



# CITY OF SAINT PAUL

## ALASKA

### RESOLUTION 21-21

#### A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT ADVANCING THE PRIME INITIATIVE THROUGH NOMINATION INTO THE 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 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, fish, and invertebrates, 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**, current limited protection measures and continued threats to the overall health of the Bering Sea have not successfully met the environmental, social and economic resilience goals of the communities, resulting in an ongoing and urgent need for innovative and adaptable local solutions, 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 with the goal of designating a 100nm co-managed marine area that will adequately address our conservation concerns while ensuring the sustainability of our local economies and provide continued fishing opportunities, and;

**WHEREAS**, the PRIME 100nm around both islands is justified and based on substantial western scientific data and Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, and will be an economic resilience area supporting tribal and resource-dependent businesses while ensuring that Indigenous and local knowledge is used for decision- making around resource use and conservation, 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 necessary and critical to accomplish timely and meaningful regulations, policies and management actions for our essential cultural, environmental and economic resources, and;

**WHEREAS**, the City supports utilizing the existing National Marine Sanctuary Act, which includes existing processes for federal fishery management actions through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, provides the needed flexibility to achieve co-management of PRIME, and allows for a balance of cultural, environmental and economic priorities; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Council of the City of Saint Paul, supports authorizing a nomination of the PRIME Initiative into the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, National Marine Sanctuary Program on behalf of the City of Saint Paul, Alaska.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL THIS 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER 2021 BY \_\_\_ IN FAVOR \_\_\_ OPPOSED AND \_\_\_ ABSTAIN.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacob N. Mercurief, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monique Baker, City Clerk