



Bering Sea Elders Group

www.beringseaelders.org • beringsea.elders@gmail.com

The Bering Sea Elders Group Passes Resolutions Calling for the Establishment of a Permanent Bottom Trawl Boundary and for More Equitable and Responsible Research and Funding Practices

October 21, 2019

For Immediate Release

Contact: Mellisa Heflin, Executive Director (907) 891-1229, beringsea.elders@gmail.com

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - The Bering Sea Elders Group (BSEG) convened for its annual meeting in Anchorage, Alaska last month, September 19-20, and passed two resolutions, including a resolution reaffirming its call for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to make permanent the Northern Bering Sea Research Area's bottom trawl boundary. In addition, BSEG passed a resolution calling for more equitable and responsible research and funding practices.

Resolution 2019-1 reaffirms numerous past BSEG resolutions calling on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to not lift or move northward the current bottom trawl boundary at the lower end of the Northern Bering Sea Research Area and to make the boundary permanent where it is or move it farther offshore. BSEG likewise called on the NPFMC to “develop management measures for the Northern Bering Sea utilizing Traditional Knowledge to protect the ecosystem and subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering.”

Resolution 2019-2 notes that “research conducted on, near, or about our lands, waters, air, and communities is almost always designed, conducted, and published without notice to our regions' peoples and Tribes and without our involvement or consent.” The Resolution highlights the fact that money connected to research in Western Alaska usually benefits non-indigenous institutions and “Traditional Knowledge-holders are rarely compensated for their expertise or involvement.” Even in research projects “that do involve monies for Traditional Knowledge holders and Tribes, those monies are often funneled through non-Indigenous organizations.”

Resolution 2019-2 goes on to call on researchers to change their practices:

all research conducted on, near, or about our lands, waters, air, and communities be done using a true co-production of knowledge approach where we are equals in the design, conduct, analysis, implementation, and publication of the research, and management of research data and information; and

all researchers receive prior consent from a community's Tribe prior to developing a project, and that researchers respect a Tribe's decision to decline tribal permission to work in a community; and

all institutions and individuals funding research in our regions require grantees to develop research projects using a co-production of knowledge approach; and

all institutions and individuals funding research in our regions fund our communities directly or through Indigenous-lead organizations.

A copy of each resolution is attached.

In addition, BSEG also elected new Executive Committee members and these new officers:

Fred Phillip (Kwigillingok) (Chair)
Norman Menadelook Sr. (Teller) (Vice-Chair)
John Waghiyi Jr. (Savoonga) (Treasurer)
Richard Slats (Chevak) (Secretary)
Peter Dull Sr. (Umkumiut)
Mary Ann Mike (Kotlik)
Peter Panruk (Chefornak)
Axel Jackson (Shaktoolik)
Aaron Iworrigan (Gambell)

The Bering Sea Elders Group is an association of Elders appointed by 38 Tribes in the Yukon-Kuskokwim and Bering Strait regions of Alaska. Each participating Tribe designates an Elder Representative to serve on the Elders Board. For more on the Bering Sea Elders Group, please visit: <http://www.beringseaelders.org/about-us/>