

**A Resolution of the Alaska State Council on the Arts  
Opposing the Inclusion of Domestic Walrus, Mammoth & Mastodon Ivory In  
African Elephant Ivory Ban Laws in the United States**

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) was created in statute in 1966 by the Alaska State Legislature to act as Alaska's State Arts Agency with a mission to represent, support, and advance the creative endeavors of individuals, organizations, and agencies throughout Alaska; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to stem the poaching of African elephants, various U.S. states have enacted laws banning the sale, use, or possession of all ivory, and additional states are considering such laws; and

WHEREAS, these domestic ivory bans fail to acknowledge the difference between African elephant ivory and legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory used by Alaska Native artists; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) explicitly protects the rights of Alaska Natives to harvest marine mammals and utilize their byproducts in art for sale in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the use of legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory by Alaska Native artists to create tools, handicrafts, jewelry, and artwork is a longstanding cultural tradition that is an actively vital component of Alaska Native culture today throughout Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the passage of state domestic ivory bans negatively impacts Alaska Native artists who depend on the sale of their art as an important cash income source to support their economic autonomy and therefore their families and communities in a cash-limited economy; and

WHEREAS, ASCA supports Alaska Native artists through a variety of efforts including its Traditional Native Arts Program, Alaska Native Arts Senior Advisory Committee, Alaska Native Leadership Program, Alaska's Living Cultural Treasures and Rural Artists Residencies Programs, and other initiatives; and

WHEREAS, ASCA has supported and advocated for protection of Alaska Native artists and their artwork through such initiatives as the Silver Hand program (Alaska Native arts authentication program) and by acting in an advisory capacity to federal agencies such as the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Arts & Crafts Board, U.S. Migratory Bird Protection, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Alaska State Attorney General's Office and Alaska Department of Natural Resources, with respect to issues impacting Alaska Native artists; and

WHEREAS, ASCA has developed strong partnerships with Alaska Native profit and non-profit organizations and tribal entities through the delivery of professional development services, and supports efforts by Alaska Native organizations such as Kawerak, Inc., the Eskimo Walrus Commission, and the Alaska Federation of Natives and other Alaska Native entities who seek to

protect Alaska Native rights regarding the customary and economic use of walrus ivory from these state bans;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that ASCA requests that walrus, mammoth and mastodon ivory be exempted from all current and future domestic ivory ban laws in the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ACSA requests Alaska's Congressional Delegation take any and all steps necessary to ensure that Alaska Native artists' creative opportunities and economic rights to use walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory remain protected under already established state and federal law.



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Benjamin Brown, Chair

**CERTIFICATION:**

I, the undersigned Vice Chair of the Alaska State Council on the Arts hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Passed this 16 day of November 2016.



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Kessler Woodward, Vice Chair