

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NORTHERN BERING SEA CLIMATE RESILIENCE AREA PROTECTIONS
REVOKED**

On Friday, April 28th, with a stroke of a pen, President Trump revoked President Obama's Executive Order (E.O. 13754). The E.O. was resoundingly endorsed last year by the Kawerak, Inc. Board of Directors, which is comprised of the 20 Tribal Council Presidents (or their appointees) of the 20 federally recognized tribes in the Bering Strait, two elder representatives, and the Norton Sound Health Corporation Chairman.

Tribes in the Bering Strait Region want to protect their subsistence way of life, support the national security interests of the United States, and also to protect their homeland from safety issues such as erosion, increased shipping, and to increase infrastructure in remote places where there is a dire lack compared to southern States.

E.O. 13754 safeguarded the Northern Bering Sea by: permanently establishing the existing boundary for bottom trawl fishing, requiring Traditional Ecological Knowledge in decision-making, closing the area from oil and gas drilling in federal waters, and establishing an advisory council that includes tribal representatives to guide federal decisions in the affected region.

The Bering Strait Region is ground zero for extreme weather and changing climate and is also the chokepoint for marine traffic, which is increasing dramatically as a result of the

lessening of sea ice. Five of our region's communities are listed as being "In Imminent Danger" due to erosion, and the Governor has declared multiple disasters due to extreme weather events. This area is home to marine mammals, fish and seabirds, which are essentially the breadbasket and the garden for the people in the region. This rich marine ecosystem is critical to our culture and survival as a people as it provides for vital food security resources that our Tribes and communities have relied on for thousands of years. Our way of life is truly dependent on the land and water that we live in and the natural resources that provide for us.

While this latest Executive Order is disappointing, it is also causing confusion. However, Kawerak believes there is a path forward and our Tribal leaders maintain a resolute desire to strengthen national security and meet the needs of villages in Alaska. We will pursue the possibility of administrative and legislative resolves with the Administration and Alaska's Congressional Delegation; we stand ready to work cooperatively and collaborate for the benefit of the people of the Bering Strait Region of Alaska and the rest of the nation.

Kawerak's mission is to advance the capacity of our people and tribes for the benefit of the region. Kawerak is a nonprofit tribal consortium that provides over 40 different programs to the Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik and Yupik people who reside in 16 communities of western Alaska and represents the 20 federally recognized tribes in the Bering Strait Region. www.kawerak.org

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