

REVIEW OF PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENTS IN ALASKA

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Alaska offers great promise as an oil and gas producing state. Three major geological provinces contain Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic sedimentary rocks. These are the Northern Coastal Plain province, bounded on the south by the Brooks and associated mountain ranges; the Interior Basin and Range province, lying between the Brooks and Alaska Ranges; and the Gulf of Alaska province, lying south of the Alaska Range. Oil and gas have been discovered in Cretaceous rocks of the Northern Coastal Plain province and in Tertiary rocks of the Gulf of Alaska province. Thirty-seven geological basins are present within the provinces. One hundred sixty-seven wells have been drilled to January 1, 1959. One gas field and five oil fields have been discovered. Many additional major oil and gas fields will be found. Exploration is progressing rapidly, in spite of very high costs, caused primarily by great distances, terrain and vegetation. The Cook Inlet-Susitna basin and the Copper River basin offer the most attractive immediate opportunities for commercial production. Alaska will demand ten to fifteen years and many hundred million dollars from the oil industry before it takes its place as a major oil producing state.

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