



*"The mission of the Council is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet."*

## News Release

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### **BOEM refuses to extend public comment period on Cook Inlet Lease Sale Environmental Impact Statement**

**September 6, 2016**—On September 1, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced that there would be no extension for public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cook Inlet Planning Area Lease Sale 244. This is despite numerous requests for extension they've received over the past several weeks, including one from Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). Today is the deadline of their 45-day public comment period, which began on July 22. CIRCAC Executive Director Michael Munger has issued the following statement:

"In preparing the DEIS, BOEM had over 70 participating authors, internal reviewers, and fact-checkers, some of whom worked on the six-pound document for almost two years. They cite over 2000 separate literature sources for information used to analyze risks, consequences, and effects of lease sale activities, including from 'Very Large Oil Spills,' and for a range of lease sale Alternatives. At any time, a thoughtful and thorough review of this document would be difficult, but to expect it in July and August is unreasonable.

"BOEM was well aware that the middle of the summer was the worst possible time to go out for public comment. For example, BOEM evaluates a Gillnet Fishing Mitigation Alternative in the DEIS, noting that the season runs from June to late August. So, they shouldn't be surprised that this stakeholder group has, in fact, been out fishing. The exact people who know the most about the habitats and resources at risk are likely those who are least able to fully participate during this review process, including commercial fishermen, subsistence users and researchers.

"We are disappointed that BOEM is not ensuring that they hear from those Alaskans with the most knowledge of Cook Inlet resources and who have the most at stake. By turning down rational requests for a reasonable extension, BOEM either does not care to receive that input or is under pressure to rush this forward on their timeline; neither of which is acceptable."

CIRCAC is a federally mandated citizens' organization, formed under the Federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA90). Its mission is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet. In pursuing this mandate, the Council strives to help protect the environment, fisheries, economic vitality, cultural resources and recreational interests of Cook Inlet, in part by promoting partnerships among citizens, agencies, and industry.

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