Testimony of Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
Dutch Kuyper, Vice President Lands and Real Estate
US House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations
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Thank you Chairman Gosar and Ranking Member Dexter for inviting me to participate in the hearing today. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential.

My name is Dutch Kuyper. I am the Vice-President of Lands and Real Estate for Cook Inlet Region Inc., an Alaska Native Corporation. I bring over 30 years' experience in investment management, real estate development, land economics, land stewardship and natural resources, including renewable energy, agriculture, and timber operations.

Like other Alaska Native Corporations, CIRI was created by the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act or ANCSA in 1971.

Alaska Native people did not want a reservation system like tribes in the Lower 48. Instead, Alaska Native leadership fought for a different model that created 12 land-based regional corporations and over 220 village corporations that are for-profit companies with economic, social, and cultural purpose.

Today, CIRI is the most culturally diverse Alaska Native Corporation with nearly 10,000 Shareholders and an estimated 18,000 Descendants representing every Alaska Native ethnicity in our State.

Many of our Shareholders reside in your home states and are your constituents given that over 40 percent of our Shareholders live in the Lower 48.

Entrusted as stewards in perpetuity of some of the most resource richest and ecologically valuable lands in Alaska, CIRI prioritizes striking a balance between sustainably developing our natural resources to improve economic opportunities for CIRI Shareholders and Descendants and all Alaskans, while protecting the land for future generations. CIRI is committed to responsible resource development in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and standards of review.

CIRI is heavily involved in resource development in Alaska and has invested in large-scale resource development projects on its lands, including oil and gas, mineral development and renewable energy projects such as Fire Island Energy. This is a 17 MW wind project that has been operational since 2012, and has delivered energy to help power over 7,000 homes in Southcentral Alaska and is visible as you fly into Anchorage International Airport.

CIRI's lands include rich deposits of copper, gold, and strategic minerals, including those critical to national defense, and advanced manufacturing. We have continued to actively evaluate and develop these resources through responsible exploration and investment.

As part of this effort, CIRI is proud to have received its third round of funding through the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP). This grant supports our ongoing exploration of a copper porphyry mineral system on CIRI owned lands while also evaluating the potential for other strategic minerals. Strategic minerals including rare earth elements such as graphite, cobalt, and tungsten are essential to the U.S. economy and our country's national defense. Many of these minerals are sourced in part from overseas, creating supply chain vulnerabilities. Alaska's geology holds promise for many of these resources, but exploration is complex, capital-intensive, and often located in remote regions with limited infrastructure. Programs like EMDP are essential to helping Alaska Native Corporations and Tribes responsibly assess and unlock this potential. We thank the Bureau of Indian Affairs for its continued support and urge Congress to maintain and expand funding for this vital program. CIRI's lands also hold large amounts of oil and gas resource which CIRI has developed to help bring energy stability to Alaska. CIRI currently has 140,000 acres of its lands under lease for active oil and gas development and plays a critical role in attracting independent oil and gas companies to develop new reserves on our lands.

CIRI has seen firsthand the benefits the development of our resources can provide to our

Shareholders, our State, and the entire US. We hope to continue to work hand-in-hand with qualified partners, our permitting agencies, and lawmakers to continue to grow Alaska’s potential and to responsibly develop its resources.