

Seldovia (SOS) Response Team

We would like to weigh in on the recent ADEC announcement that it will review, with an eye to streamline and make less onerous, the Alaska oil spill and response standards. We represent the Seldovia (SOS) Response Team, the only community-based oil spill response organization of its type in the state. We were formed in 1990 in reply to the Exxon Valdez catastrophe, and we are still here.

Our position is that ADEC should prioritize hiring and retaining skilled personnel rather than weakening oil spill prevention and response regulations.

Under current regulations, we do not feel that there are situations in Alaska where there would be too much preparation to handle larger oil spills. Vetting, clarification, strengthening of regulation and contingency plans over the years through cooperation among ADEC, industry, and the two RCACs has led to improved regulations which should be maintained. However, recent state funding cuts to ADEC have limited the state's ability to enact these regulations. If anything, filling vacant positions and making an attractive environment for personnel to remain with career intentions should be an ADEC priority.

Simply the existence, knowledge and familiarity of strong regulations, drills, contingency plans and the like serve to maintain a level of vigilance and awareness among industry and the citizenry. Let us not erode that position. If change is an objective, it should be in the direction of strength.

In closing, please know that we support the positions and comments of both Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet Regional Citizen Advisory Councils.

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