

Myths and Misinformation Going on the Offensive

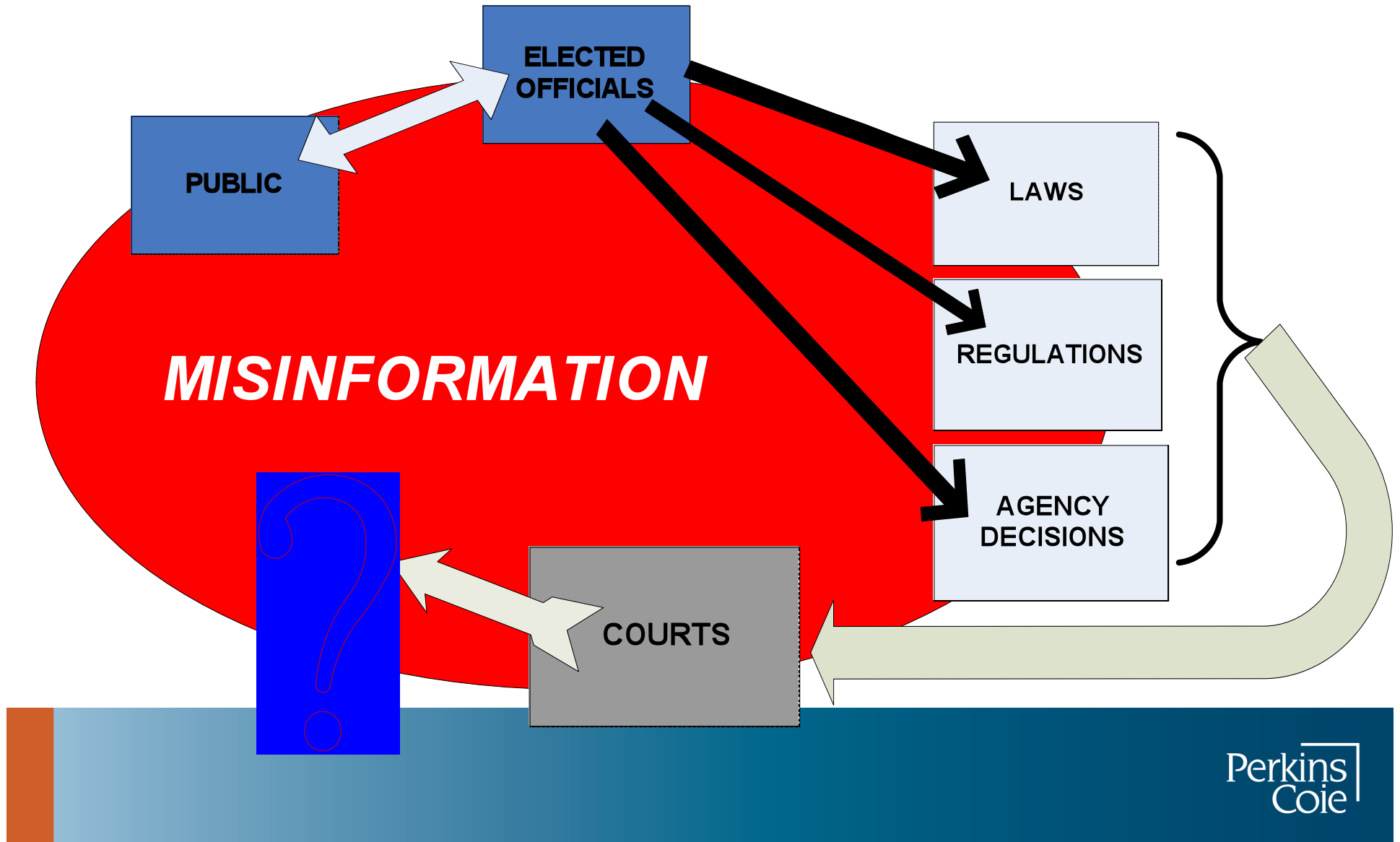
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Misinformation – it is everywhere!

- "There are no standards governing mining around streams."
- "Oil development will harm caribou."

The Role of Information in Decision-making



Impact of Misinformation on Development of Alaska Resources

- **Access to Resources**
 - Withdrawals and protected areas
- **Impact on Economics**
 - Taxes
 - "Environmental" and Operational Standards
- **Project Approvals**
 - Agencies
 - Courts

Case Study in Misinformation

Decline of the Tongass Timber Industry

- Overview of the industry
 - 2 pulp mills
 - 5 major sawmills
 - Contract loggers, tug & barge, helicopter support, etc.

Tongass Case Study

Misinformation

- Logging harms the environment
- Roads are bad
- Old growth is good (second growth is bad)
- Old growth is nearly gone
- The timber program is losing money

Tongass Case Study

Impacts of Misinformation

- Access to Resources
 - Tongass National Forest
 - 16.8 Million acres
 - 9.9 Million forested acres
 - By Mid 1990s – only 700,000 acres open for timber harvest. 90+% of forested land closed.
- Economics
 - Uneconomic sales
 - Inability to invest

Tongass Case Study

Impacts of Misinformation

- Decision-making by the Courts

Judge Ron Gould writing for the majority:

"There can be no serious argument that restrictions on human intervention in these wilderness areas will not result in immeasurable benefits from a conservationist standpoint... [W]here the purpose of the challenged action is to benefit the environment, the public's interest in preserving precious, unreplaceable resources must be taken into account in balancing the hardships."

Judge Andrew Kleinfeld writing for the dissent:

"The Roadless Rule does not preserve the status quo. It changes it, massively, for two percent of the entire land area of the United States. And by increasing the risk of forest fires, it threatens additional land and people, such as the Kootenai Tribe and the people of Idaho who brought this suit.

What we have here is a case where the agency attempted a massive management change for two percent of the nation's land on the eve of an election"

Tongass Case Study

Lessons Learned

- Access to Resources: Compromise was not a successful strategy
- Federal decision-making and the challenges it raises
- "Too big to fail"?