

Rear Admiral Megan Dean
Commander - 17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard

Admiral Dean:

I am writing in full support of the recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). Since its creation in 1990, CIRCAC has been Cook Inlet's most effective organization for promoting programs to prevent spills, enhance safety in both marine transportation and oil facilities operations, and protect Cook Inlet's waters, shorelines, cultural, natural and wildlife resources.

Not only does CIRCAC advocate for better regulatory oversight and safety measures, but they also contribute concrete solutions on how to achieve those goals. This includes conducting risk assessments, sharing data, developing applicable tools and strategies, evaluating best available technology, engaging the public, and thoroughly reviewing contingency plans and regulations that prioritize prevention while promoting safety. No other organization has focused as much attention for as many years to identifying, assessing and mitigating risks in this region.

CIRCAC has been proactive in working with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) on a suite of regulatory updates, approved in 2021. CIRCAC worked with the agency, industry partners and through various public outreach campaigns to educate and support updates that strengthened the state's spill response rules.

Since its inception, CIRCAC has formed and strengthened partnerships and encouraged consensus decision-making. Through this process, CIRCAC brings a varied group of stakeholders together to create environmental monitoring and oil spill prevention programs to promote safe production and transportation of oil in Cook Inlet.

I strongly urge the U.S. Coast Guard to recertify CIRCAC so that it can continue to build on its work and positively impact the future of Cook Inlet.

Sincerely

Grace Merkes

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