



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

ALASKA

RESOLUTION 22-13

A RESOLUTION OF CONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ADVANCING THE PRIME INITIATIVE THROUGH NOAA NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul, Alaska is a second-class city organized under the State of Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, the Pribilof Islands marine ecosystem is among the most unique and important places in the world and provides vital breeding and feeding habitat for more than half of the world's population of northern fur seals, habitat for Steller sea lions and harbor seals, is home to more than three million seabirds that flock to the islands during the summer months, and plays a central role in creating the productive ocean zone that supports some of the world's most profitable commercial fisheries, and;

WHEREAS, the Pribilof Islands communities of Saint Paul Island and Saint George Island are directly experiencing a rapidly transforming marine ecosystem, including alarming declines of fur seals, sea lions, seabirds, and commercial fish and crab stocks, which the community depends on, and with real costs to wildlife, human and ecosystem health, local economies, and culture, and;

WHEREAS, northern fur seals have historical and cultural significance to the communities of Saint Paul Island and Saint George Island and have declined to roughly a quarter of the peak historic population estimate of 2.1 million animals, and;

WHEREAS, existing protection measures and continued threats to the overall health of the Bering Sea have not met the environmental, social and economic resilience goals of the communities, resulting in an ongoing and urgent need for innovative and adaptable solutions, and;

WHEREAS, consistent with the Fur Seal Act Amendments of 1983, the U.S. Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, to ensure that activities on the Pribilof Islands are consistent with the purposes of conserving, managing, and protecting the fur seals and other wildlife, and;

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul is aware that the Tribal Government of St. Paul is leading the Pribilof Islands Marine Ecosystem (PRIME) Initiative, also known as Alagum Kanuux, with the goal of establishing a sanctuary under the National Marine Sanctuary Act (NMSA) to promote federal and tribal co-management of fur seal and other marine resources around the Pribilof Islands and is intended to address fur seal conservation concerns while ensuring the sustainability of our local economies and providing for continued fishing opportunities, and;

WHEREAS, a governance framework that reflects co-management between the federally recognized tribal governments of Saint Paul Island and Saint George Island and the federal government is intended to develop timely and meaningful regulations, policies and management actions for our essential cultural, environmental and economic resources, and;

WHEREAS, the City supports actions through the NMSA that are consistent and in coordination with existing processes for federal fishery management actions through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Services; provide the needed flexibility to achieve co-management; and allow for a balance of cultural, environmental and economic priorities, and;

WHEREAS, consistent with the Fur Seal Act Amendments of 1983, Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce to promote the development of a stable, self-sufficient, enduring and diversified economy on the Pribilof Islands not dependent on sealing, and;

WHEREAS, consistent with the objectives of the Fur Seal Act Amendments of 1983, Congress directed several U.S. federal agencies to invest over \$150 million since 1993 to develop harbor and other fisheries related infrastructure on the Pribilof Islands necessary to develop a stable, self-sufficient, enduring and diversified fisheries based economy, and;

WHEREAS, consistent with the objectives of the Fur Seal Act Amendments of 1983, Congress and the federal and state governments have enacted and implemented a number of programs including the Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program, the Crab Rationalization Program, and reductions of halibut bycatch in the groundfish fisheries, in order to ensure a stable, self-sufficient, enduring and diversified economy on Saint Paul Island.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Council of the City of Saint Paul, conditionally supports advancing the PRIME Initiative through the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, National Marine Sanctuary Program if the following conditions are met:

- the City's support of PRIME will depend on whether it is consulted as this proposal is developed and whether it agrees to the proposed sanctuary goals and objectives, which must protect existing and future economic activities as well as infrastructure development consistent with relevant congressional legislation, and it is clear on whether the co-management structure and proposed Advisory Council will not add a further level of bureaucracy and lengthen processes to accomplish critical economic development projects on Saint Paul Island, and;
- going forward consultation with the City must be continuous and any changes to PRIME or the proposed marine sanctuary shall be communicated to the City immediately to maintain community support and confidence, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City will reserve its support for when there is a final PRIME Proposal with defined goals, objectives, and management structure announced to the public at which time the City will then determine its support, or not, for PRIME, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this Resolution replaces Resolution 21-21 that was approved by the Saint Paul City Council on December 15, 2021.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL
THIS 11TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2022 BY ___ IN FAVOR ___ OPPOSED AND ___ ABSTAIN.

ATTEST:

Jacob N. Mercurief, Mayor

Monique Baker, City Clerk