



KAWERAK. INC.

September 11, 2020

REPRESENTING

Brevig Mission

Sitaisaq

Council

Akauchak

Diomedes

Injalik

Elim

Neviarcuarluk

Gambell

Sivuqaq

Golovin

Chinik

King Island

Ugiuvak

Koyuk

Kuuyuk

Mary's Igloo

Qawiaraq

Nome Eskimo

Sitnasuak Inuit

Savoonga

Sivungaq

Shaktolik

Saktuliq

Shishmaref

Kigiqtaq

Solomon

Anuutaq

St. Michael

Taciq

Stebbins

Tapraq

Teller

Tupqaqruk

Unalakleet

Uqalaqtiq

Wales

Kinjigin

White Mountain

Igatuk /

Natchirsvik

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Senator
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
Senator
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Don Young
Representative
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Murkowski, Sullivan, and Congressman Young:

I write to express support for *S.804, the Empowering Rural Economies Through Alaska Native Sustainable Arts and Handicrafts Act*, a bill that amends the Marine Mammal Protection Act to prohibit any state or locality from banning the importation, sale, barter, or possession of an authentic native handicraft article of mammoth, mastodon, or walrus ivory or marine mammal bones that have been produced by an Alaska Native. It is critical *S.804* is enacted into law and we appreciate your commitment to our ivory carvers, Native ways of living with walrus, and support for our rural economies.

The Bering Strait region is home to diverse Inuit cultures including St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Central Yupik and Inupiaq communities. Inherent to our Native ways of living is the sustainable harvest of walrus. Our hunters and ivory carvers carry with them generations of knowledge in living our way of life. Ivory carvers are our living culture bearers, reflecting the customary and traditional use of walrus ivory. The sale of our Native art is often the sole source of cash income providing for the basic living needs for many Inuit families and supports a culturally relevant local economy in our communities.

In effort to see the bill move through Congress, Kawerak Inc. does not object to amendments requested by conservation groups on fossilized mammoth or mastodon ivory so long as the Native right to utilize fossilized ivory is preserved and that fossilized walrus ivory is also protected from being banned by states. We deeply appreciate your commitment in protecting our way of life in support of our ivory carvers. Thank you for your hard work in moving this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Melanie Bahnke
President/CEO
Kawerak Inc.

KAWERAK, INC.

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Advancing the capacity of our people and tribes for the benefit of the region.