

Department of Environmental Conservation

Response to Comments

For

**Hydrostatic and Aquifer Pump Testing (Mineral Mining & Development)
General Permit
AKG003000**

Public Noticed March 4, 2025 – April 3, 2025



July 18, 2025

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

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department or DEC) proposes to reissue an APDES general permit (permit) for Hydrostatic and Aquifer Pump Testing discharges. The permit authorizes and sets conditions on the discharge of pollutants from authorized discharges to waters of the United States (U.S.) or waters of the State or to land. To ensure protection of water quality and human health, the permit places limits on the types and amounts of pollutants that can be discharged from the authorized discharges and outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) to which they must adhere.

Hydrostatic discharges eligible for coverage under this statewide General Permit including flushing will consist of either potable or non-potable water discharges used to pressurize a tank or vessel to conduct leak detection tests. The discharged water will be free of any additives and primary contaminants that would consist of suspended solids, residual chlorine, and petroleum hydrocarbon residue present in used hydrocarbon transport pipes and storage tanks. This permit also authorizes hydrostatic testing where water is placed within a tank or vessel under atmospheric pressure and the flushing of public water supply lines and storage tanks. The flushing of water lines or tanks often occurs following a new installation where the line or tank may be super chlorinated to disinfect prior to use.

Aquifer pump testing discharges covered under this statewide General Permit are for mineral mining and exploration activities only and would consist of groundwater pump tests conducted to determine well yields, recharge rates, and hydrogeological conditions. Aquifer pump testing discharges would contain pumped groundwater from a water well discharged to either the surface or to a water body. The primary pollutants would be suspended solids, dissolved solids, and potentially naturally occurring trace metals.

1.2 Opportunities for Public Participation

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

- Identified the permit on the annual permit issuance plan (PIP) accessible online at <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/>
- Notified potentially affected tribes that the Department would be working on this permit via letter, fax, and/or email

- Posted a preliminary draft of the permit accessible online for a 10-day applicant review August 6, 2024 and notified tribes and other agencies
- Formally published public notice of the draft permit on March 4, 2025 in Anchorage Daily News and posted the public notice on the Department's public notice web page (<https://dec.alaska.gov/commish/public-notices/>) and the Alaska Online Public Notice System (<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>).
- Posted the proposed final permit on-line for a 5-day applicant review
- Sent email notifications via the APDES Program List Serve when the preliminary draft, draft, and proposed final permits were available for review.

The Department received comments from one interested party on the draft permit and supporting documents. The Department also requested comment from the Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) Fish and Game (DFG), the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This document summarizes the comments received and the justification for any action taken or not taken by DEC in response to the comments.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was adopted by the Department on July 18, 2025. There were changes from the public noticed permit. Significant changes are identified in the response to comments and/or reflected in the final fact sheet for the permit.

2.0 Permit Coverage

2.1 Comment Summary Please define “Waters of the State” as different or in addition to Waters of the U.S. or reference the applicable state law.

2.1.1 Response The permit was changed to include a definition for “waters of the State” – as defined in AS 46.03.900 (37) – “waters” includes lakes, bays, sounds, ponds, impounding reservoirs, springs, wells, rivers, streams, creeks, estuaries, marshes, inlets, straits, passages, canals, the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean, in the territorial limits of the state, and all other bodies of surface or underground water, natural or artificial, public or private, inland or coastal, fresh or salt, which are wholly or partially in or bordering the state or under the jurisdiction of the state.