Secretary Doug Burgum
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: LEASING LOWER COOK INLET WILL NEGATIVELY IMPACT OUR BUSINESSES

Dear Secretary Burgum, Acting Director Giacona, and Ms. Hammerle,

We are small business owners in Lower Cook Inlet, Alaska, and we are writing to share the need to preserve the health and beauty of this region, and express our concerns about Cook Inlet's inclusion in the new 5 Year Plan for federal offshore oil and gas leasing.

These lands and waters are our most precious natural resources, and are vital to our local economies. The inherent risks and pollution from new oil platforms and pipelines are a threat to our communities and our livelihoods. Our local fisheries — sport, charter, commercial, and subsistence — oyster farms, restaurants, art galleries, and guest houses all rely on Lower Cook Inlet remaining free from oil development.

The public lands that surround Lower Cook Inlet are home to a spectacular blend of mountains, glaciers, clean rivers, and dynamic wildlife. These parks and refuges are essential to our tourism economy, drawing millions of people each year to spend time fishing and hunting, enjoying these wild places and the animals who also call them home.

It's the waters of Cook Inlet that connect and sustain our world-class parks on every shore. From watching bears snatch salmon from the rapids of Lake Clark and Katmai National Parks & Preserves to glacier trips in Kachemak Bay State Park & Wilderness Park, our parks offer visitors completely unique experiences. Allowing oil platforms in Lower Cook Inlet would detract from this wild beauty and harm our thriving tourism economy.

Local Alaskans have worked together to oppose new offshore oil and gas development in these waters since the 1970s, which has enabled our fisheries and tourism industries to survive and thrive. Our communities also remember the devastating effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. That's why almost every public comment in the 93,000 submitted during the recent Lease 258 review opposed the sale. The official estimate that Lease 258 would open the door to a 1 in 5 chance of large oil spills shows that any future leases are too risky.

We are asking you to remove leases in Lower Cook Inlet from this offshore plan to prevent disasters that would devastate our communities. Please remove Cook Inlet from this 5 Year Plan and any future federal offshore development plans.

Sincerely,

David Coray
Silver Salmon Creek Lodge
Soldotna, AK

Silver Creek Lodge stands hugely opposed to any thought of lower Cook Inlet lease sales. The rich eco-system of marine life would be in a direct line of harmful impact by any construction, blasting and drilling in lower Cook Inlet. We stand united with the efforts of Cook Inlet Keeper and other environmental groups to exempt lower Cook Inlet from any potential lease sales. Thank you. David, president, Silver Salmon Creek Lodge

Emily Chalup
Coal Point Trading Company
Homer, AK

An oil spill or leak in this area with some of the largest tides on earth, earthquakes and massive storms would devastate our economy reliant on healthy ecosystems and fish.

Nancy Hillstrand
Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries
Homer, AK

Our Alaskan corporation has been able to contribute to the economy of the Kachemak area since 1964. The leases were bought back during the 1970s to protect the rich pristine fisheries of this area. We saw what the oil spill did to our industry from 290 miles away! We must prevent this from happening again by staying out of this rich ecosystem

Marcia Kuszmaul
Juneberry Lodge
Homer, AK

A 20% chance of a large oil spell is an unacceptable and dangerous risk for a community to accept. We operate a traditional bed and breakfast lodge on the shores of Kachemak Bay. Our visitors, especially international independent travelers, tell us they come here for Nature. They cannot see and experience an undeveloped, pristine environment where they live. It is an opportunity of a lifetime. We are blessed to be able to offer this experience and too often take it for granted for ourselves. We must, in our lifetimes, protect this environment and all the life here. My business and well being depend on it. Thank you.

Kathryn Carovano
Kachemak Kelp LLC
Homer, AK

Seaweed farming and processing are new, regenerative industries in Cook Inlet that the State of AK and Federal government have supported through significant investments. Seaweed is creating new local jobs and income streams, but it requires clean water to be a viable product. Oil and water don't mix, and oil and gas production in Cook Inlet could end a promising industry that is just beginning to grow.

Kathy Sarns Irwin & Patrick Irwin
Free Spirit Bike Jerseys
Homer, AK

Leasing Lower Cook Inlet would be a short sighted travesty economically and ethically. The long term economic real value of this pristine world class area is far more profitable if it is protected from oil and gas exploration. Leasing would ruin this area that already has an established economy that is sustainable & stable & would go against the best interests of the communities and businesses in the Lower Cook Inlet Region.

Sandra Cronland
Twin Creeks Trailhead Lodge
Homer, AK

I am totally opposed to all future offshore gas and oil leases in Lower Cook Inlet. Hillcorp has a terrible track record of being concerned about the environment in Alaska. No offshore activity is safe! My husband is a lifelong Alaskan, and I have been a resident for 45 years. We own and operate a lodge business in Homer, with a view of Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay and we have local Alaskan visitors year round as well as visitors from around the world that come to Alaska to specifically experience the last great wilderness area in the world. Their experience of the incredible natural beauty of the ocean, mountains, wildlife, and clean water and beaches is a cherished experience they will never forget. My husband and I were devastated by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill as was the habitat and wildlife along 1000 miles of coastline. The detrimental effects are still felt today. Please remove all Lower Cook Inlet leases from this offshore plan. NO COMPROMISE.

Jeff Dean
Creative Fires Studio, Inc
Homer, AK

Dale Banks
Loopy Lupine Distribution LLC
Homer, AK

Anna Meredith and Jake Beaudoin
Bridge Creek Birch Syrup
Homer, AK

Valisa Higman
Valisa Higman, artist
Seldovia, AK

Cynthia Mom
Seldovia Nature Tours
Seldovia, AK

Avery Ault
Whistler LLC
Homer, AK

Katherine Elaine Brennan
North Country Charters
Homer, AK

Shannon McBride-Morin
Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge
Homer, AK

Mako Haggerty
Mako's Water Taxi
Homer, AK

Michael Walsh & Asia Freeman
Inlet Trading Post LLC
Homer, AK

Mandy Lehm
Rainbow Tours
Homer, AK

Eric Lehm & Mandy Lehm
Maverick Charters
Homer, AK

Derek Reynolds
Cycle Logical LLC
Homer, AK

Galen Lyon
Ashore Water Taxi
Homer, AK

Justice Sky
Bay Excursions
Homer, AK

Cory DeCook
Bob's Trophy Charters
Homer, AK