



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Environmental
Conservation**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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February 15, 2017

Bob Shavelson
Cook Inletkeeper
3734 Ben Walters Lane
Homer, Alaska 99603

Dear Mr. Shavelson:

Thank you for your February 10, 2017 letter stating your concerns regarding the natural gas leak from the subsea pipeline servicing Platform A in Cook Inlet. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) appreciates your concerns about the pipeline continuing to operate and the potential for environmental impacts from the leaking natural gas (methane). Although the DEC doesn't have regulations specific to the operation of natural gas pipelines, we do have general authorities under Alaska Statute 46.03.745 and AS 46.09.020 to address the release of "hazardous wastes," which are broadly defined in AS 46.03.900(9). We are working with the federal agencies and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to evaluate potential environmental impacts from the continuing release. As you know, we might also look to authorities we have under other federal and state statutes, including the Clean Water Act, to take actions relating to the pipeline leak.

On February 10, 2017 the department issued a State Interest Letter to Hilcorp requiring them to provide the department with information responsive to these questions:

1. What alternatives to the original response plan are available to Hilcorp to mitigate the environmental effects of this release?
2. What are the added risks to public and personnel safety associated with those alternatives?
3. What environmental monitoring activities will be conducted until the pipeline is repaired to quantify the impacts associated with the release of this hazardous substance?
4. What additional monitoring activities will need to be implemented in order to assess the potential impacts to aquatic species either returning to, or relocating within Cook Inlet now and as conditions transition from winter into spring, including: potential impacts to endangered species, and key prey species relied upon by these species?
5. What other options are available?

We expect to have Hilcorp's response no later than February 20, but will be gathering what information we can in the interim. This information, together with the input we are getting from the other agencies and from our own analyses, will help us formulate the best options for addressing the leak as soon and as safely as feasible.

We are also developing a communication plan to facilitate the regular reporting of information on this matter to the public.

Should you have any further questions or concerns about this incident, please don't hesitate to reach out to our State on Scene Coordinator, Geoff Merrell at 907-269-7682.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Hartig
Commissioner