

Introduced by: Mayor Joseph Klejka  
Date: October 22, 2013  
Action: Passed  
Vote: 7-0

# CITY OF BETHEL, ALASKA

## Resolution #13-18

### **A RESOLUTION BY THE BETHEL CITY COUNCIL PROVIDING COMMENTS ON THE POPULATION THRESHOLD LIMITATIONS AND RURAL CHARACTERISTICS UNDER THE ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT TO THE FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD**

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Subsistence Board is seeking comments on the process used to determine which Alaska communities are rural for purposes of the Federal Subsistence Program;

**WHEREAS**, specifically, the Board is looking at Population Thresholds, Rural Characteristics and Aggregation of Communities, as they are currently outlined under the implementation of Title VII, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), to determine if the standards within are an accurate way to determine rural or nonrural areas and the corresponding subsistence rights to the residence;

**WHEREAS**, Bethel is located 400 miles west of Anchorage and is not connected to any other community by a road system, the primary means of transportation for not only Bethel but for the Yukon Kuskokwim Region is by boat and air plane;

**WHEREAS**, with a population of 6,080, Bethel is a growing community and acts as a hub for 56 surrounding communalities;

**WHEREAS**, Population Thresholds- when Bethel reaches a population of 7,000 or more, the community would be considered nonrural and therefore unable to take part in the subsistence way of life, unless the community members prove that they possess significant characteristics of a rural nature;

**WHEREAS**, the Bethel City Council strongly encourages the board to consider the "significant characteristics of a rural nature" the "customary and direct dependence upon the populations as the mainstay of livelihood" and "the availability of alternative resources" as opposed to the "local residency" population numbers as identified under 50 CFR § 100.17;

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**WHEREAS**, an increase to the population within our community is not directly related to the economic growth as may otherwise be assumed;

**WHEREAS**, Rural Characteristics -In considering the characteristics of a rural community, the Board should investigate the social and economic structure, the stability of the economy, the extent and the kinds of employment for wages, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and seasonal employment, they should also take into account the amount and distribution of cash income among those domiciled in the community, the cost and availability of goods and services to those domiciled in the community, the geographic locations where those in the community hunt and fish and the extent of sharing and exchange of fish and game by those domiciled in the community and most importantly the cultural, social, and economic values associated with the taking and use of fish and game;

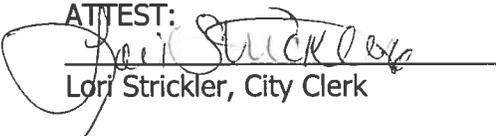
**WHEREAS**, additionally the Federal Subsistence Board should consider in their determination of rural or nonrural, the State's guidelines used to determine an area as subsistence or nonsubsistence provide for under Alaska Statutes Title 16.05.258 c. Subsistence use and allocation of fish and game. The Board should focus on determining whether dependence upon subsistence is a principal characteristic of the economy, culture, and way of life of an area or community. As a community with a strong cultural tie and reliance on the harvests community members would face significant hardship if they lose their long cherished and relied upon subsistence rights;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Bethel City Council provides comments to the Federal Subsistence Board on Population Thresholds and Rural Characteristics as provided for in their request for comments on the Rural Determination Process.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 22 DAY OF OCTOBER 2013, BY A 7 VOTE IN FAVOR AND A 0 VOTE IN OPPOSITION.**

  
Eric Whitney, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

  
Lori Strickler, City Clerk