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Governor Sean Parnell
STATE OF ALASKA

September 7, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I was deeply concerned to learn that the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. National Park Service were in the final stages of formalizing a transboundary protected area in the region of the Bering Strait via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Russian Federation.

Until last week, my Administration has received little information on these efforts since the spring of 2011, when the U.S. and Russia issued a joint statement on cooperation in the region. Since action on the proposed MOU has been temporarily deferred until certain remaining issues are resolved between the U.S. and Russia, I respectfully request that U.S. federal agencies delay further action on a formal designation until we have had a meaningful opportunity to review the MOU and share input.

While I agree that promoting a better understanding of our shared history with the Russian Federation and sustaining the cultural vitality of the indigenous people of the region are important priorities, I remain concerned that designation of a new international protected area might limit economic opportunity for rural Alaskans in the region. For example, such a designation could complicate future easement negotiations for the Red Dog Mine road, which runs through Cape Krusenstern National Monument.

While I am aware the National Park Service solicited input from local stakeholders in 2010 and 2011 regarding establishment of the international protected area, I understand that affected Alaskan communities continue to have concerns.

I hope the State of Alaska will have the opportunity for meaningful consultation with federal agencies before further action is taken to establish an international protected area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell".

Sean Parnell
Governor

cc: Jonathan Jarvis, Director, United States National Parks Service
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Kip Knudson, Director of State and Federal Relations, Office of the Governor