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ADEC has a zero tolerance policy in regards to seafood harvested in Alaska. This means that the State of Alaska will close fisheries if there is any chance seafood could be tainted by spilled oil. The zero tolerance policy is a high bar that ensures markets for Alaska seafood remain strong. Markets are important as commercial fishing, along with sport and subsistence fishing, are primary economic drivers in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region, which encompasses north Gulf coast waters of Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Alaska Peninsula. The recent average annual commercial fishery value (first wholesale and associated processing) in the oil spill region was estimated at over \$1 billion (The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry). There were an average annual 15,000 seafood workers in the oil spill region. Fishery closures would be extremely costly to coastal Alaska communities.

The state's oil spill prevention and response regulations must also be stringent because recent research by NOAA on developing herring and salmon larvae exposed to extremely low levels of hydrocarbons develop physical abnormalities such as weak or misshapen heart muscle, which leads to reduced swimming speed and increased predation. These developmental anomalies would affect fish year-class strength and ultimately fishing seasons, exvessel value, employment and raw fish tax.

Alaska statutes and regulations were developed post Exxon Valdez to insure that a spill would not happen again, but if it did, there would be an adequate, timely and well-rehearsed response. In the 30 years since Exxon Valdez, the state, industry and the public have cooperated in developing a world-class prevention and response system to protect industries that existed before oil shipments; industries that oil spill impacted communities hope will remain economically strong after oil ceases to be shipped from Alaska.

ADEC should consider the future cost of reduced fishery value, reduced employment, lost municipal revenue and resulting disruption to the north Gulf Coast before relaxing or removing oil spill prevention and response regulations.

I urge ADEC leadership to consider the effects of weakening oil spill prevention and response regulations, and how they would impact coastal communities and their economies in the years and decades ahead.

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