

Larry Hartig <i>Commissioner</i> P.O. Box 111800 Juneau, AK 99811-1800 www.dec.alaska.gov	 <p>STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION</p>	Ty Keltner <i>Information Officer</i> 907.465.5009 cell: 907.321.5491 ty.keltner@alaska.gov
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CONTACT: Gary Folley, DEC Program Manager, (907) 262-5210

Alaska, Washington, British Columbia Collaborate on Transboundary Oil Spill Response Planning

(JUNEAU, AK) –The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is proud to announce the completion of a report that focuses on transboundary oil spills in the Alaska/British Columbia and British Columbia/Washington border areas.

Titled “Review of Planning and Response Capabilities for a Marine Oil Spill on the U.S.-Canadian Transboundary Areas of the Pacific Coast,” the report covers response command, planning, operations, logistics and financial issues pertaining to a transboundary spill. The collaboration is important because laws and regulations that guide how government agencies and private response entities prepare for and respond to transboundary marine oil spills are not always uniform.

In crafting the report, 90 natural resource trustees and stakeholders from Alaska, Washington and British Columbia worked with the Pacific States-British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force to evaluate response planning and readiness for U.S./Canadian transboundary oil spills. The report makes 111 different recommendations to federal, state, provincial and local government agencies, response organizations, industry, tribes and U.S. and Canadian coordinating groups.

“This report is the culmination of the most advanced, detailed oil spill response planning between two countries, and will serve as a model for future international oil spill planning,” said Gary Folley, DEC Program Manager. “It will also go a long way to response planning for future offshore development in the Arctic.”

Members of the transboundary project workgroup included representatives from government agencies, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations and private industry in Washington, British Columbia and Alaska.

While the report focused on the southern transboundary area with Canada, DEC also continues to work with other agencies on spill response planning for the Arctic boundary with Canada. Recently, the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards released the CANUSNORTH 2010 After Action Report, which covers the CANUSNORTH spill reponse seminar and exercise, in which DEC was a major participant.

The transboundary report is available at:

www.oilspilltaskforce.org/docs/notes_reports/Final_US_Canada_Transboundary_Project_Report.pdf

More on the Pacific States-British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force is available at:

www.oilspilltaskforce.org