Resolution to Sustain Tribal Safety and Food Security in the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait Region and to promote the self-determination of the tribes in the future management of natural resources and habitat in the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait Region.

WHEREAS, Kawerak, Inc. (Kawerak) is a non-profit tribal consortium of the federally recognized tribes of the Bering Strait Region (BSR), and

WHEREAS, there are 20 federally recognized tribes in the BSR, and

WHEREAS, in March 2007, the Kawerak Board of Directors adopted a policy to provide guidance where Kawerak's position on resource development activities may be required, and

WHEREAS, that policy describes a healthy and balanced approach to natural resource protection and economic development, and

WHEREAS, per Presidential Executive Order 13175, federal agencies shall have a process that ensures meaningful and timely input directly to the appropriate leadership of federally recognized tribes at the beginning of agency process affecting tribes, and

WHEREAS, the culture and food security of Central Yupik, Saint Lawrence Island Yupik and Inupiaq peoples is grounded in the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait, a rich resource area we have relied upon for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, Tribes in the BSR rely on a diversity of marine mammals, fish, birds and other resources from the ocean to sustain our way of life and food security, and

WHEREAS, climate change is causing a rapid depletion of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean making Bering Sea and Bering Strait communities vulnerable to impacts from expanded shipping. Increased ship traffic presents potential risks such as noise pollution, boating accidents, contaminated discharges, oil spills and potential conflicts and safety hazards within hunting and fishing areas; and

WHEREAS, Traditional knowledge (TK) is a living body of knowledge that is acquired and utilized by indigenous communities and individuals in and through long-term resources use and environmental observation. It is transmitted intergenerationally. TK is a practically applicable body of knowledge, one that integrates personal experience with oral traditions. It provides perspectives applicable to an array of human and non-human
phenomena. It is deeply rooted in history, time, and place, but is adaptable and dynamic in ways that keep it relevant and useful in contemporary life. This knowledge is part of, and used in, everyday life, and is inextricably intertwined with peoples’ identity and cosmology. Tradition—and TK—does not preclude change, nor does it equal ‘the past.’ In fact, it inherently entails change (e.g. in adaptation processes). The definition establishes full respect for the authority of the indigenous peoples of the region and will guide federal agencies in its decision making, and

WHEREAS, We, through our tribal governments, have the right to govern and participate fully in all levels of decision-making in policies which may have tribal implications, and to exercise our government to government responsibilities with each other and with other governments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Kawerak urges the President of the United States to:

1. Take executive action to ensure the Natural Resources and Habitat of the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait region are protected so subsistence uses and subsistence practices of the tribes of the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait region are sustained into the future.
2. Take action to ensure tribes of the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait region have formal roles, beyond consultation, in federal decision-making regarding actions that may impact hunting and fishing or food security so that traditional knowledge is incorporated.
3. Take action to strengthen communities of the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait region to ensure their economic sustainability.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Presidential action will strengthen the ability of Indigenous Peoples to resolve issues of mutual concern through cooperation, communication and education. Kawerak, Inc. hereby makes this request to the President of the United States.

By: [Signature]
Frank Katchatag, Chairman

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned Secretary of the Kawerak, Inc. Board of Directors, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by majority vote of the Board Executive Committee of Kawerak, Inc. during a duly called meeting on this 29th day of June, 2016.

By: [Signature]
Kirsten Timbers, Kawerak Board Secretary