

To: The Honorable Vince Tutiakoff Sr.
The Unalaska City Council
Chris Hladick, Interim City Manager
Bill Homka, Director of Planning

From: Brad Gilman, Rick Marks, & Sebastian O'Kelly

Re: Proposed Marine Sanctuary In The Pribilof Islands

Date: September 13, 2022

NOAA has published in its inventory of its proposed National Marine Sanctuaries a nomination by the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) Tribal Government for a Marine Sanctuary in the Pribilof Islands. While the details of any Sanctuary, including its size, location, management rules, or even whether NOAA will establish it, are yet to be determined, we believe this is an issue that the City should pay close attention to given its potential impact on Unalaska's commercial fishing industry.

The Federal Register notice from NOAA regarding the proposal is at this link. The proposed name is Alaġum Kanuux (Heart of the Ocean). ACSPI's nomination seeks to protect nationally significant biological and cultural resources in the area, with a goal of establishing a co-management regime of those resources with Federal, State and Tribal governments.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/06/08/2022-11954/notice-of-alaum-kanuux>

Earlier in 2021, ACSPI submitted a nomination for a Marine Sanctuary that encompassed an area of a 100 nm circular boundary around the islands of St. Paul and St. George. The latest proposal does not have a designated area, as it appears that concerns were raised within the community of St. George over the size and location of the area.

Should NOAA seek to establish the Marine Sanctuary, it is required to go through a separate rule-making that would set the location and size of the area as well as its conservation and management rules that would decide what human activities, including fishing, would be permissible. That rule-making would provide opportunity for public notice and comment, including completing the analytical requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, before establishment of the Sanctuary. The process would take a couple of years. It should be noted that the decision-making for regulating fishing in a Sanctuary does not fall under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and is largely made by the National Ocean Service, not the National Marine Fisheries Service. However, a decision of this importance will ultimately be made by the Secretary of Commerce based on a recommendation by the NOAA Administrator along with input from the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Executive Order 13175 requires that Federal agencies engage in formal government-to-government consultations on major decisions that might impact a tribe or tribes. The Qawalangin Tribe will consider at its next monthly meeting submission of a letter to NOAA formally asking that such a consultation include it as part of deliberations over the proposal.

Should the City decide to get further engaged on this issue, we will provide advice on next steps to take.