

**CITY OF GUSTAVUS, ALASKA
RESOLUTION CY25-15**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF GUSTAVUS SUPPORTING SEA OTTER MANAGEMENT IN
SOUTHEAST ALASKA**

WHEREAS, the City of Gustavus is a community that is dependent on abundant, sustainable resources from the coastal waters of Southeast Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, in the late 1960's, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) reintroduced approximately 400 sea otters in six different locations to near shore waters of Southeast Alaska ~~in the absence of a long term management plan~~; and,

WHEREAS, the federal government, which has jurisdiction over sea otter management under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), has ~~established~~ not adequately mitigated negative effects on shellfish resources resulting from sea otter reintroduction ~~resources management plan for protecting the ecosystems affected by sea otters and maintaining an ecological balance of shellfish resources~~; and,

WHEREAS, the ~~unmanaged~~ proliferation of sea otters, which consume ~~non-quantified yet~~ substantial volumes of ~~the crab, urchins, clams and other shellfish,~~ upon which the region's residents also heavily rely, ~~appears to be contributing to a degradation in the ecological balance in many areas leading~~ contributing to diminished harvests of these important resources for subsistence and commercial purpose; and,

WHEREAS, ~~the drastic increase and the high density of reintroduced sea otters has so~~ depleted shellfish stocks to the extent that subsistence and personal use is ~~almost non-existent~~ diminished; and

WHEREAS, Southeast Alaska's indigenous inhabitants have hunted sea otters since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Natives under the Marine Mammal Protection act are denied the customary and traditional ability to sell intact sea otter pelts; and

WHEREAS, Section 101 of the US Marine Mammal Protection Act further allows for the use of marine mammal pelts in the creation of authentic native articles of handicraft and clothing; and

WHEREAS, under the Act, such value added fur products, so created, are already allowable for sale in both intra and interstate commerce; and

WHEREAS, ~~Alaska is a model for the management of harvestable resources for sustained yield,~~ subject to preferences among beneficial uses, ~~and is the only state in the United States which sites this model of management~~ mandated in the Alaska Constitution; and

~~WHEREAS, the mandate within the Alaska Constitution to manage for sustained yield is in~~

~~conflict with the current interpretation and enforcement of the Marine Mammal Protection Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and~~

~~WHEREAS, implementation of a sustainable harvest management regime would serve the dual purposes of maintaining sea otter populations at a level suitable for continued ecological balance and expanded economic opportunity; and~~

WHEREAS, Section 119 of the US Marine Mammal Protection Act allows the Secretary of the Department of Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with Alaska Native organizations for the conservation of marine mammals, the development of marine mammal co-management structures with Federal and State agencies and the creation of local management plans for the harvest of marine mammals for subsistence use and providing protection to important subsistence shellfish resources ~~creating an ecological balance~~; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Gustavus urges the appropriate Federal agencies work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Alaska Native and non-Native leaders in the Southeast region, to establish strategies and plans ~~for an ecological balance of~~ to increase harvestable shellfish resources, while maintaining ~~and the reintroduced sea~~ sustainable sea otter populations in Southeast Alaska, ~~including shellfish enhancement programs.~~

PASSED and **APPROVED** by the Gustavus City Council this XXth day of August, 2025, and effective upon adoption.

Sally A. McLaughlin, Mayor

Attest: Liesl M. Barker, City Clerk