

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

Senator Cathy Giessel

Senate District N

May 30th, 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

Admiral McAllister,

I write to you supporting the recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). CIRCAC's work has been crucial to preserving the balance between effective marine transportation and hydrocarbon extraction while proactively maintaining the safety of Cook Inlet's waters and shorelines, as well as its cultural and natural resources.

CIRCAC is an organization that recognizes the importance of its oversight and regulatory role while also working towards solutions to issues that affect different stakeholder groups. The Cook Inlet is home to the state's largest population centers, southcentral Alaska's largest source of energy, the state's largest port, and some of the most important watersheds in North America. CIRCAC has a record that prioritizes prevention, public engagement, information sharing, and integrating best practices to keep the resiliency of the Inlet.

In the past five months, several issues regarding oil and natural gas infrastructure in the Cook Inlet brought widespread attention and concern. At that time, CIRCAC was in the process of updating its 2000 subsea pipeline report, and now is working with federal and state agencies to scope a pipeline risk assessment. During all the incidents, CIRCAC played a material role that provided subject matter expertise and local knowledge that contributed to the response strategies.

Chair Senate Resources Committee
Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov

CIRCAC continues to broaden its outreach to other stakeholders. One example is the formation of the Tourism Stakeholder Group to include actors such as tourism marketing councils, regional chambers of commerce, and other tourism representatives. Alaska is projected this year to receive another record number of visitors. A large portion of those visitors will see Alaska from the many ships that ply the state's waters. CIRCAC is working to maintain the Cook Inlet and its attractions as a place that draws people from around the world to Alaska in a safe and sustainable manner.

The record of CIRCAC is of an organization that is consensus driven, and works from the local level upwards, achieving legitimacy from the numerous interests in the region. I appreciate CIRCAC being an important source of information that policymakers at the local, state, and federal level can leverage when contemplating important decisions in the region.

As I wrote in 2014, I look forward, once again, to continuing the positive relationship CIRCAC fosters. I respectfully request the United State Coast Guard approve the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council's application for recertification.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy Giessel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Cathy Giessel