

CLERK'S OFFICE

APPROVED

Date: 5-10-11

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

AR No. 2011-137

Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at
the Request of the Mayor

Prepared by: Office of the Mayor

For reading: May 10, 2011

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY OPPOSING THE
DESIGNATION BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION OF 3,016 SQUARE MILES OF UPPER COOK INLET AND
KACHEMAK BAY AS CRITICAL HABITAT FOR BELUGA WHALES.**

WHEREAS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration designated 3,016 square miles of upper Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay as critical habitat for beluga whales; and

WHEREAS, the designation failed to adequately consider the economic effects a critical habitat designation would have on shipping, oil and gas exploration and production, mining, and all other forms of economic activity in the inlet; and

WHEREAS, the National Marine Fisheries Service has stated that the additional regulatory oversight will cost only an additional \$600,000 over the next decade; and

WHEREAS, the cost estimate does not factor in the extra costs that existing and future operations may have to pay to meet unnecessary new regulatory burdens; and

WHEREAS, scientists in the National Marine Fisheries Service have concluded that the primary reason for the population decline was the unsustainable subsistence harvest in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, a cooperative harvest management plan was put into place in 2000; and

WHEREAS, scientists predicted signs of recovery of the beluga whale population would take five to seven years after a cooperative harvest management plan was instituted; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, the population of beluga whales was 278, and in 2010, the population was 340, which is a four percent increase a year; and

WHEREAS there is little evidence that human activity has harmed the beluga whales environment, migration, or ecology; and

WHEREAS, there is little evidence that commercial or sport fishing is harming the beluga whale population; and

WHEREAS, the commercial and sport fishing industries could be gravely threatened by a critical habitat designation because the beluga whales primary food source is fish; and

WHEREAS, lost development opportunities because of critical habitat designations could ultimately lead to lost revenue to the State of Alaska and to local governments; and

WHEREAS, all three members of Alaska's Congressional delegation and Governor Sean Parnell are opposed to the critical habitat designation; and

WHEREAS, designation of broad areas of municipal, commercial, and industrial interest, without any known or identifiable link between activities in those areas and the conservation status of the Cook Inlet beluga whale, is contrary to the public interest; and

WHEREAS, the conservation benefits, which are entirely uncertain and speculative, are outweighed by the costs and impediments posed by critical habitat in this instance in most, if not all, of the proposed designation area.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Municipal Assembly resolves:

Section 1: That the Anchorage Assembly opposes the designation by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of 3,016 square miles of upper Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay as critical habitat for beluga whales.

Section 2: That this resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval of the Anchorage Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 16th day of May, 2011.


Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:


Municipal Clerk

Content ID: 010202**Type:** AR_AllOther - All Other Resolutions

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Author: maglaquijp**Initiating
Dept:** Mayor**Date** 5/6/11 6:20 AM
Prepared:**Assembly
Meeting** 5/10/11
Date:

<u>Workflow Name</u>	<u>Action Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>User</u>	<u>Security Group</u>	<u>Content ID</u>
Clerk_Admin_SubWorkflow	5/6/11 12:28 PM	Exit	Nina Pruitt	Public	010202
MuniManager_SubWorkflow	5/6/11 12:28 PM	Approve	Nina Pruitt	Public	010202
CFO_SubWorkflow	5/6/11 12:28 PM	Approve	Nina Pruitt	Public	010202
Mayor_SubWorkflow	5/6/11 6:21 AM	Approve	Joy Maglaqui	Public	010202
AllOtherARWorkflow	5/6/11 6:21 AM	Checkin	Joy Maglaqui	Public	010202

Ad. Walker

CONSENT AGENDA – RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION-OTHER