

Matthew T. Bell, Jr.  
Rear Admiral  
United States Coast Guard  
Commander 17th Coast Guard District

Admiral Bell:

I am writing in full support of recertification of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC).

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 created the Regional Citizens Advisory Councils. As explained by Congress, "many people believe that complacency on the part of the industry and government personnel responsible for monitoring the operation of the Valdez terminal and vessel traffic in Prince William Sound was one of the contributing factors to the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill" "One way to combat this complacency is to involve local citizens in the process of preparing, adopting, and revising oil spill contingency plans".

I have seen the value of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Council and the valuable programs and studies they have completed are a definite safety and pollution prevention assets for the Cook Inlet Area.

CIRCAC is a success story that came out of a belief in 1990.

CIRCAC has been proactive in identifying risks and developing recommendations to address them; an example is the recently completed Cook Inlet Pipeline Integrity Assessment. Through this project, a full catalog of Cook Inlet's undersea pipeline system was documented allowing a panel of experts, operators and the public to recommend risk reduction measures before problems arise.

Working with industry, CIRCAC has also been able to achieve the long-term goal of closing the Drift River Oil Terminal on the West side of Cook Inlet. Situated at the base of Mt. Redoubt, Drift River posed a significant safety hazard in the event of a natural disaster. Now, that oil is transported via pipeline, greatly reducing unnecessary risk.

CIRCAC's science program provides valuable data about coastal habitats, physical oceanography and oil behavior. Current research will generate new information about how biological debris interacts with oil as it moves through the water column.

CIRCAC continues to strengthen oil spill contingency plans and recommend substantive changes to ensure facilities are adequately staffed and that the plans are executable.

CIRCAC's accomplishments in the last three years include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Completing multi-year near-shore habitat assessment
- Launching groundbreaking study of marine snow as an oil transporter
- Advocating for a strengthening of oil spill prevention and response regulations
- Increasing public outreach efforts through new, local advertising, exhibits and expanding audiences for its newsletter, website, and social media
- Expanding Geographic Response Information Database (GRID) in scope and accessibility
- Working with regulators to maintain a robust Vessels of Opportunity program
- Upgrading the Cook Inlet Ice Monitoring Camera Network with modern video technology

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.

Respectfully  
Robert E. Archibald  
PO. Box 2460  
Homer, AK. 99603