



THE ALASKA SEA OTTER AND STELLER SEA LION COMMISSION

*A Statewide Tribal
Consortium Representing
Tribes From:*

KODIAK ISLAND
CHUGACH/PRINCE
WILLIAM SOUND
SOUTHEAST ALASKA
COOK INLET
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
ALASKA PENINSULA
BRISTOL BAY

The Alaska Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission Resolution 18-01

Title: Opposing the State of Alaska's Senate Joint Resolution No. 13 "Urging the United States Congress to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act and urging the United States Department of the Interior to permit Alaska Native Organizations and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to co-manage, take, and study marine mammals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act"

WHEREAS, the Alaska Sea Otter Commission organized in 1988 to promote Alaska Native involvement in policy decisions and to encourage and implement self-regulation of sea otter use by Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, at the request of member tribes, the Alaska Sea Otter Commission expanded to encourage and implement self-regulation of Steller sea lion use by coastal Alaska Natives, and became the Alaska Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission (TASSC); and

WHEREAS, TASSC recognizes and supports the continuation of Alaska Natives cultural practices harvesting marine mammals, the creation, trade and sale of handicrafts and art from marine mammal parts and associated economic development; and

WHEREAS, TASSC is composed of sovereign, tribal governments that join by resolution from across Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution No. 13 was introduced to the Alaska Legislature "Urging the United States Congress to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act and urging the United States Department of Interior to permit Alaska Native organizations and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to co-manage, take, and study marine mammals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act"; and

WHEREAS, TASSC strongly opposes the State of Alaska's Senate Joint Resolution No. 13 urging the United States Congress to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act; and

WHEREAS, TASSC remembers the activity of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game with regards to sea otters prior to the atomic testing at Amchitka; and

WHEREAS, TASSC agrees that sea otter population in Southeast Alaska has grown exponentially between 1969-2014 to a point where negative impacts are occurring on natural resources and the marine environment; and

WHEREAS, the indigenous peoples of Alaska successfully managed the sea otter populations before Western contact; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 continues the right and traditions of coastal Alaska Natives to harvest sea otter for personal use or to sell or trade amongst other Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, Section 119 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act provides for the development of marine mammal co-management agreements between the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce and Alaska Tribes or Tribally Authorized Alaska Native Organizations; and

WHEREAS, there was no communication or consultation with federally recognized tribes or Tribally Authorized Alaska Native Organizations on SJR 13; and

WHEREAS, TASSC believes that the proposed actions in SJR 13 to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act to expand the scope of allowable uses for harvest of marine mammals will affect marine mammals throughout Alaska, not just Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, TASSC believes that allowing the sale and foreign export of pelts will negatively affect Alaska Native artisans and handicrafters from across Alaska who depend on the sale of items made with sea otter; and

WHEREAS, TASSC believes that allowing the sale of raw unaltered pelts from Southeast would create undue burden on the hunter or the Department of Interior since an otter pelt is indistinguishable from one region to another and other areas are listed under the Endangered Species Act, which would prohibit sea otter subsistence across the state to be uniform if this were enacted; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no requirement for an Alaska Native to possess an Alaskan hunting permit in order to hunt marine mammals; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska management of fish and game resources has not proven successful in a number of instances and does not provide the basis for sound sea otter management; and

WHEREAS, TASSC fully support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working with tribes and tribally authorized Alaska Native Organizations to address sea otter issues and implement sea otter research and programs; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, TASSC strongly opposes the efforts of the Alaska State Legislature to encourage the Secretary of the Interior to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to develop a population management plan for sea otters; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, TASSC strongly opposes amending the Marine Mammal Protection Act to expand the scope of allowable uses for the harvest of marine mammals; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, TASSC strongly opposes amending the Marine Mammal Protection Act to permit an Alaska Native to assign their marine mammal hunting rights to anyone who hold a State of Alaska hunting permit; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, TASSC strongly opposes granting authority to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to permit the sale and foreign export of raw sea otter pelts; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, TASSC strongly opposes the Alaska Department of Fish and Game having the ability to take as many marine mammals as necessary in order to protect other subsistence fisheries resources, administer the management plan, and delegate all or part of the agency's management authority; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT, TASSC strongly opposes SJR 13 and the involvement of the State of Alaska in sea otter co-management.

ADOPTED this 6 day of March 2018, by the Alaska Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission, by a vote of 6 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions and 0 absences.

CERTIFY



President and Chair Margaret Roberts

ATTEST



Secretary Helen Aderman