

From: [Tim Yarbrough](#)
To: [Department Clerk](#)
Subject: To city council re: Ordinance 25-52
Date: Monday, July 28, 2025 2:39:49 PM

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Council members,

Please consider that a new fire station or public works building would benefit EVERY taxpayer (including those who come to town to work and shop). A new rec center will only benefit those that choose to use it.

Regards,
Timothy Yarbrough
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Noomah](#)
To: [Department Clerk](#)
Subject: Written Testimony Submittal
Date: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:17:18 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Written Testimony for City Council Name: Theodore Noomah Email: theo.noomah@gmail.com Phone: 9072994731 Residency: City Resident City Council Meeting to Participate In: Regular Meeting Mon, 07/28 Public Comments Upon Matters Already on the Agenda - Citizen may comment on regular agenda items not scheduled for public hearing such as Consent Agenda items, Memorandums, Pending Business, New Business, Resolutions, and Ordinances to be introduced. Written Testimony:
Mayor and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment on Ordinance 25-52 asking voters for approval to keep a sales tax in place to build a recreation facility. While I appreciate the desire to invest in community recreation, I urge the Council not to advance this ordinance.

This proposal would extend the 0.3% sales tax for eight more years to fund a new recreation facility. Unfortunately, Homer has a highly regressive tax system, driven in large part by a \$500 sales tax cap, which effectively functions as a luxury tax break. In practice, this means young working residents—who already face skyrocketing housing costs and limited disposable income—will bear most of the cost of this recreation facility. Many of us are working long hours, raising families, and struggling to make rent, and we have little time to take advantage of the many pickleball courts this facility would provide.

It is clear that some residents, particularly retirees, support the recreation facility. But we must ask: who benefits most, and who pays most? A tax increase falls hardest on younger working households who are already stretched thin.

Our community already has a recreation center, the HERC buildings, which require costly remediation as a brownzone site. It concerns me that we are considering building a new facility before taking responsibility for the one we already own. If we don't address this, Homerites of my generation will soon be paying for two recreation centers: one we cannot use, and another that many of us did not ask for.

I encourage the Council to consider what is truly in the best interest of Homer's working families during our unprecedented cost of living crisis. This community has many real needs and a recreation facility can no longer realistically be considered one of our highest priorities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Theo Noomah

Homer Resident

Electronic Signature: Theodore Noomah Submitted on Monday, July 28, 2025 - 3:17pm The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/node/60081/submission/53663>

COBLE GEOPHYSICAL SERVICES

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Homer, Alaska

99603-1637

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GEOPHYSICAL CONSULTINGGroundwater/Surface Water
Geophysics

CGS MEMO 2/13/25

RE: Slope Stability Hydrology Assessment: Review for Homeowner
1355 Sterling Hwy - Water Re-Direct and Slump Assessment
Homer, Alaska 99603
KPB Parcel #17508236

Julia Hanson, Project Manager
Sterling Highway MP 169-175 Pavement Preservation
ADOT&PF South Central
4111 Aviation Ave.
Anchorage, Alaska 99519
Phone: (907) 269-0753
Email: Julia.hanson@alaska.gov

Dear Julia,

Brian and Kristen Metz live in the home shown in Photos 4, 5, 6 & 7. They are experiencing an emergency related to the sloughing and slump erosion of land in front of their house, caused by the intrusion of stormwater from the Sterling Highway. The purpose of this letter is to bring this matter to your attention and ask for your help in facilitating a solution.

On 1/18/25 Mr. and Mrs. Metz noticed that bushes were missing in front of their house. On further inspection, they found that a 12-foot x 80-foot-wide section of their front yard was gone. On 1/25/25 the bluff of the original drop had lost another 5 to 6 feet back towards the house before the weather got cold again, which temporarily halted the sloughing/erosion; weather has already been warming again causing yet another breakup. In viewing it from a drone, the owners noticed in Photo 5 that material lost in front of their house had fallen down in a 'large chunk' and blew through the lower bench all the way to the beach. The owner relates that '*The water from the twisted culvert [half culvert from ADOT stormwater diversion that eroded and fell over the bluff] is discharging onto the new [unconsolidated] landform caused by the sloughing and moving west to traverse across the slumped material in front of the [Metz] property.*'

The basic problem is that stormwater discharge from the Sterling Highway is flowing onto the unconsolidated materials pile threatening imminent mass movement in front of their home. Warmer temperatures could encourage mass movements, especially if this surface discharge continues and is not diverted.

The ADOT&PF has already been informed about some of the Homer bluff issues triggered by stormwater discharge. Increased development has created numerous local situations where every major stormwater event can have significant impacts on the Homer bluffs (e.g., Coble, 7/2021 for the City of Homer (COH)). The unique local geology is susceptible to sloughing and slump erosion, which is now encroaching on critical infrastructure – the Sterling Highway.

This is not new news. Indeed, the situation is well-known locally and has driven property owners to try various approaches to mitigate stormwater discharge over the bluff, in efforts to protect their property.

In the Metz,' stormwater is guided into a half-culvert shown in Photo 1. The purpose of this design was to protect the subject property from surface erosion by confining the water to the half-culvert. However, this system failed to contain the surface water. In addition to breaching when full and frozen, the half-culvert also leaked, and a stream formed *underneath* it as shown in Photo 2. Leakage also occurs at the headwall outlet as shown in Photo 3 near the Sterling Highway. As a result, water continually saturates this corridor despite the attempts to contain the stormwater.



Photo 1. Iced full and breached half-culvert stormwater discharge alongside the Metz subject property.

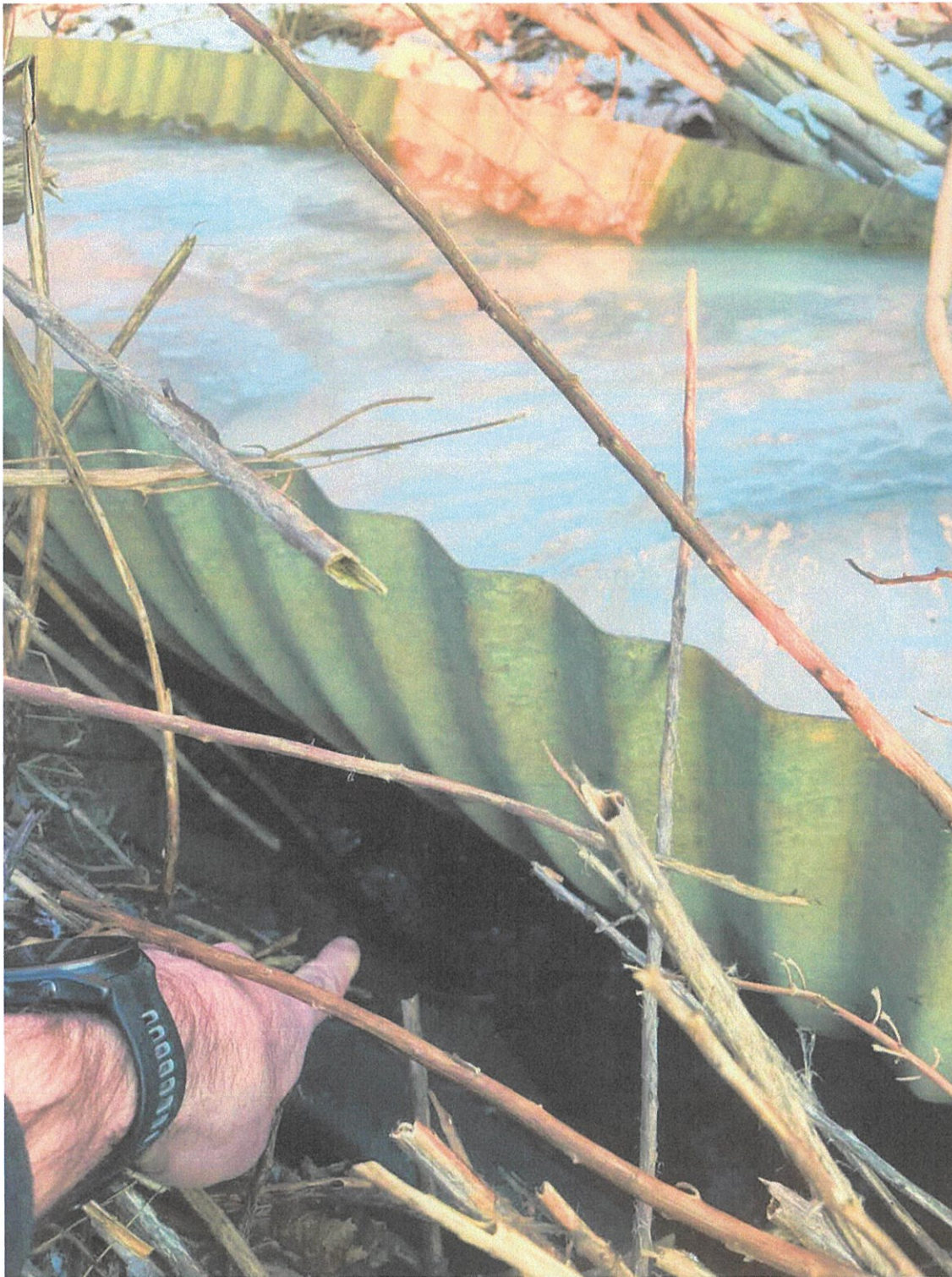


Photo 2. A significant cavity and audible streamflow underneath the half-culvert, shown midway to the bluff discharge



Photo 3. Outlet headwall leakage presumably begins the streamflow component underneath the half-culvert system

The leaking half-culvert became an open channel (Photo 3) and then, carved a cavity in the bluff and undermines any attempts at guiding surface water down the bluff by other culverts (Photo 4). It is clear that surface water has been running outside the half-culvert for some time.



Photo 4. Stormwater discharge from the previous bluff-side half-culvert system now dumping into sloughed material and flowing both in front of the Metz house shown as well as to the right of the sloughed material.

As this memo is being written, a significant amount of this stormwater discharge is being diverted into the recently slumped material, ensuring this material becomes oversaturated and likely will cause another major mass loss if nothing is done. This is because when the bench material sloughs, it will cut back into the bluff base and steepen it towards the Metz home at the next 'breakup.' The next 'breakup' could be at any time.

In the world of bluff erosion, this is an emergency. The half-culvert design needs significant updating to bring water over the bluff to the beach without impacting this portion of the bluff.

There is now more local awareness that the bluff in Homer 'sees' the open space in front of it and this outward projection of gravity creates back-fractures near the bluff edge. Any water discharge to the bluff that provides a continuous stream of water can make bluff stability impossible in these situations. Lubrication of back fractures is a primary factor in rotational slumps, and also a factor in earthflows and sloughing. The exact mechanism depends on geologic variations along the bluff, but the results are the same.

A bluff stormwater discharge system needs to be designed so as to prevent water from saturating back-fractures close to the bluff edge. The current system looks to have failed for many years based on erosion underneath the half-culvert (Photo 3), providing a continuous source for saturation through near-bluff fractures.

Development, permitted by the City of Homer, is now careful to avoid any septic injection/infiltration along the bluff. Efforts have been made recently to account for the surface geology and make alterations if it is felt that water is able to permeate the surficial geology.

The Metz property is located overtop approximately ten feet of glacial till, which, in this case, is a tight formation that remains relatively unsaturated as a stand-alone unit. However, near-bluff fractures are susceptible to water infiltration, experienced by the nearby Joseph Lawlor home, which was left hanging over the bluff from a similar ADOT drainage and resulting slump-off of Saltwater Drive/Baycrest Hill in the 1990's.

Conclusions

The purpose of this memo is to create a dialogue with ADOT that could help the Metz family. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Geoff Coble, M.S., PG
Homer Professional Building
910 East End Rd, Suite #1
Homer, Alaska 99603

References

Coble Geophysical Services, 4/2021. *Baycrest Overlook 'Bluff Point' Rotational Slump*, City of Homer Memorandum, 29 p.

Coble Geophysical Services, 7/2021. *Drainage Modeling Recommendations: Numerical Modeling to Address Development Pressures on the Erosional Margins of COH*, City of Homer, 5 pp.

Coble Geophysical Services, 9/2021. *Coastal Erosion: Outreach To Bluff Properties Experiencing Near-Surface Coastal Erosion*, City of Homer Memorandum, 14 pp.

Coble Geophysical Services, 10/2021. *Mt. Augustine Storm Drain – Temporary Plan*, City of Homer Memorandum, 17 pp.



Photo 5. A closer view of the Metz home showing the recent mass movement which blew through the 'bench' directly in front of their home. That part of the bench has thereby become unconsolidated and less stable, and unfortunately this is the material that highway stormwater is now flowing on top of



Photo 6. Stormwater discharge shown adjacent to the Metz property. Note that the recent slumping as a result of material saturation has diverted a significant amount of the stormwater to the left along the top of the sloughed material in front of the Metz home, creating an imminent mass wasting situation for the sloughed material – noting that this is all that is left supporting the Metz bluff.



Photo 7. View of the entire sloughed bench and its importance to the stability of the Metz home.

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CGS MEMO 5/19/25

Sean Holland, Director, Central Region

ADOT&PF

4111 Aviation Ave.

Anchorage, Alaska 99519

Email: sean.holland@alaska.gov

907-269-0770

RE: Metz Property, Homer, Alaska

Dear Mr. Holland,

Thank you for your correspondence of May 7, 2025, responding to our email of April 17, 2025, regarding a memorandum by Geoff Coble, Coble Geophysical Services, regarding the Metz property in Homer, Alaska.

The Metz's situation is very localized; drainage triggering the erosion that threatens their home comes from an ADOT/PF culvert, which causes this particular property to receive an inordinate amount of runoff from the Sterling Highway and West Hill Road. The highway collects all upgradient drainage and directs this drainage at ever-increasing maximum discharge rates onto private property. It is not new news that the ADOT/PF infrastructure distributes water into corridors of drainage, which erode the local bluffs. Not only are these corridors defined by the Sterling Highway, bluff erosion is beginning to intersect with the highway itself.

A classic example of this problem was seen at Mile 153.3 Sterling Hwy, which suffered erosion in 2013. The ADOT/PF went to great expense to stabilize the property – in the same way the agency installed the half-culvert drainage on the Metz property. In the case of the Metz property, the half-culvert has become detached from its downgradient headwall at the highway and flow/erosion and any near-bluff fracture saturation began to severely impact the Metz property.

Again, it is not surprising the property then experienced mass wasting causing the Metz's to begin the process to move their home to the only sliver of their property left before it hits the highway.'

ADOT/PF also had installed an over-the-bluff half culvert system at this Metz property, but it has eroded down the bluff, along with the previous ADOT/PF bluff-edge ideas. The Metz's have already incurred massive expenses due to this diversionary discharge eroding not only their property but destabilizing the alluvium that the discharge then pours onto.

We understand that the ADOT/PF needs to direct drainage from the highway to somewhere. The Metz family needs a solution that preserves their home. Homer needs a solution that protects the Sterling Highway, the only road link to the rest of Alaska.

There are a number of solutions to this problem. We offer two potential options:

A. Directional Drilling

Directional drilling to convey water from the highway directly to the beach reduce the potential for erosion. It would not relieve the Metz from the expense of moving their house closer to the highway and further away from the eroding bluff, but it is a responsible middle ground because at least the ADOT/PF would not be eroding its own infrastructure.

The culvert size is currently three feet in diameter. Assuming the future does not have a substantial additional diversion and reduced water retention contribution to flood flows, then that should still be sufficient.

The directional drilling distance from the headwall at the highway to beach level is less than four hundred feet. The elevation drop is 175 feet, winding up at 25 feet above the current mean sea level.

This is a doable project for Alaskan directional drillers – in fact, 1,000 feet at that diameter is doable, and likely larger diameters using in-state resources. There needs to be an energy dissipation structure and/or drop structure at the discharge exit to manage the beach level discharge and reduce sediment transport at low tides.

B. Articulated Half-Culvert Design

The erosion problems at the end of the Kenai Peninsula are a daily concern to private property owners who live here. A few years ago, the City of Homer commissioned Coble Geophysical to develop an alternative half-culvert design. This design can convey water over the land surface and take the place of the shifting geology in certain situations. It would address most of the issues in this case and potentially reduce costs of mitigation.

You indicated you are developing a multi-jurisdictional strategy for managing the broader drainage challenges on the lower peninsula. This is fine and good. We look forward to seeing what comes from this. In the meantime, something urgently needs to be done to address the situation at the Metz property now, not later. We are happy to brainstorm solutions with you.

Sincerely,

COBLE GEOPHYSICAL SERVICES

Geoff Coble, M.S., PG
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