



*"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."*

15 May 2023

**Members**

**Tourism  
Group**

Rear Admiral Nathan A. Moore  
17<sup>th</sup> District Commander  
United States Coast Guard – District 17  
P.O. Box 25517  
Juneau, AK 99802

**Alaska Native  
Group**

RE: Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council  
Triennial Recertification Application for 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

**Environmental  
Group**

Admiral Moore:

**Recreation  
Group**

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council is pleased to provide you with our Triennial Application for Recertification as the alternative advisory group for Cook Inlet, Alaska, pursuant to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), Section 5002(o). Our recertification request observes the revised U.S. Coast Guard guidelines that require a full application process with a full public comment period for one year out of every three; this is a year for that full process. The guidelines require a description of Council actions, programs, and projects undertaken since the last triennial recertification application submitted in 2020. As requested by our USCG point of contact, emphasis is placed on activities since the last application submitted in April 2022.

**Aquaculture  
Associations**

**Commercial  
Fishing Group**

Admiral Moore, my staff was able to have remote pre-submittal discussions with Lt. Lauren Bloch in advance of the preparation of this application. We have had the good fortune of working with LT. Bloch for a third year; as always, her guidance has been extremely beneficial. We wish her well in her next endeavor.

**City of Kodiak**

**City of Kenai**

We appreciate your thorough review of this recertification request, report, and accompanying documents. I continue to be amazed at the passionate commitment and excellent performance of our volunteer leaders and staff, particularly during these last few years. Our staff has not relaxed in the performance of our duties, as evidenced by the ongoing, evolving, and growing programs and projects detailed throughout the enclosed application.

**City of Seldovia**

**City of Homer**

Please don't hesitate to contact our office at 907-283-7222 should you or your staff have any questions or require additional materials or supporting information on any of our programs. Thank you for your consideration of our request for recertification.

**Kodiak Island  
Borough**

Sincerely,

Michael Munger  
Executive Director

**Kenai Peninsula  
Borough**

Enclosures

**Municipality of  
Anchorage**

# **Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council 2020/2023 Triennial Recertification Application Submitted 15 May 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION.**

We describe in this application specific activities initiated or continued by the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC, Cook Inlet RCAC, or the Council), covering the period from the submittal of our last triennial recertification in 2020, and those projected to the end of our current period of recertification, August 31, 2023. We focus and emphasize those activities undertaken or significantly progressed since our last recertification in August of last year.

The nature of the application format requires that many activities highlighted are duplicated in other sections. We attempt to focus our response on aspects of the undertaking that best address the question; nevertheless there is some redundancy.

While most programs and projects originate and are completed within a standing committee – Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC), or Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee – it should be noted that some critical projects are coordinated and funded collaboratively. Others may include partnerships with academia, industry, and government.

Our board Directors may also be referred to as “council members”. Additionally, references made to “staff” will generally refer to the staff Director who serves as liaison to these committees: Sue Saupe is the liaison to the EMC; Steve “Vinnie” Catalano serves in that capacity with PROPS and our Protocol Control Committee. References made to Public Outreach staff apply to Shaylon Cochran. Administrative staff references include Executive Director Mike Munger and Director of Administration Maddie Jamora, with Cassandra Johnson and Candice Elias providing support. Director and staff profiles appear on our website.

We are following the triennial application format provided by the United States Coast Guard, with exhibits/attachments provided and referenced throughout the text. The application and relevant supporting documents are sent via disk; hard copies have been sent via U.S. Postal Service as well. Some documents referenced are available at the Council’s website [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org); these are identified in the narrative below.

## **SECTION 1. Membership: The Cook Inlet RCAC should be broadly representative of the interests of the communities in the geographical area.**

A Board of Directors, whose membership is governed by its Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Policies, manages the affairs of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council. Member organizations are communities affected by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, and stakeholder interest groups in the vicinity of the oil facilities as defined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). Membership is described in three member classes: Municipal Member, Interest Group, and Agency Member. These organizations appoint or elect – according to their class – individuals to represent them on the CIRCAC Board of Directors.

### **Current Board of Directors**

<b>Director</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Organization/Interest Group Represented</b>
Gary Fandrei, President	Kenai	Aquaculture Associations (seat exp. 2021, 2024)
John Williams, Vice President	Kenai	City of Kenai (seat exp. 2021, 2024)
Deric Marcorelle, Secretary/Treasurer	Soldotna	Environmental (seat exp. 2023, 2026)
Robert Peterkin, II	Kenai	Tourism (seat exp. 2022, 2025)
Carla Stanley	Homer	City of Homer (seat exp. 2021, 2024)
Bob Flint	Anchorage	Recreational (seat exp. 2022, 2025)
Paul Shadura	Kenai	Commercial Fishing (seat exp. 2021, 2024)
Rob Lindsey	Kodiak	City of Kodiak (seat exp. 2021, 2024)
Scott Arndt	Kodiak	Kodiak Island Borough (seat exp. 2023, 2026)
Walt Sonen	Seldovia	City of Seldovia (seat exp. 2022, 2025)
Michael Opheim	Seldovia	Alaska Native (seat exp. 2023, 2026)
Hans Rodvik	Anchorage	Municipality of Anchorage (seat exp. 2022, 2025)
Grace Merkes	Sterling	Kenai Peninsula Borough (seat exp. 2023, 2026)

CIRCAC's mission is a complex one, and an informed and engaged Board is invaluable to our success. The Council has been fortunate to have directors who bring both a wide variety of experience and knowledge, and who are passionate about the organization and committed to seeing it succeed. The current Board has accumulated over a combined 190 years of volunteer service to this organization.

While continuity is essential, there is always a need for new ideas and experiences to help shape our planning and outcomes. In 2022, the Municipality of Anchorage appointed

## Section 1: Membership

Hans Rodvik to the Council, replacing Molly McCammon, who served for a total of 18 years by April of 2022. Concurrently, Walt Sonen, who has served for 11 years, was reappointed to the Board by the City of Seldovia. These Directors were both seated at the Annual Meeting on April 8, 2022. In 2023, all four incumbent Directors were either reelected or reappointed by their respective Member Group.

OPA 90 identifies and requires the participation of non-voting, agency directors. The following organizations hold Ex Officio seats on the Board of Directors:

- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Division of Oil & Gas
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources – State Pipeline Coordinator’s Office
- Alaska Department of Veterans and Military Affairs – Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- U.S. Forest Service

Efforts are made to seek appointments to fill vacancies as they occur.

### **(1a) Membership policies, including the selection and appointment process for CIRCAC and any of its Committees, to ensure full public participation.**

CIRCAC Bylaws require each Director be a resident of the State of Alaska, qualified to receive an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. Only those Directors representing Interest Groups and Municipal Members have the right to vote on any matter affecting the Council. Directors serve staggered, 3-year terms. Council Policies #3 and #4 address the eligibility of organizations in Interest Groups to become members and participate in elections for representative seats.

Just before a Director's term expires, or the Director resigns or is removed, a detailed process – contained in Council Policy – is initiated. We repeat this process annually; the dates of each Group’s elections/appointment are shown in the table on pg. 2 of this application. A Municipal Member organization submits in writing the name of the person it wishes to appoint to the Board. In contrast, Certified Interest Group members nominate and then elect their representative. Directors are formally seated by a vote of the Directors at the Council’s Annual Meeting.

Should a Director leave in mid-term, the member organization may appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term (if a Municipal Member), or may elect a

## Section 1: Membership

replacement (if an Interest Group), subject to formal seating by the Board of Directors. A Director who fills a vacancy serves for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor in office. In no case may a vacancy continue for longer than six months or until the next annual meeting of the Council, whichever occurs first.

During this recertification period, no changes were made to the Council's Articles of Incorporation or Council Policies. Prompted by the unique election development in 2022 – where the Recreation Group failed to nominate either the incumbent or a new candidate as representative – amendments were made to Council Bylaws. Working with legal counsel, these amendments provide clarification of procedure should a vacancy occur due to no nominations received during an elections process, as outlined in Council Policy. CIRCAC Bylaws require that amendments to the Council's Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws have a first and second reading by the Council, over the course of two meetings. As such, the amendments pertaining to relevant Bylaw Sections 3 and 4 were presented for consideration at the September 2022 Board of Directors meeting. They were then reviewed, approved and adopted at the Council's December 2, 2022 meeting in Anchorage. These amendments to Bylaw sections, Section 3: Council; and Section 4: Election of Directors, are provided with this submittal for your information and review (**Exhibit 1**). Note, the adopted amendments are shown in red.

CIRCAC reviews its governing documents on an annual basis and recommends proposed changes to the appropriate committee if applicable.

In April 2023, the terms of four seats on the Board of Directors were set to expire – Alaska Native, Environmental, Kodiak Island Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough. In keeping with Council Policies, the procedure for nomination and election of representatives was initiated with the affected Interest Groups in late 2022. In addition, we reach out directly to numerous non-member organizations in not only the specific stakeholder groups, but in all special interest groups. Over this triennial review period, two Tourism organizations applied for and were approved for membership, bringing the current total number of members in that Group to eight. No new stakeholder organization applications for membership have been received since last year's recertification period.

Simultaneously, staff formally initiated the appointment process with the Borough Mayors – Mike Navarre (Kenai Peninsula) and Aimee Williams (Kodiak Island). Grace Merkes was reappointed to represent the Kenai Peninsula Borough, while Scott Arndt was reappointed to represent the Kodiak Island Borough. These directors were both seated at the Annual Meeting on April 14, 2023.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the Credentials Committee reviews the entire election and appointment process for Directors and public committee members, and certifies that it complies with the Council's requirements under its Bylaws and Policies. For this current election cycle, that meeting took place on March 21.

Six standing committees – consisting of volunteers (Directors and Public Members) and operating with financial and staff support from CIRCAC – assist the Council with its

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work. Four of these committees are executive, advisory or administrative in nature, and consist entirely of Directors. These are the Executive Committee, Audit Committee, Credentials Committee, and Protocol Control Committee. Two others – the Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC) and the Prevention, Response, Operations, and Safety (PROPS) Committee – are comprised of Directors as well as members of the broader public. CIRCAC recruits the Public Member participants annually or as needed, using direct community outreach, newspaper advertisements, and press releases in the Cook Inlet and Kodiak regions, along with notifications on our website and via e-newsletters. These committees and its members are presented below.

The **Executive Committee** is comprised of five Directors selected each year at the Annual Meeting. Membership is established in the Bylaws and consists of the three Council officers (President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer), and two at-large Council members. Officers are selected each year at the Annual Meeting by a majority vote. This committee meets on a near-monthly basis to transact Council business between Council meetings. Current members of the Executive Committee have served throughout the previous application year.

<b>Executive Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliate</b>
Gary Fandrei – President, Chair	Aquaculture Associations
John Williams – Vice President, Vice Chair	City of Kenai
Deric Marcorelle – Secretary/Treasurer	Environmental Group
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Robert Peterkin, II	Tourism Group

These Executive Committee assignments were made at the April 14, 2023 Annual Meeting in Kenai.

The **Audit Committee** consists entirely of Directors and is charged with assisting the Board of Directors and Executive Director in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing and monitoring:

- financial reports and other financial information provided by CIRCAC staff and the accountant(s);
- systems of internal controls regarding finance, accounting, legal compliance and business conduct that have been established;
- administration of Council and Personnel Policies pertaining to financial matters;
- audit, accounting and financial reporting processes; and
- compliance with IRS requirements

During this certification period, the Council has complied with all reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Treasury - Internal Revenue Service, and the State of Alaska's non-profit and business licensing and certification requirements established by the

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Department of Law; Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

Council Bylaws require an annual financial audit be conducted. The most recent audit for fiscal year 2021 was conducted in June of 2022 by Lambe, Tuter and Associates. For each year of this current application period, the auditors raised no significant concerns during the exit interview. Their final reports and letters of findings to the Board of Directors were presented each year to the Audit Committee and Executive Committee. Our most recent Letter of Findings from the 2021 audit is included in this submittal for your information and consideration (**Exhibit 2**). Porter & Allison, Inc. is scheduled to conduct our 2022 financial audit this coming June. The change in auditing firm is due to a cease of auditing services offered by our former auditors; Lambe, Tuter and Associates is still scheduled to continue to prepare and file CIRCAC's tax returns.

Current members of the Audit Committee are listed below.

<b>Audit Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Deric Marcorelle – Chair	Environmental Group
Robert Peterkin, II	Tourism Group
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Scott Arndt	Kodiak Island Borough

These directors have been part of this committee throughout the previous application year. These Audit Committee assignments were made at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

The **Credentials Committee** is charged with ensuring that the Council has balanced geographic and interest groups' representation pursuant to Section 5002 (d)(2)(A) of OPA 90. This committee certifies special interest group organizations for eligibility for membership and to vote in the elections of special interest group Council members (Alaska Native, Recreation, Commercial Fishing, Environmental, Tourism and Aquaculture). This committee also oversees and certifies that the annual election process for those interest group representatives is in compliance with Council Bylaws and Policies. The Credentials Committee consists entirely of Directors.

<b>Credentials Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
John Williams – Chair	City of Kenai
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Robert Peterkin, II	Tourism Group
Michael Opheim	Alaska Native Group

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These directors have been part of this committee throughout the previous application year. These Credentials Committee assignments were made at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

The **Protocol Control Committee** reviews, evaluates, and provides comments on industry contingency plans and on legislative and regulatory developments. The committee routinely addresses issues that require a timely response due to time-sensitive deadlines, and speaks for the Board on such matters. This committee meets on an “as needed” basis. The Protocol Control Committee consists entirely of Directors.

<b>Protocol Control Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Robert Peterkin, II - Chair	Tourism Group
Bob Flint	Recreational Group
Gary Fandrei	Aquaculture Associations
Rob Lindsey	City of Kodiak
Deric Marcorelle	Environmental Group
Paul Shadura	Commercial Fishing Group

There has been little turnover on this important committee. These Protocol Control Committee assignments were made at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

The **Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee and the Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC)** are structured to address specific requirements outlined in sections 5002(e) and (f) of OPA 90. Committee meetings are advertised and open to the public. Membership on each committee consists of at least three voting representatives from the Board of Directors (as opposed to non-voting Agency Directors), and 6 to 8 public members.

Public members serve staggered 3-year terms and are seated by the Council at its Annual Meeting (recently - April 14, 2023 in Kenai). Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers of wide distribution, via social media, our website and monthly electronic newsletter, in public meetings (e.g. - Chambers of Commerce) and in local community calendars. These positions are all served on a volunteer basis; out-of-pocket meeting expenses, within guidelines set by policy, are reimbursed. To be considered for appointment, members of the public must submit a letter of interest and resume.

Notifications are sent to current Committee members whose terms are expiring several months in advance. Committee members wishing to be reappointed must submit a letter of intent and an updated resume. All applicants are reviewed first at the committee level; individual(s) are selected from the candidates, and the recommendations are forwarded to the Board for final action at the Council’s Annual Meeting. Interim appointments to fill vacated seats are made on an “as needed” basis by the Council, at regularly scheduled



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meetings. Director appointments to committees and public member committee selections are made each year at the Council's Annual Meeting.

Since the last application year, the Council has been fortunate to have recruited and seated one new public member each to the EMC and PROPS Committee. Current committee members are listed as follows:

<b>PROPS: Prevention, Response, Operations &amp; Safety Committee</b> <i>(new member during this triennial review period in italics)</i>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Deric Marcorelle	Council – Environmental Group
Walt Sonen	Council – City of Seldovia
Bob Flint	Council – Recreational Group
Carla Stanley	Council – City of Homer
Michael Opheim	Council – Alaska Native Group
<i>Hans Rodvik</i>	<i>Council – Municipality of Anchorage</i>
Jan Hansen	Public
<i>Kyle Crow</i>	<i>Public</i>
Capt. Bob Pawlowski	Public
Ted Moore	Public
John Bauer	Public
<i>Cathy Foerster</i>	<i>Public</i>
<i>Justin Theriot</i>	<i>Public</i>
Jim McHale	Public

In 2023, the PROPS Committee had three public member seats available; two seats expiring, with both incumbents interested in continuing to serve, and a recently vacated seat with a 2-year term remaining. Outreach efforts yielded an interested candidate. Members of the PROPS Committee recommended reappointment of Jim McHale and John Bauer to full 3-year terms, and appointment of new candidate, Justin Theriot, to serve out the remaining 2-year vacant seat. These PROPS Committee assignments were made at the Council's Annual Meeting in April.

<b>EMC: Environmental Monitoring Committee</b> <i>(new member during this triennial review period in italics)</i>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<i>Gary Fandrei</i>	<i>Council – Aquaculture Associations</i>
Carla Stanley	Council – City of Homer
Deric Marcorelle	Council – Environmental Group
Michael Opheim	Council – Alaska Native Group
<i>Grace Merkes</i>	<i>Council – City of Kenai</i>
<i>Paul Shadura</i>	<i>Council – Commercial Fishing Group</i>
Arpad Bruce Magyar	Public
Dan Urban	Public

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Rick Frederic	Public
Dick Prentki, PhD	Public
<i>Molly McCammon</i>	<i>Public</i>
Eric Klein	Public
<i>Tim Robertson</i>	<i>Public</i>

In 2023, the EMC had two public member seats due to expire and one vacant seat. One incumbent sought re-election and outreach efforts yielded an additional candidate. In March, members of the EMC recommended reappointment of Dan Urban and new appointment of Tim Robertson, to full 3-year terms. These EMC assignments were made at the Council's Annual Meeting on April 14, 2023 in Kenai.

### **(1b) Opportunities provided for interest groups to participate.**

Council staff and Directors regularly engage with organized stakeholder interest groups, community organizations, and the general public to engage, inform, and seek active participation. Stakeholder representatives to CIRCAC routinely attend these events as well. The Council continually provides information and updates on all of our activities. Below are some examples of outreach activities conducted or planned by the Director of Communications and Public Outreach, board and committee members, and staff during this triennial recertification period. Detailed specifics are provided here for those activities which have taken place since the previous application was submitted. Note – this application period largely encompasses the Covid-19 pandemic; with many conferences and events canceled, postponed, or shifted to online-only, CIRCAC managed to participate in the following:

- Alaska Forum on the Environment – virtual.
- Alaska Marine Science Symposium – January 2021 and 2022, virtually: pre-recorded presentations for any-time viewing and live panel sessions. January 2023, Anchorage. Staff and EMC public members attended.
- Alaska Oil and Gas Association Conference – staff typically attends this annual meeting which brings together industry, regulators, stakeholder organizations and elected officials. Staff participation limited to virtual.
- Alaska Oil Spill Technology Symposium – staff has continued to participate in the organizing committee's virtual meetings since the event was postponed and throughout 2021 and 2022.
- Clean Pacific Conference – August 2022, Seattle: staff and Council members attended and exhibited at this conference and expo. Staff participated virtually in 2021.
- Gulf of Mexico Conference “virtual preview” that combines the annual Gulf of Mexico Alliance All Hands Meeting, the annual Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystems Science Conference, and the triannual State of the Gulf Summit – April 2021.

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- International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC) – This conference will resume in-person May 2024, New Orleans: CIRCAC has submitted a poster proposal and is scheduled to attend and exhibit with multiple staff and board members.
- International Oil Spill Science Conference (IOSSC) – October 2022, virtual.
- Kachemak Bay Marine Mammal Forum – Homer, Alaska.
- Kachemak Bay Science Conference – March 2021.
- Pacific Marine Expo – November 2021 and 2022, Seattle: we continue to support this important annual event. We exhibit in the highly visible, special Alaska section, partnering close to the Prince William Sound RCAC. Members of our board attended.
- Prince William Sound RCAC Science Night – December 2022, Anchorage.
- Scholarship Fairs/Job Fairs – staff has attended occasionally in Kenai, Soldotna, and Homer to support our scholarship offerings.
- Miscellaneous
  - During the period covered by this application, CIRCAC staff and Directors regularly attended meetings of local organizations, including Borough Assemblies and Municipal Councils, chambers of commerce, Rotary Club of Kenai, Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, and others.
  - Memberships – CIRCAC supports the Chambers of Commerce in Kodiak, Kenai, Homer, and Soldotna through membership.

As part of our public outreach, at many of these events, we routinely provide items we believe will either inform or engage our audiences. Our most versatile, if not important tool, could be our “ship stick”, a flash drive in the shape of an oil tanker which contains two separate drives: one provides a 10 minute narrated slideshow presenting an overview of CIRCAC, while the second contains some 270 images, most taken from the Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island ShoreZone photos. There is also 7GB of storage capacity on this drive. We are in our 4<sup>th</sup> ‘printing’ of this popular item. We also distribute our Annual Report and display our *Coastal Impressions* catalog, as well as a variety of give-away items – tote bags, dry bags, buckets, pens, calendars and more just to enhance our brand and put our name, logo and website in front of the public.

### Community Visits & Presentations

CIRCAC staff provides formal and informal presentations to numerous local governments and stakeholder organizations every year to support our outreach, encourage participation, and share perspectives on key matters pertaining to regulatory matters or incidents. During this period, staff met with:

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Kenai Peninsula Office of Emergency Management
- Kenaitze Tribe’s Environmental Committee

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- Rotary Club of Kenai
- Arctic and Western Alaska Area Planning Committee

In addition, CIRCAC actively recruits non-member organizations for the Board of Director's interest group seats on an annual basis – to generally coincide with the expiration of each seat's three-year term – with certification at that time being a condition of voting eligibility. However, applications may be accepted, reviewed, and acted upon by the Credentials Committee at any time.

Furthering our public outreach efforts, we send a letter to organizations from an extensive list of non-member interest groups, introducing CIRCAC and requesting they consider becoming and actively participating as a Certified member. Responding organizations are then authenticated as to meeting the criteria outlined in Council Policy #3, and if approved by the Credentials Committee, are added as a Certified member organization. They are then allowed to participate in our election process by nominating and voting for their respective Interest Group representative.

### **(i) Local commercial fishing industry organizations whose members depend on the fisheries resource of the waters in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Certified Commercial Fishing Organizations (7)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association	Kodiak
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank	Kodiak
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association	Soldotna
North Pacific Fisheries Association	Homer
Northern District Setnetters Association	Anchorage
United Cook Inlet Drift Association	Soldotna
Alaska Salmon Alliance	Kenai

<b>Non-Member Commercial Fishing Organizations Contacted (10)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Cook Inlet Seiners Association	Homer
United Salmon Association – Kodiak	Kodiak
Alaska Draggers Association	Kodiak
Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation	Wrangell
North Pacific Marine Fishery Mgt. Council	Anchorage
Golden King Crab Coalition	Kodiak
Alaska Scallop Association	Lakewood, WA
Halibut Association of North America	Deming, WA
Halibut Coalition	Juneau

## Section 1: Membership

South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Assn.	Kenai
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### (ii) Aquaculture Associations in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:

Certified Aquaculture Associations (2)	
Name	Office Location
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association	Kenai
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association	Kodiak

### (iii) Alaska Native Corporations and other Alaska Native organizations whose members reside in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:

Certified Alaska Native Organizations (12)	
Name	Office Location
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.	Anchorage
Kenai Natives Association, Inc.	Kenai
Kenaitze Indian Tribe	Kenai
Nanwalek IRA Council	Nanwalek
Natives of Kodiak, Inc.	Kodiak
Ninilchik Native Association, Inc.	Ninilchik
Port Graham Village Council	Port Graham
Port Graham Corporation	Anchorage
Seldovia Native Association	Seldovia
Seldovia Village Tribe	Seldovia
Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak	Kodiak
Native Village of Eklutna	Chugiak

Non-Member Alaska Native Organizations Contacted (17)	
Name	Office Location
Afognak Native Corporation	Kodiak
Chugach Alaska Regional Corporation	Anchorage
Cook Inlet Tribal Council	Anchorage
Knik Tribal Council	Palmer
Koniag, Inc.	Kodiak
Native Village of Karluk	Karluk
Native Village of Larsen Bay	Larsen Bay
Ninilchik Traditional Council	Ninilchik
Old Harbor Native Corporation	Old Harbor

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Old Harbor Tribal Council	Old Harbor
Ouzinkie Tribal Council	Ouzinkie
Ouzinkie Native Corporation	Ouzinkie
Native Village of Port Lions	Port Lions
Salamatof Native Association	Kenai
Native Village of Tyonek	Tyonek
Tyonek Native Corporation	Tyonek
Native Village of Afognak	Kodiak

**(iv) Environmental organizations whose members reside in the vicinity of Cook Inlet, Kodiak or the terminal facilities:**

<b>Certified Environmental Organizations (11)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Kenai Watershed Forum	Soldotna
Kodiak Audubon Society	Kodiak
National Parks Conservation Association	Anchorage
ReGroup	Soldotna
The Alaska Center	Anchorage
Alaska Marine Conservation Council	Anchorage
Cook Inletkeeper	Homer
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies	Homer
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society	Homer
Great Land Trust	Anchorage
Anchorage Waterways Council	Anchorage

<b>Non-Member Environmental Organizations Contacted (8)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Anchorage
Anchorage Audubon Society	Anchorage
Audubon Alaska	Anchorage
Kachemak Heritage Land Trust	Homer
Sierra Club Alaska	Anchorage
The Wilderness Society	Anchorage
Nature Conservancy of Alaska	Anchorage
Trout Unlimited – Kenai Peninsula Chapter	Kenai

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**(v) Recreational organizations whose members reside in or use the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Certified Recreational Organizations (4)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Alaska Charter Association	Homer
Alaska Sport Fishing Association	Anchorage
Kenai River Sportfishing Association	Soldotna
Kenai River Professional Guide Association	Soldotna

<b>Non-Member Recreational Organizations Contacted (3)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
South Central Alaska Dipnetters Association	Wasilla
Alaska Fly Fishers	Anchorage
Alaska Outdoor Alliance	Anchorage

**(vi) Tourism Organizations whose members reside in or use the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Certified Tourism Organizations (7)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce	Anchorage
Kenai Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center	Kenai
Soldotna Chamber of Commerce	Soldotna
Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center	Homer
Kodiak Chamber of Commerce	Kodiak
Visit Anchorage	Anchorage
Seldovia Chamber of Commerce	Seldovia

Note: Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council is no longer active as of 2022 and was removed.

<b>Non-Member Tourism Organizations Contacted (9)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Office Location</b>
Alaska Campground Owners Association	Anchorage
Alaska Recreation & Parks Association	Anchorage

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Alaska Travel Industry Association	Anchorage
Anchorage AK Bed & Breakfast Association	Anchorage
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce	Anchorage
Anchor Point Chamber of Commerce	Anchor Point
Girdwood Chamber of Commerce	Girdwood
Homer Bed & Breakfast Association	Homer
Discover Kodiak	Kodiak

### **(1c) The extent to which meetings are publicized in the media and are accessible to members of the general public.**

CIRCAC publicizes board and program committee (PROPS and EMC) meetings through press releases, public service announcements submitted to local newspapers in the region, and via direct e-mail notifications to encourage attendance from all regional citizens and the media. In addition, we utilize our monthly Cook Inlet RCAC e-newsletter, our website [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org), and social media outlets to not only promote our meetings but to also provide links to meeting documents and presentations received if available. All visitors – including industry, government, designated stakeholder groups, the media or the general public – are welcome to attend and are provided an opportunity to comment at these meetings.

Typically, three meetings of the Board of Directors are held each year – one in Kenai, one in Anchorage, and the third rotated among the more outlying communities in CIRCAC’s Area of Concern. We feel this enhances participation from all stakeholders and board members and heightens the Council’s visibility. By way of illustration, below are our actual and planned Board meeting schedules for this application period:

<b>Board of Directors Meeting Schedule</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Locations</b>
2020	Kenai*, Seldovia*, Anchorage*
2021	Kenai*, Seldovia*, Anchorage*
2022	Kenai*, Seldovia, Anchorage
2023 (Projected)	Kenai, Homer, Anchorage

\* Note – out of an abundance of caution, this meeting, like so many others, took place virtually. CIRCAC resumed in-person board meetings in the fall of 2022, while still offering hybrid-virtual capabilities; after successfully meeting in Seldovia after years of having to re-locate or cancel due to severe weather and the Covid-19 pandemic, we will resume our rotating schedule in the fall between locations – typically, Seldovia, Homer, Kodiak.



## **SECTION 2. Communication: Establishing communications with industry and government.**

We place a high value on our relationships with industry, regulatory agencies and elected officials, based on honesty, integrity, and consistency. The outreach tools created and presented to interest groups and the general public are essential to our communications to those with whom we partner. These are previously discussed in Section 1, but are touched on again in this section.

CIRCAC maintains open, cooperative communications with government and industry to promote safer oil transportation and facility operations in our area. The Council has been very successful using a workgroup approach, whereby all interested parties come to the table to address issues and determine a cooperative plan for attaining goals.

In an effort to set our course and better communicate our programs to funding sources, research partners, industry and government, the Council developed a Strategic Plan, adopted in 2009 and updated throughout the years, most recently in 2020, 2022, and 2023. The Strategic Plan allows CIRCAC to better coordinate its OPA 90 mandates, research efforts, and partnerships, as the document lays out specific program purposes, goals, strategies, and outcomes for all to study. At the recent Board and Annual Meeting in Kenai, the Council Priorities section of the Strategic Plan was updated. These updates, with the approved revisions noted in red, are presented with this application for reference (**Exhibit 3**). New formatting and graphic layouts are planned for the overall Strategic Plan document, making revisions and updates easier to incorporate in the future.

### **(2a) How CIRCAC works with industry and government to establish and employ communications protocols for reviewing policies, projects and release of information relating to the operation and maintenance of the oil terminal facilities and crude oil tankers which affect or may affect the environment in the vicinity of the respective terminals.**

The Council regularly provides industry, government agencies and elected officials with new information and updates on all Council activities, programs and projects in a variety of ways. In this way we share available data, gain valuable insight and avoid redundancy. Below are some examples of outreach, conferences, media and activities conducted or planned by the Council staff and volunteers during the period of this triennial recertification:

- Government Visits – The Council’s President and Executive Director would frequently visit our Congressional delegation in Washington, DC, and during their visits home prior to the Covid-19 pandemic; these visits have since been virtual meetings. Similarly, staff and Directors meet with state legislators, aides, and agency staff on a wide array of topics both formally and informally.

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- Ex Officio Directors – As previously mentioned, ten agencies – state and federal – are represented on our Council’s Board as non-voting Directors.
- Protocol Control Committee – CIRCAC’s standing committee reviews staff-developed comments on proposed regulatory changes, C-Plan reviews, relevant industry permit activities, and more. See Sec. 5 for details of comments delivered during this period.
- Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) – CIRCAC’s Executive Director serves on the management board, and staff holds primary and alternate positions on the committee, chairs the Harbor Safety Plan workgroup, and provides additional administrative support. Among other initiatives, the HSC has developed and annually updates a Harbor Safety Plan; addressed a Navigation Advisory concerning under-keel clearances; continued development of an area-wide Marine Firefighting Manual; and has assumed development and management of the annual winter ice guidelines.
- Meetings, Work Groups and Conferences – Staff and volunteers regularly attend and participate actively in multi-agency, scientific and industry meetings, work groups, conferences and expos to learn, share and promote. We encourage volunteers serving on our Board or committees to consider attending such conferences as well. We are frequently invited to present the findings of our research activities or innovative projects, and participate as a vendor in many of the associated expos. For example, during this application period, among such key events we attended are (some duplications from pages 9 and 10 above):
  - ADF&G personnel – tutorial presented by Sue Saupe focused on oil spill planning and response, demonstrating access on NOAA and AOOS portals
  - Alaska Forum on the Environment – typically February, staff attended virtual sessions and presentations.
  - Alaska Marine Science Symposium (AMSS) – January 2023, CIRCAC staff and volunteers attended; workgroup sessions; poster sessions. Pre-recorded presentations and live panels, virtually, in 2021 and 2022.
  - Alaska Oil and Gas Association Conference
  - Alaska Oil Spill Technology Symposium – planning committee meetings
  - Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT)
  - Alaska Research Consortium (ARC) – staff participated in board meetings in 2020 - 2023 and serves on the ARC Executive Committee.
  - Alaska Support Industry Alliance regional meetings
  - American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) – staff and volunteers are active in the organization and committees pertinent to CIRCAC’s mission.
  - Arctic and Marine Oilspill Program (AMOP) Technical Seminar on Environmental Contamination and Response (virtual)
  - Arctic and Western Alaska (AWA) Area C-Plan Committee – staff routinely participates in meetings and the relevant GRS Subcommittee, Administration Subcommittee, Exercise and Training Subcommittee, External Communications Subcommittee, and Regional Stakeholder Committee (RSC) Taskforce meetings.

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- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) National Academies Work Session
  - BOEM Public Hearing for Federal Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258
  - BOEM Post-Award Meeting and presentation of draft Science Plan
  - Clean Pacific Conference – staff and board members attended in Seattle in August 2022.
  - Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation – virtual
  - Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response Annual Board of Directors Meeting
  - Drill Planning – Staff is frequently invited to participate and contribute in industry drill planning meetings.
  - ExxonMobil Oil Response Knowledge Transfer series (monthly webinar)
  - Gulf of Mexico Conference “virtual preview” that combines the annual Gulf of Mexico Alliance All Hands Meeting, the annual Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystems Science Conference, and the triannual State of the Gulf Summit
  - International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC) – virtual participation in 2021. Staff and board members plan to attend and exhibit, now resumed for May 2024.
  - Kachemak Bay Marine Mammal Forum – Homer, Alaska
  - Kachemak Bay Science Conference – March 2021, Homer: staff presented data and conducted a workshop on data portals with research partners at AOOS.
  - Kachemak Bay/Lower Cook Inlet Marine Ecosystem Workgroup meetings – staff presented our BOEM Contaminant Study in 2022
  - Kenaitze Tribe's Environmental Committee – staff provided a presentation
  - Marine Mammal Management in Oil Spill Response (webinar)
  - NOAA's Kasitsna Bay Lab tour – organized by the AK Regional Office; research demonstrations and updates provided by a variety of facility scientists and area-project leaders.
  - NOAA's monthly online presentation series “You Don't know What You Don't Know”
  - Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) – staff regularly attend board and Workplan Committee meetings
  - Oil Spill Science Conference – October 2022, organized by the Multi-Partner Research Initiative
  - Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force Annual Meetings – staff routinely participates virtually.
  - ShoreZone Annual Meeting and relevant meetings pertaining to fieldwork, partnerships, and research updates.
  - Tug Escort and Emergency Response Tow Vessel webinar
- Website – we use our website to inform viewers of our research and our positions on matters of significance to our mandates in Cook Inlet; to post comments for C-plan review, regulation development and legislative matters, and to provide updates on our projects, meetings and much more.

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- Annual Reports <https://www.circac.org/outreach/annual-reports/> (**Exhibit 4**)
- Newsletters <https://www.circac.org/outreach/cook-inlet-navigator-e-newsletter/> (**Exhibit 5**; recent e-newsletter edition)
- Meeting Notifications – We maintain distribution groups of industry, agency, media and stakeholder contacts to notify of board and committee meetings.
- Target lists – We maintain distribution groups to share publications, notifications, newsletters and other published materials we receive.
- Scholarships – Each year, CIRCAC awards two \$2,500 scholarships to students who reside in the vicinity of Cook Inlet with educational and career ambitions that mirror our congressional mandates. To date, we have awarded students from Kodiak, Homer, Kenai, Soldotna, Anchorage, Anchor Point and Nikiski who are entering environmental science or maritime studies programs throughout the country. Our process has recently closed for our 2023 offerings. The Council also helped launch – with Marathon Petroleum and the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) – and continues to partially fund, an annual \$2,500 Marine Operator Scholarship (recipient chosen by AVTEC instructors).

CIRCAC invites all of our industry and regulatory partners to our Board and key committee meetings where we provide updates of existing projects and plans for future projects, and invite update and feedback. This ensures that those partners are informed of our activities and can provide input and recommendations for improved actions.

A key component of participating in policy reviews and related projects is to ensure that the Council is informed of these activities in a timely fashion. This is especially important for issues that are time-sensitive and have limited review or comment periods. First and foremost is our longstanding relationship with the key industry and agency personnel. Additionally, we actively seek to ensure we are on notification lists and are provided the pertinent information to participate in the process. This is accomplished by participation on various “list serve” groups and workgroups; receipt and review of newsletters and public notices; and routine review of Coast Guard and Alaska Legislature notices. We also turn to scientists, regulators, industry experts, and sources of traditional knowledge to inform our Directors and public members regarding any number of matters before the Council, particularly those affecting proposed projects or policy and regulatory issues. Examples include:

- Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) – as a high priority recommendation made by the Cook Inlet Marine Risk Assessment Advisory Panel, the HSC was created and represents a true panel of experts. As previously mentioned, CIRCAC staff serves on the Managing Board, and hold primary and alternate positions on the Committee. An early accomplishment emerging from the Harbor Safety Plan Workgroup – chaired by Vinnie Catalano – was the adoption of an annual Harbor

## Section 2: Communication

Safety Plan. Other workgroups established currently include: Navigation, Marine Salvage, and Marine Firefighting. Visit:  
[www.cookinletharborsafetycommittee.org](http://www.cookinletharborsafetycommittee.org).

- Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) – CIRCAC staff developed and delivers training sessions for industry and agency staff on the use of CIRT, which itself is a collaborative product of dozens of partners. Staff advocates for the use of CIRT at each spill drill and exercise attended, and receives feedback to improve the tool. In addition, CIRT is continually assessed for integration and compatibility with other programs and databases – i.e. the Geographic Resource Inventory Database (GRID), Geographic Response Strategies (GRS), and Emergency Response Management Application (ERMA).
- AVTEC Marine Training – The Alaska Vocational Technical Center operates and maintains three ship simulators on their Seward campus. CIRCAC staff and board members were recently given an opportunity to try the simulator training through a variety of mooring scenarios. The 2022 event was part of the industry Pre-Winter Meeting, a chance for maritime industry operators to come together, provide operational updates, highlight resources and concerns to aid in safe winter operations, and to plan for the coming ice season. Hosted by Marathon Petroleum and AVTEC, previous training experiences at the technical center led to the creation of the previously mentioned maritime scholarship, co-funded by Marathon and CIRCAC. AVTEC provides invaluable training experience for area operators and the maritime community.
- Industry Operations – CIRCAC solicits presentations from industry to address the PROPS Committee, EMC and Council about crude oil exploration, production, pipeline, and marine operations in Cook Inlet (see Sec. 2c, iii).
- Ice camera network – A new camera was successfully installed at the Marathon LNG facility dock, offering improved camera resolution and field of view. The ice monitoring cameras were recently offered for use by project managers of an ‘oil in ice’ project, a collaboration proposed among NOAA, CISPRI, U.S. Coast Guard, and the University of New Hampshire’s Coastal Response Research Center. Staff continues to upgrade the circuitry to each ice camera for faster data speeds at a lower operating cost. Access and/or control of the ice camera network and/or specific cameras have been provided to the NOAA Ice Forecaster, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, Marathon Marine, and the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association.
- Permit and Regulation Reviews – CIRCAC receives notifications of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) or Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) permits. Though we comment with the rest of the public, we receive notifications by email and phone call prior to pertinent draft Cook Inlet permits release for review. We are also on multiple distribution lists to receive notification from agencies directly, or through publications of upcoming

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proposed changes to policies, permits and site-specific regulations within CIRCAC's purview.

### Website ([www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org))

Staff is working with SunDog Media to redesign the Council's website. A preliminary review of the design proposal was completed in 2022, and the final website proposal and contract for the project were approved in early 2023. Goals for the new site include a more easily navigable document library, allowing CIRCAC to better archive important files and projects; better support for visual elements including video content; and an overall streamlined design, making it user-friendly, as well as an asset as we continue to expand our research studies and reports. A preliminary mock-up of the site design has been completed and staff have had the opportunity for comments and revisions. The website redesign is currently underway, and staff is hopeful CIRCAC's new website will be live later this summer. The current website will continue to remain live until the new one is completed and takes its place.

### Directors Update

We compile this report after each Board meeting to provide directors with a summary of key information and actions coming out of the meetings. These are designed to be shared directly with their constituent Interest Groups (**Exhibit 6**).

### Electronic Newsletter: *Cook Inlet RCAC Newsletter*

CIRCAC staff publishes an electronic newsletter – now titled *Cook Inlet RCAC Newsletter* – generally distributed monthly to several hundred recipients, including federal and state legislators, local officials, agency personnel, stakeholders, industry contacts and many others. The newsletter is often a source of stories for media, and has served to heighten the visibility of the organization and the work we're doing in the community. We have profiled most of our Directors and public members. We continue to get new subscribers each month, with the number of subscribers growing considerably year over year. As previously listed, a recent edition is included (**Exhibit 5**).

### Annual Report

The Council's Annual Report summarizes the activities and projects undertaken, ongoing or completed by the Council and its committees during the prior year. CIRCAC distributes the report widely through direct mail, as well as at meetings and public outreach events. A link to an electronic version of the report is also emailed and posted on our website for download. The Annual Reports are distributed to relevant government agencies and companies that are involved in CIRCAC issues, as well as state and national legislators, mayors and village leaders within the Cook Inlet region, local chambers, libraries, school districts, and many other entities and interested citizens. The 2021 Annual Report is provided with the hard copy of this application (**Exhibit 4**); visit [www.circac.org/outreach/annual-reports/](http://www.circac.org/outreach/annual-reports/) for our online editions. The 2022 Annual Report is being finalized as of this writing.

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### Social Media

Social media tools allow us to communicate more quickly and effectively with our stakeholders. In the event of a major oil spill incident, they will be crucial to our staying ahead of the published news and to engaging concerned citizens who could be impacted, or who may have important information to share with us to aid in the response. Facebook and Instagram ads and blog postings have helped us promote our scholarship offerings, calls for action, public events and opportunities, as well as publicize vacancies for public committee member seats and for the Harbor Safety Committee.

### Earned Media

CIRCAC garners valuable earned media mentions for its many projects, reports, and activities. Since our last application, covering 2022 and into this year, we've seen the following media coverage:

- 11.2022 Interview for the Kenai Conversation on KDLL radio. Staff discussed CIRCAC's recent activities, establishment of the ice camera network, participation in drills and trainings, and work addressing proposed regulatory changes by ADEC.
- 07.2022 Opinion piece published in the Anchorage Daily News, Peninsula Clarion and Homer News, noting the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alaska House Bill 567, which created the framework for Alaska's leading oil spill prevention and response regulations.

### Advertisements

To further our branding strategy, we have purchased print ads in special editions of the Peninsula Clarion and Alaska Business Magazine; local Chamber of Commerce *Visitor Guides*; as well as the *Alaska Visitors Guide* published by the Anchorage Daily News. These local publications enjoy wide distribution throughout our area of responsibility and help with positive branding. We also continue to run a digital poster ad in the newly renovated Kenai Municipal Airport.

Social media posts increase and support our brand recognition and promote our activities. Ads support our scholarship offerings, calls for volunteer participation on the Council, and calls for public comment on our recertification applications and regulatory matters.

In addition, our broadly placed radio ad campaign promoting our work and encouraging public engagement continued throughout this application period, with rotating messages and new information being incorporated regularly.

Finally and as mentioned previously, we utilize paid ads in local newspapers (Kodiak, Homer, Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage) to inform the public about our elections and membership outreach, available committee seats, the review of our recertification application and availability of a public comment period, and other vital announcements.

**(2b) The extent to which Cook Inlet RCAC participates in discussions with industry and government concerning permits, plans and site-specific regulations governing the activities and actions of the facilities which affect or may affect the environment in the vicinity of the terminal facilities and of crude oil tankers calling at those facilities.**

By ensuring open communication with our industry and government partners we also ensure that we are available to provide additional detail on specific projects, plans, reviews and other activities. CIRCAC staff members are in constant contact with industry and agency personnel on various issues related to their expertise. Thus, when timely issues do come up, those contacts are in place.

For example, in 2022 staff collaborated with Prince William Sound RCAC and coordinated with the various municipalities in our area of concern, to introduce resolutions of support for our comments to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation regarding its ongoing process to address potential changes to state spill prevention and response statutes. City Councils in Kenai, Homer, Seldovia, Kodiak, and both Kodiak Island and Kenai Peninsula Borough Assemblies adopted their respective supporting resolutions.

By continually engaging and participating with industry and government personnel on a range of issues and platforms, we promote discussions about all of our activities and concerns. Examples where we participate or coordinate our activities with our partners include:

- Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings and workgroups – Staff attends all ARRT meetings, in order to observe and monitor agency activities. The project and operational updates are vital. We participate in several subcommittees, along with the Wildlife Protection Committee. CIRCAC has been working cooperatively with the ADEC and the USCG to convert the GRS catalog to a Geographic Information System (GIS) format. We have also been working with Prince William Sound RCAC, the ADEC, EPA, and the USCG to develop a Liaison Officers Job Aide for a Regional Stakeholders Committee.
- Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) – CIRCAC Director of Science and Research regularly attends these Advisory Board Meetings and serves as a member of the Workplan Committee, which evaluates study ideas and proposals to develop the project plans and budget each year. Participation in early 2023 also included review of multiple proposals submitted under OSRI's RFPs and Graduate Research Grant Program.
- Arctic and Western Alaska (AWA) Area Subcommittees: Staff participates in the GRS subcommittee to aid the transition from the legacy pdf version of the GRS catalog to a GIS database version, and the inclusion of CIRCAC's stream crossing GRS data. CIRCAC is also facilitating the initial development phase of GRS



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validation and update processing guidelines in contract with the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Staff also participates on the AWA Administration subcommittee, participating in subcommittee meetings and providing recommendations and advice as our expertise and assets allow.

- We work with agency personnel at EPA and ADEC to remain up-to-date on issues related to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) permitting activities for oil and gas exploration, development and production facilities in state and federal waters of Cook Inlet. Our Protocol Control Committee submits comments when appropriate.
- Staff attends the annual maritime Pre-Winter Meeting sponsored by Marathon Petroleum Maritime and supported by the U.S. Coast Guard, Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee, CIRCAC and others. Attendees collaborate on recommended safety measures and staff provides updates on CIRCAC projects that may serve the maritime community, like the ice camera network and the tank vessel self-arrest study. This critical meeting addresses Cook Inlet-specific winter operating limitations, procedures, and policies while providing a forum for Cook Inlet's marine operators.
- Alaska Oil Spill Technology Symposium – Staff has previously attended the symposium and continued to participate in the planning committee's virtual meetings throughout 2022. Sponsors include the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, among others. In addition to presentations and posters by speakers from the research community, the regulatory and response communities in attendance also describe their information needs and decision processes. This event provides an opportunity to learn about emerging research, agency initiatives, developing technologies, incident management and policy development. At this writing, the 2022 Symposium has been postponed until further notice.
- Contingency Plan reviews – see Section 5, part a
- Pipeline infrastructure reports – see Section 4, part a
- Reports on tanker operations at docks – see Section 5, part f

### **(2c) The extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC works to build cooperation rather than confrontation with industry and government, by:**

By ongoing dialogue and staying aware of each other's activities, CIRCAC, industry and government representatives are better able to find consensus on difficult issues and opportunities for innovation. Below are a few examples:

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- Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) Meetings – Staff attended all of the ARRT meetings to observe and monitor agency activities, and participates as a member of the Science and Technology Committee, Wildlife Protection Committee, Administration, Exercise and Training, and GRS Subcommittees, and the RSC Task Force. See prior reference.
- Spill Drills and Training (see Section 4, part b for details).
- Marine Firefighting Training – CIRCAC continues to support this area-wide intensive marine firefighting and emergency response training symposium.
- Our close working relationships with the U. S. Coast Guard Sector Anchorage and the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment in Homer provide a conduit for exchange of information and documents related to specific issues about the environmentally safe operation of the facilities and tankers in Cook Inlet.
- Elected officials, representatives from local, state and federal governments and industry attend - and frequently are invited to participate in - board and committee meetings by making presentations and addressing questions. The Council provides materials such as agendas, meeting packets, and background information by email and website postings prior to those meetings.
- CIRCAC's Board includes Ex-Officio seats for ten state and federal government agencies including the United States Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. These are non-voting positions.
- The Executive Director of CIRCAC and the Charter Funding Companies' representatives meet regularly to discuss programs, projects and working relations between the organizations.
- Staff attends the annual industry Pre-Winter Meeting to collaborate on recommended safety measures and provide updates on the ice camera network.
- Staff was invited and recently attended the first planning meeting for the Kenai Peninsula Trucking Accident and Spill Response Workshop. The workshop's objective is to help understand individual roles and responsibilities during a tank truck spill incident, providing better coordination between response agencies and determining how the varying groups can assist each other during such an event.
- CIRCAC staff interacts regularly with officials of the production, refining, and shipping companies operating in Cook Inlet, and executives of these companies often attend and provide presentations to the Board and committees.

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- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) – CIRCAC staff serves as a primary member on the committee, which provides outreach opportunities and education for members and to prepare emergency response plans for all hazards, whether natural or manmade, occurring in the community; and to establish procedures for receiving and processing requests from the public for information generated by SARA Title III reporting requirements.
- Coordinated Research and Monitoring – The Council works closely with industry and agency partners when developing research and monitoring programs. During the period 2020-2023, our field programs were coordinated with multiple government agencies for both funding and to conduct the research.
- Free Exchange of Tools and Data - CIRCAC has developed directly or in partnership with other organizations a wealth of research data, much of which has been integrated with other information to create useful tools for oil spill response. Projects such as our ice camera network, ShoreZone and others have enhanced field research to produce tools such as the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT). Shared data supports incident response.

### **(i) Working with industry and government to develop spill prevention and contingency plans, staff...:**

CIRCAC staff and committees regularly review new or proposed changes to legislation, regulations, reporting requirements, planning and response documents, permitting and other related matters. Recommendations from staff and consultants are presented to the Council's Protocol Control Committee to review and authorize the submittal of Council comments, inquiries, and recommendations. Examples are provided below:

- Participates in industry drill planning meetings to ensure the exercises address pertinent factors.
- Participates in industry drill exercises and training to provide advice and recommendations in various Incident Command System (ICS) sections, and to observe performance against C-Plans' provisions.
- Reviews and provides comments on industry contingency plans – see Section 5, parts a and b for a full listing – as well as new regulations and proposed amendments. Staff reviews federal, state, and individual applications as they come up.
- Participates at the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings and on related workgroups and subcommittees; staff provides comments and presents data and information to ARRT for review of draft Dispersant Use Guidelines.

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- Participates in the Arctic and Western Alaska (AWA) Area Plan subcommittees and workgroups led by ADEC and USCG.
- Attends all Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee and Management Board meetings, which has produced an annually reviewed Harbor Safety Plan.
- Provides training to industry and agency personnel for online ShoreZone data portals, the Cook Inlet Response Tool, and Geographic Resource Inventory Database (GRID).

### **(ii) To coordinate study projects, policies, and legislative or regulatory recommendations, staff...:**

The Council invests significant effort to coordinate with other organizations, agencies, and industry while planning for and conducting our study projects in order to leverage logistics, experience, and funding. We also stay informed of the activities and plans of others to identify where an additional partnership with CIRCAC might enhance the overall study and fill data gaps for Cook Inlet. As described in more detail later, we have coordinated study plans with AOOS, NOAA, BOEM, OSRI, UAF, and NPS for circulation model testing and development, contaminant data synthesis, deployment of ocean sensors, and coastal surveys.

In addition, the Council regularly provides comments pertinent to proposed changes to legislation, regulations, or policies which affect oil facility operations, spill prevention and response. During this application period, we submitted comments on the following:

Special Project – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation began taking public comment regarding revisions to the Oil Discharge Prevention and C-Plan Plans and Streamlined Plans (18 AAC 75 Article 4). CIRCAC launched a communications campaign in partnership with Prince William Sound RCAC to heighten public awareness and ensure that none of the existing oil spill prevention protections are weakened. CIRCAC has written letters, encouraged comments, drafted resolutions, contacted legislators and stakeholder organizations, and posted vital information in our newsletters and on our website. CIRCAC continues to closely monitor ADEC regulation revisions.

### **(iii) Keep industry and government interests informed of plans, findings, and recommendations:**

- Presentations and Public Comment – At both the Board and committee levels, CIRCAC routinely invites representatives of government and industry to participate in discussions and to make presentations regarding matters before the Council. The list below reflects our attempt to solicit and share expert presentations from state and federal agencies, stakeholders, the scientific community, the oil and gas and maritime industries, and spill response interests –

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shared with our Directors, committees, and stakeholders since the last recertification period:

- Mayor Peter Micciche, Kenai Peninsula Borough – Borough update of staffing and ongoing projects, including a new passenger terminal in Seward and harbor expansion in Homer.
- Captain Leanne Lusk, Commander Sector Anchorage, U.S. Coast Guard (multiple presentations) – provided an overview and update on Sector’s operations, including the USCG Authorization Act, Alternative Planning Criteria discussions, cyber security, change in command and staffing, spill response and preparedness, recent response incidents/cases, vessel and facility inspections, and navigation safety. Additionally, presented the 2022/2023 Ice Guidelines.
- Mayor Dave Bronson, Municipality of Anchorage – Port of Alaska importance, renovations, and funding.
- Mary Beth-Schreck, Sea Ice Program Leader, National Weather Service Alaska – update and details on the Sea Ice Analysis Program
- Vinnie Catalano, CIRCAC Director of Operations – Cook Inlet Ice Monitoring Network and details of camera sites and users
- Todd Paxton, CISPRI General Manager – updates on training and ice overflights
- Captain Paul Mehler, Senior Port Captain, Marathon Petroleum – review of ice checklist and ice operations, including Marathon KPL standards and tug operations.
- Captain Debra Cobb, Global Marine Assurance Manager, Marathon – reviewed Marathon’s marine vessel vetting process and Ship Inspection Report Program.
- David Duffy, Hilcorp Land Department – discussed tidal energy concepts and idea of platforms being repurposed for research stations.
- Captain Marc Bayer, VP Marine Operations with Mark Nielson, Manager of Marine Operations; Marathon Petroleum Company – operations update, including company safety tenets and Cook Inlet winterization enhancements.
- Lori Nelson, Manager of Public Affairs, Hilcorp – operational update including decommissioning of the Christy Lee platform, overview of Hilcorp’s acquisitions, and company/employee grants program.
- Resolve Marine presentation with Eric Smith, Director of Shared Resources; Todd Duke, General Manager of Compliance Services; and A.W. McAfee, Alaska General Manager – overview and history of company, services available in Alaska, and response examples from around the world.
- Bryan Hawkins, Homer Harbor – presentation on the Homer Port Expansion Project, including funding for survey and next steps.
- Geoff Merrell, BlueCrest Energy – operational update including details on facility improvements and recently filed C-Plan.

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- Sierra Fletcher, Nuka Research – summary of report on the impacts of Covid-19 on oil spill preparedness in Cook Inlet. Additionally, the 2022 Vessel Traffic Summary was presented.
- Alisha Chartier, Nuka Research – update on GRID project.
- Diane Dunham, Energy Response Coordinator, Hilcorp – Alaska operations summary and company history/timeline.
- Dr. Jessica Garron, UAF International Arctic Research Center – GRS and uncrewed aerial systems project.
- *Photochemical Formation and Subsequent Bioaccumulation of Hydrocarbon Oxidation Products from High Latitude Oils Spills*, presented by Maxwell Harsha from the University of New Orleans, and Angel Fouche with UAA.
- Dr. Tahzay Jones, Oceans Coordinator, National Parks Service, Anchorage – presentation showcasing research activities by the NPS in Cook Inlet and nearby areas.

Our meetings allow informal comment from attendees – including members of the general public - and we receive valuable input from many, notably:

- Lt. Nick Capuzzi, U.S. Coast Guard
  - Allison Natcher, Ex Officio Director sit-in, ADEC
  - Jonathon Schick, Ex Officio Director, AK Dept. of Natural Resources
  - Craig Hyder, Marathon Petroleum
  - Catherine Berg, Ex Officio Director, NOAA
  - Mary Goolie, Ex Officio Director sit-in, Environmental Protection Agency
  - Dr. Heather Crowley, Ex Officio Director, BOEM
- 
- The Council invites researchers to address the Board or committees on relevant science and includes government agencies and Cook Inlet oil industry operators on common issues.
  - Government agency representatives serve on the board as Ex Officio members and receive Board and committee meeting notifications, information packets (which include agendas, calendars, staff reports, and project reports) for each meeting, as well as quarterly e-newsletters and bulletins, as appropriate.
  - Industry affiliates are provided Board and committee meeting notifications, which include a link to our website for meeting agendas or information packets. Staff provides industry representatives an annual briefing.
  - Through training opportunities with programs such as CIRT and GRID, we regularly alert audiences of the introduction of new data layers, greater accessibility, and more.
  - We strive to publish CIRCAC's e-newsletter on a monthly basis to our subscribers including industry and government representatives, elected officials

## Section 2: Communication

and key staff. The newsletter provides readers with a regular update on Council projects, and links to additional information on our website or other resources.

- Information is regularly posted on the Council's website, [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org). As mentioned earlier, updates, redesign and improvements to the site are underway.
- Staff regularly works with personnel from various agencies and industry during planning phases for field research to ensure coordination when possible and to reduce duplication.
- Staff regularly contacts personnel from agencies and industry when compiling information during preparation of comments or recommendations, to obtain clarifications if needed, to ensure that information released by CIRCAC is factual.
- The Council distributes reports and position papers as warranted.

**SECTION 3. Scientific Work: The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC coordinates its independent scientific work with the scientific work performed by, or on behalf of, the terminal operators and operators of the crude oil tankers in an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication, and to ensure that research and studies are relevant to issues that impact the environment in the vicinity of the terminal facilities, and of crude oil tankers calling at those facilities.**

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) mandates CIRCAC conduct a variety of tasks that require thoughtful scientific study. CIRCAC's scientific work is carried out within a framework of programs, each with long-term goals designed to meet the intentions of OPA 90. Individual projects are developed to address one or more goals within a program, and priorities are worked out based on short-term data needs, annual budgets, and opportunistic funding and partnerships. Depending on the scientific and logistical needs of each scientific study, staff, independent contractors and/or partner organizations may conduct the work.

The Council ensures quality studies by requiring robust quality assurance/control for sampling, chemical analyses, data entry and analyses, and other study components. Despite the expenses associated with using some of the top contractors and laboratories, we believe that our ability to build partnerships is based on a certain trust others have demonstrated in the excellence of our body of work. The considerable efforts we put forth to coordinate our scientific work have produced a long list of partnerships and successful projects, several of which are now state-wide initiatives.

Funding for CIRCAC's overall science, research, and monitoring efforts has only been possible through a combination of industry contract funds, federal or state agency appropriations, competitive grants, and through leveraging of funds via various partnerships. Over the past 30 years, much of our science program has been funded outside of industry contract funds through successful competitive proposals that address the program needs identified in our Strategic Plan. Additionally, our projects often significantly leveraged by partnering with other organizations with similar goals help to minimize duplication and maximize the value of the research. Some recent examples of this include:

Collaboration

- Kamishak Bay/Lower Cook Inlet Intertidal Habitat Study – CIRCAC worked closely with partners at the National Park Service (NPS), University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and NOAA to conduct field research and analyze nearshore habitat data in lower Cook Inlet. The research was funded by BOEM and coordinated with other agencies to ensure the study design would fill data gaps for oil spill planning and response; and help to better understand areas at risk from lease sale activities in lower Cook Inlet. The final report was accepted and posted by BOEM in 2020.



### Section 3: Scientific Work

- Project: *Synthesis of Contaminants Data for Cook Inlet: Evaluation of Existing Data as "Baseline Conditions" and Recommendations for Further Monitoring*. The study team for this project includes personnel from CIRCAC, Kinnetic Laboratories, Inc., Axiom Data Science, Inc., and Payne Environmental Associates, Inc. It is a collaborative effort to compile and provide online data access to Cook Inlet contaminant data. The project is funded by BOEM, with an additional match by the Council.
- In 2022, staff participated in a BOEM Interview – a way to better understand how stakeholders receive, use, and contribute to BOEM-sponsored environmental studies and assessments. CIRCAC was identified as a key contact whom BOEM collaborates with on these types of studies.
- Our Director of Science and Research participates on the Alaska Research Consortium Board, to provide perspective of marine research and to support their mission of sustainable fisheries and marine science in the North Pacific.
- To share and utilize oil spill planning and response tools developed by CIRCAC and others, staff provided an online tutorial in March 2022 for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, including demonstrations for accessing relevant tools through NOAA and AOOS portals.
- Staff continues to serve as a member of the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) Advisory Board. Other participating members of OSRI's committees have worked with CIRCAC to coordinate partnership projects such as trajectory modeling and hydrographic model hindcast.
- Oil-Related Marine Snow – CIRCAC has long supported research on marine snow with an interest in how marine snow might provide a mechanism for oil to sink from the surface of Cook Inlet waters to the benthic environment. CIRCAC has supported relevant research conducted by two University of New Hampshire graduate students, both in coordination with NOAA's Kasitsna Bay Lab. Findings helped lead to a publication that presented a way to integrate marine oil snow formation and sediment and flocculent accumulation into oil spill planning, response, and damage assessment. This collaborative publication was posted in 2021.
- The Alaska ShoreZone Program is another longstanding example of cost sharing and development of partnerships. CIRCAC has sponsored ShoreZone aerial surveys and mapping since 2001 when we initiated the Alaska program in Cook Inlet, demonstrating a need for such a data and imagery portal. In 2022, CIRCAC was able to partner with the NPS to survey and update imagery for the Alaska ShoreZoneProgram, which is now administered and hosted by NOAA. ShoreZone habitat imagery and data are also served through AOOS, allowing us to incorporate the data layer in the CIRT for oil spill planning and response.
- CIRCAC staff have partnered with other organizations and agencies with interests and data needs for Cook Inlet ocean circulation and subsequent modeling. With partners at AOOS, UAF, NOAA, and OSRI, we have submitted various proposals or internally funded projects in 2021 and 2022 to collect oceanographic data and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Cook Inlet circulation models. Currently funded are partnership projects to (1) conduct a 20-year hind-cast of NOAA's Cook Inlet Operational Forecast System (CIOFS) model and identify

### Section 3: Scientific Work

where further ocean observations might improve our ability to model surface and subsurface circulation; (2) deploy paired High Frequency (HF) surface units to observe surface circulation in near real-time; and (3) develop an online accessible particle trajectory model.

- On occasion, industry has sought data on contaminants and similar research in the Cook Inlet lease area. CIRCAC has provided relevant EMAP and ICIEMAP data, and referred to sources of additional research and data for use.
- CIRCAC staff regularly attends science and research conferences, events, and expos (such as those listed in Sections 1 and 2 of the application). Each provides an opportunity – that staff seeks or plans ahead of time – to meet and collaborate with various industry, agency, and academia-led research teams.

Below are descriptions of current, ongoing, and recently concluded scientific studies and efforts to coordinate with industry, academia, and agencies:

#### **Biological and Chemical Monitoring Program**

##### Online Data Access

In late 2021, we finalized a Cooperative Agreement with BOEM for a contaminants compilation project of historical data that includes a meta-analysis of that data, ultimately to assess background conditions in Cook Inlet and evaluate anthropogenic and natural sources. The analysis will inform BOEM and CIRCAC on how best to move forward with environmental monitoring in Cook Inlet associated with oil and gas activities.

The project, entitled *Synthesis of Contaminants Data for Cook Inlet – Evaluation of Existing Data as Baseline Conditions and Recommendations for Further Monitoring*, is being led by CIRCAC, in coordination with a team of contractors who have a combined total of close to 200 years of experience working in Cook Inlet on contaminant issues – including specialties in hydrocarbon forensics. The study team includes personnel from CIRCAC, Kinetic Laboratories, Inc., Axiom Data Science, Inc., and Payne Environmental Associates, Inc. Funding for the project is granted by BOEM, with an additional match by CIRCAC.

The project's Science Plan was reviewed and approved by BOEM in early 2022. CIRCAC submitted its first Quarterly Progress/Status Report in February of 2022; progress and financial reports are due quarterly, including an annual report at the end of each project year. We are compiling historical reports and data sets. We've recently received input from some agencies and organizations for data, and are requesting access to non-publicly available data from others as well. Our next step is working with online tool developers and mappers to provide the first level of publicly accessible contaminants data. Concurrently, we will begin identifying which data sets can be provided as "downloadable" data, and which will be provided only in their original report format with or without data appendices. We have provided presentations to receive input on data access needs, and will make community visits to demonstrate draft online data access tools and receive recommendations to improve usefulness of the tool.

### Oxidized Petroleum Contaminants in Cook Inlet

As a continuation of our efforts to assess the extent of petroleum-derived hydrocarbon contaminants in Cook Inlet, CIRCAC supports research by Dr. Pat Tomco of UAA to measure oxygenated PAH compounds (oxyPAH) in Cook Inlet. Though oxy-PAHs have been studied for decades, a new focus on this class of compounds emerged following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In cold waters, these chemical compounds are even more poorly understood and challenges to the research include high analytical costs, incomplete method development, and there are limited contract laboratories who can conduct the analyses. The opportunity to collaborate with UAA will help expand hydrocarbon monitoring efforts in Cook Inlet to include an expanded list of potential Cook Inlet contaminants. CIRCAC has allocated funds towards this project as the characterization of oxy-hydrocarbons is a natural collaboration for our long-term monitoring efforts to understand the fate and transport of petrogenic compounds in the Gulf of Alaska.

In October 2022, Dr. Tomco's team provided an update on their research to the Council's EMC about their efforts developing analytical methods for measuring specific oxyPAH analytes. CIRCAC is discussing priorities for Cook Inlet concerns with Dr. Tomco and his partners at Louisiana State University. CIRCAC covered logistical and transport costs for mussel collections in Kachemak Bay and on to Seward for uptake experiments and natural abundance measurements.

### **Coastal Habitat Mapping Program**

There are especially strong links among our Physical Oceanography, Oil Fates and Effects, and Coastal Habitat Mapping Programs. The interplay of prevailing ocean currents (tidal and density driven), ice, winds, waves, freshwater flux, and upwelling all influence short- and long-term transport, mixing and weathering of spilled oil. The persistence of oil in the nearshore environment is determined largely by habitat type, and thus it is important to understand the proximity of sensitive habitats to prevailing currents. The individual projects within our over-arching Programs often fulfill data needs for multiple Programs. And, our data for one Program is often interpreted in the contexts of projects from another Program. For example, our Coastal Habitat Mapping Program provides information critical to understanding the potential fate and effects of treated and untreated spilled oil.

### Geographic Resource Inventory Database (GRID)

The GRID tool has been linked into the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT). Staff continually exercises and promotes the CIRT and GRID tools at drill and emergency planning events and exercises. GRID has been integrated and tested at such events, including recent drills by Marathon and Hilcorp. For GRID, data was collected throughout Cook Inlet communities, consisting of information like medical assets, first responders, media outlets, boat launches, support service industries, and more. Validated data was then entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database, associating

### Section 3: Scientific Work

it with a specific chart location. Both CIRT and GRID continue to be a collaborative and ever-improving effort due to its importance of application in oil spill prevention and response, and through its use by CIRCAC, spill responders, agencies, industry and more.

#### Alaska ShoreZone Imaging, Mapping, and Website

Since 2001, CIRCAC's coastal habitat mapping efforts have provided oil spill planning and response personnel from industry and agencies with access to high quality imagery, data and summary information to improve planning and response decisions.

Subsequently, this program has expanded state-wide, is now administered and hosted by NOAA, and is steered by a large partnership group representing agencies and other organizations, including CIRCAC. The partnership group meets frequently. References to ShoreZone and related activities are found throughout this document.

The ShoreZone habitat data and imagery is also served by the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) through their online data portals, allowing integration with dozens of other data layers; this allowed us to develop the previously referenced Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) to integrate ShoreZone imagery and data with other information useful for oil spill planning and response.

After six years of no new ShoreZone surveys in our area, CIRCAC and partners conducted and completed 6 days of aerial surveys in June 2022 along the outer Kenai Peninsula coast, an area that was last surveyed in 2002. We contracted with Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc. (CORI) to conduct the surveys, with Sue Saupe as Coastal Biologist for portions of the survey - taking high resolution digital still photographs and providing narration on biological habitat observed along the shorelines.

The National Park Service provided some funding for the surveys and worked with our contractors to obtain permissions for staging helicopter fuel on the coast. We've since received the optimized geo-referenced imagery from our contractors at CORI. The next step is to have that imagery uploaded and served on both the NOAA and AOOS websites. CIRCAC will continue to seek funds and partners to update ShoreZone imagery and mapping along the northern Kodiak Island archipelago.

#### Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) Maps

NOAA's ESI data and maps provide shoreline habitat and shoreline use data to aid in oil spill planning and response. Data collected for ESI go hand-in-hand with the imagery and data reported by ShoreZone methods and we have worked hard to integrate the two programs. During a June 2021 meeting with multiple agencies and organizations who use ESI maps for oil spill planning and response, we discussed priorities for updating ESI information in Alaska. The Cook Inlet region was identified as a high priority.

CIRCAC has allocated funds to support the "cross-walk" of ShoreZone and ESI data for serving on AOOS data portals and NOAA's Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA). Staff received a proposal and will work with the potential contractors to finalize a scope of work that will be coordinated with a related ESI project funded by OSRI and conducted by Research Planning, Inc – their project

area is in Cook Inlet and focuses on updating shoreline use data.

### Macrocystis Kelp

Two new *Macrocystis* beds were noted during our outer Kenai Peninsula ShoreZone survey in June 2022; one not far from the original small bed documented in 2002 and one in Port Dick, which is far distant from any earlier reported bed. This kelp grows in thick beds very near shore and has implications for oil spill risk and oil retention, and is likely to respond to changes in sea surface temperature and circulation related to climate change. CIRCAC staff also received a report that there is a bed that recently established inside Kachemak Bay. Partnering with others, we will monitor the bed and work on developing a proposal to continue surveys of *Macrocystis* kelp in our areas of concern – in order to help identify spreading patterns and develop a prediction model based on preferred habitat and environmental conditions.

In addition to CIRCAC's interests in *Macrocystis* - understanding expansion of kelp habitat and implications for oil spill prevention, response, and impacts - there is considerable interest by others in kelp distributions, one being the expanding interests in kelp mariculture. Though our interest is in shoreline habitat data for environmental risk assessments and oil spill planning and response, we will continue to seek collaboration with specific components of studies associated with similar projects.

## **Physical Oceanography Program**

### Cook Inlet Ocean Observing and Modeling

CIRCAC has long supported oceanographic data collections and observing systems to improve oil spill trajectory modeling of Cook Inlet's complex hydrographic conditions. Thus, we've closely followed NOAA's efforts to produce a high resolution 3-D hydrographic model for Cook Inlet. Their Cook Inlet Operational Forecast System (CIOFS) circulation and hydrographic model transitioned from developmental to operational mode in 2019. The model is currently operational, and every six hours produces outputs which include nowcasts and forecasts of water level, winds, water temperature, salinity, and currents. Its scope includes Cook Inlet and Shelikof Strait. The model can be used operationally by NOAA's Office of Restoration and Response for oil spill modeling in the event of a significant spill.

However, CIOFS is not a particle trajectory model. The identification of model strengths and weaknesses are key to trust in trajectories at drills and actual spills and will guide placement of future observational instruments and surveys. Most recently, our efforts to validate and potentially improve CIOFS included:

- CIRCAC is part of a hindcast funded by BOEM and OSRI, and contracted to Axiom Data Science, Inc. in Anchorage. The overall team (UAF, NOAA, OSRI, AOOS, UAF, CIRCAC) continue working together to plan the various components of CIOFS evaluation and potential improvements. We met in January 2023 to prioritize sampling plans and discuss any additional data sets

### Section 3: Scientific Work

to be included in the hindcast. In the field, staff will participate with partners to conduct sampling over full daily tidal cycles and capture both spring and neap tidal series. Sampling is not scheduled until 2024. OSRI and BOEM are funding hindcast modeling; CIRCAC is funding deployment of satellite drifters, Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler, and hydrographic surveys; and AOOS and CIRCAC are funding deployment of a HF Radar system that will be operated and maintained by UAF.

- The team working on CIOFS model evaluations (e.g. hind cast) also met in December 2022 to map out a plan for a project proposal under the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Funding Opportunity FY2023 Ocean Technology Transition (OTT) Project, for submission by UAF. The goal of the proposed work is to enhance a prototype particle trajectory tool and test implementation on: (1) the CIOFS operational 48-hour forecast fields and (2) the CIOFS 20-year hindcast model outputs. An operational version would be made publicly available through the AOOS Data Portal. An operational particle trajectory tool developed from CIOFS would be an important first step towards a web-based oil spill trajectory model. This proposal was submitted in January 2023 and leverages the work already underway through the OSRI and BOEM grants.

CIRCAC will continue to seek partnerships and revisit oil spill trajectory models, reflecting the significant oceanographic research and observations on Cook Inlet's complex currents. CIRCAC continues to work with industry and their contractors, state and federal agencies, and research and modeling communities to improve observational data collections on the physical oceanography of Cook Inlet and nearby areas.

### **Oil Fate and Effects Program**

#### Marine Oil Snow in Cook Inlet

Marine oil snow is the aggregation of marine snow with oil droplets, of interest to CIRCAC and the spill response community to see how marine snow might provide a mechanism for oil to sink from the surface of Cook Inlet waters to the benthic environment. As such, CIRCAC continues to support research on natural marine snow formation and sedimentation in Kachemak Bay. Recent CIRCAC-supported research was conducted by two University of New Hampshire graduate students. The most recent completed his thesis in 2022, and used a flume tank to measure aggregate sinking and resuspension velocities in different environmental conditions using a cold-water phytoplankton species common in coastal Alaska, sediments from Cook Inlet, and Alaska North Slope crude oil.

Existing oil spill fate and transport models have inputs for complex ocean currents, oil spreading/mixing and transport, but do not include data that quantify marine snow or marine oil snow settling; thus, the models cannot accurately predict the transport and deposition of marine oil snow during a spill incident. Former CIRCAC-supported studies conducted by a University of New Hampshire graduate student at the NOAA

### Section 3: Scientific Work

Kasitsna Bay Lab, led to two publications that included knowledge gained from his Cook Inlet studies; with one presenting a way to integrate marine oil snow sedimentation and flocculent accumulation into oil spill planning, response, and damage assessment. This publication, entitled *Integrating marine oil snow and MOSSFA into oil spill response and damage assessment*, was a collaborative effort with CIRCAC staff, among others, and was published in 2021.

CIRCAC will continue to seek opportunities to conduct scientific work under programs that will provide the tools and information necessary for many of the potential projects identified for an oil fates and effects program. Additionally, staff continues to address oil fate and effects issues by participating on national, regional, state, and local initiatives to stay informed about current and planned research relating to the fate and effects of spilled oil and of the various oil spill response options.

**SECTION 4. Monitoring Program: The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC develops and carries out an effective monitoring program.**

The Council uses a combination of staff and independent contractors to monitor drills, exercises and training events, and occasionally is invited to participate in the planning of these events. CIRCAC is also an active part of the drill performance evaluation working with Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc. (CISPRI), Incident Management professionals hired by plan holder/facility operators, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), and Contingency Plan writers to improve response capabilities. We are fortunate and have worked hard to develop the relationships which ensure our access to vital information and a presence in drills, deployments, and incident management.

CIRCAC's mandates pertain to crude oil on water, and our focus with drills, plan reviews, and response participation is clear in those areas. We are nevertheless deeply in tune to other incidents, closely related factors, and training opportunities – not involving crude oil on water – although the extent of our direct involvement and resources would be considerably less.

Additionally, the Council's relationships and participation with other organizations ensure access to related data, studies, and practices.

**(4a). Reviewing the operation and maintenance of terminals and tankers**

Cook Inlet Pipeline Infrastructure Assessment - CIRCAC staff worked in partnership with the ADEC and in contract with Nuka Research and Planning Group, to conduct the Cook Inlet Pipeline Infrastructure Assessment. The goal of the project was to ensure the continued safe operation of the Cook Inlet oil and gas pipeline infrastructure, and recommending and implementing risk reduction measures before further loss of integrity events occur. Industry partners participated following the scope of the project to identify pipelines and their operating parameters. As part of this project, an expert panel was convened to recommend suitable risk mitigation measures. The final report and recommendations by the expert panel were completed and published in June 2020 and can be found at <https://www.circac.org/what-we-do/risk-assessment/>.

Facility Tours – The Council strives to provide opportunities for Directors, public members, and staff to visit critical sites and operations throughout our Areas of Responsibility and Concern. The Covid-19 pandemic, declared in mid-February 2020 and extending into much of this triennial review period, has largely prevented on-site visits. Nevertheless, CIRCAC managed to visit the following:

- CISPRI facility in Nikiski
- AVTEC training and simulator facility in Seward
- Marathon Petroleum Refinery tour during 'turnaround' in Nikiski; May 2023



## Section 4: Monitoring Program

Cook Inlet Vessel Traffic Study – First pursued as part of the Cook Inlet Navigation Risk Assessment, CIRCAC updated the vessel traffic study in 2021, and presented it to the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee for review. This project represents a 10-year culmination of AIS and other data to get a holistic view of vessel traffic throughout Cook Inlet. Data will be collected annually and applied in an updated report every 3 years.

In addition, industry operators in Cook Inlet routinely provide presentations and updates to the Council and PROPS Committee. Updates and status reports may often include:

- Summary of recent activities highlighting goals and accomplishments
- Recent and/or upcoming maintenance and facility improvements
- Report of any recent incidents and response taken
- Overall status of operations, staff, equipment, and facility
- Training and planning of upcoming drills and exercises

### **(4b). Monitoring cleanup drills and actual spill cleanups**

During drill events, Council staff observes the Unified Command and the Incident Management Team and makes recommendations regarding opportunities for improvement. In a typical drill or training exercise, staff may be assigned to work within the Operations Section, Truth, Joint Information Center, and Environmental Unit. CIRCAC's expertise in these areas, access to stakeholders, and knowledge of programs such as GRID and CIRT, make staff invaluable to drills and training exercises.

Staff is notified of incidents and works to keep stakeholders informed of causes, consequences, response activities, outcomes and lessons learned. We track the performance of the responsible party and participating agencies. Incidents in Cook Inlet we have tracked since the last triennial application are numerous and have been covered in detail in prior applications. Staff pursued updates and informed of 3 crude and 10 non-crude incidents in 2020/21, and 1 and 10 respectively in 2021/22. Staff monitors non-crude and other incidents to help inform our Directors on response capabilities, performance, and other considerations of interest to Cook Inlet.

The following crude oil spills or other discharges or incidents occurred since the last recertification application was submitted in 2022:

- 03.19.2023 Magnitude 5.4 Earthquake – registered 12 miles S of Anchor Point, BlueCrest Energy reported no injuries; high pressure compressor shut down due to vibration caused by earthquake; no other mechanical issues; no leaks or spills. All other area facility operators reported no injuries, spills, leaks or issues.
- 11.18.2022 Refined Product Tanker Fire – *M/V Atlantic Lily* at the Port of Alaska; offloading jet fuel, fire due to boiler mechanical issue; AFD and USCG on-scene.
- 06.16.2022 Vessel Fire off Kodiak – USCG received distress call from *P/V Coastal Explorer* stating vessel engine on fire; sheen confirmed in vicinity.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

- 06.15.2022 Sheen off sunken F/V St. Patrick – former response to leaking fuel oil; additional response to contain sheen.
- 05.2022 Pipeline/Anchor Fouling – Marathon sub-sea refined product pipeline: annual inspection revealed an anomaly, later proved to be an anchor fouled on the pipeline.

CIRCAC obtains current, approved information at the command center and distributes it to Council members for dissemination to respective communities and interest groups. Staff also brings the concerns of the Council and committees to Command Center personnel. This process also enables us to test our own internal communications process with our board members and committees.

CIRCAC is invited to participate in drills called by agencies or planned by industry, serving generally in the roles described above. Frequently, we are invited to become engaged in planning sessions as well, for example:

- Marathon invited staff to participate in their annual drill planning team process. The upcoming drill is designed with National Preparedness Response Exercise Program (NPREP) and Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) criteria. CIRCAC also plans to participate in the drill, scheduled for October 2023.
- Staff attended planning meetings for Kenai Peninsula Trucking Accident and Spill Response Workshop.
- Staff participated in Marathon's Worse Case Discharge exercise planning meetings. This one-day tabletop exercise incorporated the initial notifications and the assembly of a Unified Command along with a field deployment of CISPRI's response equipment and personnel. The one-day exercise began in the "reactive phase", when the incident is announced to facility personnel. The exercise objectives referenced and were chosen from the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (NPREP) and State of Alaska drill objectives to include the deployment of Marathon's Air Monitoring Team, CISPRI's Power App, and to test response times of responders to deploy equipment.

CIRCAC staff attends and continues to plan to attend drills throughout the year as called by industry or the state. Since our last application in the spring of 2022, CIRCAC staff has participated in the following drills/deployments:

- Staff attended Hilcorp's functional exercise as an observer of the Wildlife Branch. The scenario focused on the rupture of two pipelines when a workboat attempted to anchor in inclement weather; the anchor dragged and fouled two subsea pipelines (Bruce to GPT and CIPL line). The anchor fouling parted both subsea lines and released 100 BBLs (4200 gallons) of crude oil into Cook Inlet. This exercise married in-person and virtual attendance, hosted at Hilcorp's command post located in Anchorage.
- Staff participated in Cook Inlet Energy's virtual exercise – a tabletop functional exercise of the Glacier Oil & Gas Corporation's Oil Discharge Prevention and

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

Contingency Plan (ODPCP) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP). CIRCAC participated virtually as an observer. This live exercise offered virtual participation for stakeholders and agencies. The scenario included a 6000-barrel crude oil leak from a tank at the Kustatan Production Facility; 4000 barrels then escaped secondary containment and migrated to a nearby lake. NPREP objectives (14 in all) were included along with 11 additional objectives for the Incident Management team. Over half of these objectives needed to be accomplished for the exercise to be considered a success. In all, 16 objectives were successfully achieved.

In the full 3-year period of this application, staff participated in or studied the results of the following additional drills and exercises:

- Hilcorp IMT exercise and field deployment at the Swanson River field
- Hilcorp workgroup exercises on virtual IMT platforms
- Coast Guard and Navy joint oil pollution exercise in Kachemak Bay
- Coast Guard and ADEC deployment in Kodiak, ‘ground-truthing’ the use of remote aerial surveillance systems of GRSs
- CISPRI field deployment July 2020
- Glacier Oil exercise – August 2020
- Hilcorp/Harvest – October virtual drill; postponed from May 2020
- Hilcorp drill planning annual joint field exercise; virtual segments to conclude with field deployment and incorporate GRID training and use

### Discharge and Incident Monitoring

CIRCAC staff closely monitors industry activities in the region, reporting all significant events to the Council’s Board for information purposes. Staff also monitors and reports other significant events such as vessel groundings or sinking, discharges that may impact surface or ground waters, and other incidents that may be a potential pollution threat. CIRCAC staff gathers information from all appropriate sources for regular notifications to the Council’s Board and stakeholders, which are provided through to the completion of the response and any subsequent actions. Photos, schematics, site plans and other aids provided by the responsible party or agencies frequently accompany our reports. The Council provides background data from our studies and recommendations for response or potential impacts when requested by industry or agencies or when we believe our information can improve decisions.

### **(4c). Reviewing results of oil spill (incidents) in its region**

#### Spill Notification and Review

Cook Inlet RCAC routinely receives spill notifications from industry, USCG and ADEC, and is identified in industry contingency plans for notification in the event of a spill. Staff at Cook Inlet RCAC works with ADEC and oil facility operators to review all aspects of the spill. Spill notifications and updates are sent to all directors and committee members via email once all pertinent facts of the spill can be gathered. Staff routinely receives spill notifications for non-crude spills as well. When the quantity or location is

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

significant, staff follows the same notification protocol for notifying Directors and committee members as with a crude oil spill, as it is likely those members will receive questions from their constituents about the incident.

### Cook Inlet Annual Spill Report

Cook Inlet RCAC annually compiles a spill report for review by our PROPS committee, using the ADEC spill database. The results from this compilation may be presented to the Council and committees.

### **(4d). Reviewing government and company reports.**

CIRCAC staff reviews reports, study plans and manuscripts that relate to our mandates under OPA 90. These often include studies done by state and federal agencies, the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, the Prince William Sound RCAC, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, universities, industry, and other organizations, including our stakeholder members. For example, CIRCAC staff has:

- Reviewed spill reports from industry and agencies (ADEC and USCG).
- Staff and a Council director serve as members of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
- Provided independent scientific peer review of proposals and reports for research entities.
- Reviewed Alaska ShoreZone protocols and user manual documents for Alaska ShoreZone Partnership.
- Evaluated, and continue to engage and review, ADEC proposed changes to state statutes for oil spill prevention and response, including revisions to the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan plans and streamlined plans (18 AAC 75 Article 4).
- Reviewed the EPA update for the National Contingency Plan Sub-part J., and associated documents.
- Reviewed manuscripts and reports related to, and in addition to, CIRCAC's three-year agreement with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to compile historical contaminants data from Cook Inlet.

### **(4e). Conduct or review necessary scientific studies with or by recognized experts in the field under study.**

Most of CIRCAC's scientific work is done through a process that brings together experts in the field, developing a team that includes expertise required for a particular study. Over the years, we've identified scientists with extensive experience and expertise in various fields of study, especially those with particular experience in Cook Inlet. During the past year, Cook Inlet RCAC has contracted or partnered with many recognized experts.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

Individual scientific studies are described in other sections as well, and many appear in our website archives. Please refer to Section 3 which describes the scientific studies and efforts to coordinate research with recognized experts in the fields of study. Below are some examples:

- Cook Inlet Ocean Observing – CIRCAC has been working with other organizations including AOOS, NOAA, UAF, OSRI to conduct validation and improve data gaps for NOAA's Cook Inlet Operational Forecast System (CIOFS) model.
- Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) – CIRCAC staff have held meetings with a group including OSRI, NOAA, AOOS, PWSRCAC, USF&W, ADNR and ADF&G to move forward with updates to Alaska's EIS maps, looking towards integrating and serving ShoreZone and other EIS data layers in CIRT and other AOOS data portals. CIRCAC routinely works with Axiom Data Science, the database and online platform developers who support the AOOS program.
- Marine Oil Snow – CIRCAC partnered with NOAA and in conjunction with research professors and graduate students at the University of New Hampshire, to conduct research on the potential formation of oil-related marine snow. These studies and findings have prompted additional studies and collaborative publication from researchers and scientists within this area of expertise.
- Kamishak Bay/Lower Cook Inlet Intertidal Habitat Study – CIRCAC worked closely with partners at the National Park Service, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and NOAA to conduct field research and analyze nearshore habitat data. Research was coordinated with BOEM and other agencies to ensure the study design would fulfill data gaps for oil spill planning and response, and help better understand areas at risk from lease sale activities in lower Cook Inlet.
- ShoreZone Imaging and Mapping – CIRCAC has worked with various partners and contractors to complete multiple reports over the years on data and imagery collected during ShoreZone aerial and on-the-ground surveys. These reports have relied on taxonomists, coastal ecologists, geomorphologists, computer programmers, and GIS mappers. These experts were found within CIRCAC and NOAA, as well as through contracts with Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc. and Archipelago Marine Research, Inc.
- In addition to conducting scientific studies, with and without partnering organizations, we've reviewed numerous submitted or final scientific manuscripts relating to contaminants research, physical oceanography, habitat mapping, and ballast water treatment technology, vectors for introductions of invasive species, ocean observing systems, dispersants fates & effects, invertebrate and algal taxonomy, and many other research categories. Our reviews may be formally requested and include editing or analysis recommendations prior to publication; or

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

they may be just reviewing (reading) published information to ensure CIRCAC's work remains relevant in the context of related efforts. Examples include:

- Reviewed scientific reports and manuscripts produced through funding by agencies, industry, and other entities that relate to our data needs on contaminants, habitats, oceanography, and ecosystems (e.g. – proposals submitted under Oil Spill Recovery Institute's Requests for Proposals and Graduate Research Grant program).
- Reviewed research reports, manuscripts, and lectures related to oil spill chemistry and response options. Staff routinely reviews informational source series such as the ExxonMobil Oil Spill Response Knowledge Transfer Webinar, and NOAA's "You don't know what you don't know" webinar series. Staff reviews and often shares of relevant studies to help keep committees and Directors apprised of current information and scientific research progress.

**SECTION 5. Prevention and Response: Efforts to prevent oil spills and to plan for responding to, containing, cleaning up, and mitigating impacts of oil spills. The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC...**

CIRCAC's programs are designed to monitor actual and potential environmental impacts stemming from the operation of oil facilities in Cook Inlet, and to review operational and maintenance practices at the facility in the interest of mitigating those impacts. Science also guides our research into maritime issues, such as operating in pan ice, navigating where high tides and heavy currents prevail, or where tanker self-arrest may be a recourse option in case of loss of propulsion.

The Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee monitors and reviews port organization, operations, incidents, and vessel traffic. The Protocol Control Committee reviews and may provide comments for industry contingency plans as scheduled review periods come due, or as revisions and amendments to contingency plans are submitted for review. In addition, the Protocol Control Committee reviews and provides comments on new or proposed changes to state and federal regulations.

**(5a). Periodically reviews oil spill prevention and contingency plans for terminal facilities and crude oil tankers while in Cook Inlet in light of new technological developments and changed circumstances.**

Oil Discharge and Prevention Contingency Plans (ODPCP) for tankers and for facilities are submitted to the State of Alaska under a five-year review cycle. The Council's Protocol Control Committee reviews contingency plans for new and existing operations within Cook Inlet, and proposed plan amendments. When these plans are reviewed, every section is completely and thoroughly scrutinized each time. This is done to ensure that each plan is in compliance with State and Federal regulations and to ensure Best Available Technology (BAT) and best management practices can be incorporated and are in use.

Further, the committee reviews proposed changes to state and federal regulations pertaining to oil spill prevention and response, as well as water and air quality issues affected by industry operations in Cook Inlet and the Kodiak Island area.

The Protocol Control Committee provided comments – with some available for review at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org), on the following matters during this triennial review period:

- 5.1.23 Approval of Comments Regarding the Alaska Regional Contingency Plan
- 1.25.23 Comments Regarding BlueCrest Energy, Alaska Operating, LLC, Hansen Production Facility, Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan #21-CP-5245

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

- 12.22.22 Comments Regarding Coast Guard Federal Register Docket No. 2022-0576 Draft Guidance for Nationally Consistent Coastal Zone Area Contingency Plan Architecture
- 12.22.22 Letter of Support for HEA's Application for Offshore Wind Exploration at Hilcorp's Platforms in Middle Ground Shoal
- 11.14.22 Comments Regarding the Hilcorp Alaska, LLC Cook Inlet Exploration Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC Plan #: 22-CP-5216
- 10.18.22 f Comments Regarding the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Contingency Plan
- 7.21.22 Comments Regarding Andeavor Logistics LP, Kenai Refinery Storage Facility and Truck Terminal, ADEC Plan #:17-CP-2019
- 6.10.22 Comments and request for additional information regarding Harvest Alaska, LLC Cook Inlet Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC Plan #:17-CP-2081
- 6.3.22 Comments and request for additional information regarding Cook Inlet Energy, LLC Cook Inlet Area Production Operations Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC Plan #:17-CP-2016
- 1.29.22 Background comments, proposed revisions to 18 AAC 75
- 1.29.22 Comments regarding Revisions to the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan Plans and Streamlined plans; 18 AAC 75 Article 4
- 12.30.21 Collaborative Comments and Background Information Regarding PWSRCAC / CIRCAC's Proposed Resolution to the Kenai Peninsula Borough, City of Kenai, City of Homer, City of Seldovia, City of Anchorage, Kodiak Island Borough, and the City of Kodiak
- 12.16.21 Comments Regarding Crowley Alaska Tanker, Cook Inlet Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC Plan #: 21-CP-5252
- 12.16.21 Comments Regarding Hilcorp Alaska, LLC Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan for Cook Inlet Production Facilities, ADEC Plan #: 16-CP-2008
- 7.27.21 Comments and RFAI Regarding Hilcorp Alaska, LLC Oil Discharge and Contingency Plan for Cook Inlet Exploration Facilities
- 7.27.21 Comments on Alaska Regional Contingency Plan, with Comment Matrix
- 4.26.21 Comments and RFAI on Furie Operating Alaska, LLC, Oil Discharge and Contingency Plan for Cook Inlet Exploration Program
- 3.5.21 Comments Regarding BlueCrest Alaska Operating LLC Hansen Production Facility Oil Discharge Prevention and C-Plan, ADEC Plan #: 15-CP-5245
- 12.21.20 Comments Regarding Application for Sundry Approvals Forms to modify current status of offshore exploration wells KLU 1, KLU 2A and KLU 4 from "Suspended" to "Plug and Abandoned"
- 10.14.20 Comments in response to Docket ID BSEE-2020-0014
- 10.14.20 Comments in response to Docket ID BSEE-2020-0007
- 10.14.20 Comments on RFAI response regarding Tesoro Kenai Pipeline Company Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC #: 15-CP-2083



## Section 5: Prevention and Response

- 8.21.20 Comments and request for additional information regarding Harvest Alaska, LLC Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan
- 7.10.20 Comments on U.S. Coast Guard Information Collection Request Regarding the National Response Resource Inventory Docket USCG-2020- 0185
- 7.10.20 Comments Regarding Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Expand the Regulations on Vessel Certificate Of Financial Responsibility
- 6.16.20 Comments on Alaska Inland Area Contingency Plan
- 6.16.20 Comments in response to Docket No. PHMSA-2918-0047, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
- 5.19.20 Comments and request for additional information regarding BlueCrest Alaska Operating, LLC Cook Inlet, Alaska Exploration Program Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan

### **(5b). Monitor periodic drills and testing of the oil spill contingency plans for terminal facilities and for crude oil tankers while in Cook Inlet.**

The Council has long advocated for rigorously exercising contingency plans through drills, which provides an excellent opportunity to verify and improve planning assumptions. CIRCAC's role in drills is varied; in most cases, staff is integrated into the command structure – typically Truth, Operations, Joint Information Center (JIC), Environmental section - depending on the needs of the company being tested. Cook Inlet RCAC has a process for obtaining current information at the command center and distributing it to Council members for dissemination to respective communities and interest groups. Staff also brings the concerns of the Council and committees to Command Center personnel. We are forthright in our assessment and recommendations of drills and exercises.

### **(5c). Wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the terminal facilities that may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up oil spills.**

#### Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT)

CIRCAC developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) based online data integration portal and visualization tool with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS). The Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) is a project that links habitat data and imagery to oil spill planning and response needs so that the information can be provided to exercise planning teams during drill planning efforts and in a timely fashion to the Incident Command during oil spill drills and response efforts. Another GIS based project that the PROPS Committee has integrated into CIRT, is the Geographic Resources Information Database (GRID); this online tool also provides access and visualization of response resources to planners and responders.

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

We are collaborating with NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Sciences' National Status and Trends, to expand a data portal to integrate contaminants data from our ICIEMAP into an online contaminants database. We will also incorporate results from the southcentral Alaska coastal bays and estuaries EMAP, CIRCAC's archived study results (1993-2002), and a depositional habitat study by MMS (now BOEM). Note – a portion of this data is one of the final deliverables to BOEM for our Lower Cook Inlet Habitat study report, focusing on hydrocarbons. We continue to update data layers, integrate additional resource and hydrocarbon data layers, expand the tool from Cook Inlet to our larger areas of concern (e.g. – Kodiak Island), and integrate additional oil response data layers.

CIRCAC has demonstrated CIRT at various oil spill drills in our region, leading to numerous requests to provide detailed presentations and training on the use of CIRT, GRID, and the Alaska ShoreZone website to industry, agencies, local oil spill responders and stakeholder groups. Staff continues to provide training sessions to industry and agency personnel. Staff is currently working to develop a training tutorial and a train-the-trainer tutorial for use by potential user groups.

CIRT may be found on the AOOS website at [www.aoot.org](http://www.aoot.org) within Projects in Marine Operations and/or within Portal Highlights in the Information & Tools for Agency and Community Planning sections.

### Physical Oceanography

Please refer to Section 3, Physical Oceanography Program that describes efforts to better understand wind and water currents in Cook Inlet. Also review Section 3 Coastal Habitat Mapping Program which describes efforts to better understand nearshore habitat – an environmental factor that affects the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up oil spills.

### **(5d). Identifies highly sensitive areas which may require special protection in the event of a spill in Cook Inlet.**

### Habitat Mapping

We've long recognized that high resolution habitat maps are necessary for understanding where habitats of special concern for oil spill impacts are concentrated. To that end, CIRCAC has worked for just over two decades to collect high resolution shoreline habitat data and imagery; and ensure availability to oil spill planners and responders via online data portals. As well, we've conducted more detailed mapping in certain areas or habitats of concern – such as Cook Inlet salt marshes, *Macrocystis* kelp beds in Kodiak archipelago, and habitats at risk in Kamishak Bay. We've also recognized the need for response strategies for site-specific, highly sensitive areas throughout our entire areas of concern, and developed our Geographic Response Strategies Program where we continue to support access to these data and integration with other data layers through our Cook Inlet Response Tool.

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

### Geographic Response Strategies

This long-standing program, tailored to protect specific highly sensitive areas around Cook Inlet and Kodiak, can save time and resources during the critical first few hours of an oil spill response. They show responders where sensitive areas are located and where to place oil spill protection resources. Cook Inlet RCAC and its partners have steadily expanded the number of sites identified. Cook Inlet RCAC identified and developed GRS sites along various overland transportation routes that included stream crossings and relevant waterways, for crude oil tank trucks, to the Marathon refinery. In addition, budgeted funds for this project have been retained to facilitate validation of site updates. Cook Inlet RCAC continues to work with the Area Planning Committees to identify and develop GRS processes to validate and update GIS/GRS sites. GRSs are also included in the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT).

### **(5e). Periodically reviews port organization, operations, incidents and the adequacy and maintenance of vessel traffic service systems designed to assure safe transit of crude oil tankers.**

### Harbor Safety Committee

CIRCAC staff actively participates in the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee, serving on the management team, and holding primary and alternate positions on the Committee. In addition, Director of Operations, Vinnie Catalano, serves as the Harbor Safety Plan workgroup Chair. The HSC has adopted a Harbor Safety Plan, which is maintained through an annual review and public comment; has researched and published a Resolution addressing derelict and abandoned vessels; has assumed management of the annual winter ice guidelines for navigation and operations within Cook Inlet; developed under keel clearance criterion for vessels transiting and mooring in Cook Inlet; and has established work groups for marine firefighting and salvage, navigation and other operations.

### Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment

The Council continues to rely on findings of the Cook Inlet Navigation Risk Assessment to inform ongoing and future CIRCAC projects and programs, such as the recently updated Cook Inlet Vessel Traffic Study (see below).

### Cook Inlet Vessel Traffic Study

CIRCAC first updated the vessel traffic study in 2021 and presented it to the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee for review. This project represents a 10-year culmination of AIS and other data to get a holistic view of vessel traffic throughout Cook Inlet. Data is collected annually and applied in an updated report every 3 years.

### Cook Inlet Ice Forecasting Network

CIRCAC sponsors and oversees a network of ice cameras, initially introduced to augment the largely incidental visual reports provided to mariners. Using PROPS funds and grants, the network now operates with 9 cameras – on private and public facilities – with new generation cameras and operating systems replacing older models, most recently a

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

camera successfully updated and installed at the Marathon LNG facility dock. The first public viewing capability was launched with the addition of a Kenai River camera. Images are now available beyond the NOAA Ice Forecaster, in addition to camera host facility access, to include the Incident Command, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, and the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association.

### Operating Guidelines for Ice Conditions in Cook Inlet

The Ice Guidelines, initially developed by the Captain of the Port, Western Alaska and the Cook Inlet maritime industry, were eventually transferred to the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) – for further development and implementation through a collaborative effort by the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association, maritime operators, harbor masters, Cook Inlet RCAC, environmental groups and other HSC members.

### **(5f). Periodically reviews standards for tankers bound for, loading at, exiting from or otherwise using the terminal facilities.**

#### Tanker Reports

Tanker traffic has been sharply reduced following the decommissioning of the Drift River Oil Terminal and Christy Lee Platform in 2019. CIRCAC continues to receive KPL dock schedule updates with information regarding the mooring status of Marathon-chartered tankers in Cook Inlet. These tanker mooring reports and Spot Charter packages promote an open and earnest cooperation between industry and the citizens of Cook Inlet, and continue to build on the transparency mandated by OPA 90. Interaction such as this diminishes complacency, addressing a primary concern of OPA 90. Additionally, we review tank vessel contingency plans (e.g. 12.16.21 Comments Regarding Crowley Alaska Tanker, Cook Inlet Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan, ADEC Plan #: 21-CP-5252).

### **(5g). Reports findings to local industry and responsible State and Federal officials.**

CIRCAC supplies industry and agencies with Committee meeting packages which include copies of completed studies, staff reports on Council activities and upcoming studies, reports, and staff/committee activities. Position papers on matters of importance are also made available directly to affected parties and may also be posted on our website. Please refer also to Section 2.

**SECTION 6. Funding: The Coast Guard will determine whether the Cook Inlet RCAC has entered into a contract for funding in accordance with the requirements of 33 U.S.C 2732(o) and will review the Cook Inlet RCAC's expenditures of such funds.**

CIRCAC's primary funding source is a long-term contract with the Charter Funding Companies operating in Cook Inlet. The contract provides a minimum funding level of \$1.4 million per year with an annual Anchorage CPI adjustment. A copy of the current five-year funding agreement is provided (**Exhibit 7**).

The Companies which have provided funding to Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council throughout this recertification period are:

- BlueCrest Energy
- Glacier Oil & Gas
- Hilcorp Alaska
- Marathon Petroleum Corp

At the time of this application, all companies have been invoiced for their funding payments and funding obligations are current.

As discussed above, the Council also secures funding from other sources in the course of conducting joint scientific and technical research and spill prevention activities, and occasionally contributes its own funds to research projects conducted by others. Current sources and recent sources of direct or leveraged funding include AOOS, BOEM, and NPS.

**(6a). Expenditures and controls are carried out in a manner consistent with sound business practices.**

The annual audit of CIRCAC's financial statements, in the opinion of the independent auditor, was "... in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America". As previously mentioned, the auditor's 2021 review letter is included (**Exhibit 2**).

**(6b). Expenditures are reasonably related to the prevention or response to oil spills from tanker or terminal operations, including environmental information, in the Cook Inlet RCAC area of responsibility.**

The Council Board of Directors approves an annual operating budget that guides the expenditure of funds. Our progress against the budget is reviewed by the Executive Committee at its regular meetings, held nearly on a monthly schedule. They consider

## Section 6: Funding

proposed revisions to the budget as presented by staff. These are reviewed for consistency with the Council's Strategic Plan.

In addition, EMC, PROPS, and the Protocol Control Committee annually approve their program budgets and work plans, and consider revisions to the budgets as presented. These are also reviewed for consistency with the Council's Strategic Plan.

A copy of the summary 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 Operating and Program Budgets is attached (**Exhibit 8**).

**SECTION 7. Accessibility of Application: The Coast Guard’s review will include an examination of the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC provided notification to the public via local press releases that it has applied for certification and the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC has ensured that the application is accessible for public review.**

Once a docket number is provided, CIRCAC will inform the public of its recertification application through paid advertisements and public service announcements in social media and newspapers of wide distribution in Kodiak, Anchorage, and the Kenai Peninsula. Press announcements will be sent to print, media outlets, and the weekly *What’s Up* bulletin, a widely-distributed publication of The Alaska Center. Copies of the application will be available at the Kenai office and online at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org). A story will be included in our Cook Inlet RCAC e-newsletter, seen by hundreds of interested parties. The website, board and committee meeting agendas, and our Directors Updates will alert groups and individuals.

Advertisement/Press Release Example:

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC) is a nonprofit corporation organized under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). Our mission is to provide for the oversight, monitoring, assessing and evaluation of oil spill prevention, safety and response plans, terminal and oil tanker operations and the environmental impacts of oil tanker and oil terminal operations in Cook Inlet.

OPA 90 calls for an annual review by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) of CIRCAC’s activities. The recertification process ensures that CIRCAC is meeting the mandates spelled out in OPA 90, and is representing the interests of the communities within the vicinity of the terminal operations in the Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island areas.

A copy of CIRCAC’s application to the USCG is available at our corporate office at 8195 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai, AK, or online at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org). The deadline for public comment to the USCG is 08/04/2023. Comments should be submitted through the Federal Decision Making Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

If unable to submit comments as above, contact LT Kuikhoven for alternates:

LT Case Kuikhoven – Seventeenth Coast Guard District

Telephone: 907-463-2812

Email: [Case.A.Kuikhoven@uscg.mil](mailto:Case.A.Kuikhoven@uscg.mil).

Letters should reference Docket Number USCG-2023-0392. For more information, contact Maddie Jamora at 907-283-7222, or via email at [jamora@circac.org](mailto:jamora@circac.org).

**BYLAWS  
OF  
COOK INLET REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL, INC.**

**SECTION 3. COUNCIL**

**3.4. Classes.** The Council shall consist of three classes of Directors.

**3.4.1.** The Interest Group Directors shall be elected by and from the Interest Groups set forth in Section 2.1.1, **except as set forth in Sections 3.15 and 4.1.2.** One Director shall be elected by each **such** Interest Group ~~set forth therein~~. (Am 09/04/09; 12/01/16)

**3.4.2.** The Municipal Directors shall be appointed by the Municipalities set forth in Section 2.1.2. One Director shall be appointed by each of the Municipalities set forth therein. (Am 09/04/09; 12/01/16)

**3.4.3.** The Agency Directors shall be appointed by the agencies set forth in Section 2.1.3. One Director shall be appointed by each of the Agencies set forth therein. (Am 09/04/09; 12/1/16)

**3.15. Vacancies.** A vacancy in the position of Director shall be filled by the Council with the appointee of the municipality or agency or the person elected by the member group, **except as set forth in Section 4.1.2.** (Am 09/04/09; Am 12/01/16) Notice of the vacancy **other than a vacancy caused by the end of a term** shall immediately be given to the applicable Municipality or Agency or Member Group. **Notice of a vacancy caused by the end of a term shall be given in accordance with policies adopted by the Council.** A Director who fills a vacancy shall serve the unexpired term, if any, as provided in Section ~~3.4~~ **3.6** (Am 12/01/16). In no case may a vacancy continue for longer than six (6) months or until the next Annual meeting of the Council, whichever occurs first. (Am 09/04/09)

Here is Section 3.6 for reference:

**3.6. Term of Office.** The Interest Group Directors and the Municipal Directors shall serve for a term of three (3) years or until their successors are elected and qualified. (Am 9/21/07)



## SECTION 4. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS.

**4.1. Election of Interest Group Directors.** ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 2.4,~~ The members of each Interest Group identified in Section 2.1.1 shall elect the Director representing that Interest Group, **as set forth below.** Each member shall have one vote. (Am 03/28/08; Am 09/04/09; Am 12/01/16)

**4.1.1.** The election of a Director to represent an Interest Group shall be conducted in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the Council. (Am 09/21/07; Am 09/04/09; 12/01/16) The Credentials Committee shall insure validation of the election and report the results of the election to the Council at its annual meeting.

**4.1.2. If an Interest Group does not nominate at least one (1) candidate to fill a vacancy by the nomination deadline established in Council policies, then the Council may elect the incumbent director to another term; or, if there is no incumbent, then the Council may elect a qualified person to fill the vacancy.**

**4.2. Selection of Municipal Group Directors.** ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 2.4,~~ Each municipality in the Municipal Group shall be entitled to appoint the Director who will represent the municipality. (Am 09/04/09; Am 12/01/16) The appointment will be made by the Mayor or the **governing elected** body as may be appropriate in the municipality.

**4.3. Selection of Agency Group Directors.** ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 2.4,~~ Each member of the Agency Group shall be entitled to appoint the Director to represent the agency. (Am 09/04/09; Am 12/01/16)

**4.4. Election of Directors.** At or before each Annual Meeting of the Council, the Council shall ~~certify recognize as Directors,~~ the Directors elected or appointed by the Member Groups, **or by the Council under Section 4.1.2,** to fill ~~such~~ vacancies.



# LAMBE, TUTER & ASSOCIATES

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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October 31, 2022

To the Executive Committee  
Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Inc.

We have audited the financial statements of Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 2021, and we will issue our report thereon dated October 31, 2022. Professional standards require that we provide you with information about our responsibilities under generally accepted auditing standards, as well as certain information related to the planned scope and timing of our audit. We have communicated such information in our letter to you dated May 18, 2022. Professional standards also require that we communicate to you the following information related to our audit.

## Significant Audit Matters

### *Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices*

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. The significant accounting policies used by Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Inc. are described in Note 2 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted and the application of existing policies was not changed during 2021. We noted no transactions entered into by the Council during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions have been recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The most sensitive estimates affecting the financial statements were:

Management's estimate of the cost allocation to programs is based on the estimated costs of providing various programs and activities. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop cost allocations in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Management's estimate of depreciation is based on expected useful lives of capital assets. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop depreciation expense in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Management's estimate of the allowance for doubtful accounts is based on management's estimates of collectability. We evaluated the key factors and assumptions used to develop the allowance for doubtful accounts in determining that it is reasonable in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

The financial statement disclosures are neutral, consistent, and clear.

*Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit*

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit.

*Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements*

Professional standards require us to accumulate all misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Management has corrected all such misstatements. In addition, none of the misstatements detected as a result of audit procedures and corrected by management were material, either individually or in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

*Disagreements with Management*

For purposes of this letter, a disagreement with management is a disagreement on a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

*Other Audit Findings or Issues*

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the Council's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

This information is intended solely for the use of the Audit Committee, Executive Committee, and management of Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Inc. and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Very truly yours,

*Lambe Tutor & Associates*

## **Council Priorities for CIRCAC**

### **Background**

CIRCAC's strategic plan is developed around a framework of "Programs" that are considered relatively permanent based on their role in meeting OPA 90 mandates. Each Program has a purpose, goals, strategies, and outcome providing a blueprint that aids staff and committees in developing their annual workplans and soliciting partnerships and outside funding. The Board last reviewed and revised that portion of the strategic plan (the Programs) in December 2022 and no further action is requested for that. During the December review, the Board requested that the Council Priorities review be postponed until the April 2023 meeting.

### **Council Priorities**

In the fall of 2013, CIRCAC's Board decided to include Council Priorities as part of the Strategic Plan to help staff, committees, and Board members (including ex-officios) focus attention and seek opportunities for partnerships and additional funding to address some of the most pressing needs.

In the fall of 2013, six Council Priorities were identified for the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. Two more were added in 2018 and three more in 2019. In December 2020, the Board reviewed accomplishments towards those 11 priorities and removed those that were either determined to have been accomplished or were no longer a priority. During that review in 2020, the Board also approved wording changes to several of the continued priorities and added two new priorities.

So, currently, the Council Priorities are (not in order of priority):

1. Evaluate oil spill risks and potential risk reduction strategies for oil facilities and infrastructure in Cook Inlet, including new risks and potential ecological impacts posed by the expansion of offshore oil industry operations into federal waters of the lower Inlet.
2. Continue seeking additional funding from other sources for non-OPA 90 issues.
3. Develop a sustained program to collect and integrate biological and chemical environmental data in the Cook Inlet region, and ensure their use for appropriate governmental and private purposes.
4. Host CIRCAC "Now and Then" Celebration to highlight CIRCAC accomplishments and lessons learned.
5. Partner with NOAA, AOOS, NPS, UAF, and others to provide an open-access oil spill trajectory model for Cook Inlet oil spill planning and response, ensuring complex oceanographic processes are captured in order to effectively model oil spill trajectories.
6. Provide leadership in the oversight and review of any actions potentially impacting State and Federal oil spill regulations and laws.
7. Develop an understanding of current and planned activities associated with OCS areas in lower Cook Inlet.
8. Compile a comprehensive library of Cook Inlet oil industry infrastructure and activities.

## **Actions requested of Executive Committee and CIRCAC Board**

Below are brief descriptions of the current status of activities towards those priorities and recommendations for either retaining as is, revising, or deleting. Given that the past 3 years were somewhat interrupted by pandemic issues, many of the priorities are still pertinent and have not moved forward significantly. For that reason, most are recommended for retention (with some recommended for revision). Also, since the concept of Council Priorities should help focus efforts, the priority list shouldn't be too long and it should be recognized that the organization will also still move forward with the Program portion of the Strategic Plan that identifies ALL of the goals and strategies the organization has identified for meeting OPA 90 mandates.

### **1. Evaluate oil spill risks and potential risk reduction strategies for oil facilities and infrastructure in Cook Inlet, including new risks and potential ecological impacts posed by the expansion of offshore oil industry operations into federal waters of the lower Inlet.**

CIRCAC has been a leader in developing plans for assessing various oil spill risks in Cook Inlet, including a Navigational Risk Assessment and a Pipeline Infrastructure Risk Assessment. There are still risks associated with oil industry operations that have not been adequately assessed and new risks coming on-line in the lower Inlet on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease areas and potential reductions in risks associated with declining production in the Upper Inlet. Assessing Risks should be retained as a Council Priority because almost every single other program, project, goal, and strategy is tied to having identified specific risks from oil industry in Cook Inlet. Thus, identifying the risks for oil spills is foundational to CIRCAC's mission and is a cornerstone to all other programs and projects. A recent example is the identification of new locations that needed development of Geographical Response Plans (GRS) based on identified oil spill risks.

#### **Recommendation: Retain with the following revisions:**

Evaluate oil spill risks and potential risk reduction strategies for oil facilities and infrastructure in Cook Inlet, including (1) new risks and potential ecological impacts posed by the expansion of offshore oil industry operations into federal waters of the lower Inlet and (2) changes to risks due to production declines and the potential changes in infrastructure, processes, and practices of Cook Inlet marine and offshore facilities.

### **2. Continue seeking additional funding from other sources for non-OPA 90 issues.**

CIRCAC has been successful in coordinating with other organizations to incorporate CIRCAC interests into projects that were initially developed for work outside of CIRCAC's OPA 90 mandates. CIRCAC often has the expertise to add to those projects that are not tied to crude oil that improve our knowledge of Cook Inlet. We can and have also leveraged our experience with crude oil issues to identify risks and potential mitigations for non-crude oil activities. Examples include acting as "Subject-matter Expert" during the methane leak in upper Cook Inlet and review of non-crude Oil Spill Contingency Plans (through Kenai Peninsula Borough funding years ago).

**Recommendation: Retain as is.**

---

**3. Develop a sustained program to collect and integrate biological and chemical environmental data in the Cook Inlet region and ensure their use for appropriate governmental and private purposes.**

We have developed partnerships with existing and new programs in Cook Inlet to leverage funding and share expertise to collect biological and chemical environmental data. For example, we completed a four-year field study (summers of 2015-2018) for nearshore habitats in lower Cook Inlet with multiple agency and university partners. Our most recent effort is a project funded by BOEM to integrate biological and chemical environmental data in the Cook Inlet region and develop on-line data access and visualization tools to enhance their appropriate use by agencies and stakeholders.

We've worked hard to work with agency, industry, and other organization partners to make this happen on a larger scale. In this fiscal environment, our OPA 90 mandates related to environmental monitoring and research is difficult to carry out alone. Our programs' successes are dependent on partnerships and integration with other efforts, especially in developing and maintaining a sustained program.

**Recommendation: Retain as is.**

---

**4. Host CIRCAC "Now and Then" Celebration to highlight CIRCAC accomplishments and lessons learned.**

This priority was originally intended to highlight our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 to include participation by representatives of Sullom Voe planning, response, and environmental monitoring efforts in the Shetland Islands, Scotland. However, due to COVID-19 shut-downs and travel restrictions we missed that opportunity during our 30<sup>th</sup> year. However, in 2020, CIRCAC rewrote this to its current language that highlights CIRCAC accomplishments since our formation. To date, we have not hosted such a celebration but are making progress in compiling information about our accomplishments. We should continue to compile that information, make it available (along with a timeline of those accomplishments) on our web-site and potentially plan for a more formal celebration leading up to our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Recommendation: Retain with recommended revision:**

~~Host CIRCAC "Now and Then" Celebration to~~ Through various outreach efforts, highlight CIRCAC accomplishments and lessons learned. Develop supporting information that includes (1) a comprehensive on-line catalog and timeline of CIRCAC's contributions towards a better understanding of Cook Inlet's environment and improvements in oil spill prevention and response, and (2) compile a comprehensive library of Cook Inlet oil industry infrastructure and activities.

---

**5. Partner with NOAA, AOOS, NPS, UAF, and others to provide an open-access oil spill trajectory model for Cook Inlet oil spill planning and response, ensuring complex oceanographic processes are captured in order to effectively model oil spill trajectories.**

Over twenty years of effort by CIRCAC and others are all converging to finally provide the information and technology to attain this goal and interest is high among our partners (e.g. AOOS, OSRI, NOAA, KBRR, NPS, and BOEM) to move this forward. As well, the EMC and PROPS have both committed funds to help support a modeling working group, model development, model validation of the CIOFS and the BOEM-funded UAF Cook Inlet Model, and a data gap analysis. Currently, we are partnering on a number of efforts including conducting a model “hindcast” that will provide model-to-data comparisons to identify model weaknesses that will help identify data gaps that could lead to additional ocean observing efforts. An exciting component is that there is significant interest by the National Ocean Service and National Weather Service to add sea ice capability in an operational CIOFS. However, there is still a long way to go to meet goals of EMC and PROPS for a user-friendly accessible oil spill trajectory model appropriate for planning purposes.

**Recommendation: Retain as is.**

**6. Provide leadership in the oversight and review of any actions potentially impacting State and Federal oil spill regulations and laws.**

A recent focus of this Council Priority was our leadership in educating stakeholders about and submission of CIRCAC comments during ADEC’s Public Scoping of the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (ODPCP) Public Scoping (18 AAC 75 Article 4). CIRCAC’s oversight and review of other potential actions will likely always be key but is especially important when future state and federal budgets and responsibilities are uncertain.

**Recommendation: Retain as is.**

**7. Develop an understanding of current and planned activities associated with OCS areas in lower Cook Inlet.**

In its 33-year history, CIRCAC activities have focused on the oil industry activities associated with upper Inlet oil industry operations (e.g. exploration, production, and transportation to and from those upper Inlet facilities). Recent activities associated with leases in the Cook Inlet Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Planning Area has expanded our focus to a larger geographic area and a wider range of activities – with associated new risks and potential environmental impacts. An example of activities associated with those leases was the extensive seismic work conducted in the lower Inlet several years ago. We submitted comments with recommendations for monitoring associated with the seismic permit and helped facilitate field collections and sensor deployments by NOAA and their contractors. Though the most recent lease sale did not lead to

significant increases in potential activity areas, there is still uncertainty in future activities associated with the previous leases.

**Recommendation: Retain as is.**

---

**8. Compile a comprehensive library of Cook Inlet oil industry infrastructure and activities.**

Funding has already been allocated by each committee for components of this, but CIRCAC can partner with agencies and industry to compile, maintain, and update more comprehensive information. It is difficult to easily find the data on-line and it is reported in different ways by different agencies and not easy to integrate. CIRCAC is commonly asked for this type of information and staff spends significant time trying to access and compile data for these requests and for preparing reviews, recommendations, and reports. A concerted effort by staff and/or contractor(s) or intern(s) would ensure this compilation was done in a more timely and integrated manner. Further, by the Council prioritizing this, it gives direction to the committees to support and coordinate these efforts.

**Recommendation: Retain but merge with Council Priority 4 above (already reflected in the proposed revised language for Priority 4.**



## COOK INLET Regional Citizens Advisory Council

*Representing citizens in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet since 1990.*



### Board and Annual meeting held in Kenai



(Above: James McHale addresses the Council after receiving the 2022 Volunteer of the Year award. Mr. McHale has served on the PROPS Committee since 2014.  
Photo: Shaylon Cochran)

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council Annual and Board of Directors meeting was held April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association building in Kenai. The Board also conducted its Annual Meeting.

[Read More](#)

### 2023 Scholarship Winners Announced

James Carter Memorial Scholarship  
for Environmental Sciences – Jacob

### CIRCAC Elections Certified



Michael Opheim (above) won reelection to represent Alaska Native Interest Groups on the CIRCAC Board of Directors.

Deric Marorelle (below) won reelection to represent Environmental Interest Groups on the CIRCAC Board of Directors.



[Read More](#)

### CISPRI holds Tour, Orientation

Mitchell of Anchorage, currently studying at Gonzaga University. Jacob is majoring in Biology and wants to focus his career on habitat and environmental protection.

Barry Eldridge Memorial Scholarship for Maritime Studies – Owen Glasman of Homer, currently attending California State University – Maritime Academy. Owen intends to return to Alaska to work as a professional mariner following graduation.

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CIRCAC staff were invited to participate in an orientation and tour day at Cook Inlet Spill Response, Inc. (CISPRI) on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

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**COOK INLET**  
REGIONAL CITIZENS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

[CONTACT COOK INLET](#)

#### CONNECT

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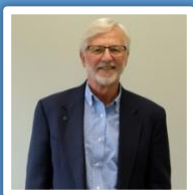
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Update from the Board of Directors  
Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

Gary Fandrei, President, representing Aquaculture Associations

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council Annual and Board of Directors meeting was held April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association building in Kenai. The Board also conducted its Annual Meeting.

CIRCAC recognized United States Coast Guard Capt. Leanne Lusk, Commander Sector Anchorage, as she will be retiring at the end of June. The Board unanimously adopted a resolution thanking Captain Lusk for her service in the USCG and as an Ex-Officio member of CIRCAC. We have been privileged to work with Captain Lusk the past three years and wish her well on her future endeavors, and equally look forward to working with the next Commander for Sector Anchorage, Capt. Chris Culpepper, who begins his deployment in July.

The Board also awarded service recognition to several volunteers with the organization. A. Bruce Magyar was recognized with the 5 Year Service Award as a public member of the Environmental Monitoring Committee. Grace Merkes was recognized with the 25 Year Service Award. Ms. Merkes currently represents the Kenai Peninsula Borough on the Council and also serves on the Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS), Executive, and Audit Committees. Finally, James McHale was recognized as our 2022 Volunteer of the Year. Mr. McHale has served for many years as a public member and Chair of the PROPS Committee. We thank all of the public member volunteers for their continued dedication to the mission of CIRCAC and applaud them for the time, efforts and expertise they give the organization.

The Council also certified annual elections, welcoming back to the Board for a three-year term Mr. Michael Opheim, representing Alaska Native Groups and Mr. Deric Marcorelle, representing Environmental Interest Groups and also serving as the Council's Secretary/Treasurer. Grace Merkes was reappointed to another three-year term by the Kenai Peninsula Borough as was Scott Arndt, who represents the Kodiak Island Borough.

Our next meeting is scheduled for September and will be held in Homer.

### **AGREEMENT FOR COOK INLET RCAC FUNDING**

The companies listed on Attachment A ("Charter Funding Companies") are required by the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) to provide annual funding to the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council ("Cook Inlet RCAC"). The Charter Funding Companies agree to provide such funding subject to the following terms and conditions.

1. This Agreement is signed in counterparts, with each individual Charter Funding Company signing this Agreement separately. Each counterpart shall constitute a duplicate original; all counterparts together shall constitute a single agreement.

2. Each individual Charter Funding Company shall pay its share of Cook Inlet RCAC's funding in the amount described in Attachment A. Cook Inlet RCAC will submit an invoice to each Charter Funding Company for the amount due from that company thirty (30) days prior to the due date; provided, however, that failure to send or receive such invoice does not relieve the company from its obligation to timely pay each payment due. Each Charter Funding Company's share is due and payable in full directly to Cook Inlet RCAC by no later than January 1 of each year during the term of this Agreement. A company's annual share may be paid in two installments: the first installment of fifty percent (50%) of the annual payment shall be paid by no later than January 1 each year, and the second installment of fifty percent (50%) of the annual payment shall be paid by no later than June 30 each year. If an installment is not received by Cook Inlet RCAC on or before the due date, the entire annual share becomes due and payable in full.

3. Cook Inlet RCAC's funding under this Agreement will be adjusted annually, as of January 1 of each year, using the following formula:

2021 - \$1,493,010.98, plus an increase equal to the 2020 Anchorage Consumer Price Index (CPI);

2022 - Total funding for 2021, plus an increase equal to total funding for 2021 multiplied by the 2021 Anchorage CPI;

2023 - Total funding for 2022, plus an increase equal to total funding for 2022 multiplied by the 2022 Anchorage CPI;

2024- Total funding for 2023, plus an increase equal to total funding for 2023 multiplied by the 2023 Anchorage CPI;

2025- Total funding for 2024, plus an increase equal to total funding for 2024 multiplied by the 2024 Anchorage CPI.

4. The term of this Agreement is from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2025. Funding adjustments in paragraph 3 are effective December 1 for the following year.

5. It is understood that the share of funding provided by individual Charter Funding Companies may vary from year to year, and that companies may be added to or deleted from Attachment A depending upon industry activity in Cook Inlet. Attachment A may be modified by the Charter Funding Companies to reflect such additions, deletions or changes in activities, and such modification shall be forwarded to Cook Inlet RCAC by no later than December 1 each year; provided, however, that any such modification is not effective until the next funding year. Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response (CISPRI) shall confirm the accuracy and provide



documentation of the share of funding by the individual companies based on the volumes reported to CISPRI by the Charter Funding Companies or by virtue of exploration in Cook Inlet for crude oil and/or natural gas before Attachment A is forwarded to Cook Inlet RCAC, and such documentation shall accompany the updated Attachment A forwarded to Cook Inlet RCAC.

6. If a new company commences activities related to crude oil or natural gas exploration in Cook Inlet, said company shall pay a minimum of \$50,000 per year as its share of Cook Inlet RCAC's funding under Section 3, above.

7. It is also understood that if additional production or transportation or exploration sources are developed by the Charter Funding Companies or other new companies operating in Cook Inlet that will require additional filing of oil spill contingency plans, monitoring or oversight by Cook Inlet RCAC, funding shall be increased to cover this increased activity and the parties shall in good faith negotiate said increase.

8. Cook Inlet RCAC will provide the Charter Funding Companies with a copy of its annual report and financial statement. The Charter Funding Companies may jointly audit Cook Inlet RCAC accounts once per year, at the companies' expense. Cook Inlet RCAC will also provide the Charter Funding Companies at no charge with copies of the minutes of all Council and Committee meetings, along with any reports, recommendations or position papers which are prepared by the Council or its Committees, if requested by the Charter Funding Companies.

9. Funds provided to Cook Inlet RCAC by the Charter Funding Companies pursuant to this Agreement are to be used for the purpose stated in OPA 90, Alaska State Law, the Bylaws of Cook Inlet RCAC and its Strategic Plan, as applicable.

10. A Charter Funding Company shall not be released from the obligation to provide funding as described above as long as: 1) Cook Inlet RCAC retains OPA 90 certification during the term of this Agreement; 2) a Company operates oil facilities, produces, transports or explores for crude oil or natural gas in the Cook Inlet area.

11. Each individual Charter Funding Company agrees to provide written notice to Cook Inlet RCAC if such company intends to cease operating in Cook Inlet, at least ninety (90) days in advance of said cessation, and agrees further to cover all of its funding obligations to Cook Inlet RCAC until the end of the calendar year in which such company ceases operating in Cook Inlet.

12. If a Charter Funding Company fails to pay any installment due under Paragraph 2, above, within sixty (60) days of the date it is due, Cook Inlet RCAC may notify all Charter Funding Companies of such default. Within forty-five (45) days of such notice, the remaining Charter Funding Companies will provide to Cook Inlet RCAC payment in full of any installment payment due from the defaulting company.

13. In the event that a Charter Funding Company files for bankruptcy and Cook Inlet RCAC is required to defend against any claim for refund of any payment made by such Company under this Agreement, or is ordered by the bankruptcy court to refund such payment, Cook Inlet RCAC shall notify all remaining Charter Funding Companies of such claim or order, and the remaining Charter Funding Companies will cover Cook Inlet RCAC's reasonable defense costs or reasonable costs of compliance with such order.

14. If the Charter Funding Companies fail to make up a funding default as provided in paragraph 11, or fail to cover Cook Inlet RCAC's bankruptcy costs as provided in paragraph 12, Cook Inlet RCAC may terminate this Agreement upon no less than thirty (30) days written notice to all the Charter Funding Companies, and may pursue any legal or political remedies available.

15. This Agreement cannot be amended, modified or supplemented in any respect except by a subsequent written agreement entered into by Cook Inlet RCAC and all of the Charter Funding Companies.

END OF AGREEMENT

CHARTER FUNDING COMPANY: Marathon Petroleum Corporation  
(Name)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name)

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

COOK INLET CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name)

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

# COOK INLET RCAC 2020 - 2023

## OPERATING BUDGET

*Exhibit 8*

			2020 APPROVED	2021 APPROVED	2022 APPROVED	2023 APPROVED
			OPERATING BUDGET	OPERATING BUDGET	OPERATING BUDGET	OPERATING BUDGET
<b>INCOME</b>						
	Charter Funding Companies		1,493,010.98	1,493,010.98	1,578,112.60	1,707,688.04
	<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$1,493,010.98</b>	<b>\$1,493,010.98</b>	<b>\$1,578,112.60</b>	<b>\$1,707,688.04</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>						
	Personnel and Insurance Costs		986,700.00	966,250.00	1,001,250.00	1,094,500.00
	Facilities/Operating Costs		54,000.00	63,000.00	77,000.00	83,011.00
	Office Supplies/Equipment/Maintenance/Computers		25,550.00	25,550.00	49,800.00	54,800.00
	Advertising/Give Aways/Subscriptions		10,000.00	10,000.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
	Postage/Delivery		1,700.00	1,700.00	2,500.00	3,500.00
	Miscellaneous		9,010.98	15,460.98	17,162.60	19,677.04
<b>TRAVEL EXPENSES</b>						
	Administrative Travel, Meeting		43,750.00	48,750.00	48,800.00	52,800.00
	Council/Committee Travel, Meeting		36,000.00	36,000.00	36,600.00	49,400.00
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>						
Professional Services (Workplan Related)						
	Council		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	EMC		125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00
	PROPS		115,000.00	105,000.00	105,000.00	105,000.00
	Protocol		10,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
	Public Involvement		<u>35,000.00</u>	<u>35,000.00</u>	<u>35,000.00</u>	<u>35,000.00</u>
	<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>285,000.00</b>	<b>285,000.00</b>	<b>285,000.00</b>	<b>285,000.00</b>
Legal Expenses			10,000.00	10,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
Certified Public Accountant			14,400.00	14,400.00	15,000.00	20,000.00
Consultation Expense & Travel			16,900.00	16,900.00	19,000.00	19,000.00
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET</b>		<b><u>\$1,493,010.98</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,493,010.98</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,578,112.60</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,707,688.04</u></b>