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DEC Accepts Donation for Tsunami Debris Cleanup Efforts

(JUNEAU, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has accepted a donation of \$19,000 for marine debris cleanup in Alaska from the Hokkaido Development Engineering Center and members of the International Association of Cold Region Development Studies (IACORDS). The gift is a collaboration of more than 350 donors and was presented to the DEC at the recent International Symposium on Cold Regions Development (ISCORD) in Anchorage.

“I thank the donors and the professional engineers at the Hokkaido Development Engineering Center and members of IACORDS who began the project to gather the donations,” said DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig. “This donation is a symbol of the deep friendship between our two nations and will be put to good use cleaning up Alaska’s coastline.”

This donation from private Japanese citizens comes after a recent gift of five million dollars from the Government of Japan to the United States for marine debris cleanup in the five Pacific-coast states. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is in the process of distributing those funds to the states. Alaska has already received approval for \$250,000, and has submitted a proposal for \$750,000.

The privately-donated funds will be combined with Alaska’s share of the Government of Japan funds and distributed via contract for cleanup efforts on Alaska shores impacted by tsunami-generated debris. This debris began appearing on Alaska shores last year and cleanup was initiating using federal, State and other resources. Crews are back in the field this summer and the cleanup is expected to continue for several years.

Photos of Commissioner Larry Hartig and Dr. Keiichi Satoh of Hokkaido Development Engineering Center are available upon request.

For more information on marine and tsunami debris in Alaska, visit the DEC’s website at: <http://www.dec.alaska.gov/Commish/tsunami-debris/>

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