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**Contact:** Kelly Harrell, Executive Director (907) 903-4163

## **Statement on the Gulf of Mexico Offshore Oil Rig Incident and the Need to Protect Bristol Bay**

Today, Executive Director of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council, Kelly Harrell, provided the following statement on the developing incident in the Gulf of Mexico involving explosion and sinking of an offshore oil rig:

“The ongoing incident in the Gulf of Mexico provides affirmation that the fish-rich waters of Bristol Bay and the southeast Bering Sea deserve the protection from offshore drilling recently granted by the Obama administration. The sinking of the oil rig and continuing spill stand as a clear reminder that despite the best intentions, stringent regulations, and new technology, the risks associated with offshore oil and gas activities can never be wholly eliminated. This enormously tragic incident for the workers and families affected serves as a painful warning sign to fishing interests and coastal communities in Alaska that we must secure a lasting solution that safeguards our fisheries stronghold in Bristol Bay and the southeast Bering Sea from offshore drilling. The seven year drilling reprieve announced weeks ago is a vital first step, but permanent protection is needed so that future generations don’t have to battle this tremendous threat again.”

For more information on the Alaska Marine Conservation Council go to: [www.akmarine.org](http://www.akmarine.org)