

# Public Testimony Sign-Up Sheet

Agenda Item D-5 Arctic Fishery Mgmt

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	AFFILIATION
1	Dave Benton	MCA
2	Jim Ayers / Bubba Cook	Oceana / WWF
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members  
FROM: Chris Oliver *Chris*  
Executive Director  
DATE: April 25, 2007  
SUBJECT: Arctic Fishery Management

ESTIMATED TIME 1 HOUR
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

Receive revised discussion paper and take action as necessary.

**BACKGROUND**

At its October 2006 meeting, the Council asked staff to prepare a draft discussion paper on options for management of fisheries in the arctic waters of the Alaskan Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Council is interested in exploring possible policy options, such as a Fishery Management Plan (FMP), to address management of existing or potential future commercial fisheries in this region. The Council received that report at the December meeting, and tasked staff to further develop options for fishery management in the Arctic. Specifically, the Council's motion was:

For waters north of Bering Strait, the Council moves to develop an analysis that would include the following alternatives:

1. Status quo for those waters.
2. Amend the existing scallop FMP, the BSAI groundfish FMP, and the BSAI king and Tanner crab FMP to prohibit commercial fishing in the Chukchi Sea.
3. Adopt a new FMP for the waters north of Bering Strait for any species not covered by an FMP (including krill and other forage species) with the following sub options:
  - a) Close all Federal waters to commercial fishing until such time as the Council develops a policy for opening the waters to select commercial fishing practices, or
  - b) Close all Federal waters north of Bering Strait to commercial fishing for forage species, and all waters north of a line at Point Hope to commercial fishing for all species (see Figure 1 map in staff discussion paper).

The Council's motion was accompanied with additional notes:

1. The effect of (b) would be to allow for commercial fishing for fish species (other than forage species) in the waters between Bering Strait and Pt. Hope.
2. The policy for opening waters north of Bering Strait could be developed through a Fishery Ecosystem Plan or other mechanism as the Council deems appropriate.
3. Initial analysis should flesh out what is required under each alternative, such as what is required as part of an FMP (e.g. EFH), and whether these requirements could be deferred until such time as the Council decides to open a fishery.

4. Under each alternative, describe the requirements for deferring management to the State of Alaska, and the procedures for deferring management.

The revised Arctic fishery management discussion paper was sent out in a Council mailing in early March. At the April 2007 meeting the Council postponed action on this agenda item until June. Therefore, at this meeting the Council is scheduled to receive and discuss this report and take action as appropriate. Staff will be available to answer questions.

# Native Village of Kotzebue Kotzebue IRA

AGENDA D-5  
Supplemental  
JUNE 2007

May 24, 2007

RECEIVED  
MAY 25 2007

North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
C/O: Stephanie Madsen, Chair  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

N.P.F.M.C.

*Knowledge of Language*

## **RE: Fishery Management Options for the Alaskan EEZ in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas of the Arctic Ocean**

*Knowledge of Family Tree*

*Sharing*

The Native Village of Kotzebue is very interested in the discussion the Council is having over fisheries management plans in the Chukchi Sea and has reviewed the paper prepared by Council staff Bill Wilson. It should be noted, the Tribe is concerned over the NPFMC's lack of communication with communities living along the Chukchi Sea about the discussion taking place on the Arctic EEZ. This effort was known about only through chance and not from a directed effort. In the future, the Tribe requests that NOAA and the Council inform the Tribes living along the Chukchi coast in a timely manner about processes/actions affecting them. Even at this early stage of Council deliberation these communities need to be represented.

*Humility*

*Respect for Others*

*Love for Children*

*Cooperation*

*Hard Work*

*Respect for Elders*

*Respect for Nature*

*Avoid Conflict*

*Family Roles*

*Humor*

*Spirituality*

*Domestic Skills*

*Hunter Success*

In regards to the discussion paper, the Tribe was encouraged by the cautionary and thoughtful tone overall and the emphasis on ecological planning. The benefits to local Chukchi seacoast communities of expanding commercial fishing activity into the Arctic EEZ are not readily apparent; however the risks are somewhat knowable. As the Council recognizes there has recently been outright loss of critical marine mammal habitat from decreasing ice, in addition to ecological changes occurring in regards to ice algae and phytoplankton biomass and timing. Additionally, it is reasonable to postulate that the commercially unmolested fish resources in the Chukchi provide the necessary abundance for marine mammals to build fat reserves to make it through the winter in the arguably ecologically compromised Bering Sea. Exploiting important marine mammal forage fish resources (which notably includes all Potential Target Species referenced in the paper) in both their summer and winter grounds, may lead to rapid degradation of their overall health, abundance, and resiliency, especially coupled with all the other threats that are continuing, or expected to arise in the near future.

*Responsibility to Tribe*

Generally speaking the Tribe agrees with the Council adopting a policy of not developing fisheries in the Chukchi until it obtains the stock and ecological knowledge to support such an action. From the human point of view, it appears small communities living along the Chukchi have the least to gain and the most to lose from any major offshore fisheries created, thus their voice and concerns should be weighted heavily in the decision making process.

The Tribe has been actively engaged in marine mammal and ecosystem research in Kotzebue Sound and the Chukchi Sea over the last decade and very much supports the idea of developing an Arctic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) through an Arctic Plan Team.

The Tribe would like to be considered for a role on such an Arctic Plan Team. The Tribe can bring ecological, economic, social and cultural perspectives to the table and already has the necessary personnel and office to dedicate time to such an effort. Since the Tribe depends on the Chukchi Sea for its members cultural, spiritual and nutritional needs it will rely on federal obligations to Tribes and trust resources as this process moves forward. Many of the Tribes concerns and priorities could be addressed in an Arctic FEP allowing for better and briefer NEPA documents and processes. Given the complexity of the options and the various ramifications from any action, it would seem wise to have such a planning team and an Arctic FEP to guide further action and definition of an Arctic Fisheries Management Plan, instead of as a simultaneous action. It appears at this point, time is still on the side of wise thoughtful stewardship action and an inclusive deliberative process would allow these issues to be fleshed out with maximum ecological and social considerations. To discuss the Tribes interest and potential participation as the Council moves forward on this issue please contact me at (907) 442-5303.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Whiting". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

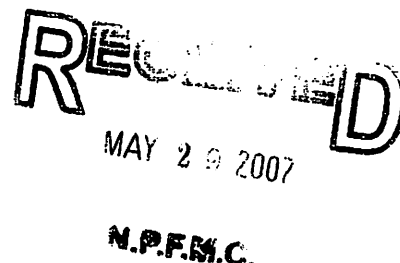
Alex Whiting  
Environmental Specialist

# Maniilaq Association

P.O. Box 256  
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752  
(907) 442-3311

May 25, 2007

Ms. Stephanie Madsen, Chair  
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
605 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252



Re: Arctic EEZ

Dear Ms. Madsen:

Maniilaq Association, a regional non-profit organization serving the communities of Northwest Alaska submit the following comments on the proposed options for Alaska EEZ in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas of the Arctic Ocean.

First of all, we recommend the Council closes the Chukchi and Beaufort Sea waters to offshore commercial fishing unless and until 1) the Council provides the local people opportunity for public input and consult with them prior to development of any plan that opens a new fishery, and 2) there is insufficient information on which to base a comprehensive fisheries ecosystem plan which demonstrates that any new commercial fishing activities could be conducted without harm to the health and resilience of the marine ecosystem and subsistence way of life.

Recommend the Council proceed with caution because of the unknown effects currently happening from climate change, with later ice formation and more open waters, the long term effects on the resources in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas are not known and the lack of existing data also contributes to the unknown factor. Actions taken without adequate information could have significant as well as grave impact on the subsistence way of life and the environment.

The area is small and confined compared to other areas, such as the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, especially the Chukchi Sea waters between Wales and Pt. Hope. Any large removal of key species would have a dramatic effect on the area.

Forage fish species are the foundation of the food web so we recommend the Council ban commercial fishing in federal waters of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas for forage specie now.

A number of marine mammal species inhabit the area that are either endangered or are vitally important as subsistence resource – bowhead whales, beluga, bearded seal, polar

## Member Villages

*Ivisnappaat, Nunatchiaq, Ipnatchiaq, Katyaak, Kivaliniq, Laugviik, Qikiqtagruk, Nautaaq, Nuurvik, Akuligaq, Isinnaq, Tikigaq  
Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, Shungnak, Pt. Hope*



bear, walrus and other ice seals. Impact on their food habitat will have strong adverse impact on the people who are dependent on these marine mammals for food resource.

Any plan that opens the area for new offshore commercial fisheries must maximize economic benefits to the local communities and residents. Super exclusive registration fisheries may be necessary to allow for participation by local residents.

We also found the following information to be missing from the paper:

- 1) Add Herring and Arctic Cod to important fish and marine species as subsistence resources (page 8)
- 2) Add Kivalina and Pt. Hope to list of communities in the Chukchi region in the "Human Habitation and Land Status" Appendix.

We hope that these comments will be taken very seriously by the Council and request that full consultation and input from the affected communities and residents be pursued.

Thank you for the opportunity for input and know that the Council will proceed with prudence and caution as it has in the past.

Sincerely,



Helen Bolen  
President, CEO  
Maniilaq Association

Cc: Northwest Arctic Borough  
North Slope Borough Wildlife Management  
NANA  
Kotzebue IRA  
City of Kotzebue  
Native Village of Kivalina  
City of Kivalina  
Native Village of Deering  
City of Deering  
Native Village of Pt. Hope  
City of Pt. Hope  
Native Village of Barrow  
Native Village of Wainwright  
Native Village of Shishmaref



175 South Franklin Street, Suite 418 Juneau, Alaska 99801 +1.907.586.4050 www.oceana.org

RECEIVED

MAY 29 2007

N.P.F.M.C.

May 29, 2007

Ms. Stephanie Madsen, Chair  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

RE: Agenda Item: D-5 Arctic Fisheries Management

Dear Madame Chair:

We urge the Council to protect the health and resilience of the Chukchi and Beaufort marine ecosystems and the subsistence way of life of Arctic peoples by establishing a new and proactive Arctic Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

In the face of global climate change and a growing world population, we must protect the resilience of marine ecosystems. The rapid reductions in the sea ice cover of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas directly impacts and threatens marine life, and avoiding the addition of new stresses – helping maintain the resilience of those ecosystems – may be especially important in the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> The harsh environment, seasonally pulsed productivity, slower growth in cold temperatures, and relatively simple food webs are likely to make Arctic marine ecosystems more sensitive to disturbance. Furthermore, relatively little is known about the abundance, distribution and role of fish and other marine species in the Chukchi and Beaufort ecosystems.

Given the lack of knowledge and potential sensitivity of marine life in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas, it is wise and prudent to proactively protect those regions by closing them to new commercial fishing until it can be shown that commercial fishing can be done without harming the marine ecosystems and the subsistence way of life. Additionally, activities likely to disrupt the food web, such as commercial fishing for forage species, should be banned throughout the region. Forage species play a critical role in the Arctic marine ecosystem and the advent of commercial fisheries for forage species may result in cascading impacts to seabirds and marine mammals.

We appreciate that the Council is addressing Arctic fisheries management proactively and recommend clarifications to Alternative 3 as suggested in the Arctic discussion paper.

We encourage the Council to identify the following as their preliminary preferred alternative:

1. Adopt a new Arctic FMP for the waters north of the Bering Strait for any species not fully covered by an existing FMP that:

<sup>1</sup> Chapin III, F.S., M. Hoel, S.R. Carpenter, J. Lubchenco, B. Walker, T.V. Callaghan, C. Folke, S.A. Levin, K-G Maler, C. Nilsson, S. Barrett, F. Berkes, A-S Crepin, K. Dancil, T. Rosswall, D. Starrett, A. Xepapadeas, and S.A. Zimov. 2006. Building resilience and adaptation to manage arctic change. Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences 2006. *Ambio* 35(4):198-202.



Ms. Stephanie Madsen  
D-5 Arctic Management  
May 29, 2007  
Page 2

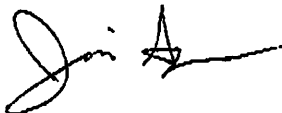
- i. Bans commercial fishing in all federal waters north of the Bering Strait for forage species;
  - ii. Closes all Federal waters north of the Bering Strait to commercial fishing for all other species, unless and until there is sufficient information on which to base a comprehensive fisheries ecosystem plan which demonstrates that such activities could be conducted without harm to the health and resilience of the marine ecosystem and the subsistence way of life; and
  - iii. Authorizes the continuation of existing commercial fisheries between the Bering Strait and Point Hope.
2. Amend the existing scallop FMP and the BSAI king and Tanner crab FMP so that their northern jurisdictions end at the Bering Strait.

We have noted the staff suggestion in the Arctic discussion paper that it may be "cleaner" to have one Arctic FMP. We have also noticed that there is the option of amending FMPs that already partially cover the Chukchi Sea, specifically those relating to crab and scallop fisheries. The alternative outlined above does both, which we believe is the best way to take into account all activities that could potentially harm the resilience of the Bering and Chukchi seas. We are not, however, recommending altering the already existing fisheries between the Bering Strait and Point Hope.

We believe a new Arctic FMP would not need to be an extensive undertaking as the Council is taking a precautionary approach to protect the health of the marine ecosystems given the paucity of knowledge. Furthermore, we also believe that an Environmental Assessment would be the appropriate NEPA documentation, again given the precautionary approach of the Council as well as the lack of economic impact and the non-controversial nature of the proposed action.

By setting an Arctic fisheries policy now, before commercial fishing expands in the Arctic, the Council can help avoid future conflict. We urge the Council to seize the opportunity to proactively and responsibly protect the Arctic by preventing additional pressures from further weakening the resilience of the ecosystems in this already-stressed region.

Sincerely,



Jim Ayers  
Vice President, Oceana

**Alaska Marine Conservation Council  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Greenpeace  
Oceana  
Pacific Environment  
World Wildlife Fund**

June 8, 2007

Ms. Stephanie Madsen, Chair  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 306  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

**RE: Agenda Item: D-5 Arctic Fisheries Management**

Dear Madame Chair:

The below signed conservation organizations in Alaska urge the Council to establish a new and proactive Arctic Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that bans commercial fishing in all federal waters north of the Bering Strait for forage species and closes all Federal waters north of the Bering Strait to new commercial fishing for all other species unless and until there is sufficient information on which to base a comprehensive fisheries ecosystem plan which demonstrates that such activities could be conducted without harm to the Chukchi and Beaufort marine ecosystems and the subsistence way of life of Arctic peoples.

In the face of global climate change and a growing world population, we must protect the resilience of marine ecosystems. Rapid reductions in the sea ice cover of the Chukchi and Beaufort seas directly impacts and threatens marine life, and avoiding the addition of new stresses – helping maintain the resilience of those ecosystems – may be especially important in the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> The harsh environment, seasonally pulsed productivity, slower growth in cold temperatures, and relatively simple food webs are likely to make Arctic marine ecosystems more sensitive to disturbance. Furthermore, relatively little is known about the abundance, distribution and role of fish and other marine species in the Chukchi and Beaufort ecosystems.

Given the lack of knowledge and potential sensitivity of marine life in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas, it is wise and prudent to proactively protect those regions by closing them to new

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<sup>1</sup> Chapin III, F.S., M. Hoel, S.R. Carpenter, J. Lubchenco, B. Walker, T.V. Callaghan, C. Folke, S.A. Levin, K-G Maler, C. Nilsson, S. Barrett, F. Berkes, A-S Crepin, K. Danell, T. Rosswall, D. Starrett, A. Xepapadeas, and S.A. Zimov. 2006. Building resilience and adaptation to manage arctic change. Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences 2006. *Ambio* 35(4):198-202.

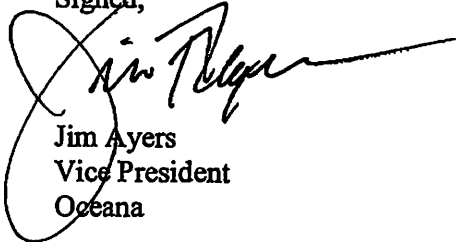
Ms. Stephanie Madsen  
D-5 Arctic Management  
June 8, 2007  
Page 2 of 2

commercial fishing unless and until it can be shown that commercial fishing can be done without harming the marine ecosystems and the subsistence way of life. By establishing a moratorium on the expansion of new Arctic fisheries now with a policy on how any fisheries could be opened in the future, the Council can help avoid future conflict.

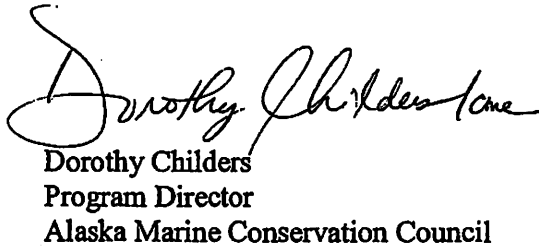
We believe such an Arctic FMP would not need to be an extensive undertaking as the Council is taking a precautionary approach to protect the health of the marine ecosystems given the paucity of knowledge. Furthermore, we also believe that an Environmental Assessment would be the appropriate NEPA documentation, again given the precautionary approach of the Council as well as the lack of economic impact and the non-controversial nature of the proposed action. While the more rigorous process of an EIS would of course be required were the Council opening new or expanding existing fisheries, because the Council is considering forward-thinking, proactive protections in this case, we believe that an EA is sufficient.

We urge the Council to seize the opportunity to proactively and responsibly protect the Arctic by preventing additional pressures from further weakening the resilience of the ecosystems in this already-stressed region.

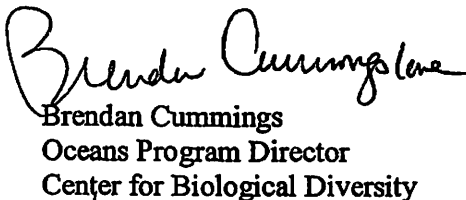
Signed,



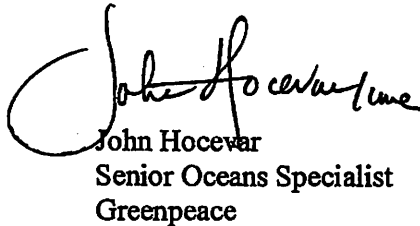
Jim Ayers  
Vice President  
Oceana



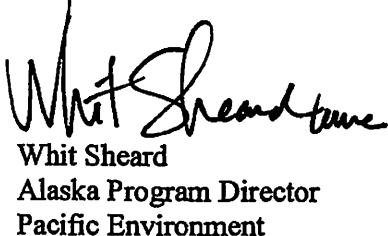
Dorothy Childers  
Program Director  
Alaska Marine Conservation Council



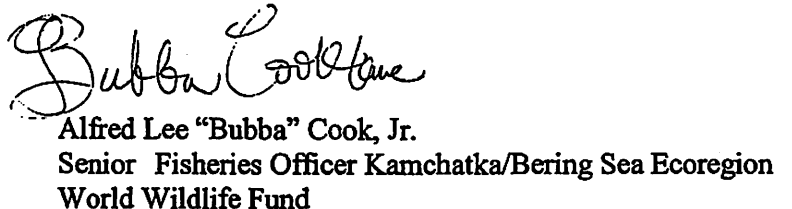
Brendan Cummings  
Oceans Program Director  
Center for Biological Diversity



John Hocevar  
Senior Oceans Specialist  
Greenpeace



Whit Sheard  
Alaska Program Director  
Pacific Environment



Alfred Lee "Bubba" Cook, Jr.  
Senior Fisheries Officer Kamchatka/Bering Sea Ecoregion  
World Wildlife Fund