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NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 5, 2006

No. 06-48

Governor Announces Measures to Ensure Pipeline Integrity

(Juneau) – Motivated by his visit to the North Slope last week to view cleanup at BP's GC-2 spill site, Governor Frank H. Murkowski directed the Department of Environmental Conservation to assemble an Arctic Pipeline Technology Team and called for a corrosion conference to ensure the integrity of oil pipeline infrastructure and continued crude oil production.

"Our North Slope pipelines must be monitored and maintained to the highest standards," said the governor. "These measurable steps will ensure the best minds, technologies and practices are employed in the design, operation and maintenance of these pipelines."

The Arctic Pipeline Technology Team will be created by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and the federal Office of Pipeline Safety. The team will work with industry and other government or non-governmental professionals with expertise in arctic pipeline engineering on leak detection, corrosion prevention, monitoring and inspection. The team will share technical resources and information related to pipeline integrity in arctic and sub-arctic climates. It will troubleshoot design, construction, operation and maintenance problems, validate engineering approaches, examine the regulatory regime and recommend changes to reflect latest technologies, and ensure the best available technology is being applied to Alaska's North Slope pipeline system.

"We need to take a good hard look at our North Slope pipelines and the programs to protect them. The oil companies have complied with leak detection standards, they have extensive corrosion monitoring programs, yet we still had a very substantial leak," added Murkowski. "The gas pipeline will extend the life of the oil pipeline for 20 years, bringing additional jobs and revenue to Alaska. Now is the time, as we prepare for future growth and development, to ensure the integrity of our pipeline system so that incidents such as this do not happen again. These two actions together will be a first step."

The governor also directed DEC to work with other agencies and industry to convene a conference in Alaska on pipeline integrity. The conference will convene the foremost experts in the world on pipeline integrity and management programs. The purpose of the conference is to gather information from across the globe on pipeline integrity technology including programs and equipment and to examine how proven or promising technologies could be applied to our pipelines.

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