

# THE OBSERVER



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Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors' Association - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition  
Port Graham Corp - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

## Compromise reached over habitat protections

### Sensitive areas guaranteed swift protection when threatened by an oil spill

Conflicting views over the timing associated with protecting two areas in Port Valdez in the event of an oil spill has been resolved. Rapid protections for two environmentally sensitive areas, a large salt marsh known as the Valdez Duck Flats and the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, are guaranteed when more than 5 barrels (210 gallons) of oil are spilled from the Valdez Marine Terminal. The protections will also be deployed if a spill occurs and the amount of oil in the water is unknown or if a lesser amount is spilled but the source is not secured.

The resulting agreement also means spill responders will gain important environmental data that will improve oil spill planning and response for Port Valdez.

#### Diverging opinions led to appeal

In 2017, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, or ADEC, approved an update to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's oil spill contingency plan

for the Valdez Marine Terminal. One of the changes modified a decision "matrix," which was a tool created after a 1994 oil spill to help responders decide the timing of when to deploy protective oil spill boom for the duck flats and hatchery, both east of the terminal.

The 2017 version of the matrix potentially delayed protections for these two environmentally sensitive areas. In that version, if the oil was moving west, the matrix did not require immediate deployment of the protections, even in the case of a 2.5-million-gallon spill from the terminal.

Deploying the protective boom takes time, up to 10 or more hours depending on the weather. Based on the Council's analysis of the 2017 version of the matrix, deployment of the protective boom could have been delayed up to 36 hours.

The Council was concerned that the oil would

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The Valdez Duck Flats (left) is one of the largest salt marshes in Prince William Sound. This habitat is home to 52 species of marine birds, 8 species of waterfowl, 18 species of shorebirds, and other songbirds and birds of prey. Salmon, harbor seals, and sea otters feed in this rich estuary. The other sensitive area is Solomon Gulch Hatchery, which incubates 270 million pink salmon eggs and 2 million coho salmon each year.





## Inoperable radar in Prince William Sound concerns Council

### No plans for repair in near future

The U.S. Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic Service, or VTS, which monitors the location of vessels in Prince William Sound, has been operating without radar in recent months.

The Coast Guard monitors traffic in busy ports around the country through these VTS offices. The VTS in Prince William Sound usually operates with a combination of Automatic Identification System, or AIS; VHF radio; cameras; and radar.

AIS is a map-based online monitoring system required to be on board larger vessels. Equipment streams the vessel's position, along with its name, course, speed, heading, and destination to the system. VHF radio is used for two-way communications with vessels.

These various systems are integrated together and the

information is relayed to the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Unit VTS in Valdez.

Radar is an integral part of the Coast Guard's monitoring of vessels in Prince William Sound as many small vessels and hazards only appear on radar.

Based on a National Transportation Safety Board report on the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster, lack of radar is considered a contributing factor to the spill.

U.S. Coast Guard Commander Patrick Drayer joined a Council meeting earlier this fall. In answer to questions from Council members, Commander Drayer noted that all three radar systems in Prince William Sound are obsolete.

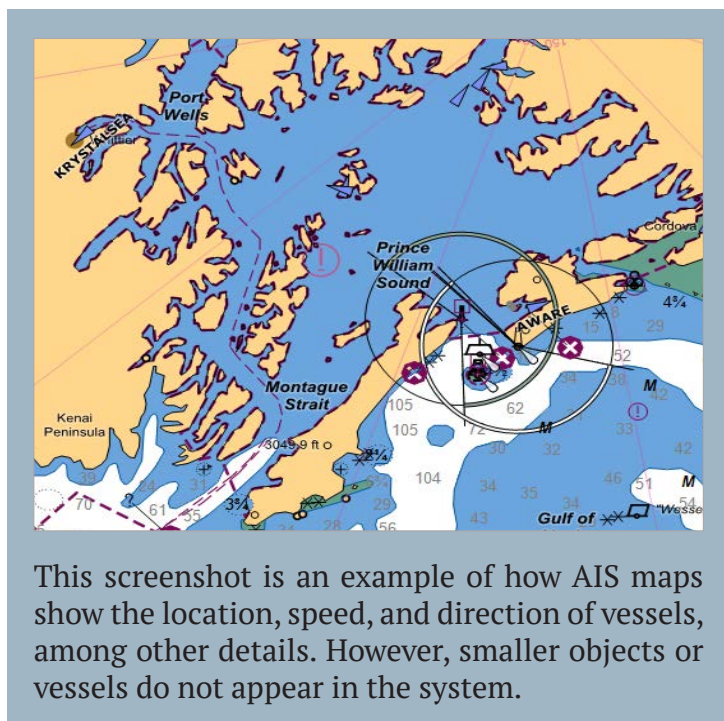
Drayer explained that the original manufacturers are no longer in business and that original design drawings are not available. Attempts to fabricate new parts to repair the existing equipment have failed, as the parts did not fit or were not compatible. He also noted that this problem is affecting systems around the country.

### Not all vessels use AIS

Many of the vessels in Prince William Sound do not have, and are not required to have, expensive AIS transmitters on board. Only vessels larger than 20 meters, or approximately 65 feet, must broadcast their location. Smaller vessels such as commercial fishing vessels, recreational boats, or kayaks may not carry AIS equipment. AIS can also miss smaller objects floating in the water, such as icebergs.

In an October 2020 letter to Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, and Congressman Don Young, the Council asked for help to secure funds to replace the equipment.

"Based on discussions with the Coast Guard, all of



This screenshot is an example of how AIS maps show the location, speed, and direction of vessels, among other details. However, smaller objects or vessels do not appear in the system.

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# New weather buoys establish PORTS® information for Valdez

The Council has partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish PORTS® information for Valdez, Alaska. PORTS® (Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System) improves the safety and efficiency of maritime commerce and coastal resource management by providing real-time environmental observations, forecasts, and other geospatial information to mariners. To help bring this resource to Valdez, the Council is streaming data from two new weather buoys to PORTS®.

In 2019, the Council worked with regional partners to deploy two buoys in Port Valdez; one off Jackson Point at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's Valdez Marine Terminal and one near the Valdez Duck Flats. These buoys collect data to improve understanding of the meteorological and physical oceanographic environment at the terminal and Duck Flats.

The objectives of the PORTS® program are to promote navigation safety, improve the efficiency of U.S. ports and harbors, and ensure the protection of coastal marine resources. The Council is mandated by Congress to study

wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the Alyeska terminal which may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill. The Council works with industry and regulators to ensure response readiness, evaluate risks, and propose solutions. Allowing these weather buoys to integrate with PORTS® furthers these efforts while also meeting the system's objectives.

"While the Council's sole purpose for installing these buoys is to promote the environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers, we believe the integration of this metocean data into NOAA's PORTS® will benefit and improve safety for a variety of other maritime users," said Donna Schantz, executive director for the Council. "This is another excellent example of how collaborative science can have wide-ranging impacts for the betterment of all."

Data from the buoys is already being provided to the Alaska Ocean Observing System. AOOS is a network that

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The buoys were made possible through donations from Fairweather Science and partnerships with the Prince William Sound Science Center, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the City of Valdez, and Valdez Fisheries Development Association. The installation has been permitted by several agencies and cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company has allowed the Council access into the marine security zone that borders the terminal.

The Council has a direct interest in the successful operation and maintenance of weather buoys and stations installed in Prince William Sound because weather affects safe oil transportation and spill response.

Right: The buoy near the terminal has been collecting data about the weather conditions on the south side of Port Valdez.







From the executive director:

## Maintaining Alaska's High Standards in Spill Prevention and Response

Prince William Sound is home to one of the best and most effective oil spill prevention and response systems in the world.

This system was developed over the past 30 years through a partnership between the oil industry, federal and state regulators, legislators, and citizen stakeholders. This system is possible because Alaskans were dedicated to working together to ensure a spill like the Exxon Valdez never happens again.

Unfortunately, we have also seen a steady, on-going, and alarming deterioration of federal and state oil spill prevention, response, oversight, and enforcement capabilities in Prince William Sound.

A variety of factors contributed to this situation: state and federal regulation and enforcement rollbacks, budget and staff reductions at oversight agencies, COVID-19, the low price of oil, reduced oil consumption, and lower throughput in the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS).

Collectively, these issues could substantially increase the risk of an oil spill in Alaska.

### "Burdensome" state regulations

This winter, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation solicited input from stakeholders, the public, and industry on its laws and regulations governing oil spill prevention and response. Reportedly, this stemmed from industry comments that such regulations are too burdensome. The Council submitted extensive comments and put together resources to support other members of the public who wished to give informed input.

The department also announced they would largely suspend oversight and enforcement activities during the current public health emergency.

In addition, funding for Alaska's Division of Spill Prevention and Response, as well as to respond to

an oil spill, is currently unsustainable.

### Sale of BP's Alaska Assets

In August, BP announced a plan to sell its Alaska assets to Hilcorp and their wholly owned subsidiary Harvest Alaska LLC. This sale would transfer the largest percentage of ownership of Alyeska to Hilcorp/Harvest, a company that according to state agencies has a track record of reducing costs. This could be very problematic if those reductions lead to further diminishment of safety, prevention, and response readiness.

### Reducing budgets increases risk

Perhaps the most critical issue is the recent slump in oil prices. The low global demand for oil and other pandemic-related impacts, combined with the declining trend in TAPS throughput, are all added stressors to the industry's budget.

As a result, Alyeska has tightened its belt and reduced staff in recent years. This could mean reduced accountability and supervision, reduced maintenance of aging infrastructure, reduced training, and increased workloads. These and numerous other factors mean elevated risk and increased chances of an accident.

### A cautionary tale

In 1990, the U.S. Congress specifically identified complacency as a key factor in the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Thirty years later, while the entire world is



**Donna Schantz**  
Executive Director

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From Alyeska:

## Collaboration and dedication helps ease tough year

I began my first weeks with Alyeska in January energized about the year ahead. Having served in multiple positions at the U.S. Department of Transportation, including time at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), I was familiar with Alyeska, and its sterling reputation for safety and integrity. As I initially traveled around the Trans Alaska Pipeline System, or TAPS, in our pre-COVID world, our employees' commitment to their work was evident in every interaction. Since getting around has become far more difficult, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update about what I've experienced in the last several months with Alyeska, and the outlook for the rest of the year.

It will be no surprise that 2020 has been challenging on many fronts for Alyeska, our employees, and Alaskans. At the forefront was Alyeska's pandemic response, a team effort to keep our employees safe and protect communities where we live and work. We have continued the essential work of delivering Alaska North Slope crude to market, while maintaining a commitment to a healthy workplace and each other. Going forward, we are prioritizing work, asking each other what we must do to protect the system and the environment, and what can we do amidst pandemic precautions that may be in place for some time.

In April and May, we responded to a spill from a sump at the Valdez Marine Terminal. It was a sobering time and a serious incident. No matter how small, we never want to have a spill and this event was made more complex and challenging by the pandemic. Throughout, I received good feedback about the response from community members and agency personnel and I was pleased to hear about strong collaboration with the Council, regulators, community, and fishing vessels. I'd like to

personally thank Donna Schantz for the opportunity to collaborate on how best to mobilize mammal and bird resources had that been needed. Our internal investigation concluded in July and the report was shared with Council staff. Further, we have continued to be transparent with staff by keeping them informed of Alyeska's plans to address the factors that caused the spill.



Brigham McCown

Even as Alyeska addressed the pandemic and the prior incident at the VMT, we could not ignore the extraordinary oil price environment this spring that resulted in cuts to production by North Slope producers. Though prices have rebounded recently, Alyeska continues efforts to work more efficiently while keeping focus ever on the safety of our people and the environment and I can say our workforce is acutely aware of the critical role TAPS plays in Alaska's present and future.

I recognize this is a concerning time for all of us, those who are part of or adjacent to the oil and gas industry, and beyond. As always, Alyeska continues to look for ways to work smarter and more efficiently and it will not be easy. I've been impressed by the grit and commitment our folks demonstrate; this is their home, too, and they show their care for it every day through their attention and focus in maintaining and operating TAPS. Part of that commitment includes

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Community Corner:

## How does outreach continue in a pandemic?

My job at the Council is to foster community engagement. This includes lots of travel to our many small communities, from Cordova in the east to Kodiak Island in the west. I also represent the Council at events such as oil spill prevention and response professional conferences, fisherman conventions, scientific forums, local government meetings or conferences, and community receptions.

All that came to an abrupt halt in March 2020 when the pandemic stopped all travel for the Council. Since then, meetings have been via videoconference, educators have cut most hands-on programs, and conferences have been canceled or switched to online.

To continue citizen oversight of the operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and tankers that use it, Council staff had to get creative and roll with the rapidly changing field of public engagement.

Our dedicated volunteers adapted quickly to using videoconference technology so the business of the Council could continue without a hitch. Our online public meetings have over sixty participants from our member entities, industry representatives, government agencies, volunteers, and members of the public participating. A long-standing practice of posting all meeting materials on our website, accessible to the public, made the switch to virtual meetings even smoother.

In May, the Council partnered with the Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation to bring the second annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium online for the first time. Only weeks after the pandemic started, the planning committee for the Symposium had to cancel or do something we'd never done: hosting an online summit. Twenty speakers and over 260 participants in the free, one-day event confirmed that going online was worth the effort. The entire series is available online at: [www.princewilliamsound.org/natural-history-symposium](http://www.princewilliamsound.org/natural-history-symposium)

The Council gives an annual award at the Alaska Science and Engineering Fair to deserving student projects related to oil spill prevention or response. This year the fair went virtual and Council volunteer Steve Lewis judged the projects remotely. The Council was proud to award Kate Deering the award for her project, Designing an Oil Filtration Device for Removing Oil from Street Runoff. After presenting her award over videoconference, I drove to her house to deliver a certificate and some small prize items. We stayed outside wearing masks, observing social distancing practices. Kate showed me the stormwater drain outside her home that inspired her project, a personal connection that could not have happened at the Fair's usual award ceremony.

In October the Council hosted a first-ever virtual networking event, Volunteer Connections. Our important citizen oversight work depends not only on formal reports and Board actions, but also the impromptu conversations where folks connect about what matters to them most in protecting our natural resources. A small but engaged group gathered online to talk, without agenda, about new projects and best practices, and swapped a lot of boat stories too. It was an opportunity to simply laugh with old friends while also maintaining our dedication to organizational excellence.

Nobody knows how long precautions will require virtual meetings and restricted travel. As we all adapt to working through this pandemic the Valdez Marine Terminal is running and oil tankers still transit through Prince William Sound. So too will staff continue to find creative, flexible ways to keep the important work of the Council progressing during the pandemic.



Betsi Oliver



## Industry drills test equipment and personnel

Drills and exercises conducted last year in Prince William Sound continued to test the new vessels and equipment brought in by the new spill response contractor, Edison Chouest Offshore, in 2018. In addition, the drills this year helped train the crews of the tugs and tankers on various aspects of spill prevention and response in Prince William Sound.

During the year, mariners practiced towing tankers; attaching tether lines between tankers and tugs; deploying and operating oil spill response equipment in both open water and near the shoreline; communicating between command posts in Valdez and Anchorage; and many other response activities.

### Tracking lessons over time

The Council observes many of these drills and exercises and issues an annual summary of the previous year's activities and observations. These reports track the history of spill preparedness and response by Alyeska's SERVs and the associated shippers.

For example, this report notes that in the past few years, responders have become more proficient at deploying protections for the Valdez Duck Flats, an estuary which is home to numerous species of wildlife. The report recommends similar training for the nearby Solomon Gulch Fish Hatchery, another area that is particularly sensitive to oil contamination.

### Improving spill response

The report also included the Council's recommendations for future exercises. Two of the suggestions would increase safety: using full personal protection equipment, or PPE, during some exercises; and conducting more drills at night.

The PPE recommendation stemmed from a 2018 exercise where Council staff observed responders struggling to communicate via radio while wearing a respirator, which some responders removed. During a

real event, respirators could be needed in contaminated areas due to hydrocarbon fumes in the air.

The Council has supported conducting drills during hours of darkness for the last several years. On the shortest days of December in Prince William Sound, daylight only lasts for 6 hours or less. Responders need to practice finding and recovering oil in the dark to be able to mount an effective spill response in winter.

Analysis of these reports over time can help identify operational issues and help improve the spill prevention and response system.

### COVID-19 affecting drills and exercises in 2020

This report covers drills and exercises conducted in 2019. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the normal schedule. Drills and exercises have continued, although they have been modified to accommodate safe pandemic practices.



Above: Council staff and a monitor from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation observe a June drill while maintaining a safe distance between each other.

For more photos from the past year's drills and more details from the full report, visit our website: [www.pwsrcc.org](http://www.pwsrcc.org)





## Potential regulation changes to undergo extended public comment period

Before the state’s oil spill regulations are modified, any proposed changes will undergo an extended public comment period, according to Jason Brune, commissioner for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Beginning last fall, the department asked the public for input on Alaska’s statutes and regulations covering oil spill prevention and response.

Brune joined the Council during a September meeting of the Board of Directors to discuss potential changes from these comments. The Council was encouraged to hear a promise from the commissioner that any proposed changes will be given more than the required 30-day public comment period.

During the public scoping, the Council raised a number of concerns which it still holds including: that this process, concluded earlier this year, was too broad for effective input; that this approach shifted the burden to the public to justify and defend these regulations and statutes; and that the department’s capacity for this review will be limited due to reduced staff and drastically reduced funding in the coming years.

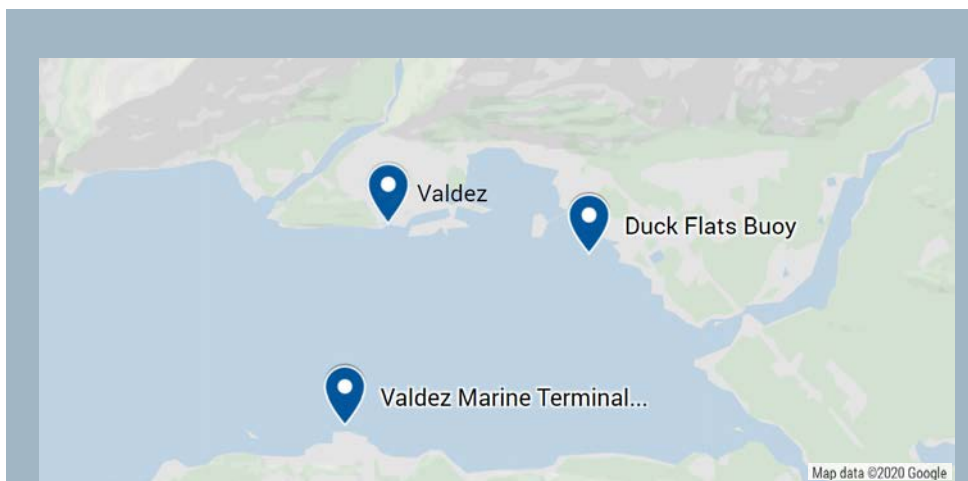
The Council is also concerned about transparency both during the process and now after the scoping has closed as the commissioner noted that the department has had follow-up communications with industry and other stakeholders which are not part of the public record.

## New weather buoys establish PORTS® information for Valdez

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consolidates critical ocean and coastal weather observations and related information products. By monitoring the state’s coastlines and ocean waters, AOOS helps provide the information needed by residents to make better decisions concerning their use of the marine environment.

“This new system, and the others like them around the country, reduce ship accidents by more than 50 percent, increase the size of ships that can get in and out of seaports, and reduce traffic delays,” said Steven Thur, Ph.D., acting deputy director of NOAA’s National Ocean Service. “They also provide real-time, resilience-ready data as coastal conditions rapidly change, potentially threatening our coastal communities.”



Local mariners know that the weather on the south side of Port Valdez can vary significantly from the north side, however scientific data has never been available to confirm this. Weather forecasts are typically focused on the north side, since Valdez and most of the region’s population is located there.

Visit our website for more: [www.pwsrcc.org](http://www.pwsrcc.org)



## Compromise reached over habitat protections

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contaminate the two sites if the incoming tide moved the oil east, which would be expected every 12 hours. The Council appealed this approval, along with the City of Valdez, and the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. The Valdez Fisheries Development Association filed a separate appeal, but both appeals were eventually joined.

### Collaboration leads to consensus

Alyeska, ADEC, and the groups who appealed reached a consensus after a years-long collaborative process.

The compromise called for gathering information about the weather in the vicinity of the terminal. To accomplish this, the groups agreed that a weather buoy would be placed at the Valdez Marine Terminal. The new buoy records wind speed, gusts, and direction; wave height and direction; and current speed and direction.

Preliminary data shows that an easterly movement of winds and waves is common.

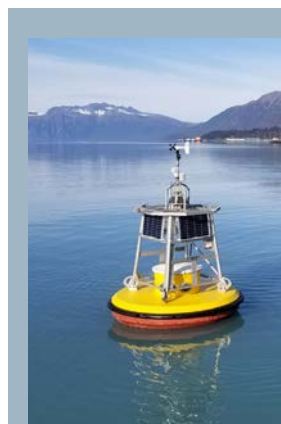
### Better data on variable weather conditions in Port Valdez

A second weather buoy was placed near the Valdez Duck Flats, co-funded by a grant from the City of Valdez. Both weather buoys were donated to the Council by Fairweather Science.

### Compromise means safe oil transportation in Prince William Sound

In over 30 years of existence, this was the first time that the Council appealed a decision by ADEC to this level. The appeal lasted almost three years and the Council considers the result a success for all those involved.

“These may seem like insignificant changes, but they add up,” said Linda Swiss, the Council’s contingency plan project manager. “Part of our job is to make sure minor changes do not become a major problem. We all share the goal of keeping oil out of the water and off the land and to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected should prevention measures fail.”



### Real-time data

Local mariners have access to this real-time weather condition tracking. The information from this buoy, located at the Valdez Duck Flats, and another at the Valdez Marine Terminal are now streaming to a NOAA website. See page 3 for more.

## Flaws in radar and marine communication systems in Prince William Sound worries Council

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these radar systems have been inoperable for at least ten months,” the letter stated. “Based on limited funding and resources it will take considerable time to repair and eventually replace this aging and inoperable equipment. In addition to the Council’s maritime safety concerns over the lack of Coast Guard radar capability in Prince William Sound, there are also homeland/national security implications of such radar inoperability.”

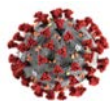
“The Council is concerned that adequate resources are not yet committed to these priorities,” the letter continued.

All three members of Alaska’s Congressional Delegation responded to the Council’s letter by writing to the Commandant of the Coast Guard requesting information regarding how this problem can be addressed. The Council plans to continue to monitor and advise on this important issue.



## COVID-19 updates

Both Council offices (Anchorage and Valdez) remain temporarily closed to the public as a safety precaution due to COVID-19.



Council staff are still conducting business, and are performing key job functions remotely.

All committee meetings are being held via video and teleconference.

The health and safety of Council staff and volunteers are our top priority and will drive decisions as the situation evolves and more information becomes available.

More information and updates available on our website: [www.bit.ly/PWSRCACcovid19](http://www.bit.ly/PWSRCACcovid19)

## January meeting to be held online

This year, due to COVID-19, the January meeting of the Council's Board of Directors will be held online.

Board meetings are open to the public and an opportunity for public comments is provided at the beginning of each meeting.

Upcoming meetings: January 28 & 29, 2021 will be a virtual meeting; May 6 and 7, 2021 is scheduled to be held in Valdez; and September 16 and 17 in Seward.

## Maintaining Alaska's High Standards in Spill Prevention and Response

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distracted with COVID-19 and the resulting economic slump, the system is again threatened by complacency, compounded further by budgetary constraints and efforts to reduce costs.

The Council and our mission are more important than ever. Our vigilance is needed to prevent backsliding that could cause major oil spill. Such a disaster would be devastating for Alaskans, for our livelihoods, for fish and wildlife, and for the marine and terrestrial environment.

The Council hires expert contractors to ensure that sound technical advice is provided to regulators and industry in order to protect Prince William Sound and its downstream communities. We raise these concerns so that sensible and effective actions can be taken. Those with the most to lose from oil pollution must have a voice in the decisions that put their livelihoods and communities at risk. Through perseverance, hard work, and strengthening of partnerships between citizens, industry, and federal and state regulators, the systems put in place to prevent another major oil spill can be maintained and improved upon.

## Collaboration and dedication helps ease tough year

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the recent arrival of Tower-1 to Valdez. Tower-1 is a multi-purpose \$1.7M fire apparatus truck equipped with state-of-the-art equipment that will significantly enhance response capabilities.

In closing please let me say that the Council is an

important partner in a shared goal: protecting the environment through safe operations and diligent response prevention and preparedness. We will maintain our partnership with you, and we will always strive to strengthen that relationship. While we may not always agree on issues, we share that critical objective and will continue to work together to achieve it.

# Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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



## Who we are

The Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System's terminal and tanker fleet.

The Council is a voice for the people, communities, and interest groups in the region oiled by the Exxon Valdez spill.

Those with the most to lose from oil pollution must have a voice in the decisions that can put their livelihoods and communities at risk.

## The Council's role

The Council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the Council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the Council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

We combat the complacency that led to the 1989 spill by fostering partnerships among the oil industry, government, and local communities in addressing environmental concerns.

## Board of Directors

The Council's 18 member entities are communities and interest groups affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill:

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce • Community of Chenega • Chugach Alaska Corporation • City of Cordova • City of Homer • City of Kodiak • City of Seldovia • City of Seward • City of Valdez • City of Whittier • Cordova District Fishermen United • Kenai Peninsula Borough • Kodiak Island Borough • Kodiak Village Mayors Association • Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition • Port Graham Corporation • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. • Community of Tatitlek



Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

## Our research

The Council's advice depends on quality research and accurate science about oil transportation safety and the environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal and tankers, as well as local knowledge and expertise.

The Council regularly retains experts in various fields to conduct independent research on issues related to oil transportation safety and performs a variety of functions aimed at reducing pollution from crude oil transportation activities in and through Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

## Advisory Committees

While the strategic direction of the Council's work is set by the Board, much of the Council's work is done through permanent volunteer committees made up of Board members, technical experts, and local citizens with an interest in making oil transportation safer in Alaska.

These standing committees work with staff on projects, study and deliberate current oil transportation issues, and formulate their own advice and recommendations to the Council's Board of Directors.

Our committees provide an avenue for public participation in the Council's work.

**Terminal Operations & Environmental Monitoring:** The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee identifies actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

**Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:** The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee monitors port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. The committee identifies and recommends improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems and monitors the vessel escort system.

**Scientific Advisory:** The Scientific Advisory Committee sponsors independent scientific research and provides scientific assistance and advice to the other council committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation, and position papers.

**Oil Spill Prevention and Response:** The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee works to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation by reviewing and recommending strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations.

**Information and Education:** The Information and Education Committee supports the Council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation in the Council's activities through information and education.

**A voice for citizens: [www.pwsrcac.org](http://www.pwsrcac.org)**