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www.pwsrcac.org

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

Members:

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce

Chugach Alaska Corporation

City of Cordova

City of Homer

City of Kodiak

City of Seldovia

City of Seward

City of Valdez

City of Whittier

Community of Chenega

Community of Tatitlek

Cordova District Fishermen United

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Kodiak Island Borough

Kodiak Village Mayors Association

Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition

Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition

Port Graham Corporation

Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation

Anchorage

2525 Gambell St., Ste. 305
Anchorage, AK 99503
O: (907) 277-7222
(800) 478-7221

Valdez

P.O. Box 3089
130 S. Meals, Ste. 202
Valdez, AK 99686
O: (907) 834-5000
(877) 478-7221

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Re: Support for Senate Bill 174 to establish an Alaska Invasive Species Council

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) is a federally mandated, independent nonprofit corporation whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers. Our work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and our 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 commercial fishing, aquaculture, Native, recreation, tourism and environmental groups, and the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.

We are writing to express our strong support for the signing of Senate Bill 174 into law. Senate Bill 174 establishes an Alaska Invasive Species Council comprised of a diverse and modest number of members to serve in an advisory role for invasive species management across agencies and jurisdictional boundaries. The bill received strong bipartisan support, passing in the Senate unanimously and receiving 35 yeas in the House. The bill gained sponsorship from 15 Senators and 11 Representatives, clearly indicating broad and bipartisan awareness of the need for robust collaboration and State engagement in invasive species prevention and management for the benefit of Alaska's environment, economy, and culture. The Alaska Invasive Species Council improves State efforts to proactively define, prevent, and rapidly respond to invasive species by bringing together stakeholders from across disparate agencies, user groups, and industry. The bill also requires the preparation of a 5-year strategic plan, and an annual update to the legislature.

PWSRCAC has a 25-year history of working to prevent the introduction of invasive species into the marine environment in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region, which includes Prince William Sound, lower Cook Inlet, and the Kodiak archipelago. Our primary concern is the introduction of invasive species from ballast water and biofouling as a result of Trans-Alaska Pipeline System tanker operations. We have been successful, along with partners in Alaska, in addressing this issue by funding research projects to sample the ballast water of tankers, engaging in various working groups, and supporting changes in Federal regulations such as the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA). In addition, PWSRCAC maintains an active early

detection monitoring program for marine invasive species, including European green crab, in the communities of Valdez, Whittier, Cordova, and Kodiak.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting Alaska's ways of life, environment, and natural resources. Again, we urge you to sign Senate Bill 174 into law to develop a coordinated plan to respond to invasive species threats in Alaska. Much like oil spills, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We need only look at the impacts of invasive species in other states and the extent of resources required to manage them. Alaska is in a unique place to improve biosecurity before more serious impacts are realized.

On behalf of the PWSRCAC Board of Directors, committee volunteers, and staff from throughout the Exxon Valdez oil spill region, we greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Donna Schantz
Executive Director


Robert Archibald
President

Cc: Tyson Gallagher, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Jordan Shilling, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor