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June 23, 2020

Matthew T. Bell, Jr.  
Rear Admiral  
United States Coast Guard  
Commander 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District

Re: Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council Recertification Application

Admiral Bell:

I am a member of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC) and fully support recertification of CIRCAC. CIRCAC has been and continues to be Cook Inlet's most effective organization for promoting programs to prevent spills, enhance safety in marine transportation and oil facilities operations, and protect Cook Inlet's waters, shorelines, cultural, fisheries, wildlife and other natural resources.

CIRCAC's advocacy for better regulatory oversight and safety measures contributes to concrete solutions on how to achieve those goals. CIRCAC accomplishes this by conducting risk assessments, sharing data, developing applicable tools and strategies, evaluating best available technology, and reviewing contingency plans and regulations that prioritize prevention while promoting safety through a transparent public process. No other organization is solely dedicated to identifying, assessing and mitigating risks from oil transportation and facility operations in this region.

There are many examples of how CIRCAC has effectively worked with industry and the public to accomplish its mission. One example is the recently completed Cook Inlet Pipeline Integrity Assessment. This project, which recognizes the importance of spill prevention, cataloged a full listing of Cook Inlet's undersea pipeline system allowing a panel of experts, operators and the public to recommend risk reduction measures before problems arise.

CIRCAC has also been able to achieve the long-term goal of closing the Drift River Oil Terminal on the West side of Cook Inlet. This terminal, sitting at the base of an active volcano, posed a significant safety and environmental hazard in the event of an eruption. The oil is now transported via pipeline, greatly reducing the risk to the environment.

Any assessment of CIRCAC's accomplishments must recognize the value of CIRCAC's science program which provides important information about coastal habitats, physical oceanography and oil behavior to regulators, industry and the public. Current research is generating new information on how biological debris interacts with oil as it moves through the water column.

CIRCAC's other accomplishments in the last three years include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Completing a multi-year near-shore habitat assessment,
- Advocating for a strengthening of oil spill prevention and response regulations,
- Increasing public outreach efforts through new, local advertising, exhibits and expanding audiences for its newsletter, website, and social media,
- Expanding the Geographic Response Information Database (GRID) in scope and accessibility,
- Working with regulators to assure a robust Vessels of Opportunity program is maintained,
- Upgrading the Cook Inlet Ice Monitoring Camera Network with modern video technology, and
- Strengthening oil spill contingency plans by recommending substantive changes to ensure facilities are adequately staffed and plans are executable.

CIRCAC has an exceptional staff that works to bring a varied group of stakeholders together to create environmental monitoring and oil spill prevention programs that promote safe production and transportation of oil in Cook Inlet.

I strongly urge the U.S. Coast Guard to recertify CIRCAC so that it can continue to build on its successes and positively impact the future of Cook Inlet.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Fandrei".

Gary Fandrei, Secretary/Treasurer  
Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council