

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 20, 2021

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Statement: Ocean Conservancy Supports the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island's PRIME Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *The following statement was issued by Michael LeVine, Senior Arctic Fellow at Ocean Conservancy, in support of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island's announcement of the Pribilof Islands Marine Ecosystem (PRIME) Initiative:*

"Ocean Conservancy fully supports the vision put forward today by the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island. We encourage the federal government to advance this proposal and move forward with the designation of a co-managed marine area around the Pribilof Islands to address shared conservation concerns while ensuring the sustainability of local economies.

"The Pribilof Islands and surrounding waters are one of the most important ecological areas on the planet. The region is home to more than half of the world's population of northern fur seals, provides summer habitat for more than three million seabirds, and supports some of the world's largest and most profitable commercial fisheries. Rapid change, including declines of fur seal, seabird, and fish populations, threaten both the ecosystem and Unangaꔁ on St. Paul and St. George who have been, and remain, inextricably interconnected with the ocean and these marine resources.

"Designation of a National Marine Sanctuary can be an important step toward a Tribal-led, community-centered, comprehensive management system that is inclusive of Indigenous Knowledge. The PRIME Initiative is a model for implementation of the Biden-Harris Administration's America the Beautiful Initiative and directly aligned with Ocean Conservancy's vision of healthy oceans supported by a more just world. We are proud to support this proposal and look forward to working with all partners to make the PRIME Initiative a reality."

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Michael LeVine is available for interviews upon request.

NOTES TO EDITOR

- The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI), the federally recognized tribe for St. Paul Island, made its announcement today. ACSPI's press release and supporting materials are available at www.aleut.com.
- The PRIME Initiative furthers a new approach for one of the world's most important and sensitive marine areas, providing flexibility to build and diversify local and regional economies and advance conservation. As a first step toward achieving that goal, ACSPI has submitted a nomination for designation of a National Marine Sanctuary, which it believes can provide opportunities for co-management, economic resilience, and comprehensive, inclusive approaches to conservation.

Ocean Conservancy is working to protect the ocean from today's greatest global challenges. Together with our partners, we create science-based solutions for a healthy ocean and the wildlife and communities that depend on it.