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U.S. Department
of Transportation
United States
Coast Guard



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U.S. Coast Guard

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U.S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL J. WILLIAM KIME

ON THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND OIL SPILL

BEFORE THE

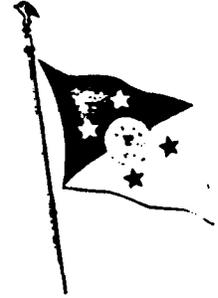
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 24, 1993



Admiral J. William Kime Commandant United States Coast Guard



Admiral J. William Kime became the 19th Commandant of the Coast Guard on 31 May, 1990. He was nominated to that position while serving as Commander of the Eleventh Coast Guard District in Long Beach, California.

During that time he also served as the commander of the Central California Sector of the U.S. Maritime Defense Zone, Pacific; and as Coordinator of the Pacific Region of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Admiral Kime has served in various assignments both afloat and ashore. He has headed delegations to both the Marine Safety Committee and the Marine Environmental Protection Committee at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London and was in charge of the structural design of the Coast Guard's Polar Star class icebreakers. He has commanded the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Baltimore, and was in charge of all Coast Guard drug interdiction operations in the Caribbean in the early 80's. Since his promotion to flag rank in 1984, he has headed the Coast Guard Office of Marine Safety, Security, and Environmental Protection in addition to commanding the Eleventh District in California.



Admiral Kime is a graduate of Baltimore City College, the Coast Guard Academy, M.I.T., the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and a registered Professional Engineer. In October of 1992 Admiral Kime was elected to a two year term as president of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (SNAME). He is the first Coast Guard officer to serve in this distinguished post. Admiral Kime is also a SNAME Fellow and is the 1990 recipient of the SNAME Vice Admiral "Jerry" Land Medal.

The Commandant's awards include the Transportation Distinguished Service Medal, the Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit and many others.

Admiral Kime, his wife Val and son James live in Chevy Chase, Md.

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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to bring you up to date on the current state of Coast Guard activities related to Prince William Sound, four years after the tragic EXXON VALDEZ oil spill. Specifically, I would like to address what lessons we have learned from this spill and what we have done to improve the protection of Prince William Sound. As might be expected, lessons were learned or reinforced in areas of prevention, preparedness and response. I will deal with each of these broad categories separately.

SPILL PREVENTION

One of the most important lessons learned from the EXXON VALDEZ incident is that prevention is our best environmental protection tool. Once oil is spilled in the water, the battle is always an uphill one. Since the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill, the Coast Guard has been aggressively implementing various pollution prevention measures within Prince William Sound.

Preventive efforts have focused on exercising greater control over vessel movements and closer oversight of vessel operations. Specifically, the Coast Guard has:

- Increased Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) oversight by providing an additional watchstander on each watch, installing an additional radar band to enhance coverage during adverse weather, and extending the area of coverage beyond Bligh Reef, where EXXON VALDEZ ran aground.

- Implemented speed, weather and ice restrictions on vessel operations. Vessels may not exceed six knots speed of advance in Valdez Narrows. During winds of 30-40 knots, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port requires an additional escort vessel. When winds are above 40 knots, transits are prohibited, and when ice encroaches the traffic lanes, vessels' movements are restricted.

- Undertaken a Critical Area Inspection Program (CAIP) which includes close inspection of the tankers engaged in the Valdez trade to ensure timely identification and repair of hull defects.

- In addition to the buoy off Bligh Reef, added a larger, more visible, fixed lighted tower to make the reef more identifiable to mariners.

- Initiated the installation of an Automated Dependence Surveillance System (ADSS), a state of the art navigational system which utilizes precise satellite navigation information relayed from tankers calling on Valdez, to the Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service. This system will greatly extend the accuracy and range of the Coast Guard's VTS and allow closer oversight of tanker movements.

- Alyeska has begun drug and alcohol screening and testing of tanker captains and crews prior to sailing, to ensure they are fit for duty.

On the national level, another prevention project that is ongoing within the Coast Guard is the study of the need for tug escorts for certain type tankers. The purpose of escort tugs is primarily to provide a backup in the event of mechanical problems such as the motor vessel BRAER encountered in the Shetland Islands. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) currently requires that single hull tankers greater than 5000 gross tons, on specific waters within the states of Washington and Alaska, be escorted by at least two towing vessels. OPA 90 also requires the Coast Guard to devise tanker navigation regulations which govern the use of auto pilots, and which establish minimum bridge and engine room manning levels. A final rule regarding these rulemakings is being drafted. These national rules will provide clear benefits to Prince William Sound.

Another set of national prevention measures concentrates on improving the qualifications and fitness of merchant vessel personnel. These include:

- In addition to drug testing requirements already in place, applicants for Coast Guard licenses and merchant mariner's documents must indicate if they have been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) during the past five years, and a future provision will require that all Coast Guard license applicants undergo a National Driver Register check. The applications of persons with one or more DUI convictions will be carefully evaluated in accordance with established criteria prior to a decision being made on license issuance or renewal.

- To reduce the role of crew fatigue, tank vessel manning regulations have been revised to prohibit a licensed individual or seaman from working more than 15 hours in any 24-hour period or more than 36 hours in any 72-hour period.

Spill prevention through ship design is another area of research and regulation resulting from the EXXON VALDEZ grounding. Double hulls and other new designs and technologies will bring us margins of environmental protection that are orders of magnitude greater than we knew a few short years ago. OPA 90 requires double hulls for new tankers for which a contract has been placed on or after June 30, 1990 and delivered under that contract on or after January 1, 1994. We have issued an interim final rule implementing this requirement and are presently working to issue a final rule. The Act also prohibits vessels contracted before June 30, 1990, and delivered before January 1, 1994 from operating in the navigable waters of the U.S. or the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) unless they have double hulls. We also drafted proposed rules for structural and operational measures to reduce oil spills from single hull vessels during the interim period they can continue to operate.

These are some of the most important initiatives we have undertaken to reduce the likelihood of accidents in Prince William Sound and other environmentally-sensitive areas. I am confident that the spill prevention regime now in place in Prince William Sound is far more effective than in 1989 and will

continue to improve as programs under development come into force.

PREPAREDNESS

Another lesson learned from the EXXON VALDEZ tragedy is the importance of preplanned organization, teamwork and communication. The public, state and local government, the marine industry, and the Federal government (including the Coast Guard), have undertaken considerable effort in the Prince William Sound area, and throughout the United States, to improve preparedness to undertake oil spill response actions should a spill occur. We have come a long way over the past four years and are much better prepared to respond to a major oil spill now than we were in 1989.

Spill response planning and periodic exercise of the response plan are critical to Coast Guard and industry preparedness. The Marine Safety Office in Valdez actively participates in and monitors Alyeska's and the shipping companies' performance during oil spill exercises. The Coast Guard monitors weekly spill exercises and fully participates with the State of Alaska and other agencies during the semiannual large scale spill exercises which have involved over 600 industry and agency personnel and 50 vessels. During these exercises, the Coast Guard partially activates its District Response Group and deploys Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, spill response equipment and response personnel to augment the response and supervise the industry's response.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizen's Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) has worked closely with the Coast Guard and marine industry to continually improve the safety of current shipping operations. The PWSRCAC has:

- Actively participated in and monitored oil spill exercises and is involved in the preparation of joint evaluations of exercises. It has been extremely helpful in the team development of the drill scenarios, problem introduction and other control issues.

- Served as the catalyst for conducting a comprehensive Disabled Tanker Towing Study to determine the appropriate towing equipment, safest speed of tankers, etc. to ensure disabled tankers can be brought under control before grounding.

- Continuously reviewed Coast Guard operations and commercial shipping activities to identify areas for improvement.

- Actively participated in the review of oil spill prevention and contingency plans with our Coast Guard, our Marine Safety Office in Valdez, and the industry.

Of equal, if not greater, importance are the PWSRCAC and marine industry's preparedness efforts to improve distressed vessel assistance in Prince William Sound. Alyeska's SERV'S (Ship Escort and Response Vessels System) has provided for the escort of all laden tankers from Valdez to the open sea. A seagoing tug and an Escort Response Vessel accompany laden tankers to provide immediate assistance should a tanker become disabled.

Other preparedness programs the Coast Guard is actively pursuing nationwide will also benefit Prince William Sound. These include:

- The On-Scene Coordinators Emergency Management Course: This course is designed for Federal and State on-scene coordinators (OSCs) and involves coordinating the concerns, demands, rights and responsibilities of the diverse group of public, private and media interests that come together in response to a major pollution incident. Its purpose is to make On-Scene Coordinators more efficient managers.

- The Federal Response Plan: The Coast Guard has been working closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in rewriting sections of this plan, specifically Emergency Support Function #10 (Hazardous Materials Annex). The intent is to create a smooth transition and interaction between the emergency functions described in this FEMA document and those found in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

- Marine Environmental Protection Industry Training: This program will provide Coast Guard personnel an opportunity to learn more about the management of major oil spill response organizations, and how coastal states are working to develop legislation to protect their waters and shorelines. This program will better enhance the working relationships between the Coast Guard, industry and the states, and improve our understanding of their operations.

- District Response Groups/District Response Advisory Teams: Title IV of OPA 90 requires the formation of a District Response Group (DRG) and a District Response Advisory Team (DRAT) within each Coast Guard District. The DRG provides a framework within which Coast Guard districts will organize their response operations. It consists of all Coast Guard units, personnel, and equipment within a district's geographic boundary; all prepositioned response equipment strategically located in the district; and a DRAT composed of three to six personnel billets, added to the district Marine Safety Division staff. The DRAT is the nucleus of the DRG and will serve as the coordinating body for the DRG and be of special value as a readily-accessible, easily-deployable team that can be dispatched to provide support for a Federal On-Scene Coordinator. It is specifically dedicated to enhancing pollution response preparedness at the port/district level, and providing expert assistance to the OSC during response operations. Within the Seventeenth Coast Guard District, a DRAT has been established at Juneau, Alaska. This DRAT consists of four specialized billets which are there to provide preparedness and response coordination for Prince William Sound, or other sites in Alaska.

- Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP): The Coast Guard is developing a Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP), which will establish guidelines to be used by the entire response community (Industry and the Federal, State and local governments) for the various exercises required by OPA 90. We will be holding a series of four workshops, beginning on

April 2, 1993, to obtain input from the response community to help develop the exercise guidelines. The workshops will address four major issues associated with the exercise program -- scheduling and execution of the exercises, "credit" for exercise participation, evaluation of the exercises, and a means to transmit information related to the exercises such as "lessons learned." This program will provide a familiarity among the responsible agencies that was lacking in 1989.

- Area Committees & Area Contingency Plans: In response to OPA 90, Area Committees are now being formed throughout the country to better prepare for a coordinated response to oil and hazardous substance spills. The Area Committees are required to develop Area Contingency Plans for their areas. These plans will detail information on a "community" response to an oil or hazardous substance spill in the area. The "community" response means that the Federal, State and local governments in the area will combine resources to ensure an efficient, effective and coordinated response. The Area Contingency Plans will be developed by July 1, 1993. The Area Plan concept envisioned by OPA 90 and now being institutionalized in our field operations, will be the driving force in generating a team approach to response that was lacking at EXXON VALDEZ.

Also, on a national level, interim final rules have been published requiring tank vessels and facilities handling oil in bulk to develop, submit for approval, and carry response plans. The deadline for submission was February 18, 1993, and vessels or

facilities that did not submit a response plan by then may not handle, store, or transport oil within the waters of the United States. Thus far, the response from industry has been very positive with the number of vessels and facility plans received being close to the total number of plans anticipated. We are already in the process of conducting preliminary reviews of these plans. Once fully in place on August 18, 1993, the requirements for tanker and facility owners to ensure the availability of private equipment necessary to respond to a "worst-case" spill will greatly enhance our ability to get sufficient equipment on-scene quickly.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Another lesson of EXXON VALDEZ was that the initiation of a rapid response to a large scale oil spill becomes essential to minimize environmental damages. This, of course, requires maintaining an inventory of spill response equipment appropriate to the risk, which must be available to respond as quickly as possible.

RESPONSE EQUIPMENT

Most of the response equipment obtained by the Coast Guard is located outside of Prince William Sound to address spills from freight vessels, passenger ships and fishing vessels which are not required to have spill response resources pre-identified and which are the source of most spills in Alaska. Since the EXXON VALDEZ spill, we have accumulated a wide range of spill response equipment to enhance the Coast Guard's spill response capability

in Alaska. Approximately 26,000 feet of containment boom has been pre-positioned at nine locations around the state of Alaska. The equipment is co-located with Coast Guard air stations, vessels and Marine Safety Offices to leverage our resources and ensure rapid response to spills. Pacific Strike Team oil lightering equipment (pumps, hoses and power packs), dracones (portable barges) and Open Water Oil Containment Recovery System (OWOCRS) have been pre-positioned at Coast Guard Support Center Kodiak to allow rapid mobilization of this equipment via Coast Guard aircraft or vessels stationed in Kodiak, to spills anywhere in Alaska.

Alyeska has accumulated the most extensive spill response equipment inventory in the world and they now routinely exercise it. Two response vessels are pre-staged outside of Valdez in remote areas of Prince William Sound along the tankers' trackline to ensure immediate response to spills. These vessels are equipped with lightering equipment to provide for immediate removal of oil from damaged tanks, as well as booms and skimmers to recover oil from the water. Alyeska has amassed over 200,000 feet of containment boom, 50 response vessels and oil skimmers with a cumulative nameplate recovery rate of 44,000 barrels per hour. The response equipment includes, but is not limited to;

- Five 210-foot Emergency Response Vessels (ERVS), each of which are equipped with oil skimmers, 4,500 feet of boom and 3,500 barrels of storage.

- One 125-foot self propelled dynamic inclined plane skimming vessel, VALDEZ STAR, which has a 1,000-barrel per hour recovery rate.

- Five oil barges dedicated to spill response. Four of these are equipped with (two) Transrec 350 skimmers which have 2,100 barrels per hour recovery rate. The total oil capacity of these barges is 490,000 barrels.

- Four seagoing tug boats equipped with dispersant spraying capability and large capacity fire monitors.

- Oil containment boom and mooring buoys pre-staged at Prince William Sound's five fish hatcheries to allow immediate deployment of the same by local fishing vessels in the event of a spill.

- An extensive network of fishing vessels, whose crews have been trained by Alyeska, are employed in exercises to place containment boom, assist the Escort Response Vessels' skimming operations, and provide logistics support.

- Response equipment, including sorbents, boom and skimmers are carried on one of the two vessels that escort all laden tankers in Prince William Sound. In addition, a dedicated crew highly trained in the use of the equipment are on board each vessel. Alyeska has also contracted with a core group of local fishermen who regularly train with Alyeska personnel and are required to participate in drills as a condition of their contract. Literally hundreds of other fishing boats are also pre-contracted to be called upon in the case of an emergency.

A Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) has been procured by the Coast Guard and is planned to be delivered to Alaska in April. This system includes skimmers, containment boom and portable tankage, suitable for deployment on Coast Guard cutters and other vessels of opportunity. This equipment will be staged in Anchorage for spill responses.

OPA 90 requires the periodic inspection of containment booms, skimmers, vessels and other major equipment used to remove discharges. A program has been developed by the Coast Guard's National Strike Force Coordination Center to classify contractor response capability, and, in conjunction with this classification, periodically inspect contractor response equipment to ensure its operational availability. In addition, OPA 90 requires vessels operating on the navigable waters of the United States and carrying oil in bulk as cargo to carry appropriate removal equipment that employs the best technology economically feasible and that is compatible with the safe operation of the vessel. We are currently in the midst of a rulemaking on this subject. Once in place, it will provide further protection for vessels in Prince William Sound and elsewhere.

Having the right equipment is only one piece of the response puzzle. The EXXON VALDEZ spill reinforced that industry, state and Coast Guard response efforts need to be coordinated from a central command area to ensure all activities complement each

other. Much has been accomplished in this area. The Coast Guard is in the process of developing a "Spill of National Significance" organizational and management structure that would be implemented in the event of a catastrophic spill incident. This structure is near completion and will be tested during a major pollution exercise to be held in Anchorage in September, 1993. In addition, the Coast Guard actively participates in all State and industry run exercises that are held throughout the State of Alaska.

A final lesson of EXXON VALDEZ was that we must consider the use of every available response technique, including mechanical cleanup, in-situ burning and chemical countermeasures. The Coast Guard, along with the Regional Response Team and industry has been working closely in developing procedures for the pre-authorization and use of dispersants, as well as other chemical countermeasures such as bio-remediation. To push the response envelope further, the Coast Guard, along with the State of Alaska, Alaska Clean Seas Cleanup Co-operative, and many others are negotiating with Russia to conduct an offshore in-situ test burn of spilled oil in order to determine the effectiveness and environmental soundness of this as a spill response technique. This would be the first major test of burning oil in an offshore environment in which the Coast Guard, along with the State of Alaska, will have been active participants.

In summary, much has been done in Prince William Sound by the public, as represented by the Prince William Sound RCAC, the State of Alaska, the marine industry, and the Coast Guard to prevent oil spills and improve oil spill response, should a spill occur. The changes are dramatic. Additional improvements are being made through regular exercises, joint State, RCAC, Coast Guard and industry meetings which identify areas where improvement can be realized, and the application of new technology such as Automated Dependence Surveillance System.

Clearly, our work is not yet complete, but we have gained experience and gleaned knowledge from the events that followed March 24, 1989. I am convinced we have made great strides toward assuring that history does not repeat itself in Prince William Sound.

