

QAGAN TAYAGUNGIN TRIBE

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Resolution 04-13

A Resolution of the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe OPPOSING the listing of the Southwest Alaska District Population Segment of the Northern Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

WHEREAS, the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe is a sovereign federally recognized tribe with government to government status with the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe is authorized by its constitution to act on behalf of the Native tribal members; and

WHEREAS, the Aleut people of the Aleutian Islands, and those living on the Alaska Peninsula, have a historic and traditional lifestyle of subsistence hunting of marine mammals, including the Northern Sea Otter; and

WHEREAS, the Aleut people are concerned, as one, for the health and continued well being of the marine mammal resources as a whole in the Aleut Region; and

WHEREAS, the Aleut people believe that the continued health of the Aleuts and their decedents depends upon being able to continue their historic subsistence lifestyle into time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the Aleut people have a long history of monitoring their subsistence marine mammal resources; and

WHEREAS, the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission has reviewed the data indicating a recent decrease in the population of the sea otter population in the Eastern Aleutians and Alaska Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, the sea otter population in the Aleutian Region and Alaska Peninsula region according to the USFWS has increased in population from an estimated population of 1000 – 2000 sea otters in 1911 to 41,474 in 2002 (population increase of 257 – 415 percent); and

WHEREAS, the sea otter population initially exceeded the carrying capacity of the local environment in the early 1960's causing the population to decline due to starvation or emigration; and

WHEREAS, the sea otter population has shown a 257 – 415 percent increase may have exceeded the carrying capacity of the local environment causing the current decrease in population numbers; and

WHEREAS, the archeological data gathered in the Aleutian Islands and Alaska Peninsula region has documented a historic accounting of the increases and decreases in the marine mammal populations, including sea otters, has occurred throughout the centuries within the Eastern Aleutians and Alaska Peninsula region; and

WHEREAS, the current decrease in sea otter populations are not due to human causes or man-made habitat changes; and

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act process is aimed at altering human interactions between sea otters and human beings; and

WHEREAS, there are no human interactions that would warrant or result in an increase in the sea otter populations, and

WHEREAS, the fishermen and subsistence users in the affected area may be further restricted in harvesting fish, although they have no known impact on the sea otter populations, and

WHEREAS, the Aleut people are not sure how a recovery plan required by the ESA listing would be helpful in restoring the sea otter populations given the fact that the current population decline is not due to human causes, and

WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Service is required by USFWS Standard Operating Procedures and under Secretarial Order 3225 to consult with the tribes and communities in the affected areas prior to listing, and

WHEREAS, the USFWS has not followed their standard operating procedures on the consultation process, and

WHEREAS, the proposed listing of sea otters as threatened was not initiated by concerns from the communities in the affected region.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe hereby OPPOSES the Listing of the Northern Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe requests the USFWS fulfill its legal obligations and responsibility required by federal law to consult with each of the federally recognized tribes in the affected area, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the USF&WS disclose to the tribes and the communities in the Aleutians Islands and other affected communities, the potential impacts that may result from the listing of the Northern Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, including potential financial impacts resulting from this listing and subsequent regulations for subsistence harvest management measures and restrictions on the local fisheries.

PASSED AND APPROVED:

By the Qagan Tayagungin Tribal Council on the 21st day of May, 2004

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; and 0 abstained.


Dorothy McCallum, Tribal President

ATTEST:


Susan McGlashan, Secretary/Treasurer