



Eskimo Walrus Commission

"To protect the pacific walrus population."

**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 Eskimo Walrus Commission represents Alaska's coastal walrus hunting communities where walrus is an essential cultural, natural and subsistence resource to the Yupik and Inupiaq peoples, 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 resources; 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

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 Eskimo Walrus Commission 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.

(over)

NOW THEREFORE THE ESKIMO WALRUS COMMISSION RESOLVES 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 Eskimo Walrus Commission on December 18, 2014.



Charles Brower, Chairman


Vice-Chairman