Source Water Assessment

A Hydrogeologic Susceptibility and Vulnerability Assessment for Alaska Airlines Yakutat Public Drinking Water System, Yakutat, Alaska PWSID # 130342.002

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION REPORT 1607

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

December, 2008

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The Drinking Water Protection (DWP) section of the Drinking Water Program is producing Source Water Assessments in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996. Each assessment includes a delineation of the source water area, an inventory of potential and existing contaminant sources that may impact the water, a risk ranking for each of these contaminants, and an evaluation of the potential vulnerability of these drinking water sources.

These assessments are intended to provide public water systems owners/operators, communities, and local governments with the best available information that may be used to protect the quality of their drinking water. The assessments combine information obtained from various sources, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), public water system owners/operators, and other public information sources. The results of this assessment are subject to change if additional data becomes available. It is anticipated this assessment will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of public drinking water source. If you have any additional information that may affect the results of this assessment, please contact the DWP staff at the following number: 1-866-956-7656.

December, 2008

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Drinking Water Protection
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public water system for Alaska Airlines Yakutat is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system located approximately 3 miles southeast of the town of Yakutat, Alaska. Another well at the site (PWSID 130342.001) is an older well reportedly not for consumption and not connected to the system. The wellhead received a susceptibility rating of **Low** and the aquifer received a susceptibility rating of **Very High**. Combining these two ratings produces a **Medium** rating for the natural susceptibility of the well. Identified potential and current sources of contaminants for Alaska Airlines Yakutat public drinking water source include: an airport, heating oil tanks, and a large-capacity septic system. These identified potential and existing sources of contamination are considered as sources of bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals. Overall, the public water sources for Alaska Airlines Yakutat received a vulnerability rating of **High** for bacteria and viruses, **High** for nitrates and nitrites, and **Medium** for volatile organic chemicals. This assessment of contaminant risks can be used as a foundation for local voluntary protection efforts as well as a basis for the continuous efforts on the part of Alaska Airlines Yakutat to protect public health.

ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Alaska Airlines Yakutat public water system is a Class B (transient/non-community) water system. The system is located approximately 3 miles southeast of the town of Yakutat, Alaska (See Map A of Appendix A). Another well at the site (PWSID 130342.001) is not connected to the system. Yakutat is an isolated community located 225 miles northwest of Juneau and 220 miles southeast of Cordova (ADEC 2008). The town lies at the mouth of Yakutat Bay where the panhandle of Alaska meets the Southcentral region.

Residents of Yakutat primarily receive water from four wells, where it is treated and piped to 191 homes and the schools. Sewage receives primary treatment, but a secondary treatment facility is under construction. Power is supplied to residents by Yakutat Power, Inc., which runs four diesel generators. Refuse is hauled to a Borough-operated landfill (ADEC 2008).

According to the sanitary survey (9/18/2002), the depth of the well is about 65 feet below the ground surface and is completed in an unconfined aquifer. No well log exists for this well. This system operates continuously and serves approximately 25 non-residents through one service connection.

ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT DRINKING WATER PROTECTION AREA

In order to evaluate whether a drinking water source is at risk, we must first evaluate what are the most likely pathways for surface contamination to reach the groundwater. These areas are determined by looking at the characteristics of the soil, groundwater, aquifer, and well.

The most probable area for contamination to reach the drinking water well is the drinking water protection area. The drinking water protection area is the area circling the well (the area influenced by pumping) and also the area upgradient of the well, usually forming a parabola shape. Because releases of contaminants within the protection area are most likely to impact the well, this area will serve as the focus for voluntary protection efforts.

There are many different methods for calculating the size of protection areas. Drinking Water Protection (DWP) uses a combination of two simple groundwater flow equations, the Thiem and uniform flow equations for all groundwater wells screened in unconsolidated material. The orientation of the protection zone is then drawn using a water table elevation map (if available) or a land surface elevation map of the area. The protection zone calculated by DWP is an estimate using the available information and resources, and may differ slightly from the actual capture zone. Because of uncertainties and changing site conditions, a factor of safety is added to the protection zone to form the drinking water protection area for the well.

The parameters used to calculate the shape of this protection zone are general for the whole alluvial plain and were obtained from various United States Geological Survey (USGS) reports, area well logs, and

the Groundwater textbook by Freeze and Cherry (Freeze and Cherry, 1979).

The protection areas established for wells by the DEC are usually separated into two zones, limited by the watershed. These zones correspond to differences in the time-of-travel (TOT) of the water moving through the aquifer to the well. An analytical calculation was used to determine the size and shape of the protection area.

The time-of-travel for contaminants within the water varies and is dependent on the physical and chemical characteristics of each contaminant. The following is a summary of the two protection area zones for wells and the calculated time-of-travel for each:

Table 1. Definition of Zones

Zone	Definition
A	Several months time-of-travel
B	Less than the 2 year time-of-travel

The drinking water protection area for Alaska Airlines Yakutat was determined using an analytical calculation and includes Zones A and B (see Map A of Appendix A).

INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CONTAMINANT SOURCES

DWP has completed an inventory of potential and existing sources of contamination within the Alaska Airlines Yakutat drinking water protection area. This inventory was completed through a search of agency records and other publicly available information. Potential sources of contamination to the drinking water aquifer include a wide range of categories and types. Potential drinking water contaminants are found within agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, but can also occur within areas that have little or no development.

For the basis of all Class B public water system assessments, the following three categories of drinking water contaminants were inventoried:

- Bacteria and viruses;
- Nitrates and/or nitrites;
- Volatile organic chemicals

The sources are displayed on Map C of Appendix C and summarized in Table 1 of Appendix B.

RANKING OF CONTAMINANT RISKS

Once the potential and existing sources of contamination have been identified, they are assigned a ranking according to what type and level of risk they represent. Ranking of contaminant risks for a "potential" or "existing" source of contamination is a function of toxicity and volumes of specific contaminants associated with that source. Rankings include:

- Low;
- Medium;
- High; and
- Very High.

Tables 2 through 4 in Appendix B contain the ranking of potential and existing sources of contamination with respect to bacteria and viruses, nitrates and/or nitrites, and volatile organic chemicals.

VULNERABILITY OF ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

Vulnerability of a drinking water source to contamination is a combination of two factors:

- Natural Susceptibility; and
- Contaminant Risks.

A score for the Natural Susceptibility of the well is reached by considering the properties of the well and the aquifer.

Susceptibility of the Wellhead (0-25 Points)
+
Susceptibility of the Aquifer (0-25 Points)
=
Natural Susceptibility of the Well (0-50 Points)

A ranking is assigned for the Natural Susceptibility according to the point score:

Natural Susceptibility Ratings	
40-50 pts	Very High
30 to < 40 pts	High
20 to < 30 pts	Medium
< 20 pts	Low

Factors contributing to the susceptibility of the wellhead are: whether the sanitary seal is in place, protection from flooding, and if the well casing is properly grouted.

The wellhead for the Alaska Airlines Yakutat received a **Low** susceptibility rating. The most recent sanitary survey (9/18/2002) indicates the well is capped with a sanitary seal, the land surface is sloped away from the well, and the well is grouted. A sanitary seal prevents potential contaminant from entering the well while sloping of the land surface and grouting help to prevent potential contaminants from traveling down the outside of the well casing.

Factors contributing to the susceptibility of the aquifer are: whether the aquifer is confined or unconfined, whether the well is completed in unconsolidated or fractured bedrock, whether wells and bore holes are penetrating the aquifer and, if applicable, the confining layer.

The aquifer for the Alaska Airlines Yakutat system is unconfined and consists mostly of silt, sand, and gravel. The aquifer received a **Very High** susceptibility rating. The highly transmissive aquifer material and the high water table in the area (8 feet bgs) allow contaminants to travel downward from the surface with the precipitation and surface water runoff. Additionally, runoff from the paved "tarmac" area of the airport drains to an area immediately north of the wellhead and accumulates seasonally. It appears that this runoff infiltrates into the subsurface.

Table 2 summarizes the Susceptibility scores and ratings for the Alaska Airlines Yakutat system.

Table 2. Susceptibility

	Score	Rating
Susceptibility of the Wellhead	0	Low
Susceptibility of the Aquifer	25	Very High
Natural Susceptibility	25	Medium

Contaminant risks are derived from an evaluation of the routine sampling results of the water system and the presence of potential sources of contamination. Contaminant risks to a drinking water source depend on the type and distribution of contaminant sources. Flow charts are used to assign a point score, and ratings are assigned in the same way as for the natural susceptibility:

Contaminant Risk Ratings	
40-50 pts	Very High
30 to < 40 pts	High
20 to < 30 pts	Medium
< 20 pts	Low

Table 3 summarizes the Contaminant Risks for each category of drinking water contaminants for the Alaska Airlines Yakutat system.

Table 3. Contaminant Risks

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	40	Very High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	40	Very High
Volatile Organic Chemicals	32	High

Finally, an overall vulnerability score is assigned for each water system by combining each of the contaminant risk scores with the natural susceptibility score:

Natural Susceptibility (0-50 Points)
+
Contaminant Risks (0-50 Points)
=
Vulnerability of the Drinking Water Source to Contamination (0-100 Points)

Again, rankings are assigned according to a point score:

Overall Vulnerability Ratings	
80-100 pts	Very High
60 to < 80 pts	High
40 to < 60 pts	Medium
< 40 pts	Low

Table 4 contains the overall vulnerability scores (0-100) and ratings for each of the three categories of drinking water contaminants for the Alaska Airlines Yakutat system. Note: scores are rounded off to the nearest five.

Table 4. Overall Vulnerability

Category	Score	Rating
Bacteria and Viruses	65	High
Nitrates and/or Nitrites	65	High
Volatile Organic Chemicals	55	Medium

Bacteria and Viruses

The contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses is **Very High** with the large-capacity septic system contributing to the risk to the drinking water well.

Coliforms (a bacteria) are found naturally in the environment and although they aren't necessarily a health threat, they are an indicator of other potentially harmful bacteria in the water, more specifically, fecal

coliforms and E. coli, which only come from human and animal fecal waste. Harmful bacteria can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms (EPA, 2008). Positive samples increase the overall vulnerability of the drinking water source, indicating that the source is susceptible to bacteria and virus contamination.

Only a small amount of bacteria and viruses are required to endanger public health. Bacteria and viruses have not been detected during recent water sampling of the system at Alaska Airlines Yakutat (data was reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for bacteria and viruses with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **High**.

Nitrates and Nitrites

The contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites is **Very High** with the large-capacity septic system and the airport contributing to the risk to this source of public drinking water. Nitrates are very mobile, moving at approximately the same rate as water.

Recent sampling history for Alaska Airlines Yakutat well indicates that nitrates have not been detected in the water (data was reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for nitrates and nitrites with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **High**.

Volatile Organic Chemicals

The contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals is **High** with the large-capacity septic system, airport, and heating oil tanks contributing to the risk to the drinking water well. The contaminant risk from the airport is especially troublesome because runoff from the tarmac drains to an area near the wellhead.

The recent sampling history for Alaska Airlines Yakutat indicates that volatile organic chemicals have not been detected in the water (data was reviewed in April, 2008).

After combining the contaminant risk for volatile organic chemicals with the natural susceptibility of the well, the overall vulnerability of the well to contamination is **Medium**.

Using the Source Water Assessment

This assessment of contaminant risks can be used as a foundation for local voluntary protection efforts as well as a basis for the continuous efforts on the part of Alaska Airlines Yakutat to protect public health. It is anticipated that Source Water Assessments will be updated every five years to reflect any changes in the vulnerability and/or susceptibility of Alaska Airlines Yakutat drinking water source.

REFERENCES

Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development (ADCED), Accessed 2008 [WWW document]. URL: http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_COMDB.htm

Freeze, R.A. and Cherry, J.A., 1979. Groundwater. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

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APPENDIX A

Alaska Airlines Yakutat
Drinking Water Protection Area Location Map
(Map A)

Public Water Well System for PWS #130342.002 Alaska Airlines Yakutat

Legend

Class B Public Water System

Groundwater Protection Zones

Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time

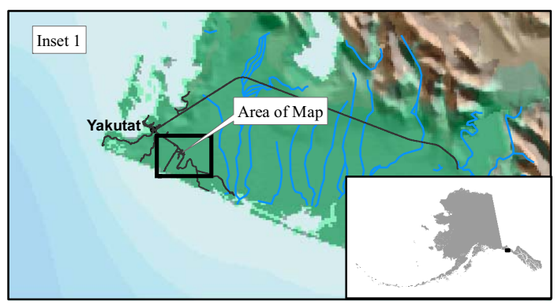
Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

Data Sources:
Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

All other data:
Alaska Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI)

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on "Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program - Guidance Manual for Class B Public Water Systems" published by ADEC

URS Corporation does not guarantee the accuracy or validity of the data provided.



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Alaska Airlines Yakutat
PWS 130342.002

Appendix A Map A

APPENDIX B

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for Alaska Airlines Yakutat (Tables 1-4)

Table 1

Contaminant Source Inventory for

ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT

PWSID 130342.002

Contaminant Source Type	*Contaminant Source ID*	*CS ID tag*	*Zone*	*Map Number*	*Comments*
Large Capacity Septic System	D10	D10-01	A	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-01	A	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-02	A	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-03	B	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-04	B	C	
Airport	X14	X14	B	C	

Table 2

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT Sources of Bacteria and Viruses

PWSID 130342.002

Contaminant Source Type	*Contaminant Source ID*	*CS ID tag*	*Zone*	*Risk Ranking for Analysis*	*Map Number*	*Comments*
Large Capacity Septic System	D10	D10-01	A	High	C	

Table 3

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT

Sources of Nitrates/Nitrites

PWSID 130342.002

Contaminant Source Type	*Contaminant Source ID*	*CS ID tag*	*Zone*	*Risk Ranking for Analysis*	*Map Number*	*Comments*
Large Capacity Septic System	D10	D10-01	A	High	C	
Airport	X14	X14	B	Low	C	

Table 4

Contaminant Source Inventory and Risk Ranking for ALASKA AIRLINES YAKUTAT

Sources of Volatile Organic Chemicals

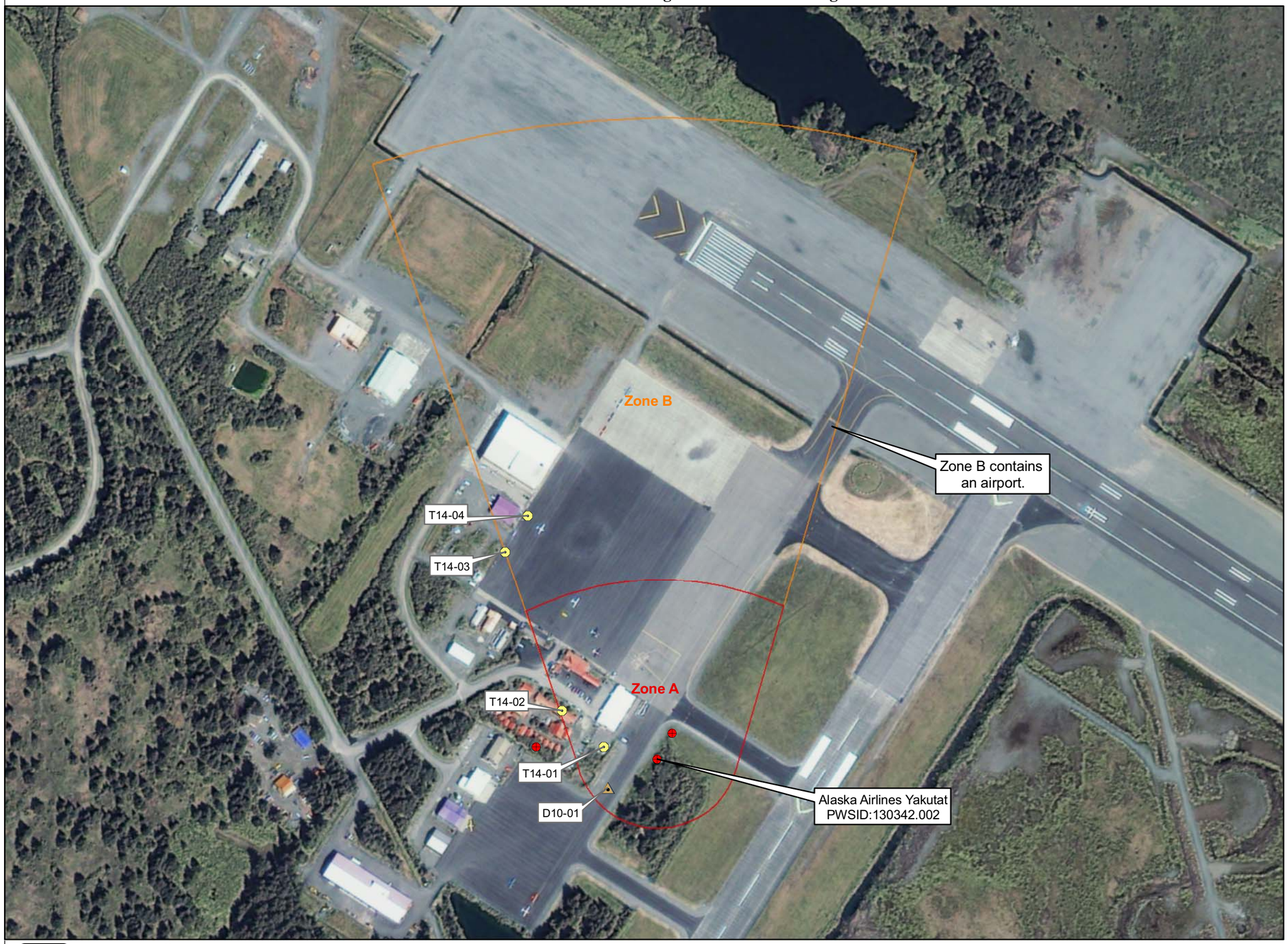
PWSID 130342.002

Contaminant Source Type	*Contaminant Source ID*	*CS ID tag*	*Zone*	*Risk Ranking for Analysis*	*Map Number*	*Comments*
Large Capacity Septic System	D10	D10-01	A	Low	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-01	A	Low	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-02	A	Low	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-03	B	Low	C	
Non-residential Heating Oil Tank	T14	T14-04	B	Low	C	
Airport	X14	X14	B	High	C	

APPENDIX C

Alaska Airlines Yakutat
Drinking Water Protection Area
and Potential and Existing Contaminant Sources
(Map C)

Public Water Well System for PWS #130342.002 Alaska Airlines Yakutat
Showing Potential and Existing Sources of Contamination



Legend

- Class B Public Water System

Groundwater Protection Zones

- Zone A Protection Area - Several Months Travel Time
- Zone B Protection Area - 2 Years Travel Time

Existing or Potential Contaminant Sources

- *Injection wells (Class V) Large-Capacity Septic System (Drainfield Disposal Method) (D10)*
- *Tanks, heating oil, nonresidential (aboveground) (T14)*

Data Sources:
Contaminant Sources, Public Water System Wells, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)

All other data:
Alaska Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI)

Drinking Water Protection Areas based on "Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program - Guidance Manual for Class B Public Water Systems" published by ADEC

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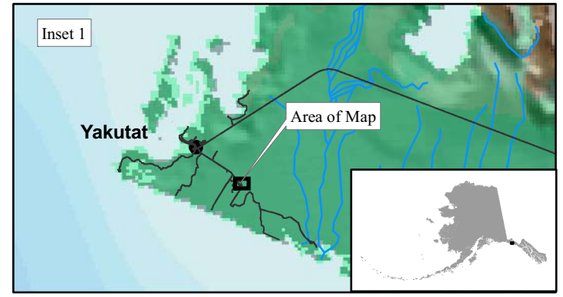

Alaska DEC

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Alaska Airlines Yakutat
PWS 130342.002

Appendix C Map C