

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release
May 26, 2011

Joint Statement of the President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Bering Strait Region

The President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation:

- Calling for protection of the shared natural and longstanding cultural heritage of Alaska and Chukotka;
- Recognizing the worldwide cultural and natural significance of the Bering Strait region, both as an ancient crossroads and as an area of present-day cooperation between our two countries;
- Noting that the Bering Strait region is important to the economies of both countries;
- Recognizing the many successes of the “Shared Beringian Heritage Program” in better understanding our shared history and sustaining the cultural vitality of the native peoples in the Central Bering Strait Region today;
- Confirming the mutual interest of both countries in deepening cooperation and strengthening ties, particularly in the region of our common boundary in the Bering Strait;
- Noting the important need to protect the rights of native peoples residing in Alaska and Chukotka, and to ensure that residents and native peoples engaged in cultural and traditional activities aimed at providing for their personal needs have continued access to natural resources in accordance with each nation’s laws;
- Conscious of the importance of cooperation to protect nature and natural resources in the Bering Strait region and to apply effective strategies aimed at sustainable development of the Arctic regions of our countries;
- Understanding the significance of unique Arctic ecosystems of Alaska and Chukotka in the Bering Strait region; and
- Conscious of the effects of climate change and other pressures on the common natural and cultural heritage of the Bering Strait region;

Declare an intention to deepen cooperation between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in the cross-boundary Bering Strait region, including the expansion of interaction between the national agencies that are responsible for the specially protected natural territories/areas of both countries in the State of Alaska and the Chukotka Autonomous District, including their commitment to developing a dialogue with native peoples to help determine the specific goals and methods for such cooperation.