

Consent Agenda Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – January 2026

ACTION ITEM

Sponsor: John Guthrie and the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee

Project number and name or topic: 6538 - Relocating the Duck Flats Buoy to Naked Island

1. Description of agenda item: The Board is being asked to approve a transfer of \$65,000 from contingency to Project 6538 - Relocating the Duck Flats Buoy to Naked Island. This project will move the Port Valdez Weather Buoy that was previously deployed at the Valdez Duck Flats to the east side of Naked Island. Project funds will cover fiberglass repair, new ground tackle, new sensors, and a contract with the Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC) to handle the refurbishment and manage the relocation. The requested funds also include budget for a separate vessel charter, as that will likely be needed to move the buoy to the new deployment location since the distance is too far to tow using PWSSC's vessel.

This project was presented and ranked during the Long Range Planning Process in December 2025, for consideration in the FY2027 budget. The Board is being asked to consider moving this project up to the current fiscal year due to its high ranking (8th out of the 23 projects presented), ability to be started immediately, and the availability of funds in contingency following the Council's most recent audit. Beginning the project early would allow for buoy deployment in late Spring/early Summer 2026, rather than Fall/Winter 2026 when weather and finding a suitable vessel to transport the buoy to the new location both become more challenging.

The OSPR Committee has had several discussions regarding a new location for the Duck Flats buoy and believes this move to be beneficial.

2. Why is this item important to PWSRCAC: The Council has a mandate under OPA 90 to "study wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the terminal that may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill." This location would provide TAPS tankers, escort tugs, and other vessels with wind and wave information more representative of the conditions expected in the center of Prince William Sound than the National Data Buoy Center buoy in West Orca Bay (46060). Buoy 46060 is protected from northerly winds in the winter as well as swell from the Gulf of Alaska entering PWS through Hinchinbrook Entrance. The data would be used to enhance maritime safety in the region and could be used by tankers, pilots, and escort tugs, as well as smaller vessels used in oil spill response.

3. Previous actions taken by the Board on this item: None.

4. Summary of policy, issues, support, or opposition: None known.

5. Committee Recommendation: The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee supports this action.

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6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** This project ranked highly (in the upper 1/3rd) on the list of proposed projects for FY2027. Using funds from contingency would allow for the deployment of the buoy in the new location in Spring 2026, when circumstances are more favorable to successful deployment.
7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Approve a transfer of \$65,000 from the contingency to Project - 6538 Relocating the Duck Flats Buoy to Naked Island in the FY2026 budget.
8. **Alternatives:** None recommended.
9. **Attachments:** None.