

Coast Guard Wraps Up Kulluk Hearing

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Coast Guard's formal hearing into what led to the Royal Shell Oil drilling unit Kulluk to go aground on Sitkalidak Island New Year's Eve has concluded. The nine-day public hearing was held at the Loussac Library in Anchorage.

Witnesses who testified came from the Coast Guard, Shell, Noble Drilling, GL Noble Denton, Offshore Rig Mover's International, Crowley, Edison Chouest Offshore and Delmar Systems.

The investigating officer, Commander Joshua McTaggart, is scheduled to submit a written report of the investigation, which will include findings of facts, conclusions and recommendations, to Rear Adm. Thomas Ostebo in early July, but he can ask for extra time as needed.

Ostebo will use the findings and recommendations to determine whether additional measures are required to prevent similar incidents and what, if any, actions need to be taken to promote safety of life and property at sea.

The Coast Guard hopes to save lives and protect the environment by identifying what went wrong and how it can be avoided in the future, as Shell and potentially other oil companies continue to explore for oil in the Arctic Ocean.