



Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council  
4230 University Drive, Suite 220  
Anchorage, AK 99508

Attn: Public Advisory Committee (PAC)  
Kristin Carpenter, Chair

Dear Ms. Carpenter and PAC Members:

September 7, 2022

Below I have included the comments I presented to the Public Advisory Committee at its Sept 7, 2022 meeting by Zoom, as we spoke about my doing. Thank you again for the opportunity to express our interests and concerns.

Sincerely,

Laurie Daniel  
KBNERR Community Council

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Good morning. My name is Laurie Daniel, here representing the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Community Council.

The Community Council supports the Reserve's research, training and education programs and provides structure for dialog and recommendations from all stakeholders.

- We are again expressing dismay with the EVOS Trustee Council decision to discontinue funding Oceanographic Monitoring in Cook Inlet/Kachemak Bay, especially considering the proposed redirection of dedicated habitat protection funds.
- This decadal time-series of oceanographic and biological monitoring is vitally important as increasing climate variability is adversely affecting our marine resources, including many EVOS-affected species some of which have not yet recovered. Changing ocean conditions affect

salmon and shellfish that are so important to our local economy and communities, including mariculture which is of expressed interest to the Trustee Council. Further, this project collects long-term data on ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms, which the Trustees specifically mentioned as needing increased monitoring. Lastly, these data were integrated with other Trustee-funded data sets precisely to understand changes across the spill-affected region. Consequently, we lose connected information on the conditions between nearshore and ocean environments.

Reallocating funds intended for habitat protection to resource development such as mariculture only makes sense for Alaska's economy if you ignore the consequences of not having long-term oceanographic and biological monitoring data. A case in point, invasive green crabs were recently detected in southeast Alaska, heightening the need for monitoring in order to contain its spread. Not being able to conduct this monitoring could have consequences for the success of Alaska's mariculture industry.

This green crab discovery, which is likely tied to warming waters because of climate change, threatens Alaskan economies, ecosystems and long-standing ways of life. The cost and effort for this monitoring can only be achieved if done collectively via a publicly-funded program like Gulf Watch Alaska, which has been supported by EVOS funding for many years.

- Appealing to the directive laid out in Resolution 99-03-01, specifically referencing long-term research and monitoring that informs and ensures the viability and protection of marine and coastal resources, ecosystems, and habitats of the spill-area, we respectfully ask that you uphold that intention for allocating the settlement funds and, in so doing, restore funding to the Oceanographic Monitoring in Cook Inlet/Kachemak Bay project (#22120114-J), as conducted by the KBNERR in partnership with NOAA Kasitsna Bay Lab.

Without continued Trustee Council funding, we lose biological data collection in Cook Inlet, as well as data analysis and synthesis efforts with nearshore and marine components of Gulf Watch Alaska, disrupting this vital long-term ecosystem data set that is so significant to habitat protection, the economy of coastal Alaska, and the spill region in particular.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to the committee.

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