



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 issues report on oil-spill prevention practices at Valdez tanker terminal

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council has released a report on whether Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. can demonstrate that it is meeting the oil-spill prevention commitments in its contingency plan for the tanker terminal in Valdez at the southern end of the 800-mile trans-Alaska pipeline.

The report, by Eagle River-based Harvey Consulting, reviewed 13 specific oil-spill prevention commitments in the Alyeska contingency plan, then analyzed whether Alyeska could demonstrate accomplishment of those commitments.

The report concluded that the company was unable to demonstrate full accomplishment of seven of the 13 commitments.

The council, in a letter transmitting the report to Alyeska, notes that the failure to demonstrate full accomplishment of the seven prevention measures is a result of the company's inability to produce documentation confirming compliance. It does not establish that the company is, in fact, out of compliance with its prevention commitments.

"While the Harvey report doesn't prove that critical prevention measures are not in place at the oil terminal, the fact that the exact status and effectiveness of those measures could not be determined is of considerable concern to us," said Mark Swanson, executive director of the citizens' council. "We hope that Alyeska makes it a high priority to ensure these prevention measures are in place and effective, and to improve its record-keeping system so that their status can readily be determined in the future."

With its letter and the full report, the council provided 21 recommendations, starting with a suggestion that Alyeska develop a documented verification process that demonstrates the prevention measures in its contingency plan are being met.

The council letter and recommendations, along with the Harvey report, are available on the council website:

www.pwsrcac.net/committees/ospr/documents/preventionmeasures.html

The findings of inadequate documentation detailed in the Harvey report were somewhat similar to the findings in a council audit of maintenance practices at the tanker terminal that was released last fall. That report, conducted under contract to the council by Hisey and Associates, is also available on the council website:

www.pwsrcac.org/docs/d0082068.MaintAudit.pdf

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.