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790 Ocean Dock Road, Anchorage, AK. 99501

TEL: (907) 272-7537

www.northstarak.com

FAX: (907) 272-8927

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March 21, 2023

Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Neal Foster
Representative DeLena Johnson
House Finance Committee

Re: Statement of Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding

Dear Representative Edgmon, Representative Foster, Representative Johnson, and members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of funding for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to assume Primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and respectfully request the Legislature provide adequate funding to the Department of Environmental Conservation to assume primacy over this program.

Since 1950 North Star Terminal & Stevedore (NSTS) and North Star Equipment Services (NSES) has been the go-to company for members of the petroleum, minerals, and construction industries, as well as the U.S. military. NSTS, and NSES specialize in marine terminal operation services, stevedore services, heavy-lift crane operations, foundation pile and pipeline support members, and equipment leasing.

Our economy would significantly benefit from Alaskans permitting Alaska projects. Having infrastructure projects permitted and regulated by Alaskans ensures that regulators would consider our unique landscape, isolated project locations, and limited construction seasons without compromising the stringent environmental standards that we are required to follow by law. Right now, we experience uncertainty in processing and can miss entire construction seasons while a permit application sits on a federal regulator's desk in another state, awaiting review and approval. We believe that a state-run primacy program would create access to regulators that would encourage regular communication and accountability between the permittees and applicants to help move infrastructure projects moving forward. In addition, these projects would put 75-100 of our guys to work on many of these projects.

Lastly, the funds coming to Alaska through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will create opportunity for our state, but also has the potential to create a significant backlog in permits for infrastructure projects around the country. A state-run primacy program for 404 would provide the same high level of regulatory scrutiny while ensuring reasonable permitting timelines.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this funding.

Sincerely,

Scott Vierra

Scott Vierra
Business Development Manager
North Star Equipment Services

