

**Department of Environmental Conservation
Response to Comments**

For

**Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Sciences
(dba Alaska SeaLife Center)
APDES Permit No. AK0052566**

Public Noticed

March 21, 2025 – April 21, 2025

FINAL

May 23, 2025



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

1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

The Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Science (SAAMS) doing business as (dba) the Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) and the Stellar South Beach Facility operate as a public aquarium and Alaska's only permanent marine mammal rehabilitation facility. The center is the only permanent marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation facility in the state. The ASLC and SSBF generate and share scientific knowledge to promote understanding and stewardship of Alaska's marine ecosystems. SAAMS operates the ASLC and the adjoining SSBF in Seward, Alaska. The ASLC and SSBF are industrial facilities operating research and development in the physical, engineering, life sciences Zoo and Botanical Garden under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The ASLC facility contains seawater and freshwater systems that support two large marine mammal habitats, one seabird habitat, indoor and outdoor research pools, rescue and rehabilitation tanks and pools, and numerous aquaria.

The ASLC has not undergone major changes since the last permit cycle. The ASLC continuously discharges disinfected industrial wastewater into the Unnamed Stream via Outfall 001A at a single discharge unit. The treated wastewater is discharged at 250 feet below the surface of the water of Resurrection Bay. The Department has not authorized mixing zones for the ASLC. All water quality standards are to be met at the point of discharge.

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 January 9, 2025
- posted a preliminary draft of the permit on-line for a 10-day applicant review on March 3, 2025, and notified tribes, local governments, and other agencies
- formally published public notice of the draft permit on March 21, 2025 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. Environmental Protection Agency. The permittee waived the five day proposed final applicant review in writing on May 14, 2025.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was issued by the Department on May 23, 2025. There were no changes from the public noticed permit.