

# Meritorious Public Service Award to

## Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard takes great pleasure in presenting the United States Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award to the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (*Council*) for outstanding support to the United States Coast Guard in safeguarding marine transportation and the environment.

For more than 17 years, the *Council* has delivered exceptional leadership, advocacy, and partnership instrumental in establishing the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee. After the 600-foot tanker SEABULK PRIDE went aground in Cook Inlet in 2006 with nearly 4.9 million gallons of petroleum products aboard, the *Council* convened the Cook Inlet Navigational Safety Forum, which advanced the call for a formal marine navigation risk assessment. Through adept leadership and sustained advocacy, the *Council* raised \$870,000, making it possible in 2011 to launch the Cook Inlet Risk Assessment – a combined effort of the *Council*, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Coast Guard. This multi-year, multi-stakeholder project assessed the risks of oil spills to Cook Inlet from marine vessels and recommended risk reduction measures, which included formation of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee. The *Council* subsequently partnered with the Coast Guard to host a Harbor Safety kick-off meeting, paving the way for a Convening Workgroup to organize the Harbor Safety Committee. In 2015, the *Council* served as a founding board member and now holds a seat on the Managing Board and on the Committee.

Today the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee serves as the principal forum for maritime stakeholders to collaborate on best practices and standards of care. It is an indispensable venue for communication and coordination aimed at enhancing navigational safety and environmental stewardship throughout Cook Inlet.

The *Council's* vigilance, leadership, and professionalism have been fundamental in the safety and welfare of Cook Inlet. Its many contributions and dedication to public service are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.