



July 25, 2023

Rear Admiral Megan Dean  
United States Coast Guard  
Commander 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District  
Docket Number: USCG-2023-0392

Rear Admiral Dean:

On behalf of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (CIHSC) I am writing in full support of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council's (CIRCAC) recertification. Since its creation in 1990, CIRCAC has been one of Cook Inlet's most effective organizations for promoting programs to prevent oil spills, enhancing safety in both marine transportation and oil facilities operations, and protecting Cook Inlet's waters, shorelines, and cultural, natural and wildlife resources.

The Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee relies on CIRCAC for their leadership, innovation and partnerships. Some examples of their impact include but are not limited to:

- Updated Alaska ShoreZone visual data with new surveys along the outer Kenai Peninsula coast.
- Advocated for a strengthening of oil spill prevention and response regulations.
- Increased public outreach efforts through new and local advertising, exhibits, expanding audiences for its newsletter, website development, and social media presence.
- Expanded the Geographic Response Information Database (GRID) in its scope and accessibility.
- Expanded the Cook Inlet Ice Monitoring Camera Network with modern video technology.

Working with industry and multiple local, state, and federal agencies, CIRCAC has expanded its Ice Camera Network. The information provided by these cameras has significantly reduced the risk of an incident in Cook Inlet's dynamic winter conditions and highlights CIRCAC's ability to develop partnerships and share information. CIRCAC leadership in this important asset has been instrumental in continuing to foster the best technologies for the safety of Cook Inlet shipping.

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 the organization can continue to build on its work and positively impact the future of Cook Inlet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Mehler III", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Captain Paul Mehler III, U.S. Coast Guard (ret) Chair

Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee