



## Risk assessment planned for Cook Inlet pipelines

By [Shaylon Cochran](#) • Oct 29, 2018

[Twitter](#)[Facebook](#)[Google+](#)[Email](#)



Credit Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Some of the oldest infrastructure in Cook Inlet has been there since the early 1960's. With the oil and gas industry showing no signs of slowing down, both the state and the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council want to know more about what condition all those platforms and pipelines are in.

CIRCAC and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation are looking for a panel of experts to take up the job. Here's CIRCAC Executive Director Mike Munger.

"To industry's credit, they've done a good job maintaining that. But we're talking about piping that is in a very dynamic body of water. Arguably the most dynamic body of water in North America with no means to do visual inspections," says CIRCAC executive director Mike Munger.

"So recently, we decided to do the next step and we're undertaking the infrastructure risk assessment which takes a look at the subsea oil lines that are related to oil production."

More than 200 miles of pipeline lie below the surface of Cook Inlet, though not all of it carries liquid crude. That's what the new assessment panel will focus on. Munger says the operation will be similar to a marine navigational risk assessment done a few years ago.

“(We’re) taking a look at all the information and having experts take a look at all the information and seeing what we can do to mitigate risk, seeing if they can come up with some recommendations to do just that; whether it be on the regulatory side of things, whether we need more regulations, more stringent oversight, to operational procedures. So (it’s) methodically going through the recommendations and trying to act on those that we can implement. And with risk assessment, you don’t really know what you’re going to get on the other end of the process. So we just have to see what comes of it and what the experts come up with and we’ll go from there.”

He says this is different than a program the state was looking into several years ago, called Dismantle, Remove and Restore or D R and R. That was focused more on platforms and other infrastructure that is nearing the end of its engineered life. But, Munger says, with plenty of resources left for companies to extract, a fresh risk assessment is necessary.

“This is just a part of the process to make sure that these operations are running safely and have structural integrity. Since all the larger operators, like Hilcorp, have purported that they want to run these assets at least another 20 years, it makes it even more imperative that we know what the state of these assets are and make sure that they’re structurally sound and will be for the foreseeable future.”

That panel will include five experts. They’ll take a full inventory of pipeline infrastructure in Cook Inlet and over the course of the next year, meet three times before giving a final report next October.