

1 **CITY OF HOMER**
2 **HOMER, ALASKA**

3 Reynolds, Burgess

4 **RESOLUTION 15-035**
5

6 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA,
7 REQUESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
8 CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN AND UPKEEP THE OIL SPILL RESPONSE
9 CACHES LOCATED IN KACHEMAK BAY, COOK INLET, AND THE
10 STATE OF ALASKA.
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12 WHEREAS, Homer and other coastal communities in Alaska depend on Alaska's
13 marine resource for sustenance, recreation, cultural traditions, and livelihood; and
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15 WHEREAS, The commercial, recreational and sport fishery is of critical importance to
16 Homer and the state, providing significant income to the City of Homer, the State of Alaska
17 and its residents through commercial and charter fisheries; and
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19 WHEREAS, The halibut stock, King salmon and other fisheries are in a critical condition
20 after a continuous stock decline over the last decade; and
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22 WHEREAS, Cook Inlet is home to an endangered population of beluga whales as well
23 as killer whales, harbor porpoises, harbor seals, and endangered Steller sea lions. It is also
24 one of the most populated and industrialized regions in Alaska, where the health and habitat
25 of these species are continuously threatened. Potential impacts from oil spills or blowouts on
26 these species, their habitats, their prey species, and on the communities that depend on
27 these species and habitats can be substantial; and
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29 WHEREAS, The extreme difficulties of responding to the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil
30 and gas blowout in the easily accessible and warm water climate of the Gulf of Mexico during
31 the summer of 2010 highlights the challenges and inadequacy of responding to such
32 incidents in the more harsh, less temperate climate and unfavorable conditions found on
33 waters in Kachemak Bay and off the coast of Alaska; and
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35 WHEREAS, Contrary to claims that such incidents are rare in Alaska, several oil well
36 blowouts have occurred on Cook Inlet rigs since 1962 and there is an average of one oil spill in
37 Cook Inlet every month; and
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39 WHEREAS, Marine waters of Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet are dominated by extreme
40 tides and temperatures, where high winds, fog and winter ice can increase the likelihood of
41 the occurrence of an oil spill and can make oil spill clean-up impossible for significant
42 portions of the year; and

43 WHEREAS, The threat from such incidents to the unique natural resources of
44 Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet is higher than ever, as the industry intends to expand
45 exploratory drilling, primarily in the waters of the northern portion of the Inlet and proposed
46 drilling anticipates sinking wells into previously untapped pre-Tertiary formations containing
47 unknown pressures; and

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49 WHEREAS, An oil spill the size of the one that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico would
50 wreak havoc on the premier commercial, subsistence and sport fishing economies of
51 Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet. Nor would the cold water environment of Kachemak Bay and
52 Cook Inlet soon recover from such an event as evidenced from the still unresolved biological
53 impacts of the Prince William Sound 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill; and

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55 WHEREAS, Alaska is one of the few states in the U.S. that continues to authorize the
56 discharge of oil and gas-related toxic effluent from drilling operations directly into marine
57 waters which exacerbates the potential consequences of blowouts and other incidents; and

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59 WHEREAS, The risks posed by increased oil and gas exploration and development in
60 Cook Inlet mandate the most stringent review and regulation of drilling rigs be conducted by
61 the State of Alaska and the U.S. Coast Guard; and

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63 WHEREAS, The U.S. Coast Guard currently provides oil-spill response equipment
64 which is pre-positioned in remote areas to help Homer and other local communities mount
65 an early response to pollution incidents in order to minimize environmental damage; and

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67 WHEREAS, In many cases, U.S. Coast Guard-owned equipment may be the first and
68 only line of defense to respond to and protect sensitive areas during the early hours of an oil
69 spill. Additionally, other equipment that may be co-located, but owned by private oil spill
70 response organizations, may not necessarily be made available to a community for use on a
71 spill that is not directly related to a client of that private organization; and

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73 WHEREAS, In the event of a large spill, such as Exxon Valdez, all available U.S. Coast
74 Guard equipment in the region will most likely be utilized to get ahead of the leading edge of
75 the spill and to protect sensitive areas; and

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77 WHEREAS, The U.S. Coast Guard is recommending decommissioning the Oil Spill
78 Response Equipment caches in Homer and the region due to funding constraints and that this
79 action will seriously threaten the unique resource values of Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet;
80 and

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82 WHEREAS, Due to the remote nature of Homer and other communities in the State
83 that currently have U.S. Coast Guard oil-spill response equipment caches it would be days

84 before response equipment could be brought in from outside the area in the event of a spill;
85 and

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87 WHEREAS, For the reasons stated herein, the U.S. Coast Guard caches in Homer and
88 other remote Alaskan communities are more critical than similar caches may be in the more
89 populated Lower 48 States.

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91 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Homer City Council requests that the U.S.
92 Coast Guard maintain the oil spill response equipment caches in Kachemak Bay, Cook Inlet,
93 and the State of Alaska.

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95 PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Homer City Council this 26th day of May, 2015.

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CITY OF HOMER

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ATTEST:

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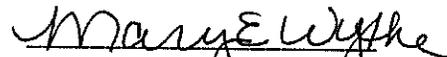
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JO JOHNSON, MMC, CITY CLERK


MARY E. WYTHE, MAYOR

Fiscal note: N/A