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Exxon-Valdez: Exxon-Valdez Trustee Council Meeting

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DRAFT

February 17, 1993

MEMORANDUM

To: Secretary of the Interior
Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Commerce

From:

Subject: March 9-11 Exxon Valdez Trustee Council Meeting

Pursuant to the Exxon Valdez settlement agreement, the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council in Alaska is required to develop a plan to spend approximately \$720 million over ten years from the \$1 billion in criminal and civil penalties resulting from the March 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. The Trustee Council has six members -- a representative from each of the three federal trustees and the three trustees from the state of Alaska. The federal trustees are:

- Secretary of the Interior
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Commerce/Administrator of NOAA

Under the applicable court decrees, unanimous agreement of the Council's six members is needed to act. Therefore, it is critically important that the three federal trustees develop a coordinated policy in ~~Washington~~ to provide guidance for the federal designees in Alaska. In the previous administration, there was little interagency coordination in Washington and, consequently, the Trustee Council has made little progress in the last 18 months. (The situation could be likened to strategic arms control negotiations where State, DOD, and the intelligence community in Washington do not provide guidance to its negotiators at the bargaining table.)

Because of several upcoming meetings, Interior, Agriculture and NOAA should work together to develop a coordinated federal response in the next few weeks and months. The next Trustee Council meeting is scheduled for March 9-11 in Anchorage, with the three federal trustees and the three state trustees:

- Acting Special Assistant for Alaska, Interior
- Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service, Agriculture
- Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA

- Attorney General of Alaska
- State Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
- State Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game

At the March meeting, several important organizational, policy, financial and land acquisition issues will be discussed. The Trustee Council also plans to issue draft management plans in late March for public comment and review, with a final draft management plan scheduled to be completed in June. In addition, some of the land under consideration for land acquisition is under "imminent threat" from logging operations.

Because of the time constraints and the importance of this issue, we would appreciate a joint recommendation to the Office of Environmental Policy from the three Departments by Monday, March 1, on how to proceed with the March Trustee Council meeting. At the same time, the Departments should begin to develop recommendations on ~~coordinating the federal position in Washington and developing~~ long-term policy guidance and suggested policy outcomes.

In the past, this issue fell within the purview of the:

- Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, in Interior
- Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, in Agriculture
- Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere/Deputy NOAA Administrator

Attachment

EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL — FEDERAL TRUSTEES

