

RESOLUTON 2013-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA REQUESTING THAT THE STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES WORK WITH IMPACTED SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP A SOUND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SEA OTTER POPULATION IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND FURTHER REQUEST THAT THEY RESEARCH WAYS TO REVIVE LOST FISHERIES, LOST ECONOMIES, AND SUBSISTENCE LIFESTYLES WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM ALLOWING THE RELOCATION AND RE-COLONIZATION OF SEA OTTERS IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA WITHOUT A MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, in the late 1960's the Alaska Department of Fish and Game deposited approximately 400 sea otters in six different locations (including islands near Sitka) within Southeast Alaska with no management plan; and

WHEREAS, Sitka is a seafood community and without a proper management plan, the growing sea otter population can potentially devastate the shellfish biomass, threatening the future of dive and crab fisheries in Southeast Alaska, while jeopardizing hundreds of jobs and tens of millions of dollars in economic activity within the region; and

WHEREAS, sea otters are the only marine mammals without blubber, and as a result, the animals have a high metabolism and require large amounts of food to survive. The sea otter diet consists mainly of marine invertebrates including: crabs, clams, geoducks, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, shrimp and abalone. Sea otters can consume up to 25 percent of their body weight per day; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates there are 23,000 sea otters in Southeast Alaska. Using an average body weight of 65 pounds and a daily food intake of 25 percent of body weight, a sea otter population of 23,000 animals will consume over 148 million pounds of shellfish per year. To put that into perspective, the entire 2012 Southeast Alaska harvest in the dive and Dungeness crab fisheries alone was only 4.8 million pounds; and

WHEREAS, the continually increasing and currently high number of sea otters has, in some areas of Southeast, depleted shellfish stocks to a degree that subsistence, personal use, sport and commercial fishing have been halted. In recent years, Alaska Department of Fish and Game closed 17 dive fishery harvest areas due to sea otter predation; and

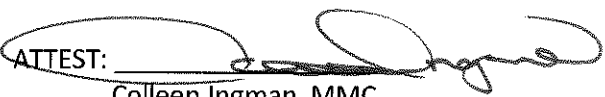
WHEREAS, both the state and federal government did not act responsibly in allowing the relocation of several hundred sea otters without a sound management plan; and


WHEREAS, the City and Borough of Sitka hopes through this resolution to bring this rapidly escalating problem to your attention in hopes you will take immediate action to begin to correct the damage that is being done.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that the City and Borough of Sitka request both State and Federal agencies work with Southeast Alaska communities to develop a management plan for the sea otter population and look for remedies to address the problems that have resulted from the ever increasing unmanaged population of sea otters, including ways to revive the lost economies that have resulted due to the relocation and re-colonization of sea otters in Southeast Alaska without a management plan.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 9th day of April, 2013.

ATTEST:


Colleen Ingman, MMC
Municipal Clerk


Mim McConnell, Mayor