



Bering Sea Elders Group

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Resolution for Stronger and More Lasting Protection of Tribal Subsistence Resources in the Northern Bering Sea and to Ensure Tribal Self-Determination for Decisions Impacting These Resources

PREAMBLE:

The teaching of our ancestors was based on respect for what the ocean provides. Respectful actions are rewarded by hunting success; disrespectful actions have negative consequences. We were taught never to waste what the Creator has given us, to share our food with the community and to listen to our Elders because they acquired wisdom over a long life, through sharp observation and through historical knowledge passed on to us by our ancestors. Today, while technology has changed, our traditional values and our hunting, fishing and gathering ways of life remain the foundation of our culture. Respect for the natural world and caring for our natural resources are necessary for our people to continue thriving off the ocean and land, and for providing these resources and opportunities to our children as their inheritance.

WHEREAS: The Bering Sea Elders Group is an association of Elders established to work together as one voice for the protection of our traditional ways of life, the web of life that sustains the ocean resources we rely on and our children's future; and

WHEREAS: Climate change threatens our way of life including through the potential expansion of bottom trawling into northern waters, which would have a negative impact on our waters and way of life; and

WHEREAS: Federal fishery managers recognized the importance of the Northern Bering Sea and the threat posed to it by bottom trawling by establishing a boundary to prevent these large-scale fishing fleets from moving into northern waters where they have not operated before and where uses of marine resources are essential to the nutritional, economic, and cultural way of life of the Native Villages that have used this area and its resources since time before memory; and

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WHEREAS: Federal fishery managers specified that before bottom trawling would be considered in the future, they would first study and consider effects on marine mammals, seabirds, crab, endangered or threatened species and the opportunity to continue the subsistence way of life; and

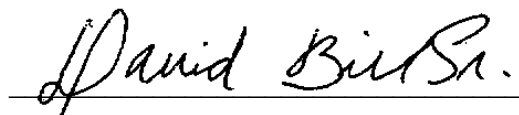
WHEREAS: The Bering Sea Elders Group remains concerned about the potential for future expansion of bottom trawl fisheries in the Northern Bering Sea; and

WHEREAS: Federally recognized tribes and Indigenous Peoples of the Northern Bering Sea have an extremely limited role or voice in the current federal management regime with authority over our traditional territory and resources, despite the national and international declarations and policies that recognize the injustice and inequity in excluding tribes in such decision-making.

NOW THEREFORE THE BERING SEA ELDERS GROUP RESOLVES AND ADVISES THAT:

1. The federal government should strengthen existing policy that prevents the potential future expansion of bottom trawl fisheries into the Northern Bering Sea. Our goal is to (1) ensure the protection of our marine resources and habitat that provide for the continuation of the nutritional, economic and cultural way of life of the Native Villages, and (2) promote the self-determination of our People in the future management of these resources and habitat.
2. The federal government should engage in formal government-to-government consultation with Northern Bering Sea Tribal Governments that will result in the implementation of stronger and more lasting protection for the Northern Bering Sea and recognition of the right to tribal self-determination in forming the future for the Northern Bering Sea.

Adopted by the Bering Sea Elders Group on September 10, 2014.



David Bill, Sr. – Chairman

Harry Lincoln – Secretary