

Norton Bay Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

Resolution # 2013-01

A Resolution of the Norton Bay Inter-Tribal Watershed Council,

WHEREAS, the Norton Bay watershed and nearby areas are primary sources of subsistence foods for the people of Norton Bay and its neighboring native communities, and

WHEREAS, the Norton Bay and nearby areas include traditional living places, birthplaces and burial grounds and other areas of cultural significance, and

WHEREAS, the Norton Bay watershed is home to a rich and diverse fishery including King Salmon, Pink Salmon, Chum Salmon, Silver Salmon, Dolly Varden as well as whitefish and other valuable subsistence species, and

WHEREAS, uranium exploration and development activities in the Norton Bay watershed permitted by the State of Alaska have been allowed to occur during the summer season that is critical importance to the subsistence harvesting of fish and wildlife, berries, roots, plant leaves, and a wide range of mammal and birds, and

WHEREAS, Governor Parnell has introduced bills (HB 77 & SB 26) designed to expand government power and strip Alaskans of their rights to clean water and healthy fisheries. One proposal is especially damaging – it would deny Alaskans the right to keep water in streams for salmon. Under current law, Alaskans can file for “instream flow rights,” to secure enough water in salmon streams for healthy fisheries. Large corporations, however, want unfettered access to Alaskan waters – regardless whether they support wild salmon. So Governor Parnell is cutting everyday Alaskans from the loop,

WHEREAS, DNR routinely processes water use applications for mining, oil and gas corporations, but it almost never processes the instream flow applications needed to keep water for fish,

WHEREAS, Alaska salmon streams are warming, and salmon are becoming more vulnerable to pollution, predation and disease; that’s why it’s more important than ever to keep water in streams to ensure healthy fish,

THEREFORE, be it resolved that, the State of Alaska’s proposed Road to Ambler for the purpose of furthering mining activity in this area, the Norton Bay Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (IRA), hereby:

1. Strongly objects to the consideration or approval of SB 26 and HB 77 in their present form;

2. Any legislation related to state water rights should recognize that Native Villages and other Alaskans have a right to healthy salmon and an obligation to protect them and should not strip away the rights of Alaskans to keep water instreams for healthy fish.
3. Any legislation related to state water rights should put the human right to water first. When allocation decisions are made in streams, subsistence uses, aquatic habitat and the constitutional rights of all Alaskans should take priority over other out of stream uses.

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned officers and members of the Board of Directors for the Norton Bay Inter-Tribal Watershed Council hereby certify that the Board which is made up of 9 members, of whom (3) constitutes a quorum, were present at the meeting held January 30, 2013, that this Resolution has passed by the affirmative vote of 5 members and that this Resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.

, President

Emily Auning - Secretary
, Secretary, Treasurer
Tyler Schmitt Treasurer