



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Environmental Conservation

DIVISION OF WATER  
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program

PO Box 111800  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1800  
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May 6, 2024

Subject: **Early notification** of wastewater discharge permit for IPOP, LLC

Dear Local and Tribal Government Leaders:

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is currently drafting an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) individual permit (no permit number has been assigned yet) for the IPOP, LLC. This permit would regulate wastewater discharges into Bonanza Channel near Nome.

### Background information

The proposed project consists of a multi-year dredging project mining for placer gold in Bonanza Channel estuary. As proposed, the project involves suction dredging 24 hours per day over a five-year period. About 4.5 million cubic yards (CY) of material will be processed (washed) for gold extraction, the dredged channel will be concurrently reclaimed to its original bathymetry, and excess processed materials will be disposed at adjacent sites. The proponent will surround the entire operation with a silt curtain to contain any sediment or turbidity generated.

The project site is located approximately 25 miles east of Nome, Alaska within the Bonanza Channel estuary and at approximately Mile Post 28.5 along the Nome-Council Road, between approximately Latitude 64.5044°N., Longitude 164.6169°W., on the western limit and Latitude 64.52866°N., and Longitude 164.5447°W. on the eastern limit.

This APDES individual permit is issued as a condition of the DEC 401 Certification on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) individual permit #P0A-2018-00123, issued on March 20, 2024, covering discharges of fill under section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

### Description of discharge

The proposed permit covers discharges from the silt curtain during entry and exit of vessels from the area otherwise contained by the silt curtain. The area contained by the silt curtain is classified as treatment works, according to Alaska Statutes, and activities inside it are covered under USACE permit #P0A-2018-00123. Escaping discharge during entry or exit of vessels through a double doored system may contain elevated levels of sediment or turbidity. To protect water quality, the proposed permit sets conditions and limitations on the discharge and requires the operator to implement specific best management practices (BMPs). Limitations include restrictions on sediment and turbidity. BMPs include operational practices to reduce turbidity and protocols for management of the silt curtain. The proposed permit includes a mixing zone outside the silt curtain's double door access system.

**Opportunities for tribal and local government participation in this permitting decision**

DEC recognizes rural Alaska has unique needs and considerations with regard to wastewater discharges and strives to issue permits that reflect a full understanding of local conditions. This letter is intended as an **early notice** to assist you in determining whether your community may be affected and inform you of the opportunity to provide traditional, cultural, or other local information that DEC should consider when drafting this APDES permit. DEC would like to know how your area and resources may be affected by this permitting action.

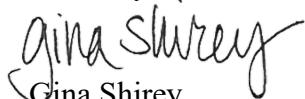
**Next steps**

After the permit is drafted, there may be a **10 day applicant review period** of the preliminary draft permit unless waived by the applicant. Following the applicant review period, there will be a minimum of a **30 day public review and comment period**. I will provide a copy of the public notice for the permit by mail or e-mail at the start of the public comment period. After the public review and comment period, there may be a **5 day applicant review period** of the final draft permit before the permit is issued unless waived by the applicant.

If requested, I can also provide notice of the preliminary draft and proposed final applicant review periods unless waived by the applicant. Due to the short timeframes for those reviews, notices are sent by email or fax. Please provide an e-mail address or fax number if you would like to receive notices for the preliminary draft and proposed final applicant review periods.

If you would like more information or would like to provide DEC with information about this permit, please do not hesitate to contact me at (907) 465-5272 or at [gina.shirey@alaska.gov](mailto:gina.shirey@alaska.gov). For technical questions about the permit, you may also directly contact the permit writer, Allan Nakanishi, at (907) 269-4028 or at [allan.nakanishi@alaska.gov](mailto:allan.nakanishi@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Gina Shirey

Local and Tribal Government Coordinator

Enclosure:      Figure 1: Area Vicinity Map  
                    Tribal Involvement in the Permitting Process postcard

cc:      Potentially Affected Local Governments  
            Potentially Affected Federally-recognized Indian Tribes