

Resolution 2024 –07

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BEGIN A PROCESS TO EVALUATE IMPACTS OF FISHERIES TO NORTHERN FUR SEALS

WHEREAS, the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (the Tribe), is the federally recognized tribe for St. Paul Island, as listed and recognized by the United States under 84 CFR 1200; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Government of St. Paul is the representative sovereign government for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Government of St. Paul is the authorized body through which Unangan of St. Paul Island can fulfill our intrinsic rights and responsibilities, and support, recollect, practice, and pass on our culture; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Government, through the Tribal Council, is determined to lead efforts to ensure and strengthen sovereignty, ensure a healthy ecosystem that supports food security, economic self-sufficiency, continued cultural practices, tribal self-determination and self-governance, and the overall health, safety, wellbeing and welfare of Tribal Members; and,

WHEREAS, Unanga̋ can be translated to mean “The People of the Sea” and our connections to the marine resources in the waters around Pribilof Islands predate historic records; and

WHEREAS, Unanga̋ cultures, economies, and food security are inextricably tied to the health of our animals, birds, fish, people, and all other aspects of the ecosystem and that Unangan have been stewards of these resources for millenia; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Government, through the Tribal Council, envisions a healthy Bering Sea that supports strong, sustainable fisheries, with unpolluted waters, abundant marine mammal and seabird populations, vibrant cultures, and thriving local economies; and

WHEREAS, the waters around the Pribilof Islands provide vital breeding and feeding habitat for more than half of the world’s population of laaqudan (northern fur seals) and important habitat for qawan (Steller sea lions) and isugin (harbor seals); and are central to the largest commercial fishery in the US, for walleye pollock, as well as other important commercial fisheries including chagi̋ (Pacific halibut), qimgiitax (snow crab), and red king crab; and

WHEREAS, the marine ecosystem is transforming rapidly, which the best information shows are attributable to anthropogenic factors and these changes directly impact community wellbeing and Unanga̋ culture; and

WHEREAS, commercial fisheries, including those for pollock, crab, and halibut, are a cornerstone of the economy of St. Paul, and recent collapses in crab stocks show that the changes occurring in the marine ecosystem are having dramatic effects on the economic well-being in St. Paul; and

WHEREAS, the current population of laaqudan is now approximately one-quarter of its historic levels and continues to decline around St. Paul, and there is a growing body of science, including Unangan Knowledge, suggesting that competition with large-scale commercial fisheries for prey is likely a contributing factor to the ongoing decline; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Government, through the Tribal Council, is committed to working openly and transparently with tribes, federal and state government agencies, scientists, industry, and all other willing partners; and



President
Vice President
Secretary-Treasurer
Council Members

John W. Melovidov
Myron Melovidov
Robert Melovidov Sr.
Michael R. Zacharof
Amos T. Philemonoff Sr.
Jacob N. Merculief
Shiona Melovidov

WHEREAS, Tribal Government, through the Tribal Council, is committed to engaging in the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process; and


BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tribal Council requests that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council begin a process to reduce direct and indirect impacts of commercial fisheries on laaquadan.

Adopted through a poll vote of Tribal Council on this 18th day of January 2024, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain, and 1 absent.



John Wayne Melovidov
President

Attested by:



Robert Melovidov, Sr.
Secretary