

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



Office of the Mayor

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Mayor Dan Sullivan

February 19, 2010

The Honorable Charisse Millett
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 412
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HJR 40 – Opposing Proposed Designation of Cook Inlet as Critical Habitat for Cook Inlet Beluga

Dear Representative Millett:

I support your resolution to oppose the proposed designation of 3,000 miles of the Cook Inlet as critical habitat for the Cook Inlet Beluga whale.

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) is committed to ensuring the long-term health and productivity of the Cook Inlet and to the conservation of its beluga population. Cook Inlet supports significant oil and gas production, fishing, mining and a year-round tourism industry to the benefit of all Alaskans. The Port of Anchorage is the essential conduit through which passes an astounding 85% of all goods entering the state, and 26% of the tonnage of U.S. international air freight moves through the city via Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

Anchorage's strategic location continues to be vitally important to our nation's overall defense strategy. We are an excellent staging point for an array of military operations and equipment that is deployed – and redeployed – through our Port in support of our national strategic interests.

The proposed critical habitat designation adds nominal value to the protection of the Cook Inlet beluga. It is fundamentally vague, and because the Endangered Species Act already applies, the MOA is addressing the needs of the beluga responsibly, directly, and with best available science. The projections of economic costs associated with the proposed designation do not pass the red face test; the potential for new regulations, delayed development and increased costs will most certainly total more than the \$575,000 that NMFS included along with its proposal.

Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact my intergovernmental affairs director, Stacy Schubert, if she can be of assistance to you. She can be reached at 343-7112 or by email: schuberts@muni.org.

Sincerely,

Dan Sullivan
Mayor