

# Robert Bridges

Dear ADEC Board & Staff,

I am writing in response to your request for 'public scoping' for changes to the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan. I am strongly opposed to any changes to the current plan.

How soon we forget the devastation what was caused by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and the thousands of miles of ocean and beach that were spoiled, and the fisheries, businesses, lives and livelihoods that were destroyed.... including the deaths of as many as 250,000 seabirds, at least 2,800 sea otters, approximately 12 river otters, 300 harbor seals, 247 bald eagles, and 22 orcas, and MILLIONS of salmon and herring. Still today, more than 20,000 gallons of oil remains on beaches in Prince William Sound and the herring and clam beds have never recovered.

From that tragedy, we put in a framework of safety regulations that has become a shining example of spill avoidance. People from around the world study and emulate our safety standards because they are stringent, yet proven, and have best practice approaches to safety and how to operate in our sensitive ecological environment.

To now suggest that we should roll back those safety standards to pre-1990 levels for some arbitrary 'open for business' strategy espoused by the administration is short sighted and extremely dangerous. History has shown that if you do not have a strong safety framework in place, businesses will not create or follow any and accidents will increase and the severity can be disastrous. One of the main jobs of government is to protect the people and our state – because big business won't. As we have seen and felt repeatedly, they will cut corners, take risks, and cause disasters (Exxon Valdez, Deepwater Horizon, Centralia Mine, Times Beach, Love Canal, etc.). Sadly the examples are too numerous to mention them all. But you know what hasn't happened in Alaska since the Exxon Valdez? We haven't had any large oil spills in a state that produces more oil than all others... And the likely reason we have not had any more disasters is because of the current Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan.

I have been to many TAPS, RCAC, RCA and PWSEDC meetings... and I have never heard industry say we need to roll back the safety regulations to improve their profitability. The only one calling for this change is the governor and maybe some sole purpose trade groups that want to zealously represent their constituents by trying to save them money on safety and allow them to take more risks to raise profits. These industries are not hurting and needing any bailouts for the sake of all other Alaskans. Oil company profits are at an all time high. Please do not 'fix' what is not broken – and what has kept us from disaster since 1990.

Sincerely,

Robert Bridges