

Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – January 2023

INFORMATION ITEM

Sponsor: Jeremy Robida and the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee

Project number and name or topic: Proposed changes to the Regional Stakeholder Committee

1. **Description of agenda item:** This is an informational item and update to the Board on proposed changes to the Regional Stakeholder Committee (RSC). The Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) instituted a task force that began meeting with the Council and others in August of 2022, with the goal of creating a job aid to explain the RSC concept and process. Proposed job aid language speaks to an RSC process that is less robust, versus what is captured in current PWS Area Plan language.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** The RSC process helps foster a working relationship between incident leadership and those directly affected by an incident, and offers a way to bring local knowledge, concerns, and potentially locally available resources into a response. The Council has long been a proponent and advocate for the RSC model, as we’ve witnessed through tanker plan exercises how useful, valuable, and important this stakeholder engagement process can be. In support of the RSC, the Council sponsored community workshops explaining how responses are managed and the RSC concept between 2013 and 2017, and built a series of RSC tools that were launched on our website earlier this year for both industry liaisons and RSC participants (see: <https://www.pwsrcac.org/rsc/>).

Currently proposed job aid language is less robust and is not aligned with approved language in the current PWS Area plan. Staff is concerned that some of the language being considered for inclusion in the job aid, with the intent to provide more flexibility to the Unified Command, may degrade the RSC process. Proposed changes are similar to those sought in 2016 (which were ultimately withdrawn based on significant opposition received), in that there is less guaranteed access to UC and Incident Action Plan documentation.

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
XCOM	12/18/12	Approved Executive Director to negotiate a contract with Nuka Research and Planning Group, up to \$27,000 in FY13, to facilitate project 7901 Incident Management for Regional Stakeholders.
XCOM	11/1/13	Approved a draft letter dated November 1, 2013 titled “Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) Proposed Draft Amendment to the Alaska Unified Plan to Eliminate the Regional Stakeholder Committee (RSC)” for distribution.
Board	01/23/14	Approved the report titled “ICS and Response Plan Basics for Regional Stakeholders RFP Number 7091.13.01” by Nuka Research & Planning Group, LLC, for distribution.

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Board	05/01/14	Approved FY2015 budget which included funding for project 7901 Incident Management for Downstream Communities.
Board	05/07/15	Approved FY2016 budget which included funding for project 7901 Incident Management for Downstream Communities.
Board	05/05/16	Approved FY2017 budget which included funding for project 7901 Incident Management for Downstream Communities.
Board	05/02/19	Approved FY2020 budget which included funding for project 7901 Resources for the Regional Stakeholders Committee (RSC) and Affected Communities.
Board	05/20/20	Approved FY2021 budget which included funding for project 7901 Resources for the Regional Stakeholders Committee (RSC).
Board	05/06/21	Board accepts Web-Based Regional Stakeholder Committee Resources project, led by contractor Nuka Planning and Research, as having met the contractual terms set forth in the contract.

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support, or opposition:** The Council opposed proposed changes from the ARRT in 2016 which would have split the RCS into two separate groups and resulted in less access to incident managers and information overall. While the currently proposed job aid language takes a different approach, the results are similar: lessor no guaranteed face-to-face time between the UC and RSC members, and less access to response documentation than is specified in the current PWS Area Plan language. Council staff spent significant time conducting outreach among member entities and regional stakeholders regarding the proposed 2016 changes, and have record of 13 letters of opposition from that timeframe. It is PWSRCAC's understanding that the 2016 proposed changes were ultimately withdrawn, in part, because of this feedback.

5. **Committee Recommendation:** The OSPR Committee has been kept apprised of the RSC Task Force meetings and progress, and suggested this topic be discussed by the Board. OSPR Committee members and staff have concerns that 1) the proposed language is not aligned and potentially weakens the currently approved PWS Area Plan language, 2) the overall task force process is being rushed and PWSRCAC subject matter expertise and history on this topic is not being fully considered, and 3) the job aid being developed to explain the RSC model and process will not go through the same level of public review as Area Plans.

6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** There are no funds allocated in the FY2023 budget for this topic.

7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** None, item is for formation only.

8. **Attachments:** None.