



International Bering Sea Forum

A Resolution Calling for Increased Global Cooperation to Ensure Environmentally Sustainable Management of the Bering Sea Environment through an Intergovernmental Agreement

In consideration of the facts that:

- The Bering Sea – one of the most productive seas in the world, which includes globally important habitats for many biological resources – is now undergoing far-reaching environmental changes, in particular climate change that alarm scientists, coastal residents and others from around the world;
- The United States of America and the Russian Federation derive significant economic benefit from the Bering Sea which produces more than 2 million tons of fish annually for the United States, and 1.2 million tons for Russia;
- The health, economic well-being, and ways of life of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the region are connected to the Bering Sea and its natural resources; in addition, the socioeconomic development of coastal villages along the Bering Sea, on both the Russian and United States sides, is dependent on maintaining ecologically sustainable conditions in the region, especially in the rational use of fisheries;
- The Bering Sea region has been home to indigenous peoples for more than 10,000 years. Their existence as peoples depends directly upon the Bering Sea, which is the foundation for their cultures and spiritual identities, and provides their livelihoods.
- In the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) created by the Russian and United States governments there have been several unilateral policies set forth to manage the fishing industry; whereas special conventions have been developed for achieving a unified strategy for preserving the stocks of individual species including pollock, salmon, and marine mammals;
- Problems of environmental security in the Bering Sea should be addressed by strengthening efforts at international cooperation among appropriate coastal states – much in the same way that several other regional seas (e.g., the Baltic, Barents, and Black Seas) are already regulated by conventions for the multi-disciplinary stewardship of their marine ecosystems;
- The Russian Federation and United States of America – the two states which, in keeping with the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (1982) and domestic legislation

creating two hundred mile Exclusive Economic Zones, presently hold corresponding jurisdiction over coastal governance (with the exception of the Convention on International Waters – the Donut Hole) have authority to shape fisheries management in the Bering Sea and to support traditional resource use by the residents who live off the sea; and

- The International Bering Sea Forum (IBSF) – an entity composed of individual citizens from both Russia and the United States with experience in scientific research, resource management, the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples to develop sustainable communities, and international collaboration for the conservation of marine ecosystems and the preservation of biodiversity – has investigated and discussed at length the various prospects for managing the Bering Sea and dealing with the existing problems in the region.

The International Bering Sea Forum hereby calls upon the governments of the Russian Federation and the United States of America to reach a new intergovernmental Agreement. The Agreement should entail the following.

- Recognition that as early as 1911, the United States and Russia set a precedent for a Bering Sea International Agreement to manage important natural resources (The North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty of 1911);
- Recognition that the United States and Russia, both hold legal jurisdiction in the Bering Sea region and will coordinate their efforts to create a unified system for natural resource use in the Bering Sea, to include conservation of its biodiversity, ecosystem-based management of its biological resources, and support for the interests of Bering Sea residents;
- The creation by Russia and the United States of an International Council to implement the provisions of the Agreement, collaborate with the relevant governmental agencies, scientific and other public institutions, and indigenous peoples' organizations in both nations, and to coordinate regional activities to unify Bering Sea resource management;
- Implementation of this Agreement and work of the International Council will be supported by governmental and private sectors.
- The stakeholders to the Agreement will provide the necessary fiscal, legal and organizational support for the International Council. The Agreement will also provide authority for the International Council to receive private sector support.

The International Bering Sea Forum hereby organizes a special Committee for preparing recommendations and otherwise supporting activities or proposals from the Russian and United States governmental agencies that will help provide the multi-faceted assistance and consultation necessary for developing and concluding this Agreement.