

July 6, 2016

Senator Dan Sullivan
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: US-Russia Polar Bear Bilateral Treaty

Dear Senator Sullivan,

On behalf of Voice of the Arctic Inupiat (VOAI), I would like to thank you for inviting me to Washington DC to discuss the subsistence culture of the Inupiat people, and our harvesting of the Chukchi Sea Polar Bears. As I expressed at the summit on June 9th, it has been difficult and complicated to navigate the regulation and policy initiatives of the US Fish & Wildlife Service regarding the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Polar Bear Treaty. This treaty could have very real impacts on the Inupiat people's ability to conduct our subsistence way of life on the North Slope. For the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to propose restrictions and punishments on our subsistence way of life is difficult for me to comprehend, especially since it is the Inupiat people who have the most interest in the sustainability of this resource—after all, it is our food source. I appreciate you taking on this matter and creating an opportunity for the Inupiat people of the North Slope to engage.

By calling the summit, you not only provided a forum for VOA and other North Slope entities to engage on this issue, but demonstrated your commitment to the Inupiat people and protecting our way of life. Prior to the summit, we had not had an opportunity to engage on this issue or to express our deep concerns for the availability of the Chukchi Polar Bears. For these reasons, I thank you.

Too frequently, the Inupiat people have been cut out of critical decisions and policy initiatives which affect our region and our way of life. As stewards of our lands, waters, and resources for a millennia, we should be more fully integrated into any decision which affects our region, our subsistence way of life, or the economic stability of the North Slope communities. VOA looks forward to engaging with you, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the administration on all matters of Arctic policy to fully ensure that the needs of the Inupiat people continue to be the highest priority.

Member Organizations

Arctic Slope Native Association
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Atqasuk Corporation

City of Anaktuvuk Pass
City of Atqasuk
City of Barrow
City of Katktovik
City of Point Hope

City of Wainwright
Ilisagvik College
Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation
Native Village of Atqasuk
Native Village of Point Hope

Native Village of Point Lay
North Slope Borough
Nunamiut Corporation
Olgoonik Corporation

Tikigaq Corporation
Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation
Wainwright Tribal Council

I thank you for interjecting into this complex regulation and affording us an opportunity to be heard. We look forward to working with you on this issue and similar Arctic policy issues in the future.

Taikuu,



Sayers Tuzroyluk, Sr.
President

CC: Senator Lisa Murkowski
Director Dan Ashe, US FWS
Ambassador David Balton, Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries
Taqulik Hepa, Director, NSB Wildlife Department
John Hopson, Jr., President of NSB Assembly and Mayor of Wainwright

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