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ALASKA LEADERS SUPPORT COASTAL INITIATIVE *Program Critical to Arctic, Statewide Development*

A group of Arctic and Alaska leaders today endorsed Ballot Measure No. 2, which would re-establish Alaska's coastal management program. Former Alaska Governor Tony Knowles, Alaska State Senator Donny Olson, and North Slope Borough Mayor Charlotte Brower spoke in support of coastal management at a press conference in Anchorage. Northwest Arctic Borough Mayor Martha, scheduled to appear, was traveling and unable to attend, but sent a text message supporting the coastal management ballot initiative.

“In the eight years of my administration,” Governor Knowles said, “the coastal management program enabled one of Alaska's most active periods of new exploration for and increased development of oil and gas. The Northstar, Alpine, and Badami fields came on line, we opened millions of acres of federal land in the NPR-A. We saw continued production from the Red Dog and Greens Creek mines. The program worked well. It made sense then. It still makes sense today.”

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This message paid for and approved by
The Alaska Sea Party: Restoring Coastal Management
Bruce Botelho, Chair - 217 Second St., Ste. 200, Juneau, Alaska 99801 - (907) 500-7925
Top contributors: North Slope Borough (Barrow, Alaska); Bristol Bay Native Corporation (Anchorage, Alaska); Alaska Conference of Mayors (Juneau, Alaska).

Alaska's coastal management program operated for thirty-four years until a political stalemate allowed it to expire. After the legislature's repeated failure to renew the program, Alaskans launched a citizens' initiative to bring it back. That initiative comes to a vote August 28, 2012.

"The North Slope Borough – and, really, the entire state – needs development for its communities to succeed and thrive," Mayor Brower said. "You only have to look across the North Slope to see the success coastal management has had in promoting responsible development. Rather than stopping development, the coastal management program has proved to be an important vehicle for state and federal agencies to recognize our Borough's concerns. Equally important, the program has provided Alaska with a unique opportunity to assert the state's rights."

The coastal management act is a rare instance where the federal government is legally obligated to abide by state guidelines if a coastal management program is in place. In states with coastal management programs, federal decision makers are required to involve state and local representatives.

Alaskans value economic development. The oil and gas that powers the state's economy comes from coastal lands. But Alaskans also want clean air and water, and healthy fish and game populations. Rural and subsistence lifestyles and economic development can co-exist. An effective coastal management program will help head off conflicts and avoid impacts to subsistence activities. Coastal management is a way to help Alaskans do development right.

Recent revelations about opponents' funding concerned Senator Olson. "All their foreign money reminds me of when Outside fishing companies opposed statehood for Alaska," Senator Olson said. "Foreign interests shouldn't be able to influence how we, as Alaskans, manage our affairs. Do we want to go back to being an economic colony run by non-Alaskans? I don't think so."

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A recent Alaska Public Offices Commission report revealed nearly 70% of the money collected by a group opposing the grassroots citizens' initiative came from outside of Alaska or outside the U.S.

The coastal management initiative is sponsored by the Alaska Sea Party, a group of municipal officials, local leaders, and interested voters committed to Alaska involvement in coastal development decisions. More than 33,000 Alaska citizens signed a petition to place the issue before voters statewide. Voters will decide on Ballot Measure No. 2 at the Alaska Primary Election on August 28, 2012.

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