

State questions NOAA spill cleanup comment

The state is concerned about a comment reportedly made by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that if subsistence users don't like the *Exxon Valdez* oil remaining in their areas they can go somewhere else.

Rose Dreyer, community liaison officer for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, sent copies

of an article in the Thursday issue of the *Anchorage Daily News* to Native leaders.

The article stated: "Eventually, the oil will break down and go away. It may bother people that the beach contains oil for four years or more, but not many will see it during winter storms when it washes off, and sub-

sistence users, if they don't like it, can go somewhere else, NOAA said."

According to Dreyer, the state is very concerned about NOAA's comment and is seeking support for the state's higher standard for oil spill cleanup.

This summer's cleanup has been guided by plans set out by NOAA and

Exxon, according to the article, but DEC has set a new standard, calling for oil to be removed within a year.

DEC has contacted the Alaska Federation of Natives and the 12 Native regional corporations within Alaska, seeking comments on the NOAA statement.