



Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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*"Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."*

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## **Citizen oversight group opposes latest request for delayed oil tank inspection at Valdez tanker terminal**

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is calling on the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to reject the latest in a series of requests by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. to postpone internal cleaning and inspection of one of the giant oil-storage tanks at its Valdez tanker terminal.

The citizens' council, wrote executive director Mark Swanson in a Feb. 29 letter to the state agency, "is especially concerned as it appears that APSC (Alyeska) is combining several different poorly understood and technically questionable arguments in an attempt to avoid honoring previous public commitments and also avoid accepted engineering practice."

The tank, known as Tank No. 10, is over 30 years old and can hold more than 20 million gallons of North Slope crude oil. Tank inspections are required to check for corrosion and mechanical fatigue, and to provide an opportunity to clean out sediment that builds up in tank bottoms, which can prevent proper functioning of the fire-suppression systems installed on the bottoms.

Tank 10 was last drained, cleaned, and internally inspected in 2000. It was due for another such cleaning and inspection in 2010, but the Department of Environmental Conservation on Feb. 26, 2010, granted Alyeska's request to postpone it to this year.

In recent months, however, the company has sought further delay. In its latest request, dated Jan. 31, Alyeska wants to postpone the inspection another four years, until February 2016.

The council's letter points out several flaws and gaps in the technical arguments offered by Alyeska in support of its extension requests.

The council "is increasingly concerned with APSC's repeated attempts to extend tank inspection schedules and their apparent efforts to overextend the regulatory discretion and good faith exercised by ADEC (the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation) in granting the two-year extension in 2010," Swanson wrote. "If an extension of the inspection interval is granted, the citizens of the Prince William Sound

communities potentially impacted by a tank failure are expected to assume the majority of the risks taken at the terminal."

Besides going to the Department of Environmental Conservation, the council's letter also went to Alyeska and to the federal Bureau of Land Management, which shares jurisdiction over the terminal with the state.

Attached to this news release in PDF form are:

- Alyeska's Jan. 31 request for the inspection delay
- The council's Feb. 29 letter opposing the delay.

The same materials, along with additional supporting documents, are available at the following link:

<http://www.pwsrcac.net/committees/ospr/documents/tank10.htm>

The council has also objected to postponement of the cleaning and inspection of another tank at the Valdez terminal, Tank No. 5. Materials relating to that issue are available at the following link:

[www.pwsrcac.net/committees/ospr/documents/Tank5.htm](http://www.pwsrcac.net/committees/ospr/documents/Tank5.htm)

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The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, with offices in Anchorage and Valdez, is an independent non-profit corporation whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and the oil tankers that use it. The council's work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The council's 19 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, Native, recreation, and tourism groups.