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Press Release

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Assumes Wastewater Discharge Permitting from the Environmental Protection Agency

(JUNEAU, AK) –The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has assumed permitting authority for wastewater discharges from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Under the Clean Water Act, EPA had been the permitting authority to issue wastewater discharge permits in Alaska. With the final transfer of authority, DEC assumes full authority to administer the wastewater discharge permitting and compliance program in Alaska.

In 2008, the State of Alaska applied to implement the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. EPA approved the application and agreed to transfer program authority to the State over four phases. The State's program is called the Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) Program. The initial phase transferred in 2008 and included domestic discharges, log storage and transfer facilities, seafood processing facilities, and hatcheries. Phase II was completed in 2009 and included federal facilities, stormwater, wastewater pretreatment programs, and non-domestic discharges. Phase III was completed in 2010 and included mining activities. November 1 marks the completion of Phase IV and includes wastewater permitting for the oil and gas industry, pesticides, munitions, and any other facilities that have not yet been transferred.

“This is an important accomplishment for the State of Alaska,” said DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig. “The transfer of this authority will enable us to manage wastewater issues closer to home and better serve Alaskans as a result. We appreciate EPA’s efforts in helping us reach this goal.”

EPA will assume an oversight role for the APDES Program and will retain wastewater permitting authority for facilities operating outside state waters (generally three miles offshore) and others, such as facilities located in Indian Country (Annette Islands Reserve).

For more information on Division of Water’s APDES Program, visit DEC’s website at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/npdes/index.htm>.

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