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Governor Sean Parnell
STATE OF ALASKA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 263

I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, under the authority of Article III, Sections 1 and 24 of the Alaska Constitution, and AS 44.19.145(c), find and order the following:

SECTION 1: FINDINGS

1. In March 2011, the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami struck Japan. The Government of Japan estimates that the tsunami and subsequent marine environment left nearly 1.5 million tons of material floating off the coast of Japan. The amount of tsunami-generated marine debris that currents and winds will bring to Alaska waters remains unknown.

2. Alaskan residents and the State of Alaska have a keen interest in seeing that marine debris risks are appropriately addressed. Alaskans' economic interests and quality of life could be impacted. The State of Alaska owns tidelands and some of the uplands near the coastline that could suffer impacts, and significant federal lands, including national forests, parks, and monuments, also border the southern and southeastern coasts of Alaska.

3. The federal Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act, 33 U.S.C. 1951 - 1958 (the Act), provides for the assessment, reduction, and prevention of marine debris that might impact the marine environment or present a hazard to marine navigation in the United States. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) administers the Act and serves as the lead federal agency responding to tsunami-generated and other marine debris.

4. The State of Alaska recognizes the lead role of NOAA in responding to marine debris threats, the authority of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) for marine navigation and safety, and the expertise that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies have in regards to radiation and other pollution.

5. Federal and State agencies, local governments, and marine debris cleanup organizations have been working cooperatively and collaboratively thus far to assess the amount and nature of the marine debris, its potential impacts, and cleanup needs. However, much work remains to be done. It would benefit these efforts to coordinate the activities of the State agencies with those of NOAA, the USCG, EPA, and others in the state.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Order is to:

1. Facilitate a timely and effective response by State agencies to marine debris from the March 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan that could adversely impact the waters and shores of the State of Alaska;

2. Ensure the Alaska public receives current information about the location and amount of marine debris reaching Alaska's land and waters and the actions being taken to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts; and

3. Ensure the Alaska public has a reasonable and efficient means to report sightings of marine debris and other important local information to federal and State agencies managing the response effort.

SECTION 3: STATE AGENCY COORDINATION

1. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), at the direction of the Commissioner, shall serve as lead agency to coordinate efforts under this Order. The Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development shall designate and maintain a single point of contact at the agency for matters relating to tsunami-generated marine debris. The contact information for each representative shall be made available on the State marine debris website, as described in Section 4 of this Order.

2. Each agency's point of contact shall regularly communicate with its counterparts in other designated State agencies regarding marine debris actions and issues.

3. Each agency's designated point of contact shall keep DEC informed on its agency's progress in addressing tsunami-generated marine debris issues.

4. The commissioner of DEC shall report regularly to the Office of the Governor on activities conducted and issues that arise under the Order.

SECTION 4: PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

1. DEC shall host a marine debris website and otherwise provide relevant information to the Alaska public on:

   (a) tsunami-generated and other marine debris impacting coastal Alaska waters, tidelands, and uplands;

   (b) the government response to risks from the debris; and

   (c) options the public has to report sightings of marine debris and volunteer in cleanup efforts.

2. DEC shall include information on its website regarding a means for the public to report sightings of marine debris, including marine debris that may be toxic, hazardous, or otherwise in need of special action. The website must include information on how to report the discovery of personal items that may be appropriate for return to their original owners in Japan.

SECTION 5: OTHER PROVISION

Consistent with law and available appropriations, each designated State agency shall use existing personnel and monetary resources to comply with this Order.

This Order takes effect immediately.

DATED at Juneau, Alaska, this 30th day of July, 2012.

Sean Parnell

Sean Parnell
Governor