

Levelock Village Council

RESOLUTION # 02-06-18C

Support for Updating Alaska Habitat Laws to Adequately Protect Salmon Spawning and Rearing Areas

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* is committed to act with a unified voice for the conservation of *Kvichak & Alagnak Rivers* inside the *Bristol Bay watershed* salmon fisheries to protect our traditional way of life and well-being, and establish a comprehensive management plan and program based upon indigenous knowledge systems and scientific principles; and

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* has demonstrated commitment and sacrifice for the conservation and protection of *Kvichak River* salmon, to provide for healthy and sustainable populations; and

WHEREAS, the community of *Levelock* depends on salmon to sustain their cultural, traditional, spiritual, and economic well-being and way of life; and

WHEREAS, salmon are a critical and irreplaceable food source for *the Levelock village* where traditionally harvested foods account for up to 33% of their caloric intake and up to 60% of the protein consumed in rural Alaska is salmon; and

WHEREAS, *The Bristol Bay Tribes* have joined together since 2013, to make informed decisions to conserve and protect *Bristol Bay* salmon, and its watershed.

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* unanimously supports all resolutions of "Protection of Critical Salmon Spawning & Rearing Habitat" which opposes all mining and dam development projects within the *entire Bristol Bay Watershed*; and

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* seeks to reaffirm its support for habitat protections that would ensure the sustainability of the *Bristol Bay Watershed Red* salmon and other salmon species to provide for healthy populations for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, *Levelock Village Community members* have considerable and valuable local and traditional knowledge on salmon spawning and rearing areas; and

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* recognizes that economic and community development are needed in rural Alaska for *Levelock and surrounding villages* to thrive, but believe development must be balanced with adequate protections that would reduce or mitigate negative and harmful impacts salmon resources; and

WHEREAS, the *Levelock Village Council* believes that current habitat laws, as written in Title 16, are too vague and open to different interpretation with changing

administrations, creating uncertainty in the permit process and do not adequately and consistently safeguard against harmful impacts to salmon; do not currently allow for a public input process, leading to a lack of transparency; and place the burden of proving salmon use the waterways proposed for development, which can be expensive and often falls to local communities, Tribes, and non-profits; and

WHEREAS, *Levelock Village Council* is undoubtedly impacted by changes in climate in both the freshwater and marine environments; and

WHEREAS, development projects that do not adequately protect salmon spawning and rearing areas could exacerbate the Bristol Bay Watersheds great fishery that we thrive on, impacts from climate change, and/or impede the preservation efforts made possible through the years of sacrifices from *Levelock Village Council*; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the *Levelock Village Council* unanimously supports the Stand for Salmon ballot initiative, which amends the State of Alaska Title 16 habitat laws; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, the *Levelock Village Council* preferentially supports the ballot initiative over the current house bill (HB 199), as the house bill could change significantly through the legislative committee process before being passed in to law and be influenced by industry lobbyists, while the ballot initiative would give the voters of Alaska a voice; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, the *Levelock Village Council*, in particular, supports the ballot initiative because it would clearly define "the proper protection of fish and game" and clarify important habitat characteristics to support salmon runs, such as water quality, flow levels, and fish passage; would include a public process for commenting on permits so that *the Levelock community members* can bring local and traditional knowledge to the table; and would assume all waterways are capable of supporting salmon and would place the burden of proving that a waterway does not get used by salmon on the developer, who, generally, has the monetary resources to conduct such studies.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that all *Levelock Village Council members* passed this resolution in a unanimous vote of, (5 yes) and (0 no.) on January 6th, 2018 in Levelock, Alaska.


President - Alexander Tallekpalek


Secretary - Hans Apokedak

Tribal Village of Levelock Official Members are, President - Alexander Tallekpalek, Vice President - Raymond Apokedak, Secretary - Hans Apokedak, Member - Sergie Chukwak, Member - Greg Andrew Jr.