

Press Release
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Federal commission releases report on Arctic oil spill research

Anchorage, AK – On November 13th, Fran Ulmer, the presidentially appointed Chair of the US Arctic Research Commission (USARC), will release a report titled, “Oil Spills in Arctic Waters: An Introduction and Inventory of Research Activities and USARC Recommendations” at the US-Canada Northern Oil and Gas Research Forum at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska. The report (http://www.arctic.gov/publications/oil_spills_2012.html) addresses the question, “What research is being done on oil spills in ice-covered waters of the Arctic?”

The report, co-authored by the US Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, is a compilation of recent research and contains recommendations for future work in areas such as oil spill response technologies for cleanup and recovery of oil, data management tools, and the fate of oil and its effects on the environment, among others.

"As oil and gas development and shipping increase in the Arctic, it's important to prepare and plan for possible accidents. Preparation includes research into oil in icy waters: how it behaves, how to locate and map oil under ice, how different response techniques could be adapted to be more effective even in Arctic conditions. The USARC report catalogues the research which has been done and by whom, and it makes recommendations for future research. We hope this will be useful to government, industry and the public," said Ulmer, who was also a member of President Obama's National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling.

The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 established the USARC (<http://www.arctic.gov>). Its principal duties are to develop and recommend an integrated national Arctic research policy and to assist in establishing a national Arctic research program plan to implement the policy. Commissioners also facilitate cooperation between the federal government, state and local governments, and other nations with respect to Arctic research, both basic http://www.arctic.gov/publications/2011-12_usarc_goals.html and applied.

The USARC, which sets goals (http://www.arctic.gov/publications/2011-12_usarc_goals.html) for the approximately \$400 million annual US Arctic Research Program, has urged federal emphasis on integrated Arctic Ocean research, renewed programs related to the prevention of and response to oil spills in ice-covered waters, and to strengthen Arctic health and indigenous language research.

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