

The Observer

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AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova District Fishermen United - OSREC - PWS Aquaculture Corp.

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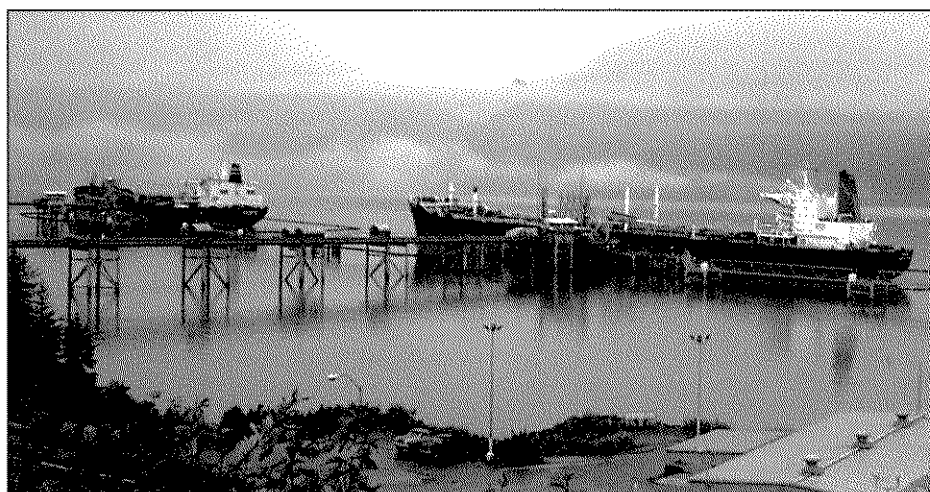
Problems at the Valdez tanker terminal draw scrutiny

A series of incidents and problems at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. tanker terminal in Valdez this fall prompted the citizens' council to call for new environmental-protection measures at the facility. The state-federal Joint Pipeline Office has also weighed in on the situation.

The problems at the terminal temporarily reduced the capacity of Alyeska's vapor-control equipment and its ballast-water piping system, as well as reducing its ability to load oil.

At a special board meeting on Oct. 31, the council requested that Alyeska take several actions to address the situation.

- The council repeated its long-standing call for vapor-control equipment to be added to a third tanker loading berth at the facility. At present, only two of the terminal's four berths have



Because of the problems at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal, most tankers are loading at Berth 5, with some deballasting at Berth 4. In this shot from early October, Berth 5 is on the left and Berth 4 is on the right. Photo by Tom Kuckertz, citizens' council.

vapor control equipment, which captures oily vapors forced out of tankers as they fill their tanks with crude oil.

The question of additional vapor-control equipment at the Valdez terminal has been a council concern for over three years.

Control equipment was installed on two tanker loading berths and began operating in 1998. However, the council has long believed two vapor-controlled berths will be insufficient to safely and effi-

See p. 5, **TERMINAL**

BP will try new tactic to kill harmful ocean hitchhikers in tanker ballast

BP this winter will bubble ozone through the ballast water on the tanker *Tonsina* in hopes the process will kill plankton without damaging anything else.

If the test is successful, ozone could become a major weapon in the war against invasions by harmful marine species of new waters, potentially including Prince William Sound.

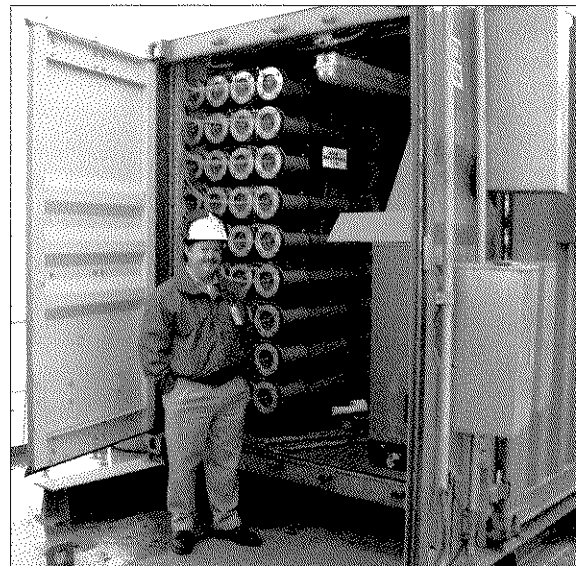
Studies sponsored by the citizens' council have already established that tanker ballast water imports living plankton into the Sound.

Valdez-bound tankers take on ballast water at delivery ports — mostly on the West Coast — for stability on the trip north, when empty oil cargo tanks would otherwise make the ships too light for safe travel. With the ballast water come millions of plankton, the microscopic early phase of creatures such as crabs, shrimp and crustaceans.

The studies have not shown that any harmful species has established itself in the Sound as a result. But the risk that it could happen — as has been the case in other ports — has spurred a search for ways to remove plankton from ballast water.

Until now, the main technique has been to exchange ballast water at sea. This replaces port water with high-seas water, which contains fewer plankton. In addition, species from the high seas are considered less likely to survive if discharged into coastal waters such as Prince William Sound.

Roger Gale, who came up with the idea of using ozone before his recent retirement as vice president of BP Oil Shipping Co., thinks ozone would be better than ballast exchange in two



Tom Colby of Alaska Tanker Co. stands before the ozone generator mounted on the deck of the BP-chartered *Tonsina*. Photo by Rica Salvador, citizens' council.

See page 3, **OZONE**

Arbitrators ban the use of Alyeska funds for council review of pipeline c-plans

The citizens' council will seek grant money to pay for its review of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s plans for preventing and dealing with crude oil spills from the trans-Alaska pipeline.

The council board made the decision at its September quarterly meeting in Kodiak. The vote came in response to an arbitration panel's ruling a few days earlier that money from the coun-

cil's \$2.5 million-a-year contract with Alyeska could not be used for reviewing the pipeline plans.

The council intends to review contingency plans (or C-plans) for the southern one-fifth of the pipeline, where spilled crude oil could be carried into Prince William Sound or the Gulf of Alaska by the Lowe or Copper river. The

See page 2, **ARBITRATION**

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