



June 21, 2017

Rear Admiral Michael F. McAllister
Commander – 17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
709 W. 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Attn: Lt. Jonathan Dale
Docket Number: USCG-2017-0289

I write to you today to express Anchorage Economic Development Corporation's (AEDC) support of recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). AEDC provides industry expertise and economic resources to both large corporations and growing companies interested in locating or expanding their business in Anchorage. We produce trusted employment data and economic research that provides a clear snapshot of the City's economy. In our view, recertification of CIRCAC is critical to many aspects of the Anchorage and Alaska economies.

CIRCAC has been Cook Inlet's most effective organization for promoting programs to prevent spills, enhance safety in both marine transportation and oil facilities operations, and protect Cook Inlet's waters, shorelines, cultural, natural and wildlife resources. No other organization has focused as much attention for as many years to identifying, assessing and mitigating risks in this region. Not only does CIRCAC advocate for better regulatory oversight and safety measures, they contribute concrete solutions on how to achieve those goals, including conducting risk assessments, sharing data, developing applicable tools and strategies, evaluate best available technology, public engagement, and thoroughly review contingency plans and regulations that prioritize prevention while promoting safety.

CIRCAC continues to strengthen oil spill contingency plans and recommend substantive changes to ensure facilities are adequately staffed and that the plans are executable. These are critical needs to maintain the safe and effective operations of key energy infrastructure in the Cook Inlet region.

CIRCAC is expanding public awareness of Cook Inlet through opening the Tourism Stakeholder Group to include other vested interests in Cook Inlet, including tourism marketing councils, regional chambers of commerce, and other travel and tourism related industry representation.

To assure the safe and efficient passage of cargo vessels that are vital to the Alaska economy, CIRCAC spearheaded efforts to fund and complete a comprehensive Navigation Risk Assessment for Cook Inlet. And equally import to Alaska's economy, CIRCAC established an ice camera network that provides real-time, remotely accessed imagery of ice conditions for ice forecasters to increase navigation safety to assure the safety of commercial sea lanes in the region.



Finally, since its inception CIRCAC has formed partnerships and encouraged consensus decision-making. Through this process, CIRCAC brings stakeholders from both the private and public sectors together to create environmental monitoring and oil spill prevention programs to promote safe production and transportation of oil in Cook Inlet, a critical part of the Cook Inlet regions energy industry that plays a vital role in fueling Alaska's economy.

I strongly urge the U.S. Coast Guard to recertify CIRCAC so that it can continue to build on its long history of success in achieving its mission and allow it to continue to positively impact the future of the communities and the economy of Cook Inlet.

Sincerely,

Bill Popp
President & CEO