



September 22, 2023

Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Gosar and Ranking Member Stansbury:

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) submits this letter and attachment to the record for the September 19, 2023 hearing entitled "Examining Barriers to Access in Federal Waters: A Closer Look at the Marine Sanctuary and Monument System."

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island is the title by which the federal government formally recognizes our tribal sovereignty; a nation born, living, and self-governing before the United States was conceived. Our Tribal Government is the venue through which Unangax̂ of St. Paul Island can fulfill our intrinsic rights and responsibilities, and support, recollect, practice, and pass on our culture. The ACSPI Tribal Government promotes, maintains, and protects cultural practices, awareness, preservation, self-governance, and self-determination for the tribal members of ACSPI.

ACSPI elevates Tribal voices and Indigenous Knowledge in management decisions that affect our terrestrial and marine resources, and the decision to pursue a nomination of a national marine sanctuary in our waters is part of that effort. We understand that our submission has engendered concern and misunderstanding, much of which has been voiced from outside our region. To address these concerns, we are continuing outreach efforts to help ensure that marine conservation efforts, including the potential for a sanctuary designation, are aligned with the needs of the Pribilof Unangax̂.

In addition, ACSPI is working with federal agencies to reach a common understanding about co-management and commercial fisheries management. In part, these conversations should help ensure that a sanctuary, if designated, would be equitable and responsive to the economic, cultural, and other needs of our people. To very clear, ACSPI has no intention of using a sanctuary nomination to undermine the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process. We would not agree to the designation of a sanctuary that did so, and it is clear based on a plain reading of the law and historical precedent that the National Marine Sanctuaries Act creates a legal pathway to prevent "undermining" that process.

ACSPI was not notified of this hearing or invited to participate. It is noteworthy that there was no participant from our region. By contrast, we have attached a letter sent to members of the fishing industry, Community Development Quota entities, including Coastal Villages Region Fund, and several others. The letter was sent in response to a letter those entities submitted to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator Spinrad on March 24, 2023. It explains the efforts being undertaken by ACSPI and is intended to foster a dialogue among those who believe they are affected. We are firm in our belief that open, respectful, and clear lines communication and understanding are the best way forward.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amos T. Philemonoff, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Amos T. Philemonoff, Sr.  
President, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island