



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Prevention Preparedness and Response Program
SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)



Hilcorp Natural Gas Leak 2021

SITREP #: 1

SPILL #: 21239909101

TIME/DATE OF DISTRIBUTION: 3:00 PM April 5, 2021

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Hilcorp Alaska, LLC

INCIDENT LOCATION: Cook Inlet between Platform A and Nikiski (lat/long: 60.779529, -151.457247)

TIME/DATE OF SPILL: Unknown, reported April 1, 2021 at 5:30 PM

HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED: At approximately 4:25 PM on April 1, 2021, a helicopter pilot identified bubbles on the surface of the water during supply delivery. Hilcorp reported the gas leak to the National Response Center and to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) at 5:30 PM on the same day.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: The product being released is not natural gas produced from the platform. The gas is processed dry natural gas (98.67% Methane), providing fuel gas to two platforms: Platform A and Platform C. Natural gas is defined by the ADEC as a hazardous substance. The exact amount of natural gas released to water is unknown at this time. Hilcorp reported the line pressure was approximately 190 psi prior to the release. As of April 2, 2021, Hilcorp reported the line pressure was reduced to 70 psi.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The cause of the leak is unknown at this time and is being investigated. A leak occurred from this pipe in 2017.

SOURCE CONTROL: The 8-inch pipeline is an underwater pipeline at approximately 80 feet below Cook Inlet waters. Source control was achieved on April 3, 2021 at approximately 1:30 PM by activating the block valves. Sonar scans are expected to commence of April 6, 2021. Diving operations to identify the reason for the release will commence as soon as ice conditions safely warrant.

RESPONSE ACTION: Hilcorp immediately shut-in Platforms A and C and began reducing pressure in the natural gas line. The line pressure was reduced to 70 psi and then shut-in. Hilcorp will initiate sonar and diving activities to assess the pipeline damage when it is determined to be safe regarding ice conditions in Cook Inlet. Hilcorp is continuing to monitor the pressure on the line. Trained staff will continue to observe for wildlife in the area. Hilcorp's response contractor, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc. (CISPRI), remains on standby.

RESOURCES AT RISK: *Shorelines* - Shoreline type varies throughout upper Cook Inlet. Shorelines around the East Forelands area include mixed sand and gravel beaches, coarse-grained sand, and exposed tidal flats. Redoubt Bay and Trading Bay on the west side of Cook Inlet include salt and brackish-water marshes and sheltered tidal flats which are of high importance to bird and invertebrate species.

Marine Mammals - Species likely to be present in upper Cook Inlet include Cook Inlet beluga whale (Endangered Species Act [ESA]-listed as endangered), western Distinct Population Segment (DPS) Steller sea lion (ESA-listed as endangered), Mexico DPS humpback whale (ESA-listed as threatened), harbor seals, killer whales, Hawaii DPS humpback whales, harbor porpoise, and Dall's porpoise. The Southwest Alaska DPS Northern sea otter (ESA-listed as threatened) is known to occur in lower Cook Inlet. The discharge location is within designated Critical Habitat for Cook Inlet beluga whales. Cook Inlet beluga whales are likely utilizing offshore waters in upper Cook Inlet during winter and will concentrate near forage fish locations as those populations arrive. Gray whales could migrate into the area in the coming weeks, but they would likely be rare.

Birds - Steller's eiders are ESA-listed as threatened and are known to overwinter south of the gas release along both the eastern and western shores of lower Cook Inlet; however, a small portion of this species has been known to overwinter in the Nikiski area. Waterfowl and shorebirds are overwintering in upper Cook Inlet. Notably, rock sandpipers are known to overwinter in upper Cook Inlet feeding on bivalves, including almost the entire population of the subspecies *Calidris ptilocnemis ptilocnemis*. Bald and golden eagles are also present in Cook Inlet year-round. Migratory birds, including waterfowl, seabirds, and shorebirds began arriving and feeding in high numbers in the Cook Inlet area in late March to early April and will begin nesting in late April and early May.

Fish - Several species and different life stages of fish are likely present in Cook Inlet near the vicinity of the gas release, including all five species of Pacific salmon (Chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, and pink salmon), Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, Pacific eulachon, Pacific halibut (spawning and hatching occurs in winter months), Pacific herring, Bering cisco, Humpback whitefish, American shad, Walleye pollock, sablefish (adults spawn in winter in deep waters, larvae are present at the water surface, and juveniles are found in nearshore waters), Pacific and saffron cod, yellowfin sole, and smelt. This area is Essential Fish Habitat for all five species of Pacific salmon.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Hilcorp is continuing to monitor ice conditions to determine when it will be safe for diving activities and explore safe options to control the source. ADEC will continue to monitor the response actions and review plans being developed. An investigation is being conducted to identify the cause of the spill.

WEATHER: Today: Mostly Sunny. Temperature highs around 34°F. NE wind 5 to 10 mph. Wind chill values as low as 11°F. Chance of precipitation 2%.

TOMORROW: Mostly sunny. Temperature highs around 30°F. NE wind around 5 mph. Wind chill values as low as 9°F. Chance of precipitation 4%.

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

No formal IMT is stood up at this time

Incident Commander: Dan Marlowe, Hilcorp Alaska, LLC

SOSC: Anna Carey, ADEC

FOSCr: MST2 Linzi Hargraves, USCG

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: As the situation warrants.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: Anna Carey, Acting Central Region Manager, ADEC (907) 835-3038 <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response>



Figure 1. Photo provided by Hilcorp - Platform A is seen in the distance during 11 AM overflight on Sunday, April 4

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:

AGENCY / STAKEHOLDER	NAME	SENT VIA	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	TELEPHONE	FAX
Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Diane Dunham	Email	ddunham@hilcorp.com	907-777-8315	
Senate O	Senator Peter Micciche	Email	senator.peter.micciche@akleg.gov Juneau (1/18-4/15) Kenai (4/20-1/15)	465-2828 283-7996	465-4779 283-3075
House 29 - Nikiski	Representative Ben Carpenter	Email	representative.benjamin.carpenter@akleg.gov	465-3779	465-2833
USCG MSD Homer	USCG-Office	Email	d17-sg-a-msdhomer-all@uscg.mil	235-3292	235-3624
US EPA	Bob Whittier	Email	Whittier.robert@epa.gov	206-553-1263 or 206-553-1264	271-3424
ADPS	State Troopers	Email	dps.all.soldotna.dispatch@alaska.gov	262-4453	262-2889
CIRCAC	Mike Munger	Email	mikemunger@circac.org and stevecatalano@circac.org	283-7222	283-6102
City of Kenai	Paul Ostrander, City Manager	Email	postrander@kenai.city	283-7535	283-3014
Kenai Pen. Borough	Dan Nelson, Office of Emergency Management	Email	dnelson@kpb.us	262-4910 or 394-2417	714-2395

Ninilchik Traditional Council		Fax	ntc@ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov	567-3313	567-3308
Cook Inletkeeper	Bob Shavelson	Email	bob@inletkeeper.org	299-3277	235-4069