



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

22 July 2010

Mr. Myron P. Naneng, Sr.  
President  
Association of Village Council Presidents  
Imarpigmiut Ungungsiit Murilkestit  
Pouch 219  
Bethel, Alaska 99559

Dear Mr. Naneng:

Thank you for your letters regarding our appointments to the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. We are both honored to serve on the Commission and will do our utmost to fulfill the responsibilities bestowed on us by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. One of those responsibilities entails making recommendations to the federal government to protect the Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts whose livelihood may be adversely affected by actions taken pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We can assure you that this is a responsibility that we will take very seriously.

Your letters indicated that the Association of Village Council Presidents/Imarpigmiut Ungungsiit Murilkestit would like to develop the scientific, traditional, and technical expertise needed to become full partners in cooperative management to the benefit of federal partners and for the conservation and subsistence use of marine mammals. You also indicated that you envision a holistic ecosystem-based organization for marine mammal management within your region. And you indicated that you seek to integrate traditional knowledge with science and create a technically capable user group. Indeed, as you stated, we share interests in the conservation and management of marine mammals and the subsistence use of marine wildlife resources.

The challenge before us, then, is to achieve these shared goals. In 2008 the Marine Mammal Commission sponsored a review of co-management efforts. The review highlighted the progress that had been made but also acknowledged that much remains to be done to build the essential capacity. Funding is certainly a key consideration, as is the level of cooperation between Alaska Native organizations and their federal and state partners.

To be frank, the follow-up after the 2008 meeting was not sufficient to put co-management on a path that would meet our shared goals. Therefore, the Commission has been in discussions with the Executive Committee of the Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM) and others in the federal government regarding the need for an additional meeting. This second meeting would seek concurrence among all relevant agencies and parties regarding a way forward. We will keep you informed of progress toward a second meeting but also encourage you to contact IPCoMM's Executive Committee, as we will involve them directly in the planning process.

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We anticipate that achieving full co-management will be difficult at times. But we also are heartened by the fact that we share a commitment to strongly held goals. Again, we thank you for your letters and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please do not hesitate to contact either one of us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daryl J. Boness". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Daryl J. Boness, Ph.D., Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael F. Tillman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael F. Tillman, Ph.D., Commissioner