

**Department of Environmental Conservation
Response to Comments**

For

**Ward Cove Industrial Site Wastewater Treatment Facility
APDES Permit No. AK0053384**

Public Noticed

March 27, 2026 – April 27, 2026

May 13, 2026



**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501**

1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

Full Cycle – Power Systems and Supplies of Alaska, LLC operates the Ward Cove Industrial Site Wastewater Treatment Facility (Ward Cove WWTF) on the Northwest side of Ward Cove. The proposed discharge for Ward Cove WWTF is secondary treated domestic wastewater and filtrate from the on-site sludge composting facility, domestic wastewater from the Ward Cove Industrial Site, domestic wastewater from the former Ketchikan Pulp Company manufacturing site, and domestic sludge and septage from septic tanks and marine vessels. The Ward Cove WWTF discharges from internal Outfall 001A, which occurs at a maximum daily flow rate of 0.025 million gallons per day. Prior to discharging at the final terminus, Outfall 001A discharges to a wood stave pipe that contains water from Connell Lake. Monitoring for the combined effluents is performed at Outfall 001B. Effluent then flows through an outfall line to a submarine terminus located at latitude: 55°24'15" North and longitude: 131°43'58" West. No mixing zone is authorized for this permit, and effluent limits proposed are to be met at their respective outfall; Outfall 001A and Outfall 001B.

The Ward Cove Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) was originally constructed to treat domestic wastewater generated at the Ketchikan Pulp Company (KPC) pulp mill. The pulp mill shut down in 1997. In 1998, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit AK000092 to Ward Cove WWTF, authorizing domestic wastewater discharge, storm water discharges, and treated landfill leachate from the KPC Ward Cove Landfill. In 1999, the facility was sold to Gateway Forest Products. In 2002, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough assumed ownership and operation of the facility. EPA issued NPDES Permit AK0053384 for the domestic wastewater discharge, which became effective in 2004. Authority for the NPDES permit transferred to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 2008, and the permit was administratively continued. The storm water and landfill leachate discharges, which remain the responsibility of KPC, are authorized under Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) Permit AK0053392. In 2011, the facility was sold to Power Systems & Supplies of Alaska LLC. In 2013, Full Cycle LLC was named as the responsible party in an application for permit reissuance, and the reissued permit became effective in 2014. The permit was administratively continued in 2019, reissued in 2020, and administratively continued again in 2025.

1.2 Opportunities for Public Participation

The Department of Environmental Conservation proposed to reissue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) wastewater discharge permit to the City of Palmer for the Palmer WWTF. To ensure public, agency, and tribal notification and opportunities for participation the Department:

- identified the permit on the annual Permit Issuance Plan posted online at:
<https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/pip/>

- notified potentially affected tribes and local governments that the Department would be working on this permit via letter, fax and/or email on December 4, 2025
- posted a preliminary draft of the permit on-line for a 10-day applicant review on March 10, 2026, and notified tribes, local governments, and other agencies
- formally published public notice of the draft permit on March 27, 2026 on the Department's public notice web page
- sent email notifications via the APDES Program List Serve when the preliminary draft and draft permits were available for review

The Department did not receive any comments during the public notice period. The Department requested comments from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. EPA. The permittee waived the five-day proposed final applicant review in writing on March 28, 2026.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was issued by the Department on May 13, 2026. There were no changes from the public noticed permit.