Akutan Traditional Council
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January 13, 2015

IN OPPOSITION TO AN ALEUTIAN ISLAND NATIONAL MARINE SANTUARY

The Akutan Traditional Council strongly opposes the designation of an Aleutian Island National Marine Sanctuary. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) made the original nomination and it is now at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Although NOAA'S nomination process clearly states that "every nomination starts at the community level" we were not consulted about this outside effort and we are not aware of ANY local support from our community.

The only entity from Alaska to sign this nomination regarding the Aleutians was the Eyak Preservation Council, which is funded by outside environmental sources with no affiliation in the Aleutians.

Aleuts have lived in our region for thousands of years. We understand how to use our land in a sustainable manner. Fishing stocks in our region are at record levels due to good stewardship by management agencies North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC), Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and local residents. The Aleutian Islands region is subject to a fishery Ecosystem Plan of the NPFMC, one of few such plans in the nation, to provide enhanced scientific information and measurable indicators to evaluate and promote ecosystem health, sustainable fisheries, and vibrant communities in Aleutian Islands region.

Finally, much of the Aleutian Islands (277,100 nm2) is already designated as a habitat conservation area, and further protections are not warranted.

The proposed sanctuary would endanger our ability to work and provide for our families.

Sincerely,

Joe Bereskin
President
Akutan Traditional Council