



Bering Sea Elders Group

BERING SEA ELDERS GROUP

RESOLUTION 2019-1

TITLE: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT BOTTOM TRAWL BOUNDARY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN TO PROTECT THE FISHERIES AND HUNTING IN THE NORTHERN BERING SEA

Whereas, the Bering Sea Elders Group (BSEG) is an organization comprised of designees of 38 federally recognized Tribes on the west coast of Alaska; and

Whereas, through our federally recognized Tribal governments, we have the right to participate fully in all levels of decision-making in policies that affect our Tribes, our Indigenous Knowledge, and to exercise our government-to-government rights as Tribes; and

Whereas, the Bering Sea is the integral part of our identity as Yup'ik, Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq people, and the water is as important to us as the land; and

Whereas, the Bering Sea Elders Group was formed more than a decade ago out of a mutual concern in our regions about the problems associated with bottom trawling; and

Whereas, the Tribes that are members of the Bering Sea Elders Group represent Yup'ik, Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Inupiaq people who rely on subsistence and commercial fish, marine mammals, and other traditional and irreplaceable resources found in the Bering Sea; and

Whereas, bottom trawling and other fisheries pose a significant threat to the ability of BSEG Member Tribes to hunt and fish as we have since time immemorial; and

Whereas, some Bering Sea fish stocks are moving north as waters warm and non-bottom trawl and longline fisheries are likely to follow; and

Whereas, over the last decade, the Bering Sea Elders Group has worked to support, maintain, and strengthen the existing bottom trawl boundary at the lower end of the Northern Bering Sea Research Area to ensure sustainable management of the Northern Bering Sea that includes Traditional Knowledge; and

Whereas, the Bering Sea Elders Group has passed multiple resolutions opposing the lifting or movement northward of the bottom trawl boundary; and

Whereas, the Bering Sea Elders Group continues to be vehemently opposed to any weakening or movement of the current bottom trawl boundary; and

Whereas, in order to protect subsistence hunting and fishing, the current boundary should remain where it is, be made permanent, and management measures should be developed for the region utilizing Traditional Knowledge.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: the Bering Sea Elders Group requests that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council not lift or move northward the current bottom trawl boundary; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: the Bering Sea Elders Group requests that the existing bottom trawl boundary at the lower end of the Northern Bering Sea Research Area be made permanent where it is or be moved farther offshore; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: the Bering Sea Elders Group requests that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council develop management measures for the Northern Bering Sea utilizing Traditional Knowledge to protect the ecosystem and subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering.

ADOPTED by the tribally designated Elder Representatives of the Bering Sea Elders Group, and signed on behalf of those Tribes during its Annual Summit held in Anchorage, Alaska on this 20th day of September, 2019.