

30 June, 2017

Rear Admiral Michael F. McAllister
Commander
United States Coast Guard – District 17
709 W. 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Docket #USCG-2017-0289 Cook Inlet RCAC Recertification Letter of Support

Attention: Lt. Jonathon Dale:

As environmental scientists, we would like to take this opportunity to comment on the scientific and environmental monitoring activities of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). We have been aware of CIRCAC projects and activities over the last 2 decades and, in disclosure, have occasionally done field work and technical reports in support their Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC). For the past seven years, we have served as senior forensic chemists supporting the National Resource Damage Assessment for the Trustees of the Gulf of Mexico BP oil spill.

Our experience with and impression of CIRCAC's EMC and specifically with their staff lead, Ms. Susan Saupe, has been outstanding. Over the years, we've observed their unrelenting efforts to support, fund (or co-fund) and execute focused programs to progress the scientific understanding of how Cook Inlet works and inventory its resources. The obvious benefit is that when human disruption occurs (e.g., oil spills, construction, operations), insight is available to mitigate or avoid the impact. We note that more often they are not just reactive; they are proactive and innovative. Ice cameras, shoreline mapping, site-specific pre-spill response plans, field studies integrating multiple environmental disciplines, and oceanographic mapping are but a few of the high-value/high-yield, basic and applied science studies they've sponsored or performed over the years. Another, background hydrocarbon chemistry, was one in which we participated and note that it, like so many other EMC studies, filled a data gap in understanding dynamic aspects of Cook Inlet.

Finally, we note that Ms. Saupe is a powerhouse of science, with broad yet detailed knowledge of Alaskan ecosystems, oceanography, geomorphology, chemistry and, equally relevant, vessel and oil industry operations. We see her conversant, informed and persuasive at conferences among her scientist

peers, and equally competent and experienced while leading or participating in field surveys. During a recent leaking pipeline incident and later accidental oil release, she was a go-to resource on how to conduct meaningful monitoring and incident response in the ice-covered inlet.

In summary, we strongly support the CIRCAC to continue performing its oversight mission and kudos to the years of superb scientific knowledge collected, compiled and synthesized by the EMC and Ms. Saupe.

Respectfully,

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