



SIVUQAQ, INCORPORATED

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Resolution 03-2016

A resolution of Sivuqaq, Incorporated, requesting that the serious issue of the mass confusion generated by Executive Order 13648, which ends the African elephant ivory market in America, be included as an agenda item in the White House Tribal Nations Conference.

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of Sivuqaq, Inc. are concerned about the health and economic welfare of our residents, and,

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13648 of July 1, 2013, which ends the African elephant ivory market in America and provides an exemption for items already permitted under existing federal legislation, which includes the protections set forth under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of our hunting rights for walrus and other sea mammals, and, importantly, the use of inedible portions in the production of arts and crafts, and,

WHEREAS, states are crafting and passing laws banning elephant ivory and are erroneously including walrus ivory in their description of ivory, even with an inclusion of the federal exemption noted in the Executive Order for items permitted under existing federal law, and,

WHEREAS, Alaska Native peoples use of walrus ivory is not explicitly mentioned in the federal or state laws, along with whale, polar bear and sea otter, all of which are included in the state laws, and are mammals we legally continue to hunt and create arts and crafts from, and,

WHEREAS, the ensuing confusion is creating a de facto ban of our walrus ivory products, with sales reported as decreased by the businesses our artists and craftspeople depend on, and,

WHEREAS, our subsistence based community depends substantially upon the walruses, bowhead whales and seals for our nutritional needs, with the inedible portions used to create our arts and crafts, and,

WHEREAS, this income is vital to our residents because our unemployment rates are at approximately 75% and,

WHEREAS, prices for food from our stores are astronomically expensive due to the high shipping costs in rural Alaska, and most residents cannot sustain themselves through purchases from these outlets, and,

WHEREAS, our pre-capitalist culture of hunting in a non-wasteful manner and only to fulfill our nutritional needs remains one of sharing with our entire community, and,

WHEREAS, we have no alternative food sources, and the small income derived from our sales of ivory arts and crafts is necessary for the financing of further hunting, and,

WHEREAS, the fuel, boats, ammunition, and other technology necessary for hunting in our modern world is expensive, and,

WHEREAS, the emotionally charged and highly graphic photographs of headless, rotting elephant carcasses, directed towards the American and worldwide public by powerful wildlife organizations, as they actively pursue a stated goal to eliminate all ivory markets worldwide, is turning ivory into an unsavory word, and is ultimately going to destroy our market and our only means of self-sufficiency, and,

WHEREAS, we can do little to counter the efforts of these wildlife organizations because we are not as well funded, and they are not duly concerned with our dire dilemma, and,

WHEREAS, we were not invited to dialogue and address our concerns in the crafting of the Executive Order by the Department of the Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as they've stated in a press release on this issue that upon review of their legal obligation to inform and involve tribes in matters affecting them, they determined that this issue did not involve any Native American Tribes, and,

WHEREAS, we are invisible in this matter of vital importance to the our food security, and USFWS has not responded to Vera Metcalf, the Eskimo Walrus Commission Director and a tribal member of our island community, and,

WHEREAS, we are not poachers or sports hunters, nor involved in terrorism or organized crime, and a ban on walrus ivory does not work towards the elimination of the poaching of African elephant ivory, which is the explicitly stated goal of the Executive Order, and,

WHEREAS, additionally, old walrus ivory is entirely distinguishable from both mammoth ivory and old elephant ivory, and we depend on the sales of that resource, and,

WHEREAS, the European Union's ban on seal products destroyed the subsistence based seal product market of the Greenlandic Inuit before the Prime Minister of Denmark resolved the law in their favor, and it has yet to be determined if the Inuit nation of Greenland can fully recover,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all efforts be set forth to provide us with an opportunity to address this grave matter with President Barack Obama through inclusion of our issue in the agenda for the final White House Tribal Nations Conference in Washington, D.C, September 26-27, 2016. President Obama created this law, but we are certain he did not mean to do us harm, and instead has demonstrated sincere concerns for our communities. We are heartened by that, for the welfare of our residents and our artists.

BY: 
Secretary, Sivuqaq, Incorporated