



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

## Hilcorp Natural Gas Leak 2021



**CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS SITREPS ARE DENOTED IN RED**

**SITREP #:** 2 and Final

**SPILL #:** 21239909101

**TIME/DATE OF DISTRIBUTION:** 3:00 PM June 8, 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 released was 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. **Hilcorp estimates that approximately 2.6 million standard cubic feet (scf) had escaped before the line was shut-in on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**CAUSE OF SPILL:** **The investigation into the cause of this natural gas release is ongoing and is being overseen by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), the federal agency with jurisdiction over design, construction, operations and maintenance of natural gas pipelines.**

**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. **The pipeline remains shut-in with no clear timeframe for return to operation. Repairs and return to operation for this pipeline fall under the jurisdiction of PHMSA.**

**RESPONSE ACTION:** Hilcorp immediately shut-in Platforms A and C and began reducing pressure in the natural gas line. The line pressure was reduced and then completely shut-in on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hilcorp initiated sonar and diving activities to assess the pipeline damage when it is determined to be safe regarding ice conditions in Cook Inlet. **The department determined that there is no risk to the environment following the shut-in of the line. Before the line was shut-in Hilcorp conducted several overflights and observations from Platform A to look for wildlife. No wildlife was observed near the surface where the bubbling was occurring. To date there have been no wildlife impacts observed.**

**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:** There is no ongoing release of natural gas. The line has been taken out of operation until permanent repairs are performed. PHMSA is the approval authority for the repairs and return to operation of the pipeline. ADEC is not taking any further response actions for this release. Any questions regarding repairs and return to service should be directed to PHMSA.

**WEATHER:** Today: Cloudy with a chance of rain. Temperature highs around 55°F. W wind 5 mph. Chance of precipitation 20%.

**TOMORROW:** Cloudy with a chance of rain. Temperature highs around 57°F. E wind around 10-15 mph. Chance of precipitation 20%.

**UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:**

Incident Commander: Dan Marlowe, Hilcorp Alaska, LLC

SOSC: Jade Gamble, ADEC

FOSCr: MST2 Linzi Hargraves, USCG

**TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION:** This is the final report on this incident.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jade Gamble, Cook Inlet and Kodiak Unit Manager,  
ADEC (907) 262-3422 <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response>

**AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:**

Please refer to the first SITREP, distributed [date], for the agency/stakeholder notification list. The first SITREP can be found by following the link in the **Additional Information** box above.