



Regional Citizens' Advisory Council / "Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."

In Anchorage: 3709 Spenard Road / Suite 100 / Anchorage, Alaska 99503 / (907) 277-7222 / FAX (907) 277-4523
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MEMBERS

May 25, 2010

Alaska State
Chamber of
Commerce

Mr. Niell Irvin
Unified Command BP/Deepwater Horizon Spill Planning Chief
BP/Deepwater Horizon Spill

Alaska Wilderness
Recreation & Tourism
Association

Mr. Vince Mitchell
Vessel of Opportunity System Director BP/Deepwater Horizon Spill

Chugach Alaska
Corporation

Re: A Nearshore Response Option for the Gulf of Mexico

City of Cordova

Dear Mr. Irvin and Mr. Mitchell:

City of Homer

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) is an independent non-profit corporation created in the wake of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill whose mission is to promote the environmentally safe operation of the Valdez oil terminal and tankers.

City of Kodiak

City of Seldovia

City of Seward

City of Valdez

Based on our experience during and since the Exxon Valdez oil spill (EVOS) in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska, we would like to recommend adding a robust nearshore response component to the existing shoreline protection strategies for the Gulf of Mexico. This plan to pick up on-water oil in the nearshore environment is based on the concept of readily available local resources from Gulf area states. For example, sewage vacuum trucks (vac trucks) can be placed on vessels such as shrimp boats or landing crafts in the 70' to 100' size range.

City of Whittier

Community of
Chenega Bay

Community of
Tatitlek

Cordova District
Fishermen United

The combination of a vac truck on the deck of a large fishing vessel is a proven resource used to great advantage in the EVOS to pick up weathered and emulsified oil. Combined with adequate HAZWOPER training already available for the spill, this could be a powerful tool in recovering near-shore oil before it impacts local beaches, oyster reefs, shrimp spawning marshes and other sensitive areas. It appears that sufficient oil containment boom is already available on-scene to support this response strategy. In Alaska, the NOFI Buster series has been shown to be an ideal containment systems to equip the vessels for nearshore free oil recovery.

Kenai Peninsula
Borough

Kodiak Island
Borough

Kodiak Village Mayors
Association

Oil Spill Region
Environmental
Coalition

It is our understanding that vacuum trucks are generally a readily available resource in the region. Trucks can be operated as a self-contained skimmer and temporary storage device and then easily pump

Port Graham
Corporation

Prince William Sound
Aquaculture
Corporation

their recovered oil into a secondary storage vessel. The vacuum pump/skimmer has proven its ability to recover emulsified and debris-laden oil and is used as part of a standard technique (usually onshore) in many oil spill tactics manuals.

We understand that Unified Command has been provided with copies of the Alaska Spill Tactics for Alaska Responders (STAR) Manual (<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/star/docs.htm>) along with the SERVS Tactical Manual from Prince William Sound. Both of these would help build a tactic for using the vac truck/fishing vessel combination. Attached is the most relevant section of the STAR Manual for your easy reference. The use of fishing vessels for nearshore free oil recovery is a critical component of oil spill response planning in Alaska, and is a proven technique for successfully engaging and employing the very same stakeholders who stand to be most severely impacted by the spill.

It is our hope that these proven and effective strategies based on the resources that are readily available will be useful to you. We think that the professional spill responders on staff in Unified Command should be able to develop and implement a nearshore response plan based on the vac truck/fishing vessel technique, if they are given the green light to use them.

We trust that you find this information helpful and we would welcome any questions about it. We wish you and the entire incident management team every success as you work to minimize the damage from this environmental tragedy now unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Swanson, Executive Director
Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council