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Effects on DEC Services Resulting from a Government Shutdown

(JUNEAU, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is determining what services will be maintained and which will be suspended if the Legislature does not pass a fully funded budget before July 1, 2015. The following DEC services critical to Alaskans’ life, health, and safety will be operational during a shutdown:

- **Division of Spill Prevention and Response:** DEC would need to maintain a level of preparedness to respond in the case of an oil or hazardous substance release. This division is primarily funded through the Prevention Account of the Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Prevention and Response Fund and therefore would not be affected.
- **Environmental Health Laboratory:** If there is a health crisis, like a major foodborne illness outbreak, DEC would need to recall laboratory staff.
- **Air Monitoring and Quality Assurance Program:** This program is responsible for forecasting the impact of weather on air quality pollution that poses a potential health hazard to people. One meteorologist position would be retained to issue air quality advisories.
- **Remote Maintenance Workers:** Staff frequently respond to breakdowns of drinking water systems in rural communities. DEC would seek to enter into local agreements to cover emergency events during a government shutdown.

Other core services provided by the department such as air and water monitoring, laboratory testing, shellfish PSP testing, permitting, inspections, complaint response, and support to many community environmental programs rely on general fund support and will be largely suspended.

Some aspects of the following departmental services will remain operational without the use of general funds:

- Division of Environmental Health's Drinking Water Program
- Division of Water's Cruise Ship Monitoring Program
- Division of Environmental Health's Pesticides Program
- Village Safe Water and Municipal Matching Grants Programs
- Food Safety and Sanitation Program: using federal funds, may continue conducting inspections of manufactured food facilities
- Office of the State Veterinarian: responding to issues related to shipments of livestock and other animals crossing the border
- Division of Air Quality's Permitting and Compliance Program: continue permit-related work funded by fees

Governor Bill Walker is hopeful the legislature will reach a compromise so this shutdown does not occur, but out of an abundance of caution, the Governor and DEC wants Alaskans to know that the services provided by the Department of Environmental Conservation will be affected.

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