

Selawik Example

Whereas the traditional Inupiaq way of life and values are central to the societal well being and physical health of Akuligaq, also known as Selawik,

Whereas, like all traditional Inupiaq communities, without our subsistence way of life, our residents are more likely to suffer physical health problems from the loss of diet nutrition and exercise, to suffer mental illness such as depression from the loss of culture, and suffer social support disintegration from the loss of values and elder knowledge and direction,

Whereas, it has been documented that 83 % of our residents depend on subsistence for at least half of their diet, but subsistence activities of 72% of our residents have been impacted by their concern about our dump site pollution,

Whereas, it has been scientifically documented that simply visiting the Selawik dumpsite is associated with substantial increase in headaches, sore throat, nausea, numbness, stomach pain, and other symptoms of ill health,

Whereas, in an attempt to avoid the dump, 65% of our residents burn trash in front of their homes, a practice documented in Selawik to be associated with increased faintness, numbness, and cough,

Whereas the United States Environmental Protection Agency has a mission to protect the environment and environmental health of United States citizens,

Whereas the federal government has a trust responsibility to the Native Village of Selawik,

Whereas the Native Village of Selawik and the federal government have a government-to-government relationship,

Whereas the USEPA has provided our community with assistance to begin addressing our waste problems through the Indian General Assistance Program, Hazardous Waste Management Program, and Brownfield Response and Job Training Programs,

Whereas our Environmental Department has begun to build capacity and make progress in reducing the serious environmental and health risks posed by our waste management situation, but has experienced a number of significant obstacles in making more rapid and sustainable progress,

Whereas, through the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice Project, our Environmental Department has been engaged in careful documentation of such obstacles that may be partially or fully addressed through changes in USEPA policies and procedures,

Whereas, the Selawik Environmental Department has identified such changes in the course of performing its work, and has included them as requested actions for EPA in the document entitled, *“Solid Waste Management Program Obstacles for Arctic Native Villages Documented by the Native Village of Selawik and their Proposed Solutions for the United States Environmental Protection Agency”*

Whereas, the Council has reviewed these changes and endorses their adoption for the purposes of facilitating the most effective use of USEPA assistance in the future by Selawik, and all Alaska Tribes,

Be it resolved that the Council extends its heartfelt gratitude to the USEPA for its grant assistance and offers its Inupiaq hospitality to USEPA representatives here this day and in the future.

Be it further resolved that the Council requests USEPA as soon as reasonably possible to initiate the actions described in the referenced document, which are summarized as following:

- ✚ Develop application and reporting requirements that are applicable to and appropriate to our unique Alaska Tribe situations and cultures, respectively, or if this is not possible, provide additional staffing funds to compensate for the disproportionate amount of time our staff needs in meeting such requirements as compared to lower-48 or urban Alaska Tribes.
- ✚ Incorporate flexibility into grant application and reporting deadlines to take into account the seasonal dependence of transportation, construction, and other logistics resulting from Arctic climate and extreme geographic isolation.
- ✚ Allow up to a two-week postponement for grant application and reporting deadlines when they conflict with subsistence activities, or other priority community events on which our traditional lifestyle is based, such as elder funeral traditions, or of which are an immediate life- or property-threatening event and that require staff participation to address, such as search and rescue or fires.
- ✚ Allow goals, workplans, and measures of success to be developed and written in a way that the Tribe determines to be most effective, and defined in a way that the Tribe determines is most appropriate, for its own community.
- ✚ Provide additional cost of living funds to Roadless Villages to at least partially compensate for higher travel and logistics costs,
- ✚ And otherwise actively support all traditional decision making, traditional activities, and traditional language and ways of being in every procedure taken, policy enacted, and relationship forged in carrying out the USEPA mission at the interface of Alaska Native Tribes, peoples, and lands.