

RESOLUTION 2006-9-20

A Resolution of the Cordova District Fishermen United

Calling for the creation of a Trans-Alaska Pipeline Citizen Advisory Council to provide Oil Pipeline Operations Environmental Oversight and Monitoring.

Since 1935, CDFU has been representing the economic, political and environmental interests of Commercial Fishing Families involved in the fisheries of the Copper River Delta, the North Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound. Over 500 fishing family's own commercial salmon harvest permits for the world famous Copper River salmon fishery. These small businesses, and the local services they support, are the lifeblood of our regional economy.

Over the past three decades, these fishing families have developed the "Copper River Salmon" they harvest into an internationally recognized brand that represents quality, taste, and natural purity. Fishing families generate over \$20million annually from harvest, and another \$12million is generated from processing Copper River Salmon.

We represent these fishing families.

In 1989, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill devastated our regional fisheries. In areas of western Prince William Sound, lingering oil from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill can still be found just below surface gravel. After 17 years the oil is still highly toxic, and expected "weathering" has not taken place. Herring have not recovered from oil spill impacts, and we have no commercial herring fishery.

Over 20% of the Trans Alaska Oil Pipeline passes through the Copper River watershed. Hundreds of river, stream and wetland crossings carry hot oil at high pressure to Valdez, where it is loaded on tankers for shipment. Over 800,000 gallons a day is transported. Since construction, the pipeline has lost over a million gallons of oil through spills, the two biggest: over 670,000 gallons in 1978, and over 285,000 gallons in 2001.

If there is a break in the Trans Alaska Pipeline at a strategic river crossing in the Copper River watershed, within 30 hours of a spill, oil can be transported by river currents to the tidal sloughs and wetlands on the Copper River Delta, our premiere salmon fishery. The oil will impact sensitive habitats that nurture fish, and also support over 235 species of birds, including millions of shorebirds. There are no efforts within the pipeline response plan to look at potential impacts

from upriver spills on the lower river habitats. The 700,000-acre Copper River Delta is one of the most important wetlands systems on the west coast of the Americas, and a critical link in fisheries habitats. The absence of reference in Alyeska Pipeline Service Company plans to potential impacts from spills to this critical habitat area is an unconscionable error and omission, and is just one illustration of the disconnect between reality and oil spill planning and pipeline monitoring.

Any size spill into the Copper River and her tributaries might impact our fisheries. Any significant oil spill occurring from March through September will seriously impact our Copper River salmon fisheries, and has the potential of fouling fish, nets, and people. An oil spill that closed the world famous "Copper River Salmon" commercial fishing season, even for a few days, would destroy the reputation of Alaskas premiere branded salmon. The disaster would affect the marketplace for years, and devastate our coastal fishing economy. Even if the season were not closed, news coverage of a significant spill into any of the waters of the Copper River will have huge impacts to a market image that we have spent decades creating. The negative image would take years to overcome, and our market niche might be lost forever.

Because of the above, and for other significant reasons, the members of the board of directors of the Cordova District Fishermen United find and resolve that:

Whereas; Safe transportation of oil through pipelines requires continued diligence in oversight of operations on the part of all three interests, operators, regulators and regional stakeholders, and;

Whereas; operators interests in the Trans Alaska Pipeline System are represented by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, and;

Whereas; State and Federal regulator interests are represented by the Joint Pipeline Office, responsible for providing permitting services to pipeline operators, and;

Whereas; Regional stakeholders, and local citizens dependent on subsistence, sport, personal use and commercial fish and other important game resources at risk from pipeline spills are not formally represented in the process of oversight of pipeline operations, and

Whereas; Local citizen involvement in oil pipeline oversight should be organized, formal and funded sufficiently to be a relevant and meaningful component of the process to monitor the safe operations of oil pipeline systems, and;

Whereas; these resident interests have the most at stake relating to safe operations, as the regional lifestyles depend almost completely on productive he environments and resources upon which they depend for subsistence, sport, and commercial fishing activities are most threatened by potential oil pipeline accidents but stakeholders are not currently a component of the pipeline oversight process, and;

Whereas; Citizen involvement is already being accommodated for oil terminal and oil tanker operations through the congressionally recognized and established Regional Citizens Advisory Councils, and;

Whereas; the council process has become an integral part of safe operations, and this effective partnership has developed what is considered by many to be the safest marine oil transportation system in the world, and;

Whereas; a mechanism should be established which fosters the same type of long-term partnership between industry, government, and local communities in overseeing compliance with environmental concerns in the safe operation and continued maintenance of the Trans Alaska Oil Pipeline, and the oil transportation system that feeds it,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Cordova District Fishermen United formally requests the State of Alaska and the Federal Government take appropriate action to create and fund a Trans-Alaska Pipeline Citizen Advisory Council to provide for Pipeline Operations Environmental Oversight and Monitoring.

And be it further resolved; That the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Citizen Advisory Council that is created have a membership that reflects the diverse interests of the communities and residents within the areas exposed to the impacts expected from catastrophic, and chronic oil pipeline failures and oil spills.

Adopted this 20th day of September 2006.

Board of Directors
Cordova District Fishermen United
509 First Street | P.O. Box 939 | Cordova AK 99574
Ph: (907) 424 3447 | Fax: (907) 424 3430 | Email: cdfu@ak.net