

Native Village of St. Michael

P.O. Box 59050 - St. Michael, Alaska 99659 Phone: (907) 923-2304/2405
Fax: (907) 923-2406



Doug Mecum
Acting Regional Administrator
NMFS Alaska Region
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802

March 19, 2010

Subject: 2010 Bottom trawl research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area

Dear Mr. Mecum,

Please consider this letter as a formal request for government-to-government consultation regarding bottom trawl research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area (NBSRA) in 2010. We request that this consultation take place at your earliest convenience, prior to any research being carried out.

We are specifically concerned about this research being planned without prior consultation with our tribal government. Additionally, we are concerned about the impacts of bottom trawling on subsistence resources we harvest, as well as the potential implications for commercial trawling if National Marine Fisheries Service goes forward with plans to conduct trawling in the NBSRA.

At this time, and until we learn more from your agency through the consultation process, we request that you postpone your plans for research bottom trawling in the NBSRA in the 2010.

If you require any additional information, please contact me at 907-923-2304/2405 or email me at smkpres07@gci.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley Martin".

Shirley Martin, President
Native Village of St. Michael

Enclosure (Tribal Resolution 10-03-19)

Cc:

Loretta Bullard, President, Kawerak Inc, P.O. Box 948, Nome, AK 99762
Myron Naneng, President, AVCP, P.O. 219, Bethel, AK 99559
Jerry Isaac, President, TCC, 122 First Ave., Ste. 600, Fairbanks, AK 99701



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Resolution NO. 10-03-19

ENTITLED: A Resolution of the Native Village of St. Michael in opposition of proposed 2010 research bottom trawling in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area by the National Marine Fisheries Services.

WHEREAS: The tribal government of Native Village of St. Michael is a federally recognized tribe; and

WHEREAS: Our tribal government is charged with the protection of our culture, heritage, environment and the foods upon which we have depended for generations; and

WHEREAS: Our tribal government supports the informed and sustainable management of our resources; and

WHEREAS: The National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) has bottom trawl research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area planned for the summer of 2010; and

WHEREAS: Tribes understand research as an activity requiring prior consultation and coordination with federally recognized tribes that may be impacted by such research or its results; and

WHEREAS: NMFS has neither formally informed tribes of, nor conducted government-to-government consultation on, their bottom trawl research proposed for 2010; and

WHEREAS: Bottom trawl fisheries are globally recognized as being destructive to benthic (bottom) habitat; and

WHEREAS: Bering Strait region residents depend on marine animals as subsistence resources, and are highly dependent on a healthy benthic habitat to provide forage for the animals used for subsistence; and


WHEREAS: The tribal government of Native Village of St. Michael is opposed to the expansion of commercial bottom trawl fisheries into the area known as the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, which encompasses the northern Bering Sea from approximately St. Matthew Island north to the Bering Strait

WHEREAS: The tribal government of Native Village of St. Michael wishes to be consulted on any proposed bottom trawl research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: Native Village of St. Michael hereby requests the National Marine Fisheries Service to postpone all bottom trawl research in the Northern Bering Sea Research Area (including 2010 research) until formal government-to-government consultation has taken place with Bering Strait region tribes and tribal concerns have been addressed by NMFS.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at a duly called and convened meeting of the St. Michael, IRA of Alaska on March 19, 2010, by vote of 6 IN FAVOR, 0 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAIN, 1 ABSENT.



Chairman



Attest: