

Bering Straits Coastal Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BERING STRAITS COASTAL ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS BALLOT MEASURE #2

The Bering Straits Coastal Association board of directors passed a resolution on August 23, 2012 supporting Ballot Measure #2 and urging Alaskans to vote in favor of the measure to restore coastal management on August 28th.

“It is important that Alaskans pass the coastal management initiative during the primary election because this is the only program that gives local people a strong voice in how development occurs along the more than 44,000 miles of coast,” board President Paul Rookok Sr. of Savoonga said. “Alaska is the only coastal state without a coastal management program.”

The Bering Straits Coastal Association formed last year as an Alaska nonprofit corporation after the Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area was disbanded when the Alaska Coastal Management Program expired. The area covered by the Association includes the same area covered by the former Coastal Resource Service Area which included all communities in the Norton Sound and Seward Peninsula area other than Nome. Nome was not included because it previously was represented by its own coastal district before elimination of the coastal program.

The Association will oversee 8 projects funded through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program that will benefit the region. These projects will support subsistence, improve local capacity of communities, address solid waste management issues, protect habitat, and prepare for impacts from climate change.

President Rookok said that he was pleased to be part of the Bering Straits Coastal Association, but without a statewide coastal management program the Association does not have a seat at the table when development projects are being reviewed. “The former Coastal Resource Service Area was a subdivision of the State of Alaska and the closest thing we had to a regional government,” he said.

During the August 23 meeting, the board hired Willa Eckenweiler of Unalakleet as the Program Director. In addition to the board president, other members of the Association’s board include Ruby Nassuk of Koyuk (Vice President), Enid Lincoln of White Mountain (Treasurer), Frances Degnan of Unalakleet (Secretary), Wade Okhtokiyuk of Gambell, Peter Martin, Sr. of Stebbins, and Luther Komonaseak of Wales.

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