



March 8, 2017
Office of the Mayor

The Honorable Senator Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0203

Dear Lisa,

The Valdez City Council has approved this letter expressing opposition to the timing of the U.S. Navy Training Operation scheduled to be held May 1 thru May 12, 2017 in the Gulf of Alaska.

As you know, these exercises are not new to our area, but the timing is something that we have not seen before. There is much concern over this timing and how it will affect our salmon runs. We had a disastrous pink salmon return last year and there has not been a definitive answer as to why our money fish returned in such extremely low numbers. If the Navy is allowed to run these exercises this Spring, during the return, that will be one more variable added to the possible reasons for reduced salmon returns, if that occurs again this year. The researchers will not be able to separate the effects of sonar and live ordnance from that of the chemical and physical changes in our ocean when they try to discover the reason for low returns. This added variable will also slow down finding a solution to help restore future, healthy runs.

Last October the City Council approved the enclosed Resolution stating that we are not opposed to the training, but we are opposed to the timing. Valdez depends on healthy salmon runs and wildlife. Therefore, as your constituents we ask that you make a direct request to the U.S. Navy to postpone the on-water portion of Northern Edge 2017 and all future training exercises in the Gulf of Alaska to occur only after mid-September and before mid-March, as they have been conducted in the past.

Thank you Senator, for your service to our state and the country.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth E. Knight".

Ruth E. Knight
Mayor, City of Valdez, Alaska

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA

RESOLUTION # 16-36

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, OPPOSING LOCATION AND TIMING OF U.S. NAVY TRAINING EXERCISES THAT POSE RISKS TO FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND MARINE HABITATS IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

WHEREAS, the City of Valdez is the governing body with the full power and authority as recognized by the citizens of Valdez, to act for its members, and has responsibility to provide government for the good health and welfare of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Navy plans to conduct training activities utilizing explosives, live ordnance, and sonar in the Gulf of Alaska in 2017 that will have impacts on marine life and habitat vital to the interests of the City of Valdez and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, these trainings will impact the waters of the Gulf of Alaska by annually releasing up to approximately 352,000 pounds of expended materials including up to 10,500 pounds of hazardous materials including cyanide, chromium, lead, tungsten, nickel, cadmium, barium chromate, chlorides, phosphorus, titanium compounds, lead oxide, potassium perchlorate, lead chromate, ammonium perchlorate, fulminate of mercury, and lead azide into waters designated by NOAA as Essential Fish Habitat for a multitude of species that support the economic development in Alaskan coastal communities and harvest of wild Alaskan salmon and other fish for global markets; and

WHEREAS, the training area and vicinity is a highly productive region for many marine fish and shellfish populations and supports some of the most productive fisheries in the United States, and an important spawning area for many fishes, and the training is scheduled to take place during the summer season when many fish populations are migrating and spawning (at least 383 species belonging to 84 families of marine and anadromous fishes have been reported from the predominant ecosystems found in the training area); and

WHEREAS, the port of Valdez is reliant on the fish and wildlife resources in the Gulf of Alaska for their subsistence harvest and the livelihoods supported by commercial fishing; and

WHEREAS, the City of Valdez supports all cultural, traditional and subsistence activities historically and continually practiced by Native and non-Native peoples in the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the City of Valdez finds no scientific information or traditional knowledge demonstrating that the U.S. Navy's training activities can take place without negatively affecting salmon, marine mammal, bird and other marine habitats.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, that

Section 1. The Valdez City Council hereby requests that the U.S. Navy refrain from using live ordnance or sonar in any Marine Protected Area, including NOAA Fisheries Marine Protected Areas, State Marine Protected Areas, and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern.

Section 2. The Valdez City Council hereby requests that the U.S. Navy relocate its training area to the far southeast corner of the current designated training area, off the Continental Shelf areas of the Gulf of Alaska, and away from seamounts.

Section 3. The Valdez City Council hereby requests the U.S. Navy to conduct its training exercises after the middle of September and before the Spring, so as not to impact migrating salmon and other species.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, this 4th day of October, 2016.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA



Ruth E. Knight, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sheri L. Pierce, MMC, City Clerk

