



September 6, 2022

Subject: **Early notification** of wastewater discharge permit for Aquaculture Facilities in Alaska

Dear Local and Tribal Government Leaders:

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposes to reissue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) general permit (AKG130000) for Aquaculture Facilities in Alaska. This permit would regulate wastewater discharges into state waters.

Background information

Aquaculture is the rearing or cultivation of aquatic organisms, such as fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants, under controlled conditions in concentrated aquatic animal production (CAAP) facilities. CAAP facilities are hatcheries, fish farms, or other facilities that contain, grow, or hold cold or warm water fish or aquatic animals in ponds, raceways, or other structures. Alaska's modern hatchery program was developed to increase salmon abundance and supplement sustainable natural production while protecting wild stocks. Currently, a total of 28 hatcheries are operating under the AKG130000 general permit throughout Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Southeast regions of the state. The Aquaculture Facilities in Alaska general permit applies to all commercial and non-commercial CAAP facilities in Alaska that produce, hold, or contain 20,000 pounds or more of aquatic animals per year in ponds, raceways, or other similar structures; feed 5,000 pounds or more of food during a calendar month; and discharge at least 30 days per year.

Description of discharge

Aquaculture facilities may discharge a variety of pollutants generated from uneaten feed, fish feces, fish carcasses, cleaning chemicals, and medications. The main pollutants of concern include total suspended solids (TSS), settleable solids (SS), pH, ammonia, dissolved oxygen (DO), and total residual chlorine (TRC). These pollutants have the potential to contribute to a number of adverse water quality impacts including increased levels of turbidity and residues and low dissolved oxygen.

General Permit additional information

Any operator that meets the eligibility requirements of the general permit will be authorized to discharge after filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) with DEC so long as all conditions of the permit are met. The public has an opportunity to comment and provide information for this general permit; however, public notice will not be issued for individual NOIs submitted by qualified facilities. The general permit will expire five years after the effective date.

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 as part of this permit reissuance. DEC would like to know how your area and resources may be affected by this permitting action.

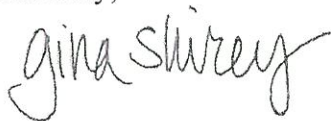
Next steps

After the permit is drafted, there will be a **10 day applicant review period** of the preliminary draft permit. 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 will be a **5 day applicant review period** of the final draft permit before the permit is issued.

If requested, I can also provide notice of the preliminary draft and proposed final applicant review periods. 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.

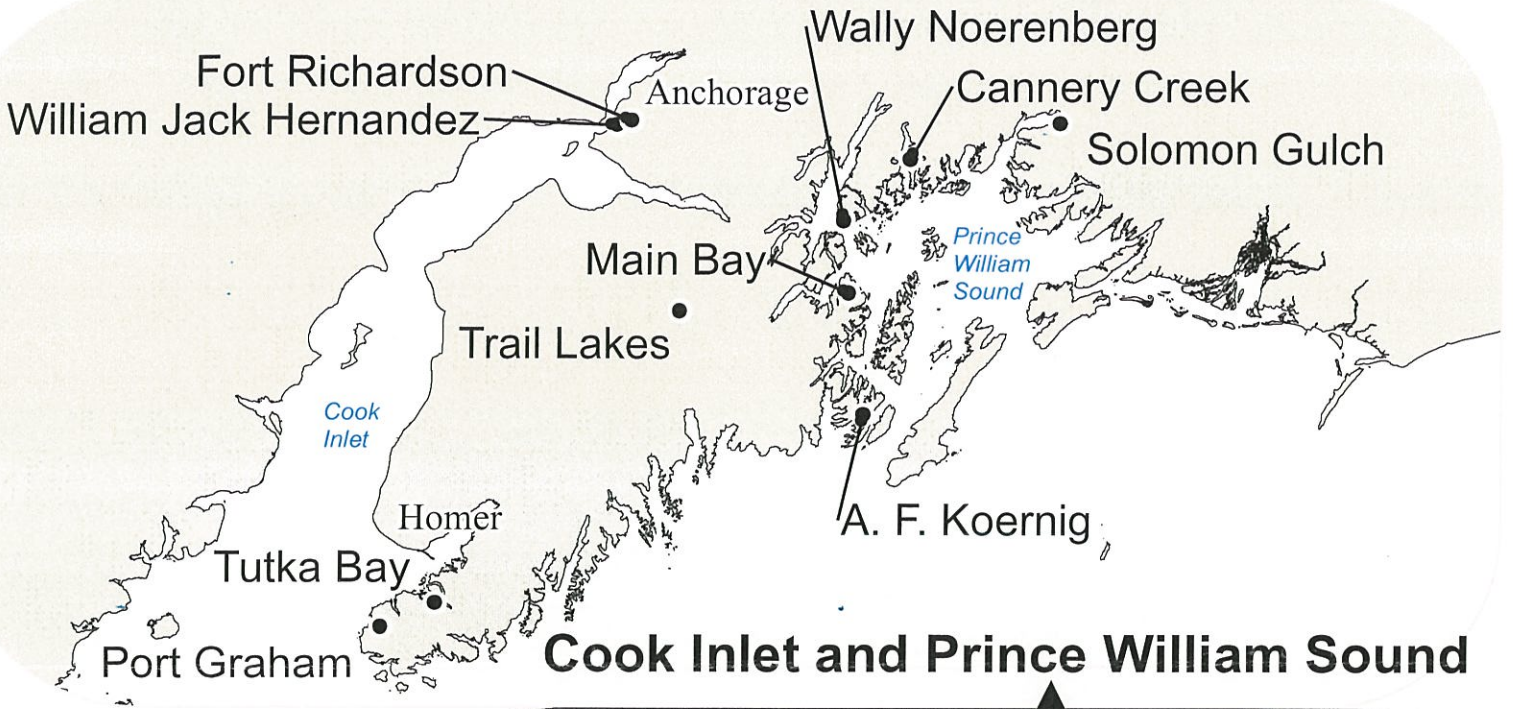
If you would like more information or would like to provide DEC with information about this permit, please do not hesitate to contact me at (907) 465-5272 or at gina.shirey@alaska.gov. For technical questions about the permit, you may also directly contact the permit writer, Anne Weaver, at (907) 269-7483 or at anne.weaver@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

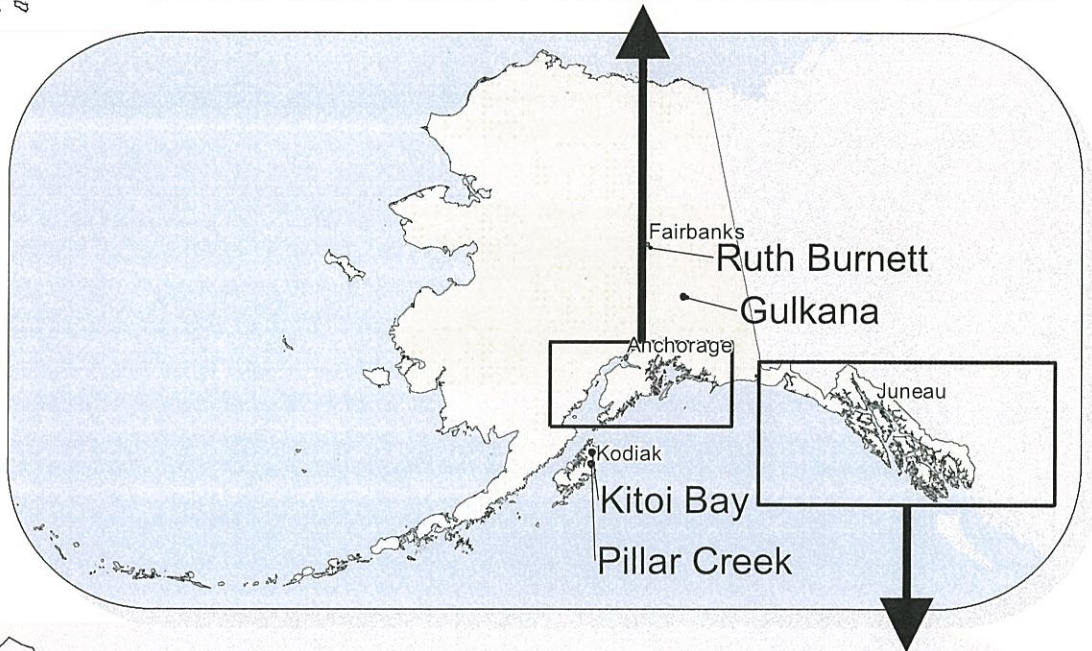


Gina Shirey
Local and Tribal Government Coordinator

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



Locations of Alaska Hatcheries



Southeast

