



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Environmental  
Conservation**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Keiichi Satoh, Dr., Eng.  
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Dear Dr. Satoh,

I write to provide an update on the cleanup of marine debris in Alaska from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami disaster.

The first projects completed in Alaska during the 2014 field season were made possible through the generosity of you, your colleagues, and the more than 400 individual donors who contributed \$21,564.94 toward tsunami debris cleanup.

This contribution completely funded an operation in the Afognak Island area in the Kodiak region. Over a seven day period, two individuals put in more than 100 hours of work to collect, bag, and transport almost 3,000 pounds of marine debris – foam, plastic, building materials, drums, totes, metal, buoys, banding, lines, and nets. While it was not possible to confirm whether specific debris was related to the tsunami, the amount of foam material collected last summer was substantially more than has been observed at these locations in the past. The amounts of plastic materials also appeared to have increased, with an estimated 70% of the plastic items this year appearing to be of Asian origin.

A second debris cleanup operation in the Sitka area, also funded in part with your gift, enabled contractors to collect and remove over 11,500 pounds of debris, similar in composition to the items found in Kodiak.

All debris from both the Kodiak and Sitka projects has been safely removed and properly disposed of or donated for recycling or repurposing. The work you funded, along with work funded by a gift from the Government of Japan, has already resulted in many tons of debris being removed from the beaches and coastlines of Alaska.

I have enclosed photographs from the two debris removal operations funded by your contribution. Two images are of debris on the beaches, and three are of the loading and transporting process. Also enclosed is a map showing the Alaska coastline where ongoing tsunami marine debris operations are prioritized. The areas in which your contributions were used are in bold type on this

map. Also enclosed is a report by our department on all the marine debris removal projects last summer.

Again, your contributions were greatly appreciated by the people of Alaska, carefully managed, and successfully applied to the tsunami debris efforts here in Alaska. They also reminded us of what good neighbors we have across the Pacific Ocean in Japan.

Sincerely,



Larry Hartig  
Commissioner

Enclosures:    Photographs  
                     Area Map  
                     Tsunami Marine Debris Status Report for Calendar Year 2014