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July 15, 2014

Rear Admiral Daniel B. Abel
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
c/o Docket Management Facility (M-30)
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

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

Dear Admiral:

On behalf of Mote Marine Laboratory, I would like to express our support for the recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (Cook Inlet RCAC).

Mote scientists Drs. Dana Wetzel and John Reynolds have had the privilege of working directly with the Cook Inlet RCAC on beluga whale studies related to possible exposures to environmental contaminants and to water quality. Cook Inlet beluga whales were listed as endangered in October 2008 at approximately that same time; the National Marine Fisheries Service completed a Conservation Plan that identified potential threats that might impede recovery of the stock. With funding and expertise provided by the Cook Inlet RCAC, Mote scientists began studying one potential threat - contaminants from oil and gas development or other activities that could introduce polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) into beluga habitat and prey.

Drs. Wetzel and Reynolds have found the staff of the Cook Inlet RCAC to be extremely knowledgeable, professional and experienced during these years of data collection and research.

We look forward to being a part of future projects, and respectfully request the Coast Guard approve Cook Inlet RCAC's application for recertification.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Crosby, Ph.D., FLS
President & CEO

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