or known coal occurrences. These boundaries do not infer that all areas within the encircled regions are of high, moderate, or low potential, but that one or typically several land blocks within the outlined area can be classed as such on the basis of known coal occurrences, extent, and character.

The potential rankings have also been tabulated along with pertinent comments about the character of the coals, and an appended listing of key references is included for each quadrangle. It is interesting to note (but frustrating when faced with this type of evaluation) that detailed geologic mapping has not been completed for most of these quadrangles. However, the available coal-resource studies and geologic maps are listed.

We hope that this work will be of benefit. If you have further questions or require assessment of specific blocks of land, please feel free to call upon us.

Enclosures

cc: Ross Schaff
Bill Barnwell