



IMPORTANT—PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

TO ALL US TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS & COASTAL RESIDENTS

CEASE AND DESIST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR PRE-APPROVING TOXIC CHEMICAL DISPERSANTS FOR OIL AND OTHER HAZARDOUS SPILLS IN ALASKAN WATERS

(November 2013--3 years and 6 months after the Gulf of Mexico BP Macondo Oil Spill)

Alaskan and Arctic waters are critical to sustaining complex ecosystems around the world which in turn support your life which is dependent on the vary organisms in earth's oceans that produce the air we all breathe.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), the Coast Guard and other responsible agencies have done very little to stop the use of toxic chemical dispersants in our oceans. In fact, they have justified and defended the use of these chemical agents as an oil spill “cleanup” method for 25 years despite a large number of scientific studies showing that these chemicals kill and sicken ocean organisms critical to sustaining all life forms.

As of this writing, they have repeatedly tried to push through approvals for *Pre-authorization* status for the use of these toxic chemicals along every coastline in America -- the current push being in Alaskan and Arctic waters.

Pre-authorization is a key word defined in U.S. Coast Guard manuals as authorizing the use of chemical dispersants to be applied to an oil spill **without further approval required** by other federal or state agencies. This means that a Coast Guard official put in charge of a given oil spill response is not answerable to anyone when deciding to use such agents.

This is Unacceptable!

FORWARD THIS MESSAGE TO
ALL FEDERAL AGENCY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM
AND YOUR NETWORKS

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL OIL SPILL RESPONSE PROFESSIONALS

The Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization along with the Change Oil Spill Response Global Alliance, a growing number of Native American Tribes, Citizen's Coalitions, government officials and public throughout the world have a CLEAR position on Chemical Dispersants = **don't use them.**

That said, we also realize that when suggesting that something NOT BE DONE, there should also be a SOLUTION or remedy put in its place as opposed to just saying '***no, we object***'.

There **is** technology in existence today that if used to replace dispersants would not only completely remediate an oil spill but restore ecosystems suffering from the long term effects.

It appears the entire [National Response Team](#) (NRT) network has lost sight of the problem sought to be solved when there is an oil or hazardous material spill of which, chemical dispersants **do not** solve.

So what is the PROBLEM to be solved when there is oil or other hazardous substance spill?

Of greatest importance in oil spill response is how to rapidly reduce the associated toxins and their threat to sensitive ecosystems, sea life, sea mammals, fisheries and human health.

The PROBLEM with an oil spill is the fact that it contains approx 50,000 compounds, many of which are toxic to living organisms.

How is this threat removed by the use of chemical dispersants that contain some of these same toxic compounds?

Inaccurate, outdated science is being used to legitimize chemical dispersant use and your government Natural Resource Trustees are **focused on the wrong problem**-- how to de-goo, dilute, sink and disperse the oil before it reaches shorelines and sensitive habits rather than remove it completely from the water column.

This has resulted in permitting and advocating an environmentally destructive 'solution' that has been part of the National Contingency Plan and industry spill countermeasure plan tool kits for oil and hazardous spills for more than two decades.

Oil industry and shipping companies may benefit from the dispersing and sinking methods, but people and marine life do not!

Current case in point: The **Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT)** officials working to gain preauthorization approval have expressed in their proposed Alaska Oil Dispersants Guidelines the following:

'there are many uncertainties regarding the efficacy [effectiveness] and toxicity of dispersant use'

Section 1.2 "Background" (para 2 & 3) 'Oil spill dispersants do not actually reduce the total amount of oil in the environment. Rather, they may change the inherent characteristics of the dispersed oil, thereby changing the oil's transport, fate, and potential effects'.

Hence, the fundamental question becomes: Why are the Environmental Protection Agency, Coast Guard and other federal officials pushing through a plan advocating the use of chemical dispersants as a tool when there are so many **uncertainties**?

There are ample scientific studies (post Exxon Valdez and now post BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico), which indicate the efficacy of chemical dispersants are at best questionable and from our extensive reviews represent a serious threat to ocean ecosystems and very high health risks to the smallest micro-organisms up through to mammals in the food web and now documented grave risks and impacts to the health of human beings.

The Alaska Unified Plan must consist of known effective measures for dealing with and removing oil or other hazardous spills across the diversified environmental regions of Alaska that do not damage fisheries, the resources or the people subsisting there and the public's health. ARRT's current plan would result in only a fraction of a toxic spill being cleaned up with long term devastating consequences.

All concerned U.S. Federal Government agencies and members of the ARRT would better serve the public if they employed current science and the best scientific solutions to oils spills in its spill response plans and engaged with all sectors to find and use better technology that does not put the arctic environment and resources, wildlife and people in danger.

If a spill is covered up by using chemical dispersants, there will be no necessity or will to invest in finding response methodology that will resolve the toxicity problems associated with an oil or other chemical spill. We say:

THE NRT MUST DISCONTINUE EFFORTS TO GAIN PRE-AUTHORIZATION FOR DISPERSANT AGENT USE IN ALASKAN WATERS AND WITHDRAW PRE-AUTHORIZATION ALREADY PUT IN PLACE ALONG ALL U.S. COASTLINES.

WE URGE YOU INVEST TIME AND PUBLIC RESOURCES INTO FINDING EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR:

- a) The devastating effects of existing toxic spills that are not being effectively addressed in Alaska, the Gulf of Mexico or elsewhere in the US by using dispersants.
- b) Addressing the threat of a major oil spill or chemical accident by tanker vessels in Arctic waters which would be an international nightmare to deal with regardless of WHERE it spills due to the unique ICE and oceanographic conditions.
- c) Hold industry stakeholders to higher standards in spill countermeasure plans. Their current plans remediate less than 25% of any hazardous spill – which is an unacceptable plan. Federal agencies need to stop approving and endorsing such plans!

The Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization along with the Change Oil Spill Response Global Alliance have found better technology for addressing the toxicity and other problems oil spills cause—Study up on these solutions now at:

www.protectmarinelifenow.org/solutions

Let's work TOGETHER!