



DEC News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEC soliciting public comment on oil spill contingency plans

September 15, 2003--The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is soliciting public comment on the first phase of proposed changes to regulations streamlining oil discharge prevention and contingency plans for oil exploration and production facilities.

“The exploration and production facility contingency plan regulations as currently written lack well defined standards and have led to long processing times and legal challenges,” said DEC Commissioner Ernesta Ballard. “These changes will clarify the standards and review procedures.”

Exploration and production facility requirements were selected as the first phase of the project consistent with Governor Murkowski’s priority for expedited resource development and accelerated oil exploration. Subsequent phases will deal with other types of facilities and vessels subject to oil spill contingency plan requirements. For oil exploration and production facilities, proposed changes include clarification of the response planning standard, response strategy and scenario requirements, and realistic maximum response operating limitations. DEC is also clarifying the distinction between its statutory obligations and those of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (AOGCC) with regard to oil exploration and production. These changes recognize the existing review and inspection authority of the AOGCC and eliminate duplication.

DEC developed and proposed informal draft regulation changes in April of this year and conducted an informal 60-day public review period that included public workshops in Anchorage and Barrow. The current draft regulations incorporate DEC’s response to issues raised during the informal public review. A summary of the responses can be found on DEC’s web site at www.state.ak.us/dec/dspar/cpr/cprhome.htm or can be requested from Craig Wilson, Industry Preparedness Program, Department of Environmental Conservation, 410 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 303, Juneau, AK 99801, by phone at (907) 465-5204, or by e-mail at Craig_Wilson@dec.state.ak.us. Written comments on the draft may be submitted to Craig Wilson by fax at (907) 465-5244. The formal public comment

period ends at 5:00 p.m. on October 13, 2003.

For a copy of the proposed regulation changes, contact Craig Wilson at (907) 465-5204, or go to http://www.state.ak.us/dec/dec_cal.htm.

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