



CC-23-008

AGENDA ITEM REPORT

A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Supporting the Recertification of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council by the United States Coast Guard to be the Regional Citizens Advisory Council for Prince William Sound and Affected Entities by the Tanker Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. Aderhold.

Item Type: Resolution
Prepared For: Mayor and City Council
Meeting Date: 09 Jan 2023
Staff Contact: Donna Aderhold, Council Member
Department: City Council
Attachments: [Resolution 23-005](#)
[PWSRCAC Request for Support](#)

Summary Statement:

See attached request for support.

Staff Recommendation:

Adopt Resolution 22-005

Attachments:

[Resolution 23-005](#)

[PWSRCAC Request for Support](#)

**CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA**

Aderhold

RESOLUTION 23-005

AN RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA
SUPPORTING THE RECERTIFICATION OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM
SOUND REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL BY THE UNITED
STATES COAST GUARD THROUGH PWSRCAC RECERTIFICATION
DOCKET USCG-2022-0707

WHEREAS, The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) was created in 1989 and certified by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) in 1990 as mandated by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, USCG requires the recertification of a Citizens Advisory Council annually with the third year recertification requiring comments from the public; and

WHEREAS, PWSRCAC was created to provide citizens a voice in promoting the environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer, Alaska, has been a member entity of the PWSRCAC since its creation; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer and its residents experienced the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill; and

WHEREAS, PWSRCAC works with industry and regulators to ensure response readiness, evaluate risks, and propose solutions to problems that arise; and

WHEREAS, PWSRCAC maintains two weather buoys in Port Valdez to improve understanding of weather conditions that could affect marine vessel safety and movement of spilled oil that could affect environmentally sensitive sites in the area, and PWSRCAC shares data collected by the buoys with the Alaska Ocean Observing System and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

WHEREAS, PWSRCAC is monitoring efforts to address the substantial tank vent damage that occurred at the Valdez Marine Terminal in February and March 2022 and the subsequent work by Alyeska Pipeline Services Company and state and federal regulators to investigate the incident, repair the vents, and prevent recurrence; and

42 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC has asked the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
43 to take steps to ensure the secondary containment systems around crude oil storage tanks at
44 the Valdez Marine Terminal will prevent water contamination following investigations that
45 demonstrated there were cracks and holes in the liner, and PWSRCAC is contracting with a
46 geotechnical engineering expert to identify non-destructive methods to evaluate secondary
47 containment liners; and

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49 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC continues long-term environmental monitoring, initiated in 1993,
50 to monitor hydrocarbons and their effects in the region and sensitive species that could be
51 impacted by an oil spill or oil spill response efforts; and

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53 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC monitors hydrocarbon spill drills, exercises, and training events
54 as well as responses to actual incidents; and

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56 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC reviews and comments on changes to oil spill prevention and
57 response plans that cover the Valdez Marine Terminal and tankers that transit Prince William
58 Sound; and

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60 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC sponsored a study of devices used to deploy a messenger line, the
61 first step in setting up a tow line between a rescue tug and tanker in distress, and conducted
62 field trials to test various devices to develop a set of recommendations that will be shared with
63 industry and regulators; and

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65 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC commissioned the Alaska Vocational Technical Center Marine
66 Training Center to develop a ship handling course specific to Alaska with scenarios based on
67 real activities and using high-resolution data; and

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69 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC commissioned a report documenting the current state and
70 history of developing sensitive area protection strategies for the Copper River Delta and Flats
71 region; and

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73 WHEREAS, PWSRCAC has proven to be critically important in the continued
74 environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and its associated tankers, and
75 is becoming ever more important as facilities and equipment age.

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77 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Homer, Alaska supports the
78 recertification of PWSRCAC by the USCG as the Regional Citizens Advisory Council for Prince
79 William Sound and affected entities by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill.

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81 PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA THIS ___ day of
82 _____, 2023.

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CITY OF HOMER

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

YES:

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Dear Homer City Council Member Aderhold,

Each year, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is required to review the certification for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Every three years, of which this is one, a more extensive application process is conducted, followed by a public comment period.

In November, PWSRCAC submitted our application for review and the public comment period has now opened. **It is extremely important that the USCG hears from our stakeholders, partners, and the public during this process and we are hoping The City of Homer would be willing to provide a letter of support.**

The letter doesn't need to be long – just a few paragraphs emphasizing how important the work of PWSRCAC is to preventing oil spills like the Exxon Valdez and ensuring a prompt, effective cleanup should a similar event happen in the future. We have attached some sample text for your reference and encourage those using the sample language to personalize it as that will carry more weight.

Letters need to reach the USCG by **February 8, 2023, and should reference “PWSRCAC Recertification Docket USCG-2022-0707,”** which is the document number of the Coast Guard’s Federal Register notice about our recertification.

The preferred method for comments to be submitted is through the Federal Register portal: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/USCG-2022-0707-0001>. Once there, click on the blue “Comment” button under the notice title.

Comments may also be sent to:
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District (dpi)
PO Box 25517
Juneau, AK 99802
Attn: LT Benjamin Bauman
Inspections & Investigations

Or LT Benjamin Bauman at Benjamin.A.Bauman@uscg.mil.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me
Thank you for considering our request,

Regards,

Robert Archibald
PO Box 2460
Homer, AK. 99603
(907) 299-0852

Sample base text for letter of support:

The [organization] City of Homer supports recertification of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC).

The PWSRCAC was established after the Exxon Valdez oil spill and has worked diligently since then to fulfill its mission: citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

PWSRCAC works with industry and regulators to ensure response readiness, evaluate risks, and propose solutions. We hope you will recertify PWSRCAC as the citizens' advisory group for Prince William Sound.

Examples of PWSRCAC work that can be referenced:

Monitoring weather in Prince William Sound: The Council maintains two weather buoys in Port Valdez: one near the terminal, the other near the Valdez Duck Flats. These buoys will improve understanding of weather conditions in Port Valdez that could affect marine vessel safety and movement of spilled oil, as well as help with decisions regarding the timing of protecting environmentally sensitive sites in the area. The Council works with the Alaska Ocean Observing System and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's PORTS® (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) to share the data collected by these buoys.

Monitoring of snow damage to crude oil storage tank vents: The Council has been monitoring efforts to address the substantial tank vent damage that occurred at the Valdez Marine Terminal in February and March of 2022, and the subsequent work by Alyeska and state and federal regulators to investigate this incident, repair the vents, and prevent a recurrence. While no substantial injuries were associated with this event, and no fire or explosion occurred, the Council believes this event was a near miss and could have resulted in devastating consequences. The subsequent actions taken by Alyeska, and state and federal regulators, will be critical to ensure that such snow damage does not occur to the tank vents or other critical infrastructure at the terminal in the future.

Ensuring the adequacy of secondary containment liners: The steel crude oil storage tanks at the Valdez Marine Terminal are required to have secondary containment systems around them in order to protect ground and surface water from contamination in the event of an oil spill. Part of those systems is a liner that is supposed to hold spilled oil until it can be cleaned up. Investigations from 2014-2017 showed that there were cracks and holes in the liner, indicating it may not prevent water contamination if a spill occurred from one of the large crude tanks. The Council has asked the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to take steps to ensure the liner would prevent such water contamination. Additionally, the Council is contracting with a geotechnical engineering expert to identify non-destructive methods to evaluate the secondary containment liner and determine how much of the liner should be tested in order to have confidence in the results.

Environmental monitoring: PWSRCAC continues its Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Program (LTEMP), initiated in 1993, to monitor hydrocarbons and their effects in our region. The Council also supports citizen-based monitoring efforts in its region, particularly for the invasive European green crab and invasive tunicates. The Council has continued its work monitoring sensitive species in Prince William Sound that may be impacted and could use additional protection during an oil spill response. The second of three anticipated years of at-sea marine bird surveys took place in March 2022, identifying important wintertime nearshore habitat and areas of high bird density. The fourth and final year of aerial forage fish surveys was conducted in June 2022. “Forage fish” are species that are preyed on by larger predators, and include Pacific herring, Pacific sand lance, capelin, and candlefish.

Monitoring of cleanup drills and spill response: PWSRCAC devotes considerable effort to monitoring drills, exercises, and training events, as well as the responses to actual incidents, which fortunately are relatively rare in Prince William Sound. Staff often participate as a member of drill planning teams along with ADEC, USCG, and industry, and drill monitoring reports are prepared by staff and contractors. When significant spills occur, Council staff, Board members, and volunteers work with Alyeska staff to understand why they occurred and how Alyeska would prevent similar incidents in the future.

Review of Valdez Marine Terminal and Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Spill Contingency Plans: As part of our OPA 90 mandate, PWSRCAC reviews and comments on changes to oil spill prevention and response plans that cover the Valdez Marine Terminal and tankers that transit Prince William Sound. PWSRCAC participates in a workgroup consisting of industry, regulators, and stakeholders, which meets on a quarterly basis to discuss conditions of approval and improvements to the terminal plan. Additionally, PWSRCAC participates on drill and exercise design teams with industry and regulators that test response readiness. In 2022, the Council commissioned a report that documented the history of the oil discharge prevention and contingency plan for Prince William Sound oil tankers.

Testing devices used to deploy messenger lines: Passing a messenger line is the first step in setting up a tow line between a rescue tug and a tanker in distress. This can be a difficult and dangerous task. In 2021, the Council sponsored a study of devices used to deploy a messenger line. In 2022, field trials testing various devices were conducted as follow up to recommendations included in the original study. Results will be used to develop a set of recommended practices that will be shared with industry and regulators.

Course on shiphandling customized for Alaska: In 2022, the Council commissioned AVTEC Maritime Training Center in Seward, Alaska, to develop a shiphandling course specific to Alaska. This new coursework will better prepare mariners for handling vessels in Prince William Sound and Alaska. The scenarios are based on real activities and use high-resolution data previously funded by the Council. AVTEC was notified in April 2022 that both the basic and advanced shiphandling courses received approval by the U.S. Coast Guard and was subsequently add to the AVTEC schedule.

Oil spill planning for the Copper River Delta and Flats: The Council commissioned a report documenting the current state and history of developing sensitive area protection strategies (also known as geographic response strategies or GRS) for the Copper River Delta and Flats region. The goal of this project was to better understand what drove the development of these past strategies, what exercise activity and training had occurred in this region to date, and what content is still relevant today. The Council would like to see this information updated and once again referenced in Prince William Sound Area contingency planning documents.

**CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA**

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RESOLUTION 20-018

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA SUPPORTING THE RECERTIFICATION OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL BY THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO BE THE REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AND AFFECTED ENTITIES BY THE TANKER EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL.

WHEREAS, The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) was created in 1989 and certified by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) in 1990 as mandated by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, The USCG requires the recertification of a Citizens Advisory Council annually with the third year recertification requiring comments from the public; and

WHEREAS, The PWSRCAC was created to provide citizens a voice in promoting the environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer, Alaska, has been a member entity of the PWSRCAC since its creation; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer, Alaska, experienced the effects of the Tanker Exxon Valdez Oil Spill; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer, Alaska, recognizes the value in citizen input on the environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and its associated tankers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Homer, Alaska supports the recertification of the PWSRCAC as its Regional Citizens Advisory Council promoting the Environmentally Safe Operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council this 10th day of February, 2020.



CITY OF HOMER

KEN CASTNER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

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