



ALASKA FEDERATION  
OF NATIVES

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AFN LEGISLATIVE/LITIGATION COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 12-07

- TITLE:** REQUESTING THE ALASKA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION, AND THE GOVERNOR OF ALASKA TO DECLARE A CHINOOK FISHERIES DISASTER THROUGHOUT THE ARCTIC YUKON KUSKOKWIM (AYK) WITH FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS DIRECTED TO THE AYK SUSTAINABLE SALMON INITIATIVE
- WHEREAS:** Healthy and abundant Chinook Salmon stocks of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers are essential to the cultural, nutritional and economic well-being and way of life of the tribal villages and peoples who live along these river drainages, and
- WHEREAS:** Food security is a basic human right recognized by the United Nations and affirmed by the United States in the United Nation's Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and
- WHEREAS:** The Chinook stocks in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River drainages, and Chinook stocks throughout the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region, are in a serious state of decline, resulting in closed subsistence fisheries and commercial fisheries restricted to the point where villages are not attaining the amount needed to satisfy their basic needs and cash for other subsistence purposes, and
- WHEREAS:** The Kuskokwim and the Yukon Rivers have experienced disastrous declines of Chinook salmon. These circumstances led to widespread restrictions and closures of subsistence and caused nutritional, economic and cultural hardship for the thousands of tribal members who live in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim regions and depend upon the return of these salmon stocks for their health, well-being and way of life; and
- WHEREAS:** Nowhere in the country are salmon more important to the survival, subsistence economy and essential way of life than for the people of the Yukon and Kuskokwim region; and

**WHEREAS:** The First Nations Peoples of the Yukon also depend on the Chinook runs for their way of life, and the spawning grounds in Canada are vital for healthy Chinook runs throughout the Yukon drainage, and

**WHEREAS:** The Secretary of Commerce declared a Fisheries Disaster Declaration over the 2009 salmon fishing season making that the 17th disaster declaration issued by state and federal agencies since 1997; and

**WHEREAS:** The Association of Village Council Presidents are founding members of the Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Sustainable Salmon Initiative (SSI) which serves as the leading collaborative multi-stakeholder organization for addressing pressing salmon research needs in the A YK region; and

**WHEREAS:** With the leadership and collaboration of the Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference and Kawerak, Inc., the AYK Sustainable Salmon Initiative has emerged as one of the largest and most successful working models of cooperative management of fisheries research in North America. The AYK SSI provides a strong co-management role for the AYK tribal organization; and

**WHEREAS:** Although the AYK Sustainable Salmon Initiative has begun the difficult task of understanding the causes of the declines of salmon in the region, critical salmon research is needed immediately to protect future generations; and

**WHEREAS:** The causes for the Salmon decline remain unknown including the depth of impact caused by the Bering Sea trawlers by-catch; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Alaska Federation of Natives urge the United States Congress, the Obama Administration and the State of Alaska to declare a disaster on the Chinook Salmon fisheries so that the affected tribes may access disaster relief funds to address their immediate subsistence needs; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that AFN request the United States Congress, the Obama Administration and the State of Alaska to support and appropriate urgently needed funding, of no less than \$5,000,000 per year for a minimum of 8 years (the full life cycle of salmon) to address salmon research and restoration needs throughout the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim regions of Alaska, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that such research funding be directed specifically to the AYK SSI as a tribal-federal-state co-management effort, and that such funding explicitly not be administered through the State of Alaska, and

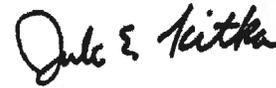
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that AFN urges the Governor of the State of Alaska, a signatory of the AYK SSI Memorandum of Understanding, to guarantee the recommitment of working cooperatively with the regional Native organizations Association of Village Council Presidents , Tanana Chiefs Conference and Kawerak, Inc, and

other partners to support the goals of the initiative and openly and aggressively work to secure funding for the continuation of the AYK SSI to fund critical new research to address salmon declines, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State and Federal Governments make available additional funding to address urgent salmon research needs related to salmon declines in the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Norton Sound Regions, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that AFN urges the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to consider the immediate reduction of the Chinook Salmon by-Catch by the Bering Sea trawler fleet.

PASSED THIS DAY,  
29<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2012



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Julie E. Kitka

