

**MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION**  
**4340 EAST-WEST HIGHWAY, ROOM 905**  
**BETHESDA, MD 20814**

28 February 2007

Mr. Charles D. N. Brower, Chairman  
Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals  
800 East Dimond, Suite 3-590  
Anchorage, AK 99515

Dear Mr. Brower:

Thank you for your letter to the Marine Mammal Commissioners requesting support for the Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM) and its efforts to provide stable funding for Alaska Native organizations and co-management of marine mammals in Alaska. In consultation with, and with the support of, the Commissioners, I am responding on their behalf.

The Marine Mammal Commission has strongly supported Alaska Native organizations and promoted co-management under section 119 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. To further the goals of co-management, the Commission is committed to (1) enhancing communication among Alaska Native organizations and with their federal agency partners, (2) improving co-management coordination and efficiency, and (3) helping to ensure adequate funding for those efforts.

To the credit of Alaska Native leaders and the federal officials with whom they work, considerable progress has been made toward co-management since 1994 when section 119 was added to the Act. IPCoMM, in particular, has been an important catalyst for that progress. Resolutions 06-01 and 06-02 indicate that IPCoMM wishes to further co-management goals by representing the common interests of Alaska Native organizations concerned with co-management and subsistence use of marine mammals. Understandably, the resolutions seek a solid budgetary foundation for co-management. As with other research and management under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Commission agrees that adequate and predictable funding is needed for co-management efforts and the Alaska Native organizations that participate in those efforts.

The general goals of the IPCoMM resolutions mirror the three Marine Mammal Commission commitments listed above. As such, we support those general goals.

Because the precise details and justifications pertaining to how those funds will be used are not yet evident in IPCoMM's resolutions or problem statement, the Commission is unable to comment on specific funding proposals or such matters as (a) how the requested funds would be used by each Alaska Native organization, (b) how IPCoMM plans to ensure that all the relevant Alaska Native organizations will be represented, and (c) how IPCoMM would ensure that the various co-management groups retain an adequate degree of independence and flexibility and are treated fairly and equitably. We understand that IPCoMM plans to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop more specific proposals, and the Commission would be happy to assist in those efforts.

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Such matters will be useful topics for the Commission's upcoming review of co-management efforts. We will contact you next month to invite an IPCoMM representative to participate as a member of the steering committee. We anticipate a productive and positive co-management review.

As you know, the Commission believes that participation of Alaska Native organizations in co-management efforts is vital to the long-term conservation of Alaska marine mammals and subsistence cultures. The Commission looks forward to working closely with you and your colleagues to achieve these goals.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss any of these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director