

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1991

Source

CSSJR 19(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.

10



Relating to the management of the walrus population.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the Pacific walrus, which includes about 80 percent of the world's walrus population, occurs primarily in the Bering and Chukchi Seas; and

WHEREAS the Pacific walrus population was severely depleted by commercial hunting two times during the past 100 years but has surpassed its pre-exploitation population, and is currently estimated to number approximately 234,000 animals; and

WHEREAS the Pacific walrus is harvested by coastal Native people of the state under rights protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 -1407); and

WHEREAS, at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) in 1987, the Netherlands with the support of some animal rights groups proposed increasing the protection afforded the Pacific walrus by moving the Pacific walrus from Appendix III to Appendix II of CITES, but the proposal was not adopted; and

WHEREAS an Appendix II listing with CITES allows CITES to regulate international trade in a way that may affect the ability of Native residents of the state to use Pacific walrus in traditional and customary ways; and

WHEREAS a proposal to change the appendix designation of Pacific walrus may be considered at the 1992 meeting of CITES; and

WHEREAS the taking of Pacific walrus by Native people in the state has been much less in recent years and is not large enough to endanger the population of Pacific walrus; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Eskimo Walrus Commission have signed a memorandum of agreement to work together to establish and maintain a sound management policy for the health of the Pacific walrus population; and

WHEREAS the memorandum of agreement and other existing management systems provide adequate mechanisms for conservation of the Pacific walrus population;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature considers any change in the CITES Pacific walrus designation from Appendix III inappropriate since current management of the species has resulted in healthy population levels; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Eskimo Walrus Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to make a coordinated effort to thwart any proposals to change the appendix designation of Pacific walrus by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; the Honorable John F. Turner, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the commissioner of fish and game; the Honorable Benjamin Nageak, Chair of the Eskimo Walrus Commission; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.