



*“The mission of the Council is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet.”*

**Members**

19 January 2021

*Tourism  
Group*

Anita Erickson  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Water  
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program 555 Cordova St. 3rd Floor  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2617

*Alaska Native  
Group*

Dear Ms. Erickson,

*Environmental  
Group*

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC) is responding to your call for comments regarding the proposed issuance of an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) permit (AK0053686; subsequently referred to as “Draft Permit”) to Furie Operating Alaska LLC for wastewater discharges to state waters of Cook Inlet by the Julius R. Platform.

*Recreational  
Group*

CIRCAC is a citizen oversight council for oil industry operations in the Cook Inlet region and was established according to Section 5002 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). Our organization represents local governments and interest groups in Cook Inlet and nearby areas who have the potential to be impacted by crude oil industry operations in Cook Inlet.

*Aquaculture  
Associations*

Under OPA 90, CIRCAC is responsible for recommendations concerning permits, plans, and site-specific regulations governing the activities and actions that may affect the environment in the vicinity of Cook Inlet terminal facilities. The proposed geographic area, activities, and facility covered in this draft permit are within our area of concern and, as such, this letter address our concerns specific to the new source of produced water discharges to Cook Inlet proposed in the draft permit. Our organization opposes any discharge permit that allows increased pollutant loads to Cook Inlet and supports a goal of zero discharge and, as written, the Draft Permit significantly increases the volume of produced water that could be discharged to Cook Inlet.

*Commercial  
Fishing  
Organizations*

*City of Kodiak*

*City of Kenai*

*City of Seldovia*

*City of Homer*

*Kodiak Island  
Borough*

*Kenai Peninsula  
Borough*

*Municipality of  
Anchorage*

According to the Draft Permit Fact Sheet, the 2014 Permit was based on production of gas from the Beluga formation and assumptions that the amount of produced water generated from the Beluga formation would be approximately 50 barrels per day (bbl/d) and transported via pipeline to the onshore Central Production Facility (CPF) for disposal. Since then, the production from the Sterling formation has increased the volume of produced water by up to 4,000%, or 2,000 bbl/d, and the permit anticipates volumes up to 5,000 bbl/d, or 10,000% more than initially permitted. Additionally, the waste stream now requires mitigation of hydrate formation via the introduction and discharge of methanol.

Under 18 AAC 70.016(a)(1)(A & B), permits under 18 AAC 83 Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) or an application for state certification of a federal permit under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) are subject to anti-degradation regulatory requirements. The anti-degradation review procedure is based on, among other things, the existing water quality of the receiving water, the necessity of degradation, and the social and economic importance of the regulated activity. As presented, the Draft Permit and Fact Sheet provide summaries of “discussions” between the applicant and ADEC, but do not provide the reviewing public with the details of these discussions.

The preferred Treatment “Separation Followed by Two-Stage Filtration” (Alternative 2) includes treating the methanol-laden produced water at the platform and discharge to the surrounding Cook Inlet receiving water is not the best alternative. The applicant states that (emphasis by CIRCAC) “the pilot test *indicates* the system in Alternative 2 provides adequate removal of hydrocarbons and metals such that implementation of Alternative 3 is *likely not necessary* to meet Permit limits. Furie intends to implement Alternative 3, if necessary, to meet limits...” The lack of certainty should lead ADEC to require that Alternative 3 – Modified Flotation with Two-Stage Filtration – be incorporated in the treatment at the initiation of the Draft Permit, if it moves forward allowing the proposed produced water discharge volumes.

Finally, we are reiterating our belief (submitted to ADEC in earlier APDES permit review comments) that it is ADEC’s responsibility to ensure that EPA conducts a reanalysis of the Cook Inlet exemption for the coastal subcategory in their Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELGs), since ADEC cites the ELGs in decisions to remove the exclusion of discharges from New Sources.

If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact me or our Director of Science and Research, Susan Saupe, at the number below or at our respective e-mails, [munger@circac.org](mailto:munger@circac.org) or [saupe@circac.org](mailto:saupe@circac.org).

Sincerely,



Michael Munger  
Executive Director