



**KAWERAK, INC.** December 16, 2020

*REPRESENTING*

**Brevig Mission**

*Sitaisaq*

**Council**

**Diomedede**

*Injalik*

**Elim**

*Niviarcaurluq*

**Gambell**

*Sivuqaq*

**Golovin**

*Chinik*

**King Island**

*Ugiuvak*

**Koyuk**

*Kuuyuk*

**Mary's Igloo**

*Qawiaraq*

**Nome Eskimo**

*Sitnasuak Inuit*

**Savoonga**

*Sivungaq*

**Shaktoolik**

*Saktulic*

**Shishmaref**

*Qikiqtaq*

**Solomon**

*Anjutaq*

**St. Michael**

*Taciq*

**Stebbins**

*Tapraq*

**Teller**

*Tala*

**Unalakleet**

*Uᅇalaqᅇiq*

**Wales**

*Kinigin*

**White Mountain**

*Iᅇaluik /*

*Nutchirviq*

To: The Research Community  
From: The Kawerak Board of Directors

Re: Follow up regarding research and related activities in the Bering Strait region under COVID-19 conditions

Dear Colleagues,

As with the rest of the world, Alaskan Indigenous and rural communities continue to be impacted by the spread of COVID-19 and the associated wide-ranging social, spiritual, and economic effects. Over the past 6+ months, Kawerak has remained focused on the health, safety, and well-being of Bering Strait region residents.

We understand that many researchers are currently planning for the 2021 'field season,' which may include engagements with communities in our region. No one can predict how the next few months and beyond will unfold with regard to the pandemic. Kawerak would like to reiterate our guidance and recommendations from May of this year and we ask all researchers, research organizations, and research funders to continue to be vigilant against the spread of this disease and to plan for the continuation of restrictions and the need for virtual work and engagements.

As we previously noted, while circumstances are challenging for us all, we urge the research community to continue to use this time to foster and nourish meaningful relationships that will carry our collective work into the future in an even stronger and more equitable way. Co-production of knowledge for research is urgently needed and we encourage everyone working, or intending to work, on our traditional homelands and waters to embrace such an approach.

The Kawerak Board of Directors also insists that anyone planning to engage with communities in our region be in contact with the appropriate Tribal Councils, Indigenous organization, and other relevant government or other bodies far in advance of making any plans or arrangements for travel into the Bering Strait region to obtain up-to-date information and, specifically, to receive permissions from Tribal Councils (or the relevant village-based decision making entity). In addition, we insist that you

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respect and obey communities' travel mandates. While it is difficult to not see each other in-person, it is critical that everyone follow all public health guidance and take measures to protect yourselves, your families, and our communities.

Sincerely,  
KAWERAK, INC.

  
Frank Katchatag, Board Chair

*Additional information:*

- Link to May 18, 2020 letter: <https://kawerak.org/download/research-through-covid-19-in-the-bering-strait/>
- Link to co-production of knowledge framework: <https://kawerak.org/download/coproduction-of-knowledge-framework/>
- Link to Kawerak's COVID-19 response page: <https://kawerak.org/covid-19-response/>
- Link to Norton Sound Health Corporation's COVID-19 response page: <https://www.nortonsoundhealth.org/category/covid-19/>

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