



# KODIAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

100 E. Marine Way, Suite 300, Kodiak Alaska 99615 • (907) 486-5557 • FAX: (907) 486-7605  
www.kodiak.org • Email: chamber@kodiak.org

March 31, 2010

Ms. Laurel Jennings  
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council  
441 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 500  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Comment

Dear Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce is grateful for the opportunity to add our views to the EVOS Trustee Council's deliberation on your future plans for spending the remaining oil spill settlement. We have weighed-in occasionally on your decisions over the years and have always found the Trustee Council to be highly responsive to public input. Thank you for your positive record over the twenty-one years since the oil spill so dramatically and negatively impacted the wildlife, people and economic livelihoods of Kodiak and the spill region.

The largest beneficial result for Kodiak's economy from the EVOS Restoration Plan has been in the area of land conservation throughout the archipelago, especially the Trustee Council's prioritization of salmon river conservation. This decision to conserve salmon habitat is a long term positive investment in Kodiak's commercial fishing industry which remains our number one jobs and income provider. While the threats to salmon populations are ongoing and often complex, the historic investments the Trustee Council has made in salmon watershed conservation in the oil spill region, have removed the well-known and immediate threats to salmon viability caused by human development along salmon spawning rivers and streams.

In addition to salmon habitat conservation, the Trustee Council's investment in Kodiak's Fish Tech Center has been important in broadening and deepening the quality of marine ecosystem research that can be carried out here, thereby helping to make Kodiak a world-class scientific and biological research center. This enhanced research capacity is not only beneficial to our community's desire for strengthening sustainable commercial fisheries but also supports Kodiak's significant marine research job sector.

The Trustee Council's salmon river and coastal area conservation investments have also benefited Kodiak's current and future tourism industry by making sure that the Kodiak Archipelago's remarkable natural beauty will remain attractive to tourists for generations to come, especially within the adventure destination nature tourism sector, as well as our mainstay sport fishing and hunting visitors who cherish the unique opportunities that Kodiak has always been famous for the world over.

The growth of Kodiak's visitor industry in the years since the spill has been perhaps the most visible positive change in our economy during the last two decades, including the growth of lodges, B&B's, charter boats and other destination offerings. In addition, your support for

the Alutiiq Museum in downtown Kodiak has made Kodiak's well known cultural and historic tourism offerings all the richer.

In terms of a tangible, on-going return on your investment, the Trustee Council's large land purchases in the Archipelago have helped capitalize several Kodiak-area Native corporations who in turn have issued dividends to shareholders who make purchases and business investments within Kodiak's economy. Significantly, the creation of corporate and shareholder permanent funds by the corporations who participated in EVOS restoration land conservation transactions are helping to make sure that the original oil spill settlement continues to positively impact Kodiak's economy on an annual basis and should continue to do so for decades to come.

The investments made by newly capitalized Native corporations who participated in habitat conservation show important results that benefit Kodiak's economy. One notable highlight of those Native corporation investments has been the recent addition of fiber optic cable capacity in Kodiak through the entrepreneurial investments of Old Harbor Native Corporation and Ouzinkie Native Corporation. The availability of high-speed fiber optic cable communication is helping to make Kodiak fully 'plugged in' to the global information-based economic sector which makes living in Kodiak a viable option for people and businesses who require rapid, real-time communications.

This fiber optic communications upgrade has been a significant infrastructure support asset for the Kodiak Rocket Launch Facility and Kodiak's integral involvement in the nation's vital national defense sector that also adds diversification to our local employment base.

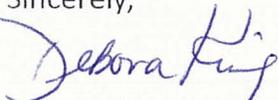
In summary, the EVOS Trustee Council's record to date has had multiple positive impacts to commercial fisheries, marine research, nature-based and cultural tourism, and the capitalization of Native corporations who continue to invest in Kodiak's economy. All of these Trustee Council investments of oil spill dollars continue to benefit Kodiak's economy and enhance our future competitiveness for attracting businesses and families who seek the unique quality of life offered here.

As to the alternatives before the Trustee Council on spending the remaining oil spill dollars, the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce urges you to continue with the priorities that have been proven to benefit Kodiak in the areas of sustainable fisheries, including salmon habitat conservation and marine research.

When prioritizing your remaining habitat investments we hope that you continue to focus on salmon spawning systems and to seek opportunities on the Kodiak road system that will meet your goals to benefit oil spill injured fish and wildlife species as well as human services such as tourism. We appreciate your willingness to work respectfully with landowners who own property that could enhance the public's access to Kodiak's natural wonders and open space on both the road system and throughout the archipelago.

Again, thank you for your impressive record of investing the Exxon settlement funds and for the open public process you have provided the communities impacted by the tragic oil spill.

Sincerely,



Debora King, Executive Director