



Alaska SeaLife Center
w i n d o w s t o t h e s e a

July 16, 2014

Rear Admiral Daniel B. Abel
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
c/o Docket Management Facility (M30)
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building Ground Floor
Room W12-140
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

RE: USCG-2014-0414; Cook Inlet RCAC Recertification

Dear Admiral Abel:

The Alaska SeaLife Center (Center) in Seward, Alaska, supports recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC).

The Alaska SeaLife Center is Alaska's only public aquarium and only rescue and rehabilitation facility for stranded marine mammals. We are a private, non-profit corporation with approximately 85 year-round employees whose mission is to generate and share scientific knowledge to promote understanding and stewardship of Alaska's marine ecosystems. Our mission has a clear state-wide perspective. Therefore, we see Cook Inlet RCAC as a like-minded organization, working for the protection of Alaska's marine resources.

Through a robust environmental and biological monitoring, physical oceanography and habitat mapping programs, Cook Inlet RCAC is respected for the scientific contributions they have made to increase our understanding of the Cook Inlet region. Their studies and projects are serving to expand our base of knowledge about Alaska's coastal and marine habitat. Most recently, for example, they completed a study to specifically address biological diversity, abundance, and hydrocarbon contaminants of potential beluga whale prey items in known beluga winter habitat areas. Cook Inlet RCAC was the first organization to apply a coastal habitat mapping and imaging database for improving shoreline protections. They were also the first organization to develop geographic response strategies, oil spill response plans tailored to protect a specific sensitive area.

These are just a few examples of the areas of mutual interest and the scientific value that we see in Cook Inlet RCAC. We look forward to supporting them and partnering in future projects. We respectfully request the Coast Guard approve Cook Inlet RCAC's application for recertification.

Sincerely,

Tara L. Riemer, Ph.D.
President and CEO