

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
**United States  
Coast Guard**



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# News Release

## **U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency & The State of Alaska Seek Input on Dispersant Avoidance Areas off the Coast of Alaska**

KENAI, VALDEZ, KODIAK, UNALASKA, Alaska - A multi-agency team is seeking public input that will help guide the development of Dispersant Avoidance Areas within the Preauthorization Area as required by the Alaska Regional Response Team (RRT) *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska*. This plan was signed and enacted in January 2016 and is part of the Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases, also known as "The Unified Plan." Avoidance Areas will be included in Section 1 of appropriate Subarea Contingency Plans. In the event of an off-shore crude oil discharge, Avoidance Areas will guide the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) in making dispersant use decisions. More information on Avoidance Areas and how to provide public comments is available on the project website:

<http://nukadraft.wixsite.com/avoidanceareas>

The agencies will hold public meetings at four communities bordering the Preauthorization Area and review feedback until January 9, 2017. These meetings will feature presentations on the policy and science of dispersants, as follows:

Thursday, November 10, 2016  
1:30-4:30pm  
Kenai City Council Chambers  
210 Fidalgo Ave., Kenai, AK

Wednesday, November 16, 2016  
1:30-4:30 pm  
Valdez Civic Center Ballroom  
110 Clifton Ct., Valdez, AK

Tuesday, November 29, 2016  
1:30-4:30 pm  
Kodiak Borough Conference Room  
710 Mill Bay Road #121, Kodiak, AK

Thursday, December 8, 2016  
1:30- 4:30 pm  
City of Unalaska Council Chambers  
43 Raven Way, Unalaska, AK

Information on this process will also be shared with tribal representatives at a table in the one-on-one room of the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Bureau of Indian Affairs Providers Conference (<http://biaprovidersconference.com/>) November 30 – December 1, 2016 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, AK.

A technical committee of federal and State agency personnel will review public comments before recommending Avoidance Areas for FOSC approval.

#### BACKGROUND

If warranted during an oil spill, the new *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska* outlines an offshore zone where the FOSC may direct the responsible party, if applicable, to mobilize resources for chemical dispersant use, without further consultation with other federal agencies, State of Alaska, local tribes, or stakeholders. The FOSC informs federal and State agencies of this decision and seeks their input at several stages in the process, however decision-making is delegated to the FOSC.

The designation of Avoidance Areas within the Preauthorization Area informs the FOSC that decisions to use dispersants in these areas warrant additional consideration and consultation with natural resource trustees before decisions are made. Dispersant use in Avoidance Areas would be governed by the “case-by-case” process described in Tab 1, Part 1B of the *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska*, and the National Contingency Plan (40 CFR Part 300, Subpart J). This additional scrutiny ensures benefits of dispersant use outweigh the risks to the environment.



The Preauthorization Area's boundaries are based on common shipping routes followed by crude oil vessels. The Preauthorization Area's inner boundary begins 24-nautical miles offshore, corresponding with the U.S. contiguous zone, thereby excluding nearshore sensitive areas. Its southern boundary extends to the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, 200 miles offshore, and its northern boundary extends 100 nm north of the Aleutian Island chain. The Preauthorization Area continues to the shoreline at two points: Cape Suckling and Cape Sarichef.

Detailed information about the *Dispersant Use Plan* and Avoidance Areas is available online at:  
[http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/plans/uc/Annex%20F%20Appendix1\(Jan%2016\).pdf](http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/plans/uc/Annex%20F%20Appendix1(Jan%2016).pdf), and questions may be directed as follows:

Regarding the *Dispersant Use Plan* and meeting agendas:

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Regarding meeting logistics or comment submission contact:

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