



THE STATE  
of ALASKA  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Environmental Conservation

DIVISION OF WATER  
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program

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January 31, 2024

Subject: **Early notification** of wastewater discharge permit for AKG523000 Offshore Seafood Processors in Alaska General Permit

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 (AKG523000) for the Offshore Seafood Processors in Alaska. This permit would regulate wastewater discharges Statewide.

### **Background information**

The permit authorizes and sets conditions on the discharge of pollutants from operators of seafood processing vessels in Alaska discharging between shore (0.0 nautical miles (nm) at mean lower low water (MLLW)) to 3.0 nm from shore as delineated by MLLW or baseline, whichever is greater. In order to ensure protection of water quality and human health, the permit places limits on the types and amounts of pollutants that can be discharged from the seafood processors and outlines best management practices to which the seafood processors must adhere.

The Offshore Seafood GP authorizes seafood processing waste discharges to navigable waters of the U.S. located in the State of Alaska's jurisdiction, except in designated Excluded Areas. These Excluded Areas include protected water resources such as national parks, national wildlife refuges, critical habitat areas, and sea lion haul outs. The Offshore Seafood GP also includes conditions applicable to "Excluded Area" discharges to critical habitat areas, certain waters near specified federal and state-owned locations, at-risk waters, and degraded water bodies. Further, the Offshore Seafood GP establishes buffer zones around many of the Excluded Areas. DEC also proposes to continue the 2012 permit modification approved to allow coverage under the Offshore Seafood GP for the discharge of pollutants to the Excluded Areas, in accordance with the conditions, monitoring requirements, and effluent limitations of the Offshore Seafood GP.

### **Description of discharge**

The pollutants of concern associated with seafood processing and ground fish waste discharges include residues, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), total suspended solids (TSS), and non-petroleum oil and grease (polar). These pollutants result from the waste solids (shell, bones, skin, scales, flesh, and organs), blood, body fluids, slime, stickwater, and oils and fats from cooking and rendering operations. Ammonia or chlorine may also be present intermittently. Other regulated parameters include color, turbidity, pH, and temperature.

The permit also authorizes the discharge of cooling water, boiler water, freshwater pressure relief water, refrigeration condensate, refrigerated seawater, cooking water, scrubber water, catch transfer water, and live tank water. Pollutants in these discharge streams may include TSS, BOD, fecal coliform, non-petroleum oil and grease (polar), pH, and temperature.

#### **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.

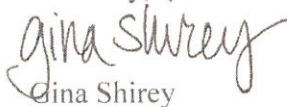
#### **Next steps**

After the permit is drafted, there may 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 may 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](mailto:gina.shirey@alaska.gov). For technical questions about the permit, you may also directly contact the permit writer, Jackie Ebert, at (907) 723-8186 or at [jackie.ebert@alaska.gov](mailto:jackie.ebert@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Gina Shirey  
Local and Tribal Government Coordinator

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