

HB

915

# COMMITTEE REPORT

## HOUSE

2/28/80

FURTHER: FINANCE

Date: 3/19/80

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on RESOURCES has had HB 915

"An Act making a special appropriation for marine mammal management and research; and providing for an effective date."

under consideration and (a majority of the committee) (the committee) reports it back with the following recommendations:

- do pass  do not pass
- do pass with attached amendments(s)
- replace with CS for \_\_\_\_\_  same title  
 new title
- and recommends \_\_\_\_\_
- AND attaches a "Letter of Intent"  New Fiscal Note
- reports it back without recommendation.
- referred to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

**MEMBERS SIGNING  
DO PASS**

(NO REC)  
~~Al Glasgow~~  
~~Robert (L) ...~~  
Don ...  
...  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERS HAVING  
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

~~...~~  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
B. ... - No Rec  
...  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
...  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAIRMAN**

AGO 125408

Hearing 4/8/80 - Reported out as CS



# Alaska State Legislature

## House

HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FISH & GAME ISSUES

Alvin Osterback, Chairman

Pouch V, State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
(907) 465-3715

### HEARING NOTIFICATIONS

Re: Marine Mammal Research & Management

BILL	DATE INFORMED	LETTER/PHONE	INFORMED	HEARING DATE
HB 915	4/3/80		Rep. Fuller Sen. Ferguson, to testify Dept. of Fish and Game, Mr. Guy Martin, Kawerak Corp.	4/8/80

Make <sup>re</sup> (C)  
for HB 975 both adding as new sections

A BILL

For an Act entitled: "An Act making appropriations to the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska for socio-cultural research relating to whales and a study of the status of the beluga whale in the waters of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.

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

\* Section <sup>3</sup> <sub>as a grant</sub> The sum of \$80,000 is appropriated from the general fund <sup>to be paid</sup> to the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska to continue the socio-cultural research relating to whales.

\* Section <sup>4</sup> <sub>as a grant</sub> The sum of \$45,000 is appropriated from the general fund <sup>to be pd.</sup> to the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska to conduct a review of the historic use, distribution and life history of beluga whales in Alaska waters.

\* Section 3. This Act takes effect immediately in accordance with AS 01.10.070 (c).

~~Handwritten scribble~~

650  
80  
45  

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775

649,239  
80,000  
45,000  

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774,239

Information supporting the need for an Act entitled: "An Act making appropriations to the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, University of Alaska for socio-cultural research relating to whales and a study of the status of the beluga whale in the waters of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.

During the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) annual meeting in July 1979, a resolution pertaining to the coverage for small cetaceans, which includes beluga or white whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*) was introduced. Action was deferred to the 1980 IWC Annual meeting.

If the IWC should move to regulate beluga whales, the management, in all likelihood, would be subject to regulations established for aboriginal whaling since no known commercial harvests exist. The IWC expects that the following factors relating to the harvest of bowhead whales shall be documented:

1. The importance of the bowhead in the traditional diet;
2. Possible adverse effects of shifts to non-native foods;
3. Availability and acceptability of other food sources;
4. Historical take;
5. The integrative functions of the bowhead hunt in contemporary Eskimo society and the risk to the community identity from an imposed restriction on Native harvesting of the bowhead; and
6. To the extent possible, ecological considerations.

Should the beluga be subject to similar IWC requirements, little biological or socio-cultural data would be available for consideration in the development of a management regime. A report by V. Gurevich (1979) submitted to IWC notes that no unanimous opinion exists about the range of distribution on seasonal movements of the beluga. No data is available which documents the subsistence value of beluga to coastal inhabitants along the Arctic, Bering Sea, and Cook Inlet. This data would certainly appear necessary in view of possible regulatory actions and also because of pending outer continental shelf petroleum development which would have the potential of affecting beluga and beluga subsistence harvests.

Make CS  
HB 915  
both adding

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HB 915: Marine Mammals management and research appropriation.

This bill provides monies for continuation of work by the Eskimo Walrus Commission for work on walrus and other marine mammals, and also funding to the North Slope Borough for work with the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission on beluga and bowhead whale studies.

Particularly because of the impending 1982 OCS lease sale in the Norton Sound Basin, it is vitally important to have current data on the status of walrus herds. There is evidence now that the herds are experiencing the effects of population stress. The EWC is studying use and dependency of walrus and other marine mammals by Alaska Natives, including socio-economic as well as biological data.

In 1979 marine mammal management was returned to the federal government, with the result that, under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 1) there is no sport hunting of marine mammals (can only be taken by Natives); 2) marine mammals are to be taken for subsistence use; 3) meat cannot be wasted; 4) marine mammals cannot be taken if that resource is in danger of depletion; and 5) raw ivory can only be sold to Natives.

The federal government will return marine mammal management to the State if certain conditions are agreed upon; currently the feds and state are negotiating. Since Natives are the largest user group, the EWC could provide much-needed Native input.

The state is not enforcing marine mammal management now that the feds have control. The EWC is working on developing and implementing management regulations, enforced by village social pressure; as the AEWG has done with whales.

Now that the state involvement with walrus and other marine mammals has been curtailed, it is important to have some in-state group actively working on research, management and enforcement.

Norton Sound Fish & Game Advisory Committee has requested the resumption of marine mammal research, the assumption by the state of marine mammal management, and the allowance by the feds of sport hunting of walrus on guided hunts.

Monies to the North Slope Borough are for work with the AEWG on research and training programs on whales. In light of the delays of the Beaufort lease sale because of lack of scientific investigation on the impact of oil drilling on whales, the timing of these programs is critical. There has been much concern over the migration patterns and habitat of the bowhead and beluga whales. This program will study the effects of man-made noise, vibration, and other disruptions on whales, and will train and involve Natives in the scientific work.

March 31, 1980

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March 26, 1980

MARINE MAMMAL MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Grant

Personnel

Research Director \$30,000  
Research assistant 20,000  
3/4 Secretary  
\$9/hr. x 40 x 25 13,500  
Fringe at 21% 13,335

\$ 76,835

Office rent

\$500/mo. x 12 6,000

Supplies

\$150/mo. x 12 1,800

Telephone + postage

\$200/mo. x 12 2,400

\$ 10,200

\$ 87,035

Research

Travel

4 EWC meetings  
\$12,000/meeting 48,000

25 village trips  
\$250 airfare/trip 6,250

25 village trips  
\$45/3 days/per diem 3,375

57,625

61,875

Consultant

\$250/day x 17 days 4,250

4,250

Management Services

31,300

TOTAL

\$180,210

A very rapid change has occurred in the hunting techniques and equipment used the past few years. There is a decline in the use of skin boats and an increase in aluminum boats. The C.B. radio is in common use for communication between hunters, knowledge of weather changes and as a safety factor. Other remarks on safety were that life preservers and flares should be standard boat equipment, and that boats should be sturdy, seaworthy, and safe for the hunt.

Hunters are frustrated and confused by the see-saw control of walrus management between the State and Federal agencies; and the resulting changes in procedures relating to management controls. This was apparent in the very large majority that favored control by the Eskimo Walrus Commission. The implication is that Native hunters are being used as pawns in the procedural disagreements between the State and Federal agencies.

# ESKIMO WALRUS COMMISSION

KAWERAK, INC.

P.O. Box 948

Nome, Alaska 99762 (907) 443-2161

February 1, 1980

Initial Report (con't)

Page 2.

I was hired by The Eskimo Walrus Commission on the 11th of July, 1979 during their meeting held in Nome, Alaska as their Marine Mammal Research Specialist.

Using Mr. Charles H. Johnson's letter dated June 12th, 1979 to Dr. Dave Hickok; I developed a rough draft questionnaire. I used this very little, since it was not developed adequately in my initial trips to Wales and Little Diomedes. I used the scratch pad for the most part on these two trips.

After talking with Ms. Rosita Worl of Arctic Information and Data Center in Nome, I developed a more comprehensive data gathering questionnaire. This was also refined with the expertise of Mr. Caleb Pungowiyi, Mr. Charlie H. Johnson, and Mr. Guy Martin.

The majority of the people in my public meetings in the communities visited were reluctant to fill the data gathering questionnaires, thinking it was for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. After I explain to them the project was funded from the Alaska Legislative Body in Juneau for The Eskimo Walrus Commission; the people in the community visited would begin to offer to participate in the research project. When the people understood that they were finally recognized for their vast knowledge in their subsistence life-style; their self-esteem was bolstered. Many would comment on how they were glad that one of their own was doing the research and not someone from Washington, D.C., or the "Lower 48".

The Time and Funding element is inadequate. When the people that have inhabited the land all their known history are expected to get an adequate picture of themselves in one year, only causes a debasing effect upon them. The recognition of their vast knowledge in their subsistence life-style should be honored by an on-going Monitor-Research position in the recognized representative body such as the Eskimo Walrus Commission. This also should be from one of their own to be relevant to the people represented.

## REASON:

As I sent ninety (90) Marine Mammal Research Questionnaires to the Community of Togiak, Alaska; the majority of the incomplete data gathering forms were sent back with comments such as: "Why do you want to ask so many questions?" "Are you writing a book?" "Why don't you come in person and ask these questions, then I can answer you in person".

## RESULT:

I did not have adequate travel funding to travel in person to explain the project

ESKIMO WALRUS COMMISSION

KAWERAK, INC.

P.O. Box 948

Nome, Alaska 99762 (907) 443-2101

February 1, 1980

Initial Report (con't)

Page 3.

RESULT: (con't)

before asking them to fill out the marine mammal research questionnaire. It is not only to gather data; but it demands a whole lot of on-going Public Relations that is desperately needed, just to be in good working relationship with the representative body such as The Eskimo Walrus Commission.

On the brighter side, it is good to see your fellow-man relate to you with a sparkle in his eye; "I'm glad the people in Juneau are finally listening to us before they tell us what to do or not to do in our hunting!"

IS IT WORTH WHILE?

From my own viewpoint as the Marine Mammal Research Specialist I say; we are just beginning a relevant working relationship that has been lacking all these years. Let us keep the good wholesome working relationship going in our "Great Land!!".

Sincerely submitted I remain,

*Mr. Carl M. Ahwinona, Sr.*

Mr. Carl M. Ahwinona, Sr.  
Marine Mammal Research Specialist  
Eskimo Walrus Commission  
P.O. Box 948  
Nome, Alaska 99762

see  
Marine Mammals  
p. 2

North Sound  
Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Nome, Alaska  
3/10/80

POSITION STATEMENT

We in North West Alaska feel our marine and land animal resources are Very important to us. These resources represent part of an everyday way of life with many of us, not only for food, other subsistence needs and sport, but also for a "Living." Thus, we need to maintain, or where appropriate, increase these resources to facilitate continued utilization.

For this, we need adequate management and research and we feel the State is the proper agency to do so. This requires funding.

We don't want to be left out in the "cold" of N. W. Alaska funding for Fish & Game any longer. As I have said, these resources mean as much or more to the people of this area as any regional population in the world.

With your understanding, we recommend the following specifics:

- 1) Adequate surveillance of commercial crabbing and herring fishing efforts. We are very concerned about these northern Bering populations. The M. V. Vigilance should be available for patrol during these seasons. Air surveillance would also be helpful.

- a. A boat that can be used safely along the coastal waters.
  - b. Air surveillance capability at least during some seasons.  
ex. Spring bear hunting and fall bear and moose seasons.  
Unscrupulous guides could quickly deestimate both populations here because of the nature of the area.
- 3) A Crab Biologist position is needed in Nome in view of the new commercial harvest in the Northern Bering Sea.
- 4) Another more realistic crab count and continued research are also needed as some very strange things are happening to the crab population of this area.
- 5) ~~Resume marine mammal research (Federal-State joint effort if necessary) and:~~
- a. ~~Re-establish the Marine Mammal Biologist position in Nome.~~
  - b. ~~Push for State control of all marine mammals.~~
- 6) ~~Request federal government to allow sport hunting of walrus or guided hunts.~~
- 7) Modern fish counting equipment and techniques need to be employed in:
- a. Salmon spawning streams for escapement and
  - b. Herring in the Northern Bering.
- 8) Another aerial survey of the Arctic caribou herd and continued close management are needed if the herd is ever to return to a significant size so a sizable yearly harvest can again be utilized.
- 9) Make certain adequate oil spill containment and clean-up capability is present if oil exploration and development occurs in the Bering Sea.

# Groups to spearhead bowhead research

Associated Press

Representatives of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Acoustical Society of America will hold a five day meeting in San Diego starting Feb 25 to spearhead a comprehensive research program on the effects of offshore drilling on the endangered bowhead whale.

Eskimo hunters contend that sensitive bowheads could be forced from their traditional migration paths by the underwater noise caused by offshore drilling. They say they fear a change in migration patterns could leave villages on Alaska's northern coasts without access to the bowhead, important to Eskimos both as a food source and a part of their traditional culture.

North Slope Borough spokesman Jon Buchholdt said the first two days will be devoted to determining what data is already available on underwater sound and the bowhead. The rest of the conference will be used to write a protocol stating research objectives for the project and ways it will be accomplished.

Buchholdt claims federal research has been devoted only to justifying quotas imposed on Eskimo subsistence hunting by the International Whaling Commission. "They have wasted millions of dollars on research which is beside the point," he declared.

He said the government has failed to recognize Eskimo subsistence whaling as an industry in itself.

Buchholdt said North Slope Eskimos hope the research project can be incorporated in a settlement with oil companies wishing to drill offshore in the Beaufort Sea. The borough, environmentalists and other

local governments in the area are suing to void the recent joint federal-state Beaufort Sea oil and gas lease sale on grounds drilling could threaten marine mammals in the area.

## Walrus commission told of possible herd decline

2-15-80

ANCHORAGE (AP)—A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman has warned the Eskimo Walrus Commission that increased commercial and industrial activity in the Bering Sea and Bristol Bay will contribute to a steep decline in walrus populations in the next 10 years.

migratory bird coordinator for the Alaska Division of the Service, said the 1980 walrus population is at an all-time high of about 250,000, up from about 50,000 in 1955. He said the population fluctuates naturally, but there will be increased pressures in the next 10 years that may cut the herd to between 110,000 and 150,000 animals.

Schmidt said those pressures include commercial clam fisheries, and oil and gas extraction, plus the effect of increased boat traffic, herring fisheries.

"If the only thing we had to worry about was the present Native harvest, from a biological standpoint I wouldn't be too concerned," Schmidt said. "If you stopped hunting walrus entirely right now, the population is going to come down anyway due to these other factors."

Subsistence hunters will kill an estimated 10,000 walrus per year during the next few years.

Schmidt said the Fish and Wildlife Service believes there is a need for more cooperation between the federal government, the state and Alaska Natives. He said the Service has agreed to form a Pacific Walrus Technical Committee with the Eskimo Walrus Commission and the Alaska Fish and Game Department.

"What we would like to see is more cooperative and management research studies," Schmidt said.

Controversy exists in Alaska because management of walrus herds has been taken from the state and given to Fish and Wildlife under the Marine Mammals Protection Act.

Non-natives are prohibited from possessing or dealing in raw products such as seal skins and ivory. But there are no restrictions on Native subsistence hunting.

Schmidt said he would prefer not to see Native hunting increased. But if hunting remains at the current level between now and 1990, he said it will not adversely affect the walrus population.

In fact, Native subsistence hunting is an element in population control. Schmidt said that when walrus populations reach a high level, as is the case now, the animals "are more or less eating themselves out of house and home at a certain point."

He said there are "fewer healthy animals, lower fecundity and starvation, plus more incidence of disease."

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Original sponsor: Resources Committee  
(for Special Subsistence  
Committee)

Funding Information  
General Fund \$774,239  
Other Funds -0-  
\$774,239

IN THE HOUSE

BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 915

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

A BILL

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(1) to the Eskimo Walrus Commission for cooperative work with the Department of Fish and Game on the improvement of walrus conservation measures, the development of subsistence hunting data, and the dissemination of information on the subsistence use of walrus \$87,035

(2) to the Eskimo Walrus Commission for research on nutritional and cultural dependence on walrus by the people from Barrow to Togiak 61,875

*leave in* (3) to Kawerak, Inc., for management service costs 31,300

\* ~~Sec. 2.~~ The sum of \$469,029 is appropriated from the general fund to be paid as a grant to the North Slope Borough for research and training programs relating to whales, to be undertaken with the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission.

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Committee)

*Reported out  
without sec. 3 & 4*

Funding Information  
General Fund ~~\$774,239~~  
Other Funds -0-  
~~\$774,239~~  
649,239

IN THE HOUSE

BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 915

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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