

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

DIVISION OF SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE CONTAMINATED SITES PROGRAM

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Dear concerned citizen,

This letter is to give you an update on the sulfolane investigation in North Pole. The most significant news to report this week is that the North Pole city water continues to have no sulfolane in the distribution system.

Tests of both city wells continue to show very low traces of the chemical, but the existing water treatment plant is removing those traces. In the winter, water is pumped from well #1. The raw water sampled on February 24 showed 3.6 parts per billion of sulfolane. Well #2 is used in warmer weather and, although not currently in use, is being tested once a month. Sampled last on March 2, the raw water results from well #2 were 5.6 parts per billion sulfolane. Concentrations remain non-detect in the water going to consumers. The lowest recommended level for sulfolane in drinking water, published by a federal health agency in early February, is 24 parts per billion. Information about these recommendations is available on the DEC website for the North Pole Refinery, at www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/csp/sites/npolerefinery.htm.

Flint Hills has been working with several other small public water systems, primarily restaurants, in the plume area to set them up with sulfolane-free water. The following establishments now have holding tanks to replace well water use: Little Richard's Diner and 12 Mile Roadhouse. Water for these systems is currently being supplied by Pioneer Wells water hauler.

Shannon and Wilson continues to test residential wells and anticipate completing this work by the end of March 2010. Their testing of private wells shows an increasing number of non-detects in wells at the edges of what we consider the plume boundary, strengthening our knowledge of these boundaries. Flint Hills will continue their effort to sample wells installed specifically for monitoring over time. This will allow us to look for seasonal variation in concentrations.

We have updated the DEC website on sulfolane issues with the North Pole refinery to include all the past emails sent to people interested in updates. We will continue to update the web page as new information is available.

If you have questions about DEC's work on this issue, please write or call me or those listed.

Sincerely,



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For more information:

On contaminated sites, contact DEC: Marti Early, 907-465-5206, marti.early@alaska.gov or Ann Farris, 907-451-2104, ann.farris@alaska.gov

On health related information, contact the Alaska Division of Public Health, Nim Ha, 907-269-8028, nim.ha@alaska.gov

On public water supplies, contact DEC, Cindy Christian, 907-451-2222, cindy.christian@alaska.gov

On water testing or other refinery issues, contact Jeff Cook, Flint Hills Resources, 907-488-5104, jeff.cook@fhr.com