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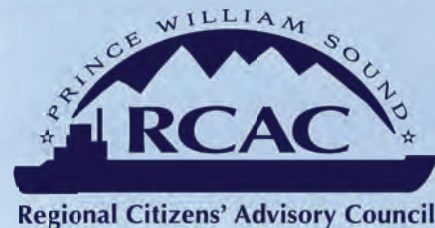
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THE OBSERVER

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Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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Alaska's oil spill laws and regulations opened for public review

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation recently began a process to review and potentially change oil spill laws and regulations in Alaska. The department's first step, a public scoping, opened on October 15, 2019.

The department is currently asking for input from stakeholders, the public, and industry on areas where Alaska's oil discharge prevention and response contingency plan laws and regulations could be streamlined. In the department's official announcement for this review process, Commissioner Jason Brune stated that "I've heard from many Alaskans that contingency

plans are unnecessarily burdensome while lacking corresponding environmental benefits. To achieve Governor Dunleavy's goal of being open for business, today we are beginning a fully transparent scoping process seeking the public's input."

The department is taking comments on all of its regulations on oil discharge prevention and contingency plans. In addition, the department is accepting comments on Alaska's laws on oil and hazardous substance pollution control. These laws, or statutes, are the foundation of oil spill prevention and response

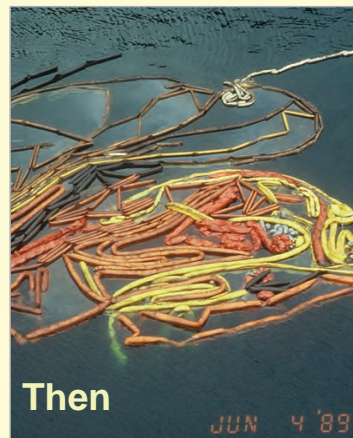
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Why Alaska has such strong rules

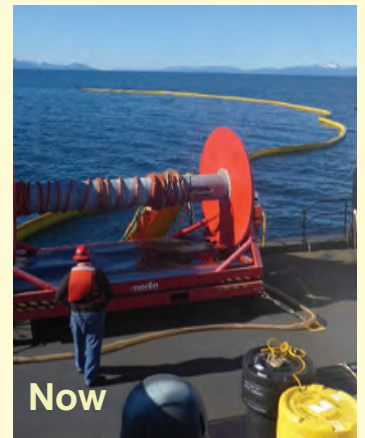
Strong statutes and regulations are one of the main reasons why Prince William Sound has not had a major oil spill since the Exxon Valdez disaster. The world-class oil spill prevention and response system for the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers is a direct result of post-Exxon Valdez spill laws and regulations, which were designed to protect Alaskans and our environment, as well as commercial and sport fishing, aquaculture, recreation, tourism, subsistence, and cultural interests.

These laws and regulations help prevent oil spills and ensure that there are enough trained responders and equipment in place should prevention measures fail.

Read more about the history of Alaska's world-renowned oil spill preparedness and response system on our website: www.bit.ly/StrongRules



Then



Now

The Exxon Valdez oil spill taught many lessons about oil spill prevention and preparedness, such as ensuring responders are better trained ahead of time to use cleanup equipment. The strong rules that resulted from that spill mean better preparedness today.

Board resolution supports strong protections from oil spills

In a special session on October 29, 2019, the Council passed a resolution stating strong opposition to any legislative or regulatory changes that erode oil spill prevention and response standards, increase the risk of a catastrophic spill, or demonstrate a return of the complacency on the part of the oil industry and regulators that Congress determined to be a primary cause of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The resolution was prompted by a public scoping process recently opened by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, or ADEC.

See page 1 for more about this public scoping.

Scope too broad and transparency is lacking

The Council is concerned that there are no specific proposals, leaving a broad scope of possible regulatory and statutory changes. The reason for the scoping is also unclear. ADEC's commissioner, Jason Brune, has made several statements indicating he believes existing regulations are burdensome and too onerous for industry.

See page 6 for more from the commissioner.

"Protecting our communities and the environment is not burdensome, it is the cost of doing business in Alaska," stated Robert Archibald, president of the Council. "Reducing any perceived burden to industry by rolling back or eliminating proven oil spill prevention and response requirements transfers the risk and burden of another oil spill to the communities, citizens, and environment they were designed to protect. This initiative disregards the efforts of hundreds of Alaskans who worked tirelessly on improving regulatory requirements after the Exxon Valdez oil spill to ensure that our state would never again suffer a similar environmental disaster."

The Council encourages comments from stakeholders

Public input is needed to maintain the proven and effective prevention and response system in place in Alaska. After the public scoping, ADEC will review

the input received and put forth any potential changes, followed by a formal public comment period for those proposed changes. There is a 30-day minimum requirement for all state public comment periods.

During the public scoping period, the Council is encouraging the public to submit comments and hopes to see support for:

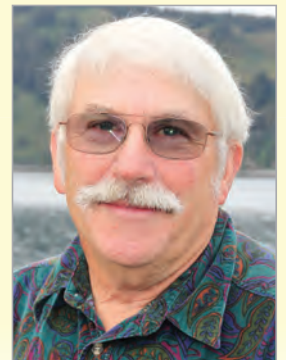
- Opposition to any legislative or regulatory changes that would erode oil spill prevention and response standards.
- Public comment periods that are longer than the required minimum 30-days. Adequate time must be provided to analyze any proposed changes and gather input from stakeholders. This is essential to make sure proposed changes do not weaken important oil spill prevention and response measures that many people fought so hard to implement after the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The Council also recommends that the State of Alaska halt the public scoping until more information is provided to the public as to the driving factors that led to this regulatory and statutory reform initiative. It also strongly recommends that Alaskans interested in maintaining prevention and response standards designed to protect the state's environment, people, and economy from catastrophic oil spills contact the ADEC to register their views regarding any weakening of existing safeguards.

Full Resolution: www.bit.ly/PWSRCAC_1903

"Protecting our communities and the environment is not burdensome, it is the cost of doing business in Alaska."

- Robert Archibald
Council President



Shares of pipeline and terminal to change hands this year

Lack of public information about BP to Hilcorp sale leads to concerns

Late last year, Hilcorp Energy Company announced that they intend to purchase all of BP's Alaska-related assets. These assets include approximately 49% interest of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

Assuming the deal goes through, Hilcorp will take over BP's facilities on Alaska's North Slope and their affiliate Harvest Alaska LLC will take over BP's share of the pipeline and terminal. Harvest's specialty is "midstream" operations, which means moving oil from the production site to a destination such as a refinery or shipping terminal.

Harvest representatives have stated that their company has grown mostly through acquiring existing facilities and operating them through the end of the facility's life. They have said that their experience with issues that occur in aging facilities, such as corrosion, would be a benefit for the pipeline and terminal, which is now over 40 years old.

The pipeline, the Valdez terminal, and the tanker escort system are all managed by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Currently, Alyeska is jointly owned by BP Alaska; ConocoPhillips Transportation Alaska, which owns 29%; ExxonMobil Pipeline Company, which owns 21%; and Unocal Pipeline Company, which owns a little over one percent. Alyeska is directly responsible for all maintenance, operations, legal, accounting, and personnel activities in these facilities. Hilcorp and Harvest have stated that Alyeska will retain control and responsibility over these facilities. They also said that decisions would still be made by consensus between

the three majority owners: Hilcorp, ConocoPhillips, and ExxonMobil.

Overseas Shipping Group is planning to purchase Alaska Tanker Company, from whom the new owners will charter tankers to transport oil from the terminal. This means the current tankers are expected to remain shipping oil from the Valdez Marine Terminal for Hilcorp.

Sale pending approval

Before the sale can be completed, the Regulatory Commission of Alaska must approve the transaction. This commission regulates utilities and pipeline carriers in the State of Alaska. Other state agencies will weigh in on the transaction as well.

After the announcement, questions arose about whether Hilcorp has the financial and organizational capacity to safely operate the system and to prevent and respond to oil spills and other safety or environmental incidents.

Hilcorp and Harvest requested that the commission keep their financial documents and the sale agreement confidential. The companies are private, meaning they do not sell shares of stock to the public and are subject to less oversight. The companies provided all requested financial documents to the commission, but argued that because they are private, divulging financial information to the public would put them at a competitive disadvantage during future business negotiations.

Many of the submitted comments, including the Council's, recommended release of financial documents and a more transparent process. The commission has not made the decision whether to grant this request.

Concern over incidents and regulatory citations

The commission held a public comment period on the sale in late 2019.

"The Council is concerned over Hilcorp's documented



Valdez Marine Terminal. Photo by Linda Robinson.

Continued on page 9

From the executive director:

Transparency is the foundation of public trust

Public trust in our oil spill prevention and response system took many years to rebuild after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. It took a commitment to transparency, listening, and engaging stakeholders in developing and maintaining the system of safeguards for the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers that we have today.

This system is now widely regarded as one of the best in the world. Strong State of Alaska statutes and regulations have supported this robust system. The lack of significant spills in Prince William Sound over the last 30 years indicates the effectiveness of industry meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements.

Trust in the system is at risk

Over the past few years, the Council has been seeing a steady erosion in regulatory oversight, staffing, funding, and coordination among many of the federal and state agencies responsible for enforcing strong laws and regulations. This alarming erosion has already started to reduce public trust in our prevention and response system.

In enacting the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, Congress determined that only when local citizens are involved in oil transport will the trust develop that is necessary to change the system from confrontation to consensus, and so the Act called for creation of citizen councils. Our Council is a unique partner for industry and regulators, giving them a platform to provide information, answer questions, listen to stakeholders, and cultivate the long-term relationships that are necessary to establish public trust.

While the Council has had disagreements with industry over the years, there have been numerous examples of industry, regulators, and citizens working cooperatively and collaboratively to find solutions. The success of these collaborative processes has been founded upon the transparent sharing of technical and scientific information; stakeholders felt informed, heard, and included in the process, resulting in trust and acceptance of the results.

However, an effort is currently underway to reform current oil spill regulations and statutes, reportedly to make them less burdensome on industry. We have seen a shift in philosophy among some decision makers that the details in the oil spill prevention and response contingency plans, and the regulations that guide them, are unnecessary and distracting. However, there is a lack of clear information on what is problematic.

It is unreasonable to claim now, decades later, that existing requirements are too onerous on industry. Industry has demonstrated a commitment to the environment through safer operations, implementing new technologies, and integrating lessons learned. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and the Trans Alaska Pipeline System tanker operators have worked with regulators and citizens for 30 years to continuously improve the system and operate profitably. Any perceived financial burden to industry should be weighed against the devastation and enormous burden another major oil spill would place on the people, fish, wildlife, and environment of our region.

It appears that some may not fully understand or appreciate the legacy they have been entrusted to protect. Without transparency about what direction this potential regulatory reform may be going, it is difficult for those with historical knowledge, like the Council, to respond and advise.

Transparency is the antidote to mistrust

The Alaska Oil Spill Commission found that starting in 1981 there was a dramatic decline in regulatory oversight,



Donna Schantz
Executive Director

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From Alyeska:

Brigham McCown named new president of Alyeska Pipeline

Brigham A. McCown will become the next president of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The selection was announced by the Trans Alaska Pipeline System's (TAPS) Owners Committee.

McCown is the second company president hired as an Alyeska employee following Vice Admiral Thomas Barrett, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), who was brought on in January 2011 and is retiring.

McCown brings over three decades of executive management, legal, and operational experience in the infrastructure and transportation industries. He currently serves as chairman and CEO of Nouveau Consulting where he advises on matters pertaining to federal security and safety regulations. He is also chairman and founder of the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure, a non-partisan think tank leveraging innovation to improve infrastructure safety.

McCown has held several posts at the U.S. Department of Transportation, serving as a direct report to both democratic and republican Secretaries of Transportation including service as the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's first deputy administrator. In 2013, he retired from the U.S. Navy after 25 years of combined active and reserve service as a naval officer and naval aviator.

Outgoing president Admiral Tom Barrett, who is working with McCown during a transition period, stated, "I have known Brigham for many years and I share Alyeska's Owners' confidence in his excellent fit as Alyeska's next president and in his ability to lead the organization. I am equally confident in the proud and talented TAPS people, whose dedication to safety, protecting our environment, operational excellence, reliability, efficiency and innovative work will carry TAPS operations into the next 40 years and beyond."

"Brigham brings a deep and varied range of experience in the regulatory realm to Alyeska, including a sharp focus on operations and an unwavering commitment to safety,"

said Jerry Frey, president of ExxonMobil Pipeline Company and chair of the TAPS Owners Committee.

"We are confident in his leadership skills, which have been proven in many unique arenas, and in his ability to keep Alyeska and TAPS moving forward during this exciting time for Alaska's oil and gas industry. Brigham has a high level of enthusiasm

for working in Alaska, on the iconic and critical infrastructure of TAPS, and with the men and women of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company."

"TAPS Owners and Alyeska leaders are grateful to Tom Barrett for his extraordinary leadership," Frey said. "In his tenure, he built community partnerships, strengthened Alyeska's culture, advanced the company's safety record and expanded the focus on ethics, compliance, diversity and innovation. Tom led a transformative shift in Alyeska's business and maintenance strategy. His leadership and initiatives will have a lasting impact on the company, on TAPS sustainability, and on Alaska."

With nine years of service as Alyeska president, Barrett is the longest tenured of any Alyeska CEO/President in the company's 49-year history. During his time at Alyeska, the organization celebrated its 35th and 40th anniversaries, 17 and 18 billionth barrel moved, increased throughput for the first time since 2002, and numerous safety, environment and compliance honors. Under Barrett, the organization evolved and innovated to successfully tackle numerous operational and external challenges.

• Submitted by Alyeska Corporate Communications.



Brigham McCown

Public statements by Commissioner Brune cause concern

The recent public scoping notice issued by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, along with statements made by the department's commissioner, Jason Brune, have caused concern at the Council.

Some of the commissioner's statements were interpreted as encouraging a reduction in regulations, safeguards that could lead to a return to the complacency that led to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

References to "burdensome" regulations

Last March, the commissioner spoke to Alaska's Resource Development Council, an organization comprised of representatives from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries. He told the group that he has been focusing on the word "economic" in the department's mission: 'Conserving, improving, and protecting Alaska's natural resources and environment to enhance the health, safety, economic, and social well-being of Alaskans.' He specifically requested comments from members of the business group regarding which regulations they view as "overly onerous" and "unnecessary." "We need to make sure that we hear from you what we can do to help make Alaska open for business," the commissioner told them.

The commissioner spoke to the Council at two public meetings this year. At the Council's meeting last May, he mentioned the length of the regulations for contingency plans.

"When you make things complex and you make things 49 pages, for regs [regulations] for a c-plan [contingency plan], that influences your investment climate," he said.

These regulations cover different response planning standards for crude tankers, non-crude tankers and barges, crude oil terminals, non-crude terminals, oil and gas exploration facilities, production facilities, and pipelines.

"We're going to look at [the regulations] and we're going to determine whether it's -- some things that are in there are just outdated, some things are unnecessary, they're not protecting human health and the environment," the commissioner told the Council in May.

"Some of the things that have been added to c-plans over the years, as I said, I think that the c-plans have gotten -- and I know a lot of you disagree with me on this -- but they've gotten overly onerous and too large to the point that they're almost unusable documents," the commissioner said in September.

Since 1992, the department has revised these regulations nine times to streamline the process and make creating the documents less onerous.

Lack of transparency

The Council has asked for examples of regulations that have been suggested for reform but has not received any specifics.

"Some of the examples [of recommended changes] that have been given -- I mean, I'm -- I can't come up with any right now but, I mean, some of the regs that we put forward for potential changes, I don't have that list in front of me but did come from input that we received in those processes," the commissioner said in May.

"We have identified the list of regs that we think can be improved. The State of Alaska -- the different departments were asked to do that by the Governor. We put a list of about a hundred came forward from the different agencies around -- I think 35 or 40 of them came from DEC."

At the Council's meeting in September, members showed appreciation that the commissioner was open to conversations, however concerns remained.

"I've heard a lot of folks say they want huge changes," the commissioner told the Council in September.

Council calls on the commissioner to uphold commitment to protect Alaska

However, at the May meeting, the commissioner also made statements that he is committed to the protection of Alaska's environment.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that the economy of Alaska is protected and economic development and

Continued on page 9

Genetic testing reveals no new marine invasive species

The Council funds monitoring for marine species that could be introduced into Prince William Sound as a result of the operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated oil tankers. If an invasive species, such as the European green crab, becomes established in Prince William Sound, they could cause serious economic and ecological harm.

To detect potential invasions early, the Council now uses both visual and genetic methods to monitor for potentially damaging species. The DNA of plankton samples analyzed for an extensive list of marine species including but not limited to crustaceans (crabs), mollusks (clams), and annelids (worms). In 2017, using the genetic plankton analysis technique, Council scientists identified 52 marine species in samples from Port Valdez and central Prince William Sound, and none of those were invasive, non-native species. However, 2016 genetic monitoring revealed some non-native species in Prince William Sound, the soft-shell clam (*Mya arenaria*) and a sea squirt (*Botrylloides leachii*), but those two species were not found in 2017.

Read more about the new genetic testing method and download the full report: www.bit.ly/Genes_NIS



Above: A closeup of a plate used in visual monitoring. A series of these plates that are placed in the water in various locations. At right, Council staff member Nelli Vanderberg holds up a plate during a monitoring trip in 2019. Photos by Austin Love.



Study evaluates places of refuge Some locations won't work for Prince William Sound tankers

A recent Council-sponsored study reviewed eight "potential places of refuge," or PPOR, which are locations where an oil tanker in distress can anchor and take action to stabilize its condition. Of the eight reviewed in the study, none were found to be safe for use by tankers. However, several safe alternates were identified, analyzed, and proposed for future consideration.

Identifying these sites in advance allows decision-makers to save time during their critical initial response to a potential oil spill. Establishment of these places of refuge is recognized by the International Maritime Organization and other governmental agencies as an important marine safety and pollution mitigation measure.

Read more about the findings and the technology that made this study possible on our website: www.bit.ly/PPOR_2019

Long-term monitoring in Prince William Sound shows lowest contamination levels in study's history

Results from the Council's efforts to monitor the long-term environmental impacts of the operation of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers since the Exxon Valdez oil spill have shown oil contamination in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska has reached all-time low values. The Council has been conducting environmental monitoring since 1993.

Alyeska and its owner companies have implemented several improvements over the years which have contributed to the reduction of pollutants being discharged. These include the elimination of single-hulled tankers and the major modifications Alyeska made to their Ballast Water Treatment Facility which resulted in more effective removal of oil contamination from ballast water.

Read more about the types of sampling and locations on our website: www.bit.ly/LTEMP_2019

Volunteers engage Kenai students in oil spill lessons

By Betsi Oliver
Outreach Coordinator

In September, Council volunteers brought a message of citizen engagement and oil spill prevention to Kenai's second and third graders.

At the education event known as Masters of Disaster, students engaged in engineering challenges, learned principles of chemistry, got an introduction to tanker design, and practiced oiled wildlife response. The principal of Kenai's Mountain View Elementary, Karl Kircher, says that making connections at this young age to career pathways, engineering, and applied sciences is crucial, because students are deciding whether school is meaningful for them and what their future might hold.

The community showed their support. Parents texted teachers saying that the activities gave their children meaningful points of connection with their own Exxon Valdez oil spill cleanup efforts. The Peninsula Clarion ran a front-page photo titled "Getting their hands dirty for science."

Ten volunteers spent two hours non-stop with groups of students: Board members Patience Andersen Faulkner, Mike Bender, and Dorothy Moore; committee chairs Jane Eisemann, Jim Herbert, John Kennish, and Steve Lewis; committee members Cathy Hart and Savannah Lewis; and a guest volunteer, Deb Hart. Amanda Johnson, Betsi Oliver, and Nelli Vanderburg of staff completed the team.

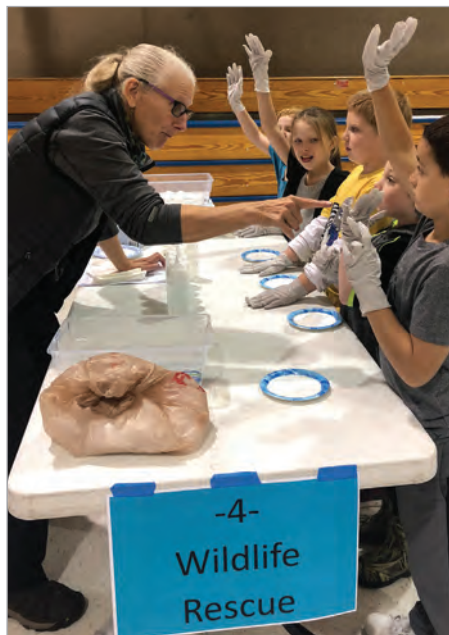
In one station, students used a variety

of materials to represent boom, skimmers, and other cleanup materials to keep oil off a model beach. Another station showed the impact of weatherization on oil, how a small drop can spread into a large layer of sheen that is hard to contain or be whipped up into mousse that is hard to remove. Investigating ship design was a blast when students ran the length of the Exxon Valdez – 987 feet – and got to handle a Lego version of a double-hulled tanker. At the wildlife response station, students investigated what happens to oiled eggs (answer: oil can absorb through the shell) and experimented with different cleaners to remove oil from feathers. Even using the same product that professional responders use to clean oiled animals, the students saw firsthand that the oil could not be completely washed away. That highlighted the message of the day: Cleaning up spilled oil is tough. Prevention is the best and only way to keep the environment free from oil.

In the past, this program has been offered in smaller schools. It was the first time we offered Masters of Disaster to a community the size of Kenai. The Council regularly adapts its education, and outreach, efforts to best suit the needs of our diverse communities. Next fall we'll take Masters of Disaster on the road again to Seward. Hope to see you there!

Right: Jane Eisemann, a former teacher from Kodiak and volunteer on the Council's Information and Education Committee, teaches a lesson on wildlife rescue.

Far right: Jim Herbert, resident of Homer and member of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, shares a lesson on oil spill response.



Three Council-related reports accepted at conferences this year

- “Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and the Prince William Sound Long Term Environmental Monitoring Program” by long-time contractor Jim Payne will be presented at the 2020 International Oil Spill Conference. This Council program has gathered data on the presence of hydrocarbons in sediments and mussels in the region since 1993.
- “Providing a local voice for setting priorities in Alaska for human health, and social and economic disruptions from spills” by Davin Holen, member of the Council’s Scientific Advisory Committee, will be presented at the 2020 International Oil Spill Conference.
- “Alaska’s Oil Spill Response Planning Standard – History and Legislative Intent” by Elise DeCola and Tim Robertson, authors of the Council-sponsored report of the same name, was presented at the 2019 Alaska Historical Society Annual Conference.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

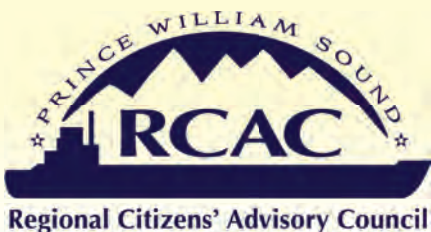
The Council meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, May in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated among member communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Upcoming meetings:

- May 7 & 8, 2020 in Valdez, Alaska
- September 17 & 18, 2020 in Seward, Alaska
- January 28 & 29, 2021 in Anchorage, Alaska

More details are available on our website:

www.pwsrcac.org



More information about Hilcorp and Harvest needed to ease concerns

Continued from page 3

track record of significantly reducing operating costs,” the Council stated in their comments. The Council cited Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation’s online spill records, which shows that over the course of Hilcorp’s operations in Alaska, which began in 2012, over 90 crude oil spills or discharges were attributed to the company. These incidents included the death of an employee in 2018, and a 2017 gas leak in Cook Inlet that lasted over four months.

The Council pointed out that Hilcorp’s disproportionately high number of incidents were during operation of systems much smaller than the pipeline system they plan to purchase and recommended heightened scrutiny of the sale.

Implications for end of life of the pipeline system

Part of the lease agreement for the pipeline includes an obligation on the part of the owners to dismantle and remove the equipment and restore the land to a satisfactory condition after the system is shut down. This includes the pipeline and the terminal. As part of the sale agreement, BP will retain the responsibility to pay for these expenses. It is not clear what regulatory agency will have the authority to ensure BP’s resources are available at that time.

ADEC commissioner on regulatory reform

Continued from page 6

environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. Those two things we’ve proven can co-exist. We’ve also proven in 1989 that you can really screw things up. So we need to make sure we’re doing it right,” the commissioner told the Council last May.

The Council called on the commissioner to uphold this commitment to protect Alaska’s environment during upcoming reviews of regulations.

To read the full transcripts of the meetings and view the video of the presentation to the Resource Development Council, please visit: www.bit.ly/ADEC_Statements

Public review: Oil spill laws and regulations

Continued from page 1

regulations. Regulations can be changed by the agency that oversees them, however state law can only be amended by the legislature. While no specific revisions are being proposed by the department at this time, the Council sees this effort as having the potential to lead to a weakening of oil spill prevention and response requirements put in place after the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Once the current public scoping is complete, the department plans to review the submitted comments and then propose specific revisions to the regulations. If changes are proposed, the department will provide an opportunity for public review and comment. Public comment periods on specific changes are required to be open for a minimum of 30 days.

The specific sections under review are:

- Alaska's Oil Spill Regulations 18 AAC 75 – Article 4
- Alaska State Statute 46.04, Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Control

The original deadline of January 15 has been extended. Written comments must be submitted to ADEC no later than 11:59 p.m. on March 16, 2020.

The Council encourages the public to comment in support of strong regulations that protect our communities, environment, cultures, economies, and human health from oil pollution.

For additional details, including copies of the regulations, links to submitted comments, news articles, as well as how and where to submit your own comments, please visit our website: www.bit.ly/ADEC_Input

Schantz: Transparency is the foundation of public trust

Continued from page 4

and that decline contributed to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. An official recommendation to the Alaska legislature after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill was, "The nation and the state need strong, alert regulatory agencies fully funded to scrutinize and safeguard the shipment of oil."

As those who experienced firsthand the devastation of the 1989 spill are retiring or are no longer with us, the Council has increasingly become a repository of the knowledge and lessons from that disaster.

We hope that any movement towards regulatory changes will include a thorough public input process with adequate time for information to be shared, reviewed, and commented on. Only through active citizen engagement and community relationship building can public trust in the oil spill prevention and response system be upheld.

The Council will do everything possible to make sure the safeguards put in place over the past 30 years are not weakened, and to protect the region's stakeholders who would be most impacted by another catastrophic spill. The Council was created for this role, in anticipation of the time when enough of the memory of Exxon Valdez oil spill had faded such that the robust system put in place to prevent an accident like that from ever happening again begins to look overbearing and burdensome. The Council continues to raise awareness and provide reasonable and justified resistance to regulatory and statutory changes that could weaken existing protections.

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Send in your questions or comments:
newsletter@pwsrca.org

Photo by Nelli Vanderberg.

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



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