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SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

TED FERRY CIVIC CENTER
Ketchikan, Alaska
October 23, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Donald Hernandez, Chair
Cathy Needham
John Smith III
Patricia Phillips
Albert Howard
James Slater
Theodore Sandhofer
Frank Wright
Harvey Kitka
Larry Bemis
Calvin Casipit
Michael Douville
Louie Wagner

Regional Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Ketchikan, Alaska - 10/23/24)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Good morning everybody, Council members. Looks like we have everybody here. So, as DeAnna announced just a little while ago if you weren't in the room. We start off our morning sessions with an opportunity for people to come forward and give comments or testimony on issues related to subsistence that are not necessarily on our agenda. So, this would be non-agenda items. The first order of business today will be the Ketchikan rural determination, but testimony on that will come after we hear our staff analysis. And -- but first we have non-agenda items and I see some blue cards being collected. I think everybody knows by now that if you do want to testify, you should bring up a blue card so we can kinda [sic] manage our time here and know how many people want to testify and I see the first person coming forward. So, go ahead, state your name and get started.

MR. SANDERSON: Good morning. My name is Keenan Sanderson, representing myself this morning. I - a couple of weeks ago learned of when the Federal Subsistence Board is going to be meeting in January, actually, February. And I would like to implore this body to tell the Federal Subsistence Board that it is outright uncalled for, for them to have the Federal Subsistence Board meeting at the same time as the Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting. Both of these meetings are gonna [sic] have severe impacts on a lot of Southeast communities, and to have them at the same time is just disrespectful. I don't know the exact dates off the top of my head, I believe the Board of Fish will be here in Ketchikan. I believe it starts late January, something like January 28th through February 8th. And the Federal Subsistence Board, to my recollection, is in the ballpark of February 3rd through the 8th. I can't be in two places at once as an individual. There's just no way that I can do that and there's and even if I wanted to try to pay attention to both meetings through being, you know, remotely tagged in there. It's just impossible to me -- for any individual to do that. And through conversations with a few staff people, the only thing that I could gather on as the reason why they set the meeting when they did is that they had no idea when the Board of Fisheries were going to be. I call b.s. on

1 that. The Board of Fisheries have had their meeting date
2 set for about a year and a half plus. So, either -- I
3 just, like I have no reason why, as to why they would
4 set the dates there other than it sort of feels
5 intentional to divide our community up into two
6 different places. Now, big entities like tribes and you
7 know, the charter industry, the commercial industry,
8 they can be in two places at once because they have a
9 lot of people to be able to split up and, you know, half
10 of you go to Ketchikan, half of you go to Anchorage. But
11 as an individual myself, I can't, I cannot be in two
12 places at once. And I guess my suggestion would be to
13 implore the Federal Subsistence Board to postpone their
14 meeting until it a date that doesn't either conflict
15 with the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the North Pacific
16 Fisheries Management Council. I don't know how that's
17 going to be possible. But I'm trying to keep my comments
18 respectful, but I -- is beyond infuriating that the
19 Federal Subsistence Board would have the audacity to do
20 that, is not okay. So, I will be writing a letter as an
21 individual to the Federal Subsistence Board demanding
22 that they do that. But I would also encourage the RAC
23 to do that as well. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
26 Sanderson. Any questions, comments from the Council.
27 Cathy.

28
29 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
30 question isn't necessarily to Keenan, but maybe to
31 staff, and that is whether or not like, we can ask the
32 Federal Subsistence Board -- we could bring this issue
33 before them in an annual report item, that's one thing,
34 possibly. Just to make sure future -- it doesn't happen
35 in the future. But for this particular cycle, is this
36 like a publicly noticed meeting that you can't really
37 shift the schedule of it, or is it something that they
38 would even be able to do? I guess that's my real question
39 is, I know we can ask, but if there's -- is there
40 something in regulation that would prevent them from
41 doing it at this stage in the game? Thank you.

42
43 DR. VICKERS: Good morning. This is Brent
44 Vickers from the Office of Subsistence Management. This
45 conflict was brought to our attention earlier. I know
46 it is unfortunate, if not distressful and we're very
47 sorry to Southeast that we had to have this conflict.
48 We -- I did ask if we could move it several months ago
49 when this was brought to our attention. We noted that
50 and unfortunately, we can't. At this meeting date was

1 set amongst the Board members over a year and a half
2 ago, knowing what conflicts at that time they might have,
3 there's a very small window of time that we can have
4 this particular Board meeting, because of time
5 constraints of publishing the Final Rule that allows for
6 the fishery regulations to go into effect before the
7 next fishing season. Which we're always really battling
8 to make that deadline just because of how slow things
9 work once they go to D.C. So, there was a small window
10 of time from the last Council meetings, which end in at
11 the end of October, and that when we're able to do the
12 Board meeting. There was a polling and then a re-polling
13 amongst the Board members several months ago, I think
14 about 4 or 5 months ago to re-confirm that these are the
15 best dates for them all, and it was. And at this point
16 we unfortunately, we just can't move it. I know there's
17 other conflicts of time, and I'm very sad that Southeast
18 is on the losing end of this one. And I wish that there
19 was more we could do. We have discussed trying to --
20 because of this incident, schedule things even further
21 ahead of time. To try to best suit everyone -- all --
22 everyone's interests across the State. So that's all I
23 really have to say. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you for the
26 explanation, Brent. And John.

27
28 MR. SMITH: John Smith. And thank you,
29 Mr. (In Native) respect. And I -- it didn't come to my
30 attention until you shared this. So, my concerns are the
31 same, two of them having them at the same time, but you
32 know, taking assumptions and that we all knew about that,
33 that's kind of odd. So just being respectful, you know,
34 I know you're sitting here and you're representing, and
35 I just see you. But I know there's many more in your
36 community, in your tribe, in your IRA. So, call out for
37 some help and send half of your crew to the other meeting
38 and that and maybe we can't change it, but I encourage
39 if we can and we can make a, you know, why we're sitting
40 here today, if we can make that adjustment, I would be
41 all in on doing that. But if we can't and that doesn't
42 end up that way, reach out to your family and your team
43 and get some of them to go to the other meeting while
44 you're there and then work together. Thank you, happy
45 day.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Response,
48 Keenan.

49
50

1 MR. SANDERSON: Yes, thank you for
2 allowing me to respond to that. With all due respect to
3 the Council member. I may be able to ask some of my
4 family members to be able to attend both these meetings.
5 But as an individual, I feel that it's imperative that
6 I attend both of these meetings myself, not somebody
7 representing me on behalf of myself. I wanna represent
8 myself on both of these meetings. And I'm just gonna say
9 again for the record that this the Federal or not the
10 Federal, the Board of Fisheries meeting has been known
11 for a long time. And we heard that there was a re-polling
12 back in July or sometime this summer to confirm dates.
13 So, I -- and I know for a fact that these dates, like
14 everybody has known these dates during the summer so,
15 either nobody bothered to care to look or this was
16 intentionally done by the Federal Subsistence Board.
17 Which is, I again, believe, uncalled for. The
18 alternative that I would ask the RAC to -- if in fact
19 these dates cannot be changed, is to postpone any of the
20 Southeast proposals that the Federal Subsistence Board
21 to a later date -- to another meeting because, I mean,
22 I won't speak on behalf of anybody else in this room.
23 But again, I feel is imperative that I be at both of
24 these meetings. And for me personally, I have to
25 prioritize the Board of Fisheries meeting. That's plain
26 and simple, because there's so much at stake with king
27 salmon and groundfish, and rockfish, and herring and all
28 these other things that I -- there is so much going on
29 at the meeting that I have to be in Ketchikan for that
30 meeting. And that means I have to sacrifice going to the
31 Federal Subsistence Board. But again, I still feel that
32 it is necessary for me to be able to comment on these
33 proposals in person. As anybody should've had that
34 right. But now that's being taken away from every single
35 one of us who has a vested interest in both of these
36 issues. So, sorry, and I know -- I don't direct this at
37 staff, I direct this towards the Federal Subsistence
38 Board, but a sorry is not gonna cut it for me. It's just
39 plain and simple.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, well. I
42 think we heard you and we were made aware of it some
43 time ago and, you know, tried to do something, but you
44 heard the explanations, and I think we'll just have to
45 try and make sure it doesn't happen in the future. That's
46 all I can say. We've got it listed as a Annual Report
47 topic to bring to their attention. Looks like somebody
48 else from the staff might want to weigh in.
49
50

1 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
2 members of the Council. For the record Katya Wessels
3 acting as deputy director for OSM. We can try to work
4 with the schedule to accommodate when the proposals from
5 Southeast are taken by the Federal Subsistence Board and
6 that -- you know, possibly have a time certain. So, if
7 somebody wants to provide a testimony, they can. All of
8 these meetings, you know, although maybe not everybody
9 can travel there in person. They can call via phone and
10 provide their testimony. That's the best we can offer
11 at the moment. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Was
14 there somebody on the phone that wanted to testify? No.
15 Okay. Next blue card I have is from Heather Bauscher.

16
17 MS. BAUSCHER: Good morning. Thank you,
18 Mr. Chair. My name is Heather Bauscher, for the record.
19 I am the fisheries community engagement specialist for
20 the Sitka Conservation Society in a shared role with
21 Salmon State. I'm coming forward this morning to bring
22 up the Tongass plan assessment. This is an assessment
23 that the Forest Service is currently doing, and it is
24 meant to paint the picture of what is currently happening
25 on the Tongass. It provides a summary of current
26 conditions and trends. It should capture what people
27 currently use, depend on the forest floor, what kinds
28 of stressors are impacting these uses, and what kinds
29 of information the Forest Service should be looking for
30 as they describe the current state of the forest. I'm
31 bringing this up this morning because this is extremely
32 important for subsistence users, because so many of us
33 depend on healthy forest habitat to meet our subsistence
34 needs. Many folks are concerned about how climate
35 change, competition from outside hunters, increases in
36 the tourism, cruise ship pollution, landslides, other
37 weather events, climate change, all of these things are
38 potentially going to be impacting our ability to
39 practice subsistence harvest on the forest in the future
40 and should be considered in the plan. The Tongass has
41 never done an assessment before in this way. We're
42 looking -- we're currently working with a Forest Plan
43 that was written over 27 years ago. It has been amended
44 a little bit along the way, mainly to address timber
45 harvest, either by increasing old growth harvest areas
46 or by providing for a pathway to young growth harvest,
47 which was the driver for the 2016 amendment. But this
48 is our opportunity to shift the plan as a whole and make
49 sure that it incorporates the importance of subsistence,
50 harvest, access, and habitat for our communities. I also

1 really view this as an opportunity to try and put
2 something proactive in place that will be in place for
3 the next 20 years and will hopefully be able to survive
4 whatever the pendulum swings in the politics are that
5 are coming down the line. So, this document is used to
6 frame the entire rationale for why the Tongass Forest
7 plan needs to be revised. It's called The Need for Change
8 and it's important to weigh in at this phase because
9 this will inform what issues are addressed, highlighted,
10 and prioritized through the rest of the revision
11 process. Another thing to point out is the timeline of
12 all of this is going to happen in such a way that this
13 body will not be able to meet in an official capacity
14 before the comment period open and closes, because
15 that's planned for January, February time, and I believe
16 you won't be able to meet until spring. So, trying to
17 bring this up, to get this as an item on the agenda so
18 that there can be a discussion so that the Southeast RAC
19 can weigh in reasonably on this. There's a long history
20 of the Southeast Regional Advisory Committee weighing
21 in on Tongass issues such as roadless former Tongass
22 plan revisions. I think there's two components to this
23 ask, one is identifying all these different needs and
24 the components that should be in the plan in the future,
25 and also recognizing that there is more than 20 years
26 of transcripts on this. There's past inclusion in Annual
27 Reports. I mean, there was even a whole series of
28 subsistence hearings that happened the last time during
29 the Roadless Rule. I don't know if all of those things
30 could be compiled. I believe there was even a paper
31 written on all of those subsistence hearings in that
32 content. So, I think it's a chance to try and get all
33 of those documents together and be proactive and show
34 what should be in the plan moving forward so that we can
35 build something lasting. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
38 Heather. Questions from the Council about the forest
39 plan revision. Patti.

40
41 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
42 Thank you, Heather. Can fisheries information services
43 and wildlife information services be a part of the
44 assessment?

45
46 MS. BAUSCHER: I believe so. I believe
47 any of the information related to priority areas for
48 fish or wildlife, and those uses and needs are good
49 things to highlight for this.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

2
3 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can
4 genetic sampling of salmon by streams be part of the
5 assessment? Because we heard yesterday that while we --
6 the RAC had been a part of research strategizing like
7 25 years, 20 years ago at where -- at a strategy session,
8 it came out that we would like -- and this was
9 stakeholders, we supported genetic sampling of salmon.
10 But yesterday we heard that genetic sampling was
11 lacking. So, I'm just wondering if that could be a part
12 of the assessment. Thank you.

13
14 MS. BAUSCHER: I can't answer that, but
15 maybe somebody else would like to. I don't know. I'm not
16 sure what to do. Maybe that's something to bring up in
17 a discussion later. If this does become an agenda item,
18 perhaps for Thursday.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
21 Anybody else on the Council. Ted.

22
23 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
24 Chair. Ted Sandhofer. Yeah, thanks for coming up,
25 Heather. You know, we have talked about this, had a
26 little workgroup, you know, and we have questions, you
27 know. This is a whole new format, the plan, how is it
28 gonna work, you know if LUDs are going away. I understand
29 and LUDs restrict some activities and allow some others.
30 How are -- how is it gonna work now, you know, are we
31 formatting this over a different forest that has done a
32 plan recently, you know, access, management, climate
33 change. There's a whole bunch of things that you
34 mentioned. And I think that this body needs to be
35 involved early and late. And I
36 would expect that we can do that. So, thanks, Heather,
37 for your testimony.

38
39 MS. BAUSCHER: Yeah.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
42 Ted. Cathy.

43
44 MS. NEEDHAM: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 And thank you, Heather, for bringing this portion of it
46 up. I think the key point that I take away from this is
47 the timing of it all. And I know that the Southeast
48 Regional Advisory Council has been involved very heavily
49 in forest plan revisions in the past, when at least the
50 last one was, which was before my time. And what I hear

1 you say is that this is a good opportunity to provide
2 information early into why -- what the need for the
3 change for the forest plan is. It's unfortunate that we
4 don't meet again so that we have the time to, like,
5 really have a good discussion and get things on the
6 record. But we do have this, like, we talked about it
7 earlier in the meeting. We have this wealth of
8 information within our transcripts and discussions that
9 this Council has had through the last revision, and on
10 things like the Alaska Roadless Rule. And so, I would
11 hope that -- I'm not sure like how much time we'll have
12 to talk about it at our meeting here, but I would hope
13 that we could put together like, I'd love to ask for a
14 formal subcommittee of members from this Council to be
15 able to engage with SCS, the organization that is kind
16 of working on this assessment right now. To engage with
17 them, to actually share past discussions and things that
18 they have done in the past.

19
20 And if it can't be a formal subcommittee
21 that meets between -- that meets with them between now
22 and our next meeting to be able to provide this input
23 on the timeline that it's at. At least a work group, an
24 ability for SCS to tap Council members so that -- and
25 especially some of the long-term Council members that
26 were involved in the last plan revision. So, they kinda
27 understand that process. I think that they have been
28 here, they know in their heads, like they have that
29 institutional knowledge that they can say, well, these
30 things have already been discussed and it would be easier
31 than trying to data mine 20 plus years of transcripts
32 that exist. I mean, those things are word for word,
33 everything that we've talked about. But it's hard to
34 summarize and go and find that information in those
35 transcripts. So having that dialogue or being able to
36 have that dialogue is important. And so, I would ask
37 that maybe staff figure out if we can have a formal
38 subcommittee for this or if it has to be a work group,
39 and then whether or not the Regional Advisory Council
40 can weigh in between this meeting and the next. Thank
41 you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
44 Cathy. Any other questions from the Council? Albert.

45
46 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I gave
47 myself a pep talk this morning to keep everything short
48 for you, so. I think a lot of -- we've come across these
49 situations many times already where what we do and the
50 time we have doesn't necessarily work with the timing

1 of trying to accomplish a forest management plan. So
2 that doesn't give us an opportunity to weigh in. Mr.
3 Sanderson got up and left before I had an opportunity
4 to say I agree with him. Mr. Chairman, there was a good
5 example, yesterday we had a question about the Unuk River
6 water quality, and we wanted to ask you what that was
7 because you had the information. Now imagine him trying
8 to be at both meetings and having important information
9 at both meetings that can't be done. So, going forward,
10 I think we need to take a look at how to accomplish
11 something so, he can attend both meetings or anyone in
12 his situation can do that. I think it's important,
13 sometimes nobody can get his message across better than
14 himself and I think with the forest management plan, I
15 agree with Cathy. We need to figure out how to weigh in
16 on that, because our next meeting, we may not have an
17 opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
20 Albert. Anybody else on the Council, questions?

21
22 MR. SLATER: This is Jim. I just wanted
23 to concur that I agree. It's very important for us to
24 form some interim working group between now and the next
25 meeting to coordinate with SCS and form -- crystallize
26 our thoughts on the new plan. Thanks.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. And we
29 will have a presentation from the Forest Service kind
30 of outlining their process for us later in the meeting
31 on Thursday, tomorrow hopefully. So, and we do have a
32 working group formed to at least, you know, discuss the
33 preliminaries now, which we did this morning for a while,
34 so. Yeah, we'll try and formalize something here before
35 the end of the meeting, get some questions answered and
36 decide how to move forward on this, I think, before we
37 leave this meeting. So, thank you, Heather, for bringing
38 us that information. And if you want to stay up there,
39 because we do have cards from a number of your students
40 and they might want to join you, so.....

41
42 MS. BAUSCHER: Okay. Well thank you. I
43 was hoping to like, have a break between so I could,
44 like, change out the hats, but.....

45
46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: That's fine.

47
48 MS. BAUSCHER: This is fine, we can --
49 I'm already here, so.....

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1 (Indiscernible)

2

3 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ If you're ready.

4

5 MS. BAUSCHER: Yeah, that's fine.

6

7 (Simultaneous speech)

8

9 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Otherwise we
10 could.....

11

12 MS. BAUSCHER: Moving on from the Tongass
13 assessment and thank you all so much for also agreeing.
14 It's important to weigh in and finding a way to work
15 that in. I'm gonna take off that hat and put on my UAS
16 Adjunct Professor hat. And also, thank you all for the
17 continued support of this student program that we have.
18 We've been bringing kids for the last 7 to 10 years now,
19 and it's mostly because you all love the program so much
20 and continue to advocate it for -- advocate for it. And
21 a big thank you to the Forest Service for continuing to
22 support this program, especially Rob and Ashley over
23 there. So, we have this four-week practicum course
24 through the University of Alaska Southeast, for those
25 who aren't aware. This year we have nine students
26 participating from three different high schools. Last
27 year was the first year we started to have remote
28 cohorts. We had a remote cohort from Hoonah. This year
29 we had a remote cohort in Petersburg. We also have
30 students from Pacific High and Mount Edgecumbe High.
31 Within Pacific High, we've also added in like a
32 subsistence class during the day. So those students from
33 Pacific High that are participating in this are also
34 doing some stuff during the day in the classroom as
35 well. So, this has been evolving and part of the class,
36 all the assignments are for the purpose of skill building
37 to learn how to navigate these spaces. So, they have a
38 couple of assignments and you all can help them with
39 some of that. They are required to get ten contacts
40 while they're here. So please talk to them. They're
41 required to do a couple interviews of different folks
42 involved in different things. They might ask you to step
43 aside -- step outside to talk to them for a bit. But the
44 other big important thing that we're gonna do next is,
45 everybody has to prepare an introduction and come up and
46 speak on the mic. So, I'm gonna step aside and allow
47 that to go forward. And you can call their names. Thank
48 you.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
2 Heather. First card I have here is from Naomi Jones.

3
4 MS. JONES: Good morning. Thank you, Mr.
5 Chair. (In Native) Hello, my name is Naomi Jones. I'm a
6 senior at Mount Edgecumbe High School. I'm here
7 representing myself and I am from Tyonek where I not
8 only participate in subsistence fishing, but also
9 commercial fishing. I have grown up subsistence and
10 commercial fishing for salmon since I was little, even
11 though commercial fishing has been something I've done
12 with my family, it isn't as important to me as
13 subsistence fishing is. Is something that brings my
14 family together to not just make memories, but to
15 continue the traditions our elders have passed down
16 before us. It's a time where we continue learning our
17 ways of life, and how the importance of subsistence is
18 to our culture. It's important to my family and me
19 because Tyonek does not have a grocery store. Even in
20 my 18 years of life, I have noticed a change in the
21 salmon runs around my community. We are not getting as
22 much king salmon as we used to, nor are we getting as
23 much coho salmon either. Although my family personally
24 does not fish for sockeye, I also noticed the difference
25 in them as well. King salmon is one of the main salmon
26 my family depends on. We don't put the salmon away in
27 one way, we put it in a way in different ways, so we
28 have a variety to choose from. Is the main subsistence
29 food for many in my community. Coho salmon is a second
30 type of salmon my family puts away for the winter.

31
32 My family and I have noticed the numbers
33 of these fish haven't been strong in recent years. We
34 have not put away any coho salmon even before I attended
35 MEHS. This is something that affects my family as we
36 depend on it for the winter when we can't get our
37 groceries from Anchorage. Just this summer, when
38 commercial fishing, I noticed that we were getting
39 bigger sockeye. This kind of weirded me out since I was
40 used to smaller sizes of sockeye in our fishing district.
41 Although my family does not fish for them on subsistence
42 days, I still realize that they are important source of
43 food for other communities around my region and the
44 State. Going to Mount Edgecumbe made me realize that
45 people all over Alaska are noticing the changes in our
46 environment and made me realize that other youth are
47 noticing these changes as well. I want the Board to help
48 show the youth in Alaska that their voice is important,
49 regardless if they were raised in a village or a city.
50 I want more youth to know that these Regional Advisory

1 Councils would love to hear them say what is important
2 for them and their communities. I just want more youth
3 to know about these processes and how their voices can
4 help make a change in our beautiful State. Thank you for
5 your time and thank you for letting me speak here today.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
8 Naomi. Any questions or comments from the Council?
9 Frank.

10

11 MR. WRIGHT: While you're down in
12 Edgumbe -- before you went to Edgumbe, you -- were
13 you -- you probably worked in subsistence. So, while
14 you're in Edgumbe, do you miss it a lot? You know,
15 because when I'm away from it, I can't wait to get home.
16 So, it's kind of, I know you're there for education, and
17 -- but missing something that you've always lived for
18 is something that, you know, I was gone from Alaska for
19 a while, but I came home because I missed home and I
20 missed having fish on the table. Thank you.

21

22 MS. JONES: Going to Mount Edgumbe
23 makes me realize I do miss it a lot and how much it
24 brings my family together cause [sic] my grandpa's
25 getting older and it's something that I do with him
26 every summer. And to help him makes me really happy that
27 I'm helping, not just feed him but continue our culture.
28 And it's just something that I've always done and like
29 not doing it as often makes me realize that I'm missing
30 out on something, but I know that getting a better
31 education is what my family and my community wants me
32 to do.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. John.

35

36 MR. SMITH: I just wanted say how proud
37 I am of you. It was a great honor sitting with you the
38 other day. On the other hand, I encourage you, you know,
39 in your education to, you know, really focus on the
40 government and learning, taking a lot of government
41 classes, but even an attorney sitting up at the table
42 and speaking, and talking, and even the document you
43 wrote is very powerful and really appreciate you and
44 your strength and standing up there for your family and
45 your community. I know when I first got here, we had a
46 motion on the table of having one of our youth sitting
47 at the table up here. So, I want us to, as a RAC team
48 to, you know, where is that at right now? Because I'm
49 almost at the end of my term. So, it's been three years
50 or so. Maybe the OSM or some of the other team can answer

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1 to that and see where that's at, of having a student
2 like yourself sitting up here representing your family
3 and your community. So, gunalcheésh ho ho, a big claim
4 gunalchéesh, a big thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
7 And maybe one of the staff is gonna come and inform us
8 on the student participation at RAC meetings, it looks
9 like.

10
11 MR. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
12 members of the Council. Katya Wessels. So as -- yeah,
13 you know, in your charter you have the language on for
14 one non-voting youth member that was just added early
15 this year when the charters were signed by the Secretary
16 of the Interior. We are working internally on the process
17 on how to proceed with these appointments. Because these
18 members, though they're non-voting, they still will have
19 to be appointed by the Secretary. So, we need to have a
20 process, how we're going to do it. The -- our work has
21 slowed down because we were moved from the Fish and
22 Wildlife -- administratively moved, into the Office of
23 the Policy Management and Budget so, we were not able
24 to advance our work developing these procedures as
25 quickly as we hoped to do that. We're hoping that by the
26 winter of 2025, we are going to have a solid plan. That
27 doesn't mean that we cannot start the conversations with
28 younger people who want to apply to serve on the
29 Councils. It's most likely going to be something like a
30 letter of interest. It's not going to be an application
31 that the young people will need to fill out, they -- but
32 we don't know yet how we're going to process these
33 applications. And, you know, Federal government is all
34 about processes, unfortunately. So, that's where we're
35 at. You have any other questions?

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: John.

38
39 MR. SMITH: Yeah, just an encouragement
40 on your process. I would hope that you would keep it the
41 same as every one of us at the table had to apply for
42 it and go through those motions. I really encourage that
43 the teachers they teaches [sic] the kids the process of
44 how to sit up here as an adult, but really appreciate
45 that. And thank you, thank you, thank you.

46
47 MR. WESSELS: You welcome. I'm just
48 saying we wanted to -- we want to make it simpler because
49 as you know, all of you apply to serve in the Council.
50 You know how complex this process is. And you apply and,

1 you know, 16 months later you find out if you're
2 appointed or not, which is, you know, pretty lengthy.
3 And, you know, sometimes people even forget that they
4 applied. Then all of a sudden, they get an appointment
5 letter. So, we want to make the process for Council
6 members simpler, too. That's the other process we're
7 working on because we want to encourage more
8 participation. And Southeast -- I was going to talk about
9 that later, but Southeast is always great. There are a
10 lot of people who are interested in applying, and you're
11 very dedicated and you work late into the evenings so -
12 - but we still want to make it easier for more people
13 who are interested to apply to serve on the Council as
14 a voting member or as a young non-voting member to whom
15 the knowledge can be passed. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
18 Katya. Let's let Naomi sit down back and bring up
19 another. For Katya? One more for Naomi? Okay.

20
21 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
22 Naomi. So, I really am glad you're involved in this
23 program that, you know, makes you aware of the processes
24 of the Regional Advisory Council. I'm curious to know,
25 are you familiar with ANILCA? Is there an accompanying
26 like lesson on ANILCA Title 8, are you familiar with
27 ANILCA Title 8?

28
29 MS. JONES: I've -- in the class it's
30 gone over briefly, but not exactly in depth. So, I was
31 gonna ask about that later.

32
33 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Naomi. I would
34 share with you and your classmates that -- so
35 Representative Udall and Representative Young came to
36 Pelican, and Representative Udall said to our community
37 that we as a community needed to learn ANILCA cause it
38 was gonna impact our life substantially. So, I mean,
39 here we are 50 years later in the ANILCA and we're still
40 modifying it for the good of subsistence. So, thank you
41 for your participation and your young involvement, will
42 bring that base of knowledge you need. So, thank you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
45 We have eight more students that wanna come forward. So
46 maybe, you know, we can space out the questions a little
47 bit, give somebody else a chance here. Can we do that?
48 Can I call up Thomas Smith.

49
50 MS. JONES: Thank you.

1

2 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (In
3 Native) Hi, everyone, my name is Thomas Smith, and I'm
4 a Yup'ik and Athabascan -- I'm Yu'pik and Athabascan.
5 Born in Anchorage, raised in Iliamna and Kenai. I'm
6 currently a second year senior from Mount Edgecumbe High
7 School living in Sitka. I just wanted to come up here
8 and give a brief introduction, I will be doing my
9 testimony later. I just wanted to say thank you all for
10 holding this and letting us be a part of this. It's very
11 important to see this. I'm planning on applying for one
12 of the Board positions in -- maybe next year, and I
13 wanted to see what you guys do and how you guys do it.
14 So, thank you very much for inviting us and showing us
15 hospitality and welcoming us with open arms. Qu yana.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
18 Thomas. And just want to say you did a excellent job on
19 the testimony yesterday on the Sitka hearing. I want to
20 make note of that as well.

21

22 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any questions
25 for Thomas? Okay, thank you. Maybe we'll hear from you
26 again. How about Qiana Fletcher?

27

28 MS. FLETCHER: Hi, my name is Qiana
29 Fletcher. I am from Sitka, a child of the (In Native)
30 And I'm representing myself today. First, I'd like to
31 thank everyone for the actions taken to support our needs
32 and everything in Alaska. I've been a part of subsistence
33 before I can even remember. My family's -- it's been a
34 part of my family's lives for so long I wouldn't even
35 know what to do if we didn't. Being able to have access
36 to the resources that supports our long-lived lifestyle
37 is absolutely refreshing. I wanna be able to create that
38 life for my future family, my future kids, like that's
39 something I would need to implement in their life. It
40 created me as who I am today and if it was taken away,
41 I wouldn't know how to live. That's the base of my life
42 and many Alaskans. I -- yeah, I really wouldn't know
43 what to do. It's also being able to support the elders
44 and other family and friends who can't do it for
45 themselves. They get to continue their way of life, their
46 culture, the practices that surround that. And within
47 that, back in Sitka, we have a program, the Sitka Native
48 Educational Program, that helped many kids in Sitka
49 especially for -- I mean, they were very inclusive. It
50 wasn't just for the Native kids there. It was for anyone

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1 who needed information on the culture, the lifestyle,
2 how to live in Alaska, how to support yourselves in
3 Alaska, how to respect the culture. It was -- it
4 influenced a big part of not just me, but other people
5 here who came with us. And I feel having protection over
6 our ways of life and our ways of getting food is
7 absolutely astounding. I am really thankful for everyone
8 here who keeps the culture -- oh, I'm sorry about that
9 -- keeps the culture alive and brings it together for
10 future generations.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Excuse me. Any
13 questions for Qiana? Frank, go ahead.

14
15 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
16 It's not a question, it's just a comment. One of the
17 things that you said that really stuck in my mind was
18 that you want to learn the culture, to support the
19 community. You know, the Tlingit people, the Haida,
20 Tsimshian would not have existed if they didn't work
21 with each other or support each other. And that's what
22 you made a comment on. And I think that even having that
23 thought in your head is helping each other, you know,
24 that's wooch.een, you know, helping each other.
25 Gunalchéesh.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
28 Frank. Anybody else on the Council? Comment, question?
29 Mike.

30
31 MR. DOUVILLE: I don't have a comment or
32 question, but I would request that you get close to the
33 mic so they can really hear what they're saying. I'm
34 having to struggle and I really want to hear what you
35 have to say. And we enjoy having you here and listening.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
38 Anybody else? Thank you, Qiana.

39
40 MS. FLETCHER: Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: How about
43 Kaetlyn Skulta?

44
45 MS. SKULTKA: Hello. My name is Kaetlyn
46 Skultka. I'm from Sitka, Alaska, born and raised. I'm
47 representing myself today. I am Haida and have been --
48 and have grown up doing every culture camp and fish camp
49 Sitka has to offer. Which has molded me into who I am
50 today. For the rich -- from the rich cultural

1 experiences, environment, education to the community,
2 family, friends, and mentors all have genuinely
3 influenced my beliefs, behaviors, and practices. I would
4 like to start by thanking Heather and all our lovely
5 chaperones for getting us here, believing in us, and
6 pushing us to use our voices to defend what we love, and
7 the Regional Advisory Council for allowing us the
8 opportunity to be heard. My family and I enjoy all the
9 subsistence activities Sitka provides. These practices
10 are crucial for our cultural heritage, sustainability,
11 food security, and community health. Continuing these
12 practices preserve and ensures future generations
13 benefit from them. Concerns from, or for the future of
14 resources include overfishing, climate change, habitat
15 destruction, and pollution. These factors could deplete
16 essential practices impacting both environment and our
17 community's way of life. That being said, I feel hesitant
18 about bringing children into the world if they wouldn't
19 be able to uphold our traditions and methods. But having
20 this opportunity gives me hope that there are people
21 advocating and defending our way of life. This has all
22 been inspiring and I hope to help keep our subsistence
23 alive. Thank you for your time.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Excuse me, any
26 questions or comments for Kaetlyn? Albert.

27
28 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
29 could be answered by any of the students. What are your
30 thoughts on the Ketchikan's petition for rural
31 designation and how does that impact your life?

32
33 MS. SKULTKA: I don't exactly know how
34 to answer that, because I'm not too sure how it would
35 impact Sitka or like surrounding communities, but --
36 yeah, I don't really know. I'm not too sure.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

39
40 MS. BAUSCHER: That was a great response.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

43
44 MS. BAUSCHER: And there's another
45 student that is interested in giving testimony on that
46 later. So, you'll hear from Thomas weighing in. But you
47 did a great job answering that question, Kaetlyn.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Follow up,
50 Albert.

1

2 MR. HOWARD: Yeah. Mr. Chair, there's
3 just a method to my madness sometimes. Title 8 of ANILCA
4 is -- you can Google it and everything you need to know
5 is -- so I'm looking at my phone, that's what I'm doing.
6 I'd encourage you to take a look at how that would impact
7 your life if that designation was allowed, because
8 that's what I'm doing this morning. How is this gonna
9 impact my life? And that's part of why we sit here, is
10 to protect our way -- not only protect our way of life,
11 but also to improve it. So, thank you, Mr. Chair. Try
12 to make my dialogue useful, so.....

13

14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
15 Albert. Harvey, did you have your hand up?

16

17 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just
18 have a comment. I really appreciate you young people
19 coming forward and expressing some things. I just want
20 to make sure that this continues. I realize that at your
21 age, you're still learning a lot of different things,
22 and the learning process will go on forever. We learn
23 by doing as much as we can. I know one of the hardest
24 things is to get up in front of people like us. But
25 we're just people. Just gotta remember that and go ahead
26 and talk what you talk. Your opinion matters a great
27 deal to what we hear. Thank you very much.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
30 Harvey. Anybody else? Larry.

31

32 MR. BEMIS: I'd like to comment on all
33 the students that are spoke and the ones coming up that
34 it takes a lot to get up in front and have the
35 information and bring from where your community is or
36 your thoughts or whatever. The most important thing is
37 that as you go on, you should share with others and get
38 others to see where you're at and kinda encourage them,
39 because the few of you that are out there seeing this
40 and doing this, a lot of other people really don't take
41 -- maybe take the interest or see your views. And I
42 think that you should -- each one of the individuals,
43 the students should share with others to encourage them
44 to take a look at their communities to find the things
45 that they can do and bring up the things that most
46 interest them. This is not a battle, this is not
47 political, this is our way of life and we try to hold
48 on to it. And I'm thankful to see you guys here today.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Larry. Thank you, Kaetlyn. And how about Kye Vaughn, Vaughn, handwriting's a little sketchy here, Siskel maybe? Kai Vaughn Siskel, correct me when you come up.

MR. JESKE: Hello. My name is Kye Vaughn-Jeske. I am from Sitka, Alaska, the son of Jesse Jeski and Sheena Vaughn. And I'm representing myself today. Thank you for the Board for letting me speak. First, I would like to say that I've grown up around subsistence use ever since I could remember. I've always loved catching a fish with my parents, then having a great family dinner or going hunting for deer. And doing all this is nice because when you get back home after a good hunt, everyone's happy and has a smile on their face. I want to say -- I want this to stay the same for the next generation so, my kid can walk through the door with the deer in his hand and put a smile on my face. Thank you for your time. Gunalchéesh.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Kye. Any questions or comments for Kye?

(No comment)

Okay, thank you. And now we have Oliver Petersen.

MR. PETERSEN: Thank you, Chairman. My name is Oliver Petersen. I am representing myself today. I am a senior at Petersburg High School and I am a (indiscernible). I also grew up subsistence fishing with my grandparents and a lot of my friends. My job relies on the salmon, and I want to be here to learn about the different ways that I can be involved in the process of preserving the resources in Alaska that so many people rely on for basic resources like food or money. I want my kids and grandkids to be able to enjoy these resources for as long as possible. I have a testimony I will later share with you -- share with the Board regarding the rural and non-rural status of Ketchikan. Thank you for your time and consideration and allowing the students to share their values and views with this Board.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Oliver. Questions or comments for Oliver? Frank.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just your comment about wanting to wanting to be able to

1 share all this with your kids and your grandkids and --
2 is something that you could come back later in your life
3 and come join this Board, because what we -- is exactly
4 what we do, is we try to protect the resources that we
5 have, and we see -- many of us, all of us -- probably
6 all of us here see what's going on in this world. So,
7 we need to have people like you that wanna preserve
8 everything we have. And it's what we got, what we got
9 is we have. Gunalchéesh.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
12 Frank. Mike.

13
14 MR. DOUVILLE: We don't look friendly,
15 but we are and we really appreciate listening to you.
16 And I can see that you're looking down the road, future
17 generations. You wanna be able to do this, for your kids
18 to do this. And that is our goal as well and it's nice
19 to hear that. But this is our goal is, to keep
20 subsistence use alive and healthy for future
21 generations.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
24 Albert.

25
26 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Part
27 of this process is you have to learn and I've learned
28 this from Patti and Cathy, and everyone around the table
29 is, you have to learn -- not only do you have to learn
30 Title 8, you have to learn State and Federal law. And
31 that's how you protect your way of life. If you can't
32 do it through this process, you do it through the State
33 or Federal process. But don't ever let them divide your
34 group that you're here with that seems to be common
35 practice by some organizations, is to divide you so that
36 you accomplish nothing.

37
38 (Distortion)

39
40 I'm sitting here with a 12th grade
41 education, but I read State law and Federal law, and
42 also been encouraged by Cathy and Patty to constantly
43 read Title 8. And that gives you the direction on how
44 to protect your way of life or to move on to make things
45 better for your community. I'd encourage you to take a
46 look at how this rural designation is gonna affect Sitka,
47 and maybe that could be their way of graduating from
48 your courses, figuring out how that's gonna impact your
49 way of life. Cause it is going to, everything I've read
50 about, it's gonna impact all the way up to Cook Inlet

1 and all over Alaska. It's not just Southeast Alaska. So,
2 I'd encourage you to do that. And the way you're living
3 is how I got here. I never imagined I'd be sitting here,
4 but my way of life put me here. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
7 Albert. Anybody else? John.

8
9 MR. SMITH: (In Native) me too. You know,
10 I got 12 kids, two of them are girls, and I have 15
11 grandchildren and that's what put me on the table. My
12 elders were always telling me, if you're part of your
13 culture and I'm (In Native) of the Eagle Nest people.
14 So, I have a lot of people that I represent. So, I
15 encourage you to know, how you came up to the table and
16 said, you know, I represent myself, and I hope that one
17 day that when you sit up at the table, soon, later down
18 in your life, that you're saying, I'm here representing
19 my people, and my clan, and my family, my people, my
20 community. So gunalchéesh for all of you children and
21 the young man that came up before you about, you know,
22 him sharing about him growing up, but also that he's in
23 it because his kids, he's thinking about his future and
24 he doesn't even have children yet. But he's thinking
25 about that. And that's really, super powerful.
26 Gunalchéesh ho ho.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
29 So, thank you, Oliver. And we'll look forward to hearing
30 your comments on the rural determination. Good job. And
31 the last card is from Caleb, it's either Butovsky or
32 Lutomski. Got to correct me on names, handwritings
33 sometimes hard for me to read.

34
35 MR: LUTOMSKI: Morning, everybody. My
36 name is Caleb Lutomski. I'm here from Petersburg. I'm a
37 senior at Petersburg High School and I'm here
38 representing myself. I'm a subsistence hunter and
39 fisherman, as well as a commercial fisherman and permit
40 holder for the last three years. And I'm just here to
41 learn about the laws and regulations and how it's all
42 created and carried out. And just to introduce myself,
43 I've personally been hunting and fishing for as long as
44 I could remember, and I firmly believe that hunting and
45 fishing for your food, rather than just buying it off
46 the shelf is infinitely more healthy for you. Not just
47 consuming the food, but the connection that you build
48 with your land and your waters that you fish. Yeah, I
49 believe it's much better for you than just going and
50 picking out a piece of meat on the shelf and, you know,

1 connecting with the animal and processing it and
2 everything. I think that's really important, that we
3 sustain that for future generations. As far as concerns
4 go, I would be worried about the future of salmon runs
5 in Southeast Alaska, as the decline in recent years has
6 been prevalent. And I would just like to keep that a
7 priority on the Board so we can have a successful fishing
8 industry. And because personally, I would like to
9 continue my career in commercial fishing and possibly
10 buy a boat and set up in the next few years. So, in
11 addition, I was lucky enough to be part of a work group
12 this morning and last night. And I would like to mention
13 for the future land management plan to -- I'd like to
14 see access to timber for personal use continued for
15 residents in southeast Alaska and I don't have much to
16 say, but thank you guys.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Thank you,
19 Caleb. Very well stated. Ted, you have a comment,
20 question?

21
22 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Thank you, Chair.
23 Ted Sandhofer. Hey Caleb, thanks for being here. Good
24 to see you again. And this is pointed not towards just
25 you, but to all of the students, you know, I just want
26 to thank you all for being here, you know, you are our
27 future leaders. I mean, the maturity that you show --I
28 think of myself back when I was your age and, boy, you
29 guys are just bounds ahead of me, you know. And although
30 you just are saying you represent yourself, your words
31 are representing your family, your communities, and
32 that's very important. You should be very proud of
33 yourself. I mean, this is great stuff and with young
34 people like you, the future is bright, and I really
35 appreciate that. That's all I have to say. Thanks.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
38 Cathy.

39
40 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
41 just wanted to thank you for your comments, and I really
42 appreciate you sharing like, your personal career goals
43 and like what you're interested in doing. And one thing
44 I didn't understand when I first got on this Council,
45 you know, I said I would be here to represent subsistence
46 users. And then I looked around and I was like, there's
47 a lot of commercial fishermen on our Council. And how
48 do you -- how do we balance that? And they're all here
49 to represent subsistence users and as being commercial
50 fishermen, they bring even that additional breadth of

1 knowledge. And so, as you -- you know, I was listening
2 to your testimony and I was thinking, oh, you know,
3 that, you should know that there's not a conflict between
4 those things. And in fact, it probably -- in a lot of
5 respect, has enhanced a lot of perspective of the work
6 that we do and have been doing over time. And so, I
7 wanted to say that to you specifically. But then for all
8 of the students. Another thing that struck me while I
9 was sitting here was the young woman. I won't put it --
10 the name out there cause I don't wanna put anybody on
11 the spot. But she was asked a question and she thought
12 about it. You could see she was really thinking about
13 the answer, and then she was not afraid to say, I don't
14 know. And I think it's important to say that it's okay
15 to say that you don't know. We don't all have the
16 answers. I don't have the answers sitting up here lot
17 of times when people ask me questions and you'll see,
18 sometimes we ramble because we're like, still thinking
19 about the question and what our answer is. And we might
20 not ever quite get to the thing, but it's okay to say I
21 don't know. And I encourage you that if you're in a
22 situation where someone asks you a question, you do say,
23 I don't know. And if you're dedicated to it, then what
24 you probably would do subsequently is maybe find out and
25 be able to go back and approach that person one on one
26 and say, you know, I was thinking about your question
27 and this is probably, you know what I thought, now that
28 I've had time to think about it with more information.
29 So, I appreciate all the students and their testimony
30 and coming up. And those would be like sort of a key
31 advice to you know, whatever your future plans are,
32 understand that they don't -- it doesn't have to conflict
33 with the work that you could do on an important Council
34 like this. And then it's okay to say, I don't know. It's
35 a perfectly acceptable answer. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
38 Cathy. Jim.

39
40 MR. SLATER: Hi, Caleb and the rest of
41 the students just wanted to say thank you for bringing
42 that testimony. And also, a special thank you to Heather
43 for bringing them here. Just hearing your dedication and
44 insight and energy reinforces the meaning of why we're
45 all here. And it really means a lot for what we're doing
46 to see people who are appreciating the work and who are
47 willing to carry it forward. Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jim.
50 Frank, did you have your hand up? Yeah.

1

2 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Being
3 up in front of people like us, I look real mean. I
4 remember when I was in college, I was doing -- taking a
5 speech class. Man, you talk about shaking all over the
6 place, but you know that for you to be here to do this.
7 There's a reason why you're here. When you were in
8 school, you were thinking about fishing, taking care of
9 your family, everything. You wouldn't be here if you
10 didn't think about those things. You'd be somewhere
11 else. Thinking about what this is -- what is going on
12 in this world. You're saying I need to do something, and
13 here you are. You're speaking up about things that are
14 happening around here. You -- you're worried about
15 fishing? I always worry about fishing. But for you to
16 be here, you have to be proud of yourself. Proud of who
17 you're representing. I know you say you're here for
18 yourself, but you're not. You're here for everything you
19 do. Everything -- all the people you know. Every -- all
20 the people that you worry about. So, being here is a big
21 thing. We all look at you, this Council looks at you and
22 says, yep, these young people are worried about what's
23 going on in this world. Gunalchéesh for being here.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
26 Frank. And John.

27

28 MR. SMITH: I just want to say I can hear
29 you. I just want to encourage Heather to hook up and
30 help you, support you and what you're talking about
31 harvesting timber, you know, for free use. University
32 of Fairbanks is pushing a -- being able to grade wood
33 and whatnot so communities can actually build their
34 houses without any conflict. And even the Forest Service
35 they're sitting in here, and maybe they can support you.
36 And understanding that each one of us, if we're a
37 community member, you said Petersburg, right? Yeah.
38 Petersburg that, you know, depending, you know, like I
39 was from Hoonah. And you can get 10,000 board feet a
40 year that you can go out and harvest, you know, just
41 encouraging that piece. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
44 Anybody else? Okay, Harvey.

45

46 MR. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Caleb,
47 I really appreciate your talk. I know it seemed like you
48 -- at the time, you just talking for the family, but
49 like a lot of us think that way at the at that age. But
50 as time goes on, we realize that we're looking at

1 everybody around us, not just us. I really appreciate
2 the idea of you wanting to make sure that the salmon
3 never go away. It's very important. I know if you follow
4 one train of thought, that leads to more. And thank you
5 very much for your testimony.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
8 Harvey and any other Council members? Patti.

9
10 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
11 as a RAC member, I really need to hear what you and your
12 classmates have to say. It helps form my opinions on
13 what we're facing before the RAC. And also, you know,
14 having that -- you sat in on, you know, the -- our Board
15 of Fish subcommittee last night and you sat there quietly
16 and listened. And that's a good attribute to have, is
17 to listen to other points of view, although you may not
18 agree with it. And but it will help you form your opinion
19 as you move forward. And there is lot of commercial
20 fishermen at this table. I have four sons. They're out
21 commercial fishing right now, but they also subsistence
22 fish and hunt. So, it's a combination that is a way of
23 life here in Southeast Alaska. So, thank you to you,
24 Caleb, and to all the other students for and Heather,
25 for coming forward and making your presentations to us.
26 Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
29 Patti. Anybody else? Okay. Thanks, Caleb. Thanks, all
30 the students. Excellent job. We have one more? Okay. Oh,
31 okay. This card might have gotten mixed in with some
32 others, but would that be Laurel? Yes. Okay. Sorry,
33 Laurel. It's like Laurel Breeze Smithers. Correct? Go
34 ahead.

35
36 MS. SMATHERS: Hello. My name is Laurel
37 Breeze Smathers. I am from Sitka, Alaska, and I go to
38 Pacific High School. And my family has been using
39 subsistence for as long as I could remember. My grandpa
40 moved to Port Alexander after the Vietnam War and bought
41 property and was able to use natural resources to build
42 a cabin to provide for his families, and later with
43 bought the Huntress boat and started commercial fishing.
44 Even my mom and aunties were raised commercial fishing
45 and how they use the natural resources. And after we
46 moved to Sitka, we still use subsistence like we still
47 fish and berry picking.

48
49 (Pause)

1

2 My parents met in Port Armstrong at a
3 fishing hatchery.

4

5

(Pause)

6

7

8 Me and my mother have been using
9 subsistence resources like berries since I could walk,
10 we would go out and pick berries and turn them into jams
11 and jellies and syrup and give them out to families and
12 friends. These are some of the many reasons why I wish
13 to keep subsistence open to everybody for as long as we
14 can. Thank you for letting me talk.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
Laurel. And I know Port Alexander is a community very
similar to where I live in Point Baker. And we have a -
- we know a lot of people, you know, that we all fish
together. And I probably know that maybe some of your
relatives there. So, I can certainly relate to, you know,
your experiences there. Port Alexander to where I live.
So, thank you very much. Any other Council members
questions or comments? Jim.

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MR. SLATER: I just want to say thanks
for coming up. And I know sometimes it can be really
intimidating here. You did a great job.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jim.
John.

MR. SMITH: In our culture (In Native)
be of good courage. It doesn't mean we're not afraid or
we're not nervous. And I like the way you still got up
there and you still got your words out, and it means a
lot what you said. There was a lot of connection to your
family, and, you know, and your spirit. And thank you
for that, gunalchéesh.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
Anybody else? Okay. Thank you, Laurel. Good job.

MS. BAUSCHER: I just wanted to say one
last thank you to the Southeast Regional Advisory
Council for your continued support for this program and
to the Forest Service for continuing to funding this and
make this possible. All the students also will be picking
an issue that they have to follow for their final paper.
So, a few of them may talk about some of the topics you
suggested, Albert, but you also see a few of them

1 speaking up later. This is the first year that they've
2 gotten excited themselves about actually giving
3 testimony on specific agenda items beyond just the
4 introduction. So, thank you all for your support in this
5 program and continuing to make this possible.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
8 Heather. And I do have one more card and I don't think
9 it's a student, but George NIX.

10
11 MR. NIX: Good morning. As just a
12 clarification on the word subsistence and the definition
13 of it. We've been throwing it around a lot, and with my
14 short amount of time that I've spent on Council with the
15 Organized Village of Kasaan, I've learned that verbiage
16 is really important. And what we are holding ourselves
17 to is, is these definitions of these words. So, I'll
18 pull it up. But the definition of subsistence is the
19 minimal resources that is necessary for survival.
20 Customary and traditional harvest seems a lot more
21 appropriate. We've never been bare minimum. We were
22 always -- we knew where the food was. We knew how to get
23 it. And that's something that I really am passionate
24 about. I don't like the word subsistence at all because
25 we're not here to survive, we're here to thrive. And
26 it's just really wanted to put that out there. So, thank
27 you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
30 George. I don't know, there might be some comments on
31 that because it's something that we've, you know, talked
32 about amongst the Council members as well. So, Albert,
33 did you have your hand up? Yeah.

34
35 MR. HOWARD: Not sure if I'm the only one
36 that gets that look, Mr. Chair. But I'm trying not to
37 comment every time, but I actually agree with you. We
38 had this conversation yesterday, and the conclusion I
39 came up with yesterday at dinner time about that word
40 and I agree with you. I don't -- I don't care for it
41 either. But someone saw us the way we manage resources
42 back, you know, I spoke about this yesterday where my
43 grandfather would have been at the river and somebody
44 came and told him he couldn't do it anymore. Well,
45 someone saw him taking what he needed and didn't take
46 any more than that. So, that's in my mind. That's where,
47 you know, someone came up with the idea where subsistence
48 use, I looked up the definition as well, and I don't
49 agree with it. And I agree with your thought process. I
50 think part of that was they didn't know how to regulate

1 us because it was all ours. If you read William Paul's
2 speech to AFN in 1978, he said it was all of ours, and
3 I'd encourage the students to read that as well. If you
4 look at William Paul's speech to AFN, he talks about
5 this process before it even happened. It was all of ours
6 and the way they took it was to call it subsistence
7 users and put us into that user group so they could
8 regulate us. If they would have gone with your
9 terminology and your thought process, then we would --
10 it would be hard to regulate us because it was all of
11 ours. And those words would say that. So, thank you, Mr.
12 Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
15 Albert. John.

16
17 MR. SMITH: I just going to say it in
18 Tlingit (In Native) Our food is our way of life. So, I
19 really appreciate, and I do believe, and I think we had
20 that talk yesterday and this morning about that.
21 Appreciate you coming up and sharing that. Thank you. I
22 actually sent this document. It's made by the Forest
23 Service and hoping that we can send that to all the --
24 our community here, our SEARAC team to look at. I know
25 we were looking at that to find some of our history and
26 information to add to our salmon proposals and how
27 important it is to the community. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
30 Cal, go ahead.

31
32 MR. CASIPIT: You know, I've heard --
33 I've heard this issue of definition of subsistence for
34 many, many years since I -- since I came and came to the
35 Forest Service in 1980, retired -- folks know I retired
36 a few years ago. But as far as the definition of
37 subsistence, you know, like we operate under ANILCA
38 Title 8. And ANILCA Title 8 does define subsistence,
39 it's right in the law at section 801. And if you would
40 allow me, I would like to read that into the record so
41 folks know. So -- I'm sorry it's 803 -- definitions,
42 section 803. As used in this act, the term subsistence
43 uses means the customary and traditional uses of by rural
44 Alaska residents of wild renewable resources for direct
45 personal and family consumption food, shelter, fuel,
46 clothing, tools, transportation for the making of
47 selling of handicraft articles out of non-edible
48 byproducts of fish and wildlife resources taken for
49 personal or family consumption, for barter or sharing,
50 or for personal or family consumption, and for the

1 customary trade -- and for purposes of customary trade.
2 So, that's the -- that is the definition of subsistence
3 that appears in ANILCA. And that's the definition that
4 we're supposed to operate under. So, that's kind of felt
5 I should read that. Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
8 Cal. Harvey.

9

10 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Had
11 discussions about this word that they used for a long
12 time. I realize we know what it means. This group but
13 where -- when it goes back to Washington, D.C. for some
14 of the things that that are there, those people have no
15 idea what subsistence means. They look at the definition
16 a little different than we do. So, I recommended at one
17 time that they put it in big, bold letters what we looked
18 at it as what it meant. But I really appreciate your
19 talk. Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
22 Harvey. Albert.

23

24 MR. HOWARD: Mr. Chair, the definition
25 in ANILCA is different than what the State sees. I mean,
26 if you go through the whole process, the state of Alaska,
27 they manage the system and they regulate it, and they
28 don't -- they don't recognize subsistence and it's been
29 documented that they don't agree with it because it gives
30 the user group a special designation to the resource.
31 And what that means in the State constitution, you're -
32 - all residents have equal access and equal opportunity,
33 and you can't limit that to any State resource. So,
34 yeah, the definitions in ANILCA, but it's totally
35 different when you have to deal with the State and the
36 State process. It's interesting, I've heard our elders
37 at home say I'm full-blooded Tlingit we walk in two
38 worlds, and I've done that in the army. You walk in our
39 world as Natives, and then you walk in the other world,
40 and you have to learn how to walk in both. Sitting at
41 this table, we're in three worlds. You've got the Federal
42 government, you've got our process, and then you've got
43 the State process. So, whether or not ANILCA says their
44 definition of subsistence is not necessarily recognized
45 by the State that way. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
48 Albert. Anybody else? Harvey, I think Harvey kind of hit
49 the nail on the head there. You know, for what we do
50 here, you know, in this process, we have a definition

1 of subsistence. But when we talk about, you know, the -
2 - what we do here, and we use the word subsistence
3 outside of this process, people have a whole different
4 understanding of, you know, they think in terms of the
5 definition that you read us. And I think we have to be
6 mindful that, you know, I try and be mindful of this as
7 well when I'm talking to other people or, you know, if
8 you're giving an interview or something to use a term,
9 you know, traditional harvest instead of subsistence,
10 because it does portray the reality of, you know, the
11 way of life better than that term to other people. So,
12 yeah. So, thanks for Cal for, you know, pointing out the
13 definition that we operate under. And thank you for
14 pointing out how other people view that definition.
15 Patti.

16
17 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
18 Thank you for coming forward. We as a Southeast Regional
19 Advisory Council, one of our charges is to be a forum
20 for the expression of opinions. And thank you for coming
21 forward and sharing that opinion. We are to hear all the
22 opinions that come before us, and it's important for us
23 to hear everybody's point of view. Though we do have our
24 own opinions, we base those decisions on the voices that
25 come before us and the materials that we need, read and
26 the analysis that come from our -- from the staff at
27 Office of Assistance Management. But thank you for
28 coming forward.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
31 George.

32
33 MR. NIX: Ho ho gunalschéesh.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And I have no
36 more blue cards, but we do have -- oh, wait a minute.
37 They keep coming forward here. One more. I guess it's
38 from the Douglas Indian Association. Tribal entity with
39 a -- I don't have a name. Are they on the telephone
40 or.....?

41
42 MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, they have written
43 a comment in chat that they've asked me to read into the
44 record.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Oh, okay. Go
47 ahead.

48
49 MS. PERRY: Again, this is a chat from
50 our Teams platform on the meeting from Douglas Indian

1 Association. And it reads Douglas Indian Associations
2 tribal territory includes the Taku River. The tribal
3 fishermen are extremely concerned about the declining
4 salmon runs on the Taku River. Many residents who live
5 on the Taku River are overfishing, especially the king
6 salmon. The tribe has discovered many maps on the Taku
7 River that show reservation land on the Taku River. The
8 tribe would like to get that land returned back to the
9 tribe and re-establish Tlingit fishing camps for tribal
10 residents in Juneau. That's the end of the comment. Thank
11 you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
14 DeAnna. And I guess I'll assume there's nobody else on
15 the phone then, that would like to give a public comment
16 at this time.

17
18 MS. PERRY: And for those folks on the
19 phone, if you could press star six and state your name.
20 If you are participating in the Team's platform, you
21 have a raise hand feature at the top of your screen that
22 will let us know that you'd like to speak, and we can
23 put you in the queue. Again, star six to unmute
24 yourselves on the telephone, and star five if you're
25 participating on Teams.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Just stand by a
28 second here. I'm not hearing anybody. But we do have one
29 more person in the room who needs no blue card to come
30 forward and address the Council, and that would be our
31 regional forester, Chad VanOrmer. I see you came in.
32 Would you like to take an opportunity to have a few
33 words with the Council?

34
35 MR. VANORMER: Sure. Thank you, Mr.
36 Chair. Yeah. For the record, I'm Chad VanOrmer. I serve
37 as the regional forester here for the Forest Service in
38 Alaska and also a member of the Federal Subsistence
39 Board. I'm happy to be here today. I wanted to come down
40 and attend the meeting here in person, really, just to
41 hear some of the important dialogue that's on the agenda
42 here later on regarding the Ketchikan rule
43 determination. So, I know we're going to have some good
44 robust discussion around that. And I just again wanted
45 to be here firsthand and also be able to connect with
46 the with the Council as well. I'm newly in my role. I
47 started in April as the regional forester behind David
48 Schmid, who retired. And so, I'm still doing a little
49 learning, even though most of my career has been here
50 in Alaska. But in terms of this new role I'm in as the

1 regional forester and trying to fulfill my duties on the
2 Federal Subsistence Board as well and the processes that
3 go with them. So, I just wanted to again spend some time
4 here today with you all and listen firsthand and be able
5 to interact with you all, you know, during breaks and
6 also formerly here if I'm asked to here on the
7 microphone. So, anyway, just appreciate the opportunity
8 to come up here and, and say a few words. Thanks.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
11 Chad. Might be a few questions from the Council that you
12 might want to take. Cathy.
13

14 MR. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well,
15 congratulations. You might be new to your role, but
16 you're definitely a familiar face and have worked with
17 us in the past. My question is, are you going to be here
18 today and tomorrow? Just for the potential for
19 discussion about the Tongass plan revision, will you be
20 present for any of that or just today? Thanks.
21

22 MR. VANORMER: Yeah, thank you for that.
23 My schedule will have me here just today. Yeah. So, I'll
24 have to depart here. I'm on the later flight back to
25 Juneau so, I will not be able to be here tomorrow for
26 the for the plan revision discussion. But it is certainly
27 a process that we're kicking off, a really big process.
28 And I'm just really proud of the team on where we've
29 gotten so far in launching the assessment and especially
30 a lot of the public engagement that we've had so far.
31 We've had multiple partners come out wanting to support
32 that community engagement that we've done so far for
33 trying to understand the assessment. And, and I know we
34 have a lot of talent in the room here, especially
35 tomorrow, that will be available and ready to answer any
36
37 more of those technical questions that come along
38 regarding the process.
39

40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chad.
41 Any other questions? Albert.
42

43 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
44 a comment. I want to say thank you for supporting
45 Wildlife Proposal 24-04. Mr. Chairman. His justification
46 for supporting the proposal we submitted on behalf of
47 Angoon; I believe is the reason that passed the Federal
48 Board. So, thank you.
49

50 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,

1 Albert. Patti.

2

3 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Mr. VanOrmer,
4 I wish -- I wonder if you would give us a brief bio and
5 congratulations to your promotion. For the students of
6 -- you know, because people from the region can actually
7 rise to the ranks. And, you know, you really know the
8 region very well. And I think it puts a lot of trust in
9 the system that we're working with. So, if maybe for the
10 students, you could give a brief bio of how you got to
11 where you are. Thank you.

12

13 MR. VANORMER: Sure. Thanks, Patti. I did
14 have an opportunity at the Federal Subsistence Board
15 meeting to have lunch with Heather and the students that
16 were present at the Federal Subsistence Board, and I
17 will be doing so again today. So, I really am very happy
18 with that program and very proud of -- and glad I was
19 here -- of the students that got up and spoke this
20 morning and on how these processes work. And we try to
21 be as open and transparent and inclusive as possible,
22 especially how the structures have been set up around
23 subsistence management here in the state of Alaska. My
24 career, let's see, I'm primarily raised in rural areas
25 of the Lower 48, in upstate New York and in northern
26 Illinois, and always had an interest in natural resource
27 management and being in the outdoors. I was kind of a
28 free-range kid. You know, just be home at dark kind of
29 mentality. So, it kind of led me in a career of really
30 trying to understand in that dynamic, in natural
31 resources. And, you know, a lot of people are really
32 interested in the critters, the trees. My interest is
33 really around people and kind of that intersection with
34 the natural resources that we have. And that's why this
35 subsistence program is really professionally and
36 academically, just very intriguing. And of course,
37 living in Alaska for the years that I have, just near
38 and dear in terms of you know how to preserve a way of
39 life that's out there that was brand new to me when I
40 arrived here in Alaska in 2001. It was after a college
41 education, you know, that got me my first Forest Service
42 job on Prince of Wales Island as a recreation planner.
43 And I did that for a few years and decided I needed to
44 go connect with my family and moved back to Vermont and
45 learned quite a bit back there about the agency and how
46 we work. But I knew when I left Alaska, it was just a
47 matter of time that I'd be back at some point. And it
48 was in 2010 when I had the opportunity to come back up
49 as the district ranger for the Admiralty Island National
50 Monument and spent seven years working really closely

1 with Albert and the community of Angoon. And then I
2 also, during that time got to take on the duties as the
3 district Ranger and Hoonah as well. So, I got to spend
4 a few years over there getting to know the community and
5 building a lot of the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership
6 and the great work that's going on there. And then I
7 made my way from the district office up to the regional
8 office, staying in Juneau as a planner and, and a budget
9 director for a few years. I did the Roadless Rule making.
10 Cathy and I got to know each other really well during
11 that process, and I valued that time and our relationship
12 that we've forged there and then eventually moved my way
13 into the deputy regional forester role and now into the
14 regional forester role. So, anyway, I think you know,
15 in terms of career and I try to teach my daughter this
16 too is, you just you got to think and explore and don't
17 be afraid to take chances out there and I think by taking
18 -- if you have a vision and you have an idea of what you
19 see your life to be, and you really kind of put that in
20 the forefront it just naturally unfolds in certain ways.
21 Those opportunities kind of present themselves, and
22 especially if you're not afraid to take some of those
23 bold challenges, such as coming up here as a young
24 student to speak in front of a Board. I'm paying
25 attention right. Those students, the students here today
26 are future leaders here in the Alaska region, whether
27 they work for the Forest Service, whether they work for
28 the tribe or a non-profit organization. You know, I see
29 us all kind of pulling on the same rope and just really
30 encourage the students to continue to really kind of
31 learn and explore and envision themselves in the future.
32 And I just feel confident that they'll make their way
33 there. So, thank you for that.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
36 Harvey.

37
38 MR. KITKA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 Listening to your talk, I really appreciate what you're
40 saying. I myself am struggling with this rural status
41 thing that's coming up, and I still struggle with the
42 idea that a community like Ketchikan Indian Community,
43 it's not their fault that the city grew up around them
44 and made them non-rural. I know that the people still
45 live in a subsistence style and still share stuff. I
46 just struggle with the idea of how can we help the people
47 that are Native, that live there for countless time and
48 subsisted [sic] in a way that they have. I realize that
49 it's almost like trying to separate the town from the
50 from the Indians, and I'm struggling with that at this

1 point, and I just hope that somebody will come up and
2 help us with this idea. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
5 Harvey.

6

7 MR. VANORMER: Yeah, I appreciate that.
8 Harvey. And that's why I'm here, is really just to learn.
9 I am very much in the data gathering mode. You know, we
10 all come to the table here today. With important
11 decisions and discussions in front of us. And we all
12 bring our own unique and individual perspectives on how
13 we're viewing, you know, the decision that's going to
14 be in front of us. And I, too, am bringing my own here
15 as well. And I guess where I'm at this point in time is
16 really an open mind to really do a lot of data gathering
17 and understand the purpose behind the proposal and how
18 that fits in with the regulatory kind of constructs that
19 we have to work within as well as, you know, trying to
20 understand you know, from head and heart the community,
21 especially the Ketchikan Indian Community and how, you
22 know, we can figure out a path forward. So, I'm not
23 really sure in myself how I feel that tension myself and
24 I'm certain will probably feel it here in the room more
25 openly when we discuss the proposal. So, I'm just looking
26 forward to doing that journey with you all and learning
27 along the way here.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you for
30 that response. Any other comments or questions from the
31 Council? Not seeing any. So, thank you very much again
32 for being here.

33

34 MR. VANORMER: All right. Thank you too.
35 Look forward to the day.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. So, that I
38 believe concludes our non-agenda testimony items. We'll
39 take a 15-minute break. Come back, we'll hear the
40 analysis on the rural determination petition and dive
41 right into it. So, back at 10:25.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
48 everybody. Council members are all finding their seats.
49 So, if folks out in the out in the audience would settle
50 in or at least quiet down and we'll get started with the

1 analysis. But first, we did have one question that came
2 to mind for Mr. VanOrmer after he took his seat last
3 time. So, Chad, if you want to maybe just come forward
4 for one more quick question. Cathy Needham, go ahead.

5

6 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 Thanks for coming back up and one thing that occurred
8 to me, so I had a couple things have happened this
9 morning. One was a presentation by SCS about the
10 assessment to the forest plan revision that is in the
11 process right now and is going to be having -- you know,
12 it'll be finished and then it'll have a public comment
13 period. And that public comment period is prior to our
14 next meeting. So, they've come forward to ask us for --
15 to be able to provide some information into that process,
16 but we're not meeting until after the assessment is going
17 to be done, and then it's going to move into sort of the
18 next phase of the forest plan revision. And we've brought
19 this up as a concern in our Annual Report to the Federal
20 Subsistence Board that, you know, these out of -- kind
21 of out of cycle where big things happen in our region,
22 and this Council could provide the opportunity to
23 provide like substantial comments. And a lot of times
24 those public comment periods are closed. And we've come
25 -- overtime we have been able to -- people -- agencies
26 have said, okay, we're going to take your comments even
27 though the public thing is back, but this particular
28 circumstance is asking for our input into something
29 while they're writing it. And that's happening in
30 between our meetings. And so, my question was to staff
31 about whether or not we could form a subcommittee or
32 work group that can work on that between meetings? If
33 you -- when we when we brought this up to the Federal
34 Subsistence Board, just this whole out of cycle ability
35 to comment the Federal Subsistence Board said that maybe
36 one way around it is that this Regional Advisory Council
37 could ask the agency or the Forest Service in this case,
38 whether or not they would extend that comment period in
39 order to allow us to be able to participate at our next
40 meeting. And so, I was hoping to make that ask on behalf
41 of this Council to the Forest Service, at least to think
42 about potentially like where the assessment fits into
43 it and how we can make sure that we are participating
44 in that to the best of our ability and to help with
45 putting information forward to you guys. Thank you.

46

47 MR. VANORMER: Thank you for the
48 question, Cathy. And I'm thinking we have a process
49 that's moving forward here around the plan revision. And
50 we're at the very beginning of a very -- what I would

1 say not very -- but we're at the beginning of a lengthy
2 decision-making process, right. So, we're going to go
3 through the assessment. Then we're going to talk about
4 need of -- need for change. Then we'll have a proposed
5 action. Then we'll have alternatives, and then we'll
6 have an EIS. And then we'll have, you know eventually,
7 you know, marching towards a record of decision in a
8 matter of probably two years or so. So, there's going
9 to be lots of time for engagement with the plan revision
10 team as we move forward here. I recall during the
11 Roadless Rule making work that we did together, we had
12 a hard time kind of matching public comment periods with
13 allowing for the Southeast Regional Advisory Council to
14 be able to participate during those comment periods. And
15 I think the Forest Service can make an effort to try and
16 align some of those comment periods with the schedule
17 here of the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. I do
18 like the idea of having a working group or a committee
19 or something that can be engaged in between the cycle
20 of your formal meetings that you have here so that we
21 can have that continuous engagement. And also, you all
22 are, you know, sanctioned under the Federal Advisory
23 Committee Act. So, you know, you are kind of quasi, you
24 know, government representatives here and I don't see
25 much of an issue with even taking comments from the
26 Southeast Regional Advisory Council outside of those
27 formal public comment periods, because you all have a
28 very formal role in the decision-making processes as we
29 move forward, especially around subsistence. So, I think
30 the best I can offer is we can make opportunities outside
31 of the public comment period and honor the comments and
32 sentiments of the Southeast Regional Advisory Council
33 as we move forward. In addition to trying and taking a
34 look at timelines and how we can maybe strategically,
35 you know, make those timelines match up with your meeting
36 cycles here as well. The only thing that I hesitate with
37 timelines is I know when you mix timelines, forest
38 service and plan revision together, it's hard to commit
39 more than probably 3 to 6 months out, you know, because
40 things change as you move through the planning process.
41 So, I'm keenly aware now of the concern. I heard the
42 discussion this morning, and I probably teed up a little
43 bit of commitments here for the team that's going to be
44 in front of you tomorrow to talk more in depth about the
45 plan revision process. But my goal, my intent would be
46 to ensure that the Southeast Regional Advisory Council
47 has a voice in that plan revision process, regardless
48 of it's within the comment period or outside of it as a
49 committee.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: One follow up.
2 Cathy.

3
4 MS. NEEDHAM: Yeah. Thank you for that.
5 But I also want to make sure that that applies to the
6 assessment that's ongoing, too, because, I mean, we can
7 get into the forest plan schedule and everything, but
8 that's a little bit separate with this the assessment
9 to that and being able to provide information into that
10 assessment.

11
12 MR. VANORMER: Okay.

13
14 MS. NEEDHAM: So, I want to make sure it
15 includes that.

16
17 MR. VANORMER: Yeah. And I'll talk to the
18 team about that and see, you know, kind of where the
19 boundaries are that we're working within. But I,
20 personally don't see much of an issue with being able
21 to take in the considerations of the Southeast Regional
22 Advisory Council, even if the public comment does --
23 comment period does conclude before you all can meet
24 again. We'll be able to incorporate those -- your
25 thoughts into that process there.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Very good.
28 Very helpful. Thanks for responding to that.

29
30 MR. VANORER: Alright, thanks.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON HERMAMDEZ: And maybe OSM
33 staff wants to add to this discussion.

34
35 MS. WESSELS: It just -- very briefly for
36 the record, Katya Wessels I just want to make it clear
37 because your Council is the Federal Advisory Committee
38 Act Council committee your subject to the requirements
39 of the act. So, no matter if you have a working group
40 or a subcommittee, that working group or subcommittee
41 needs to report back to the Council in order for Council
42 to provide official recommendation from the Council. So,
43 your -- you know, you formed a working group already,
44 and this working group can continue working between the
45 meetings, but they will have to bring their, you know,
46 findings, discussions, decisions back to the entire
47 Council during the winter meeting to provide official
48 recommendations. And if you decide to form a
49 subcommittee, that is also allowed, but it will be a
50 lengthy process because it needs to be approved by the

1 agency, which will take some time, and then it will be
2 subject to all FACA requirements and reporting,
3 including meeting minutes, 30 day meeting summaries, all
4 the record keeping in a database and things like that.
5 So, I just want the Council to be aware. There is also
6 another possibility of having a subcommittee that does
7 not report back to the Council, but that will require
8 the chartering of that subcommittee, which can take a
9 year.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Duly
12 noted. Thank you, Katya. And let's bring the presenters
13 back up for rural determination process here. Thank you
14 for allowing that. So, go ahead.

15
16 DR. VICKERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
17 Members of the Council, proponent Ketchikan Indian
18 Community, representatives of all tribes. Everyone else
19 that's either here or on the phone that is taking the
20 time to tune in and listen, I greatly appreciate it.
21 Look forward to getting your input over the next couple
22 of hours. My name is Brent Vickers. I am the Anthropology
23 Division Supervisor at OSM, and I have team members up
24 here with me who have all. We've all worked on this
25 analysis together.

26
27 MS. MORROW: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
28 Members of the Council. My name is Kristen Morrow. I'm
29 an anthropology pathways intern with the Office of
30 Subsistence Management.

31
32 DR. ROBERTS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
33 Members of the Council. My name is Jason Roberts. I'm
34 an anthropologist at OSM, and I'll get started with the
35 proposal analysis summary. This is definitely a summary.
36 I hope you've all had some time to give good once over
37 on the analysis, and I apologize, it's quite long. But
38 there are a lot of things to really cover in that
39 analysis. So, without further ado, non-rural
40 determination proposal NDP25-01 -- just disappeared from
41 the screen. Okay, so, NDP25-01 was submitted by the
42 Ketchikan Indian community. It requests that the Federal
43 Subsistence Board change the Ketchikan area to a rural
44 status area. And the analysis for this proposal begins
45 on page 108 of your meeting book. The Ketchikan area
46 currently includes Ketchikan City, Clover Pass, North
47 Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Point, Herring
48 Cove, Saxman East, Pennock Island, and parts of Gravina
49 Island. It does not include the community of Saxman, and
50 there's a map of this area on page 115 of your meeting

1 book. The proponents note that Ketchikan is the
2 traditional territory of the Tlingit, with a long
3 history of indigenous occupation, as well as a long
4 history of subsistence harvesting, traditional food
5 practices, and overall reliance on natural resources as
6 a key component of livelihood and cultural identity. The
7 proponents also explain that Ketchikan is relatively
8 remote, with no road access to the rest of Alaska or the
9 Lower 48, and that their supply chains, which provide
10 commercial foods and other goods, are vulnerable to
11 disruptions and they note how the recent Covid 19
12 pandemic highlighted this issue. The proponents also
13 note that Ketchikan is comparable in many ways to places
14 like Kodiak and Sitka, which the Federal Subsistence
15 Board already recognizes as rural.

16
17 Actually, it's two slides up, I forgot.
18 One more please, Deanna. Thank you. So, the history of
19 the non-rural - rural determinations within the Federal
20 subsistence management program is quite complicated and
21 convoluted, to say the least. If you read that section,
22 it's pretty long because there's a lot to go into. From
23 1990 until about 2015 so, when the Federal program first
24 started in the early 90s until about 2015, this
25 determination process was strongly based on quantitative
26 measures like population size and included conditions
27 for grouping communities considered to be socially and
28 economically connected. As a result of the more recent
29 2015 review of the rural determination process, these
30 specific quantitative guidelines regarding things like
31 population size, the aggregation of communities, and the
32 ten-year status reviews that were automatically done
33 these are no longer part of the process. This was done
34 in an effort to make rural and non-rural status
35 determinations more holistically in a way that
36 incorporates a greater number of demographic, economic,
37 and geographic factors while also accounting for
38 regional variations through greater consultation and
39 incorporation of input from Regional Advisory Councils,
40 Alaska Native groups, the public and the State. And so,
41 looking at a bit more about the regulatory history,
42 Ketchikan has been considered a non-rural area since the
43 Federal Subsistence Management program began in the
44 early 1990s. Pennock Island and parts of Gravina Island
45 have been added to the Ketchikan non-rural area over
46 time, but the boundaries of the non-rural area along the
47 Tongass Highway have not changed since 1992. The Board
48 has twice voted to include Saxman within the Ketchikan
49 non-rural area. However, both of these actions were
50 rescinded before being implemented. So, Saxman has

1 effectively retained rural status since the first
2 determinations were made in 1992, and this will be the
3 first time that the RAC and the Board will be considering
4 Ketchikan's rural or non-rural status, since the revised
5 regulations governing non-rural determinations were made
6 in 2015. And so, looking at those non-rural decision-
7 making factors right now, as I said, we consider multiple
8 factors like population size and density, economic
9 indicators like employment and income, the use of fish
10 and wildlife, degree of remoteness and availability of
11 commercial goods and services. And we try to do that in
12 a very holistic fashion. But we rely now quite heavily
13 on input from the affected Regional Advisory Council or
14 Councils to define their concept of a rural community
15 or area. Based on information provided in the analysis
16 and from personal experience, we also rely on the input
17 from Alaska Native groups, the public and the State. It
18 should be also noted that the Board can modify the
19 geographic extent of a rural or non-rural area based
20 upon changing conditions when these proposals are
21 brought forward. So, they can only do this when a
22 proposal is brought forward at this point. And it
23 requires the use of distinguishing boundaries or
24 features on the landscape. At this time, the Board cannot
25 currently specify a particular group of people within a
26 given community or areas as rural, while others remain
27 non-rural.

28
29 And then looking at -- next slide please
30 -- at your October 2023 Council meeting, you gave us a
31 lot of good feedback and suggestions on how to proceed
32 with the analysis and key information you wanted to see
33 in the analysis that you thought would be helpful in
34 determining Ketchikan rural or non-rural status. These
35 characteristics included the harvest and use of wildlife
36 by Ketchikan residents, and how these metrics compared
37 to other nearby communities. Information on the economy
38 and employment options in Ketchikan, particularly
39 looking at economic changes related to the loss of the
40 pulp mill and the growth of more seasonal industries
41 like tourism. Ketchikan residents' access to grocery
42 stores and other retail stores, as well as economic
43 services and social services like hospitals, schools,
44 airports, post offices and again in comparison to other
45 nearby areas. And then population information for
46 Ketchikan both the overall population size and density
47 and change over time, as well as the cultural makeup of
48 Ketchikan, particularly with regard to the percentage
49 of Alaska natives living in Ketchikan, many Council
50 members noted that ANILCA should help maintain

1 indigenous traditions and livelihoods. So, this is the
2 type of information we tried to provide you with in the
3 analysis. And some Council members also noted that it
4 was important to consider the rural or non-rural status
5 of Ketchikan on its own merits, without being overly
6 influenced by the potential impacts of a status change
7 to fish and wildlife harvest opportunities for others.
8 So, with that, I'll pass it off to Brent.
9

10 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Jason. This is
11 Brent Vickers Office Assistance Management. And go ahead
12 for the next slide. Okay. So, we are going to get into
13 Ketchikan population and non-rural boundary issues which
14 starts on page 126 in the meeting books. As Jason has
15 already said that in 1992 it was defined -- the non-
16 rural area was defined as Ketchikan City, Clover Pass
17 North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Pass,
18 Herring Cove, Saxman East, and parts of Pennock Island.
19 This geographic area has remained relatively the same
20 over the last couple of decades, except for adding parts
21 of Pennock Island and -- or adding Pennock Island and
22 parts of Gravina Island. The changes, however, are that
23 since that time -- when they first designated the Board
24 -- first designated this non-rural determination area,
25 these communities listed were CDPs or Census Designated
26 Places. They had distinct boundaries, they had
27 populations that could be measured more or less. They
28 had populations that were kept track of and everything.
29 Since then, these communities are no longer CDPs.
30 They've been incorporated into the Ketchikan Gateway
31 Borough as a result -- one result of that is we can --
32 since the 90s, we've not been able to track their
33 population. We don't know what their population is for
34 each of those communities or neighborhoods or however
35 you really want to look at it, we can get -- we can make
36 estimates based on what the size of the borough is minus
37 Ketchikan City, which is really one of -- Ketchikan City
38 and Saxman are the only two entities with distinct
39 boundaries within the borough. And the second impact of
40 this -- of the CDP's being incorporated or second thing
41 that has happened is, when the Board first determined
42 this area, they drew the lines where development had
43 stopped, and I believe that the road was no longer paved
44 beyond that. Well, as time has gone on the development
45 -- the road has been paved. There's housing that
46 continues on. And so, if you want to look at the next
47 page or next slide, please, you can see this is the
48 current Ketchikan non-rural area boundary. You can see
49 that Saxman is not included. It's as Jason said, it has
50 not effectively never been included. But the boundaries

1 end where -- there's houses right beyond that line. The
2 houses continue up, and so, it's more or less an
3 arbitrary line at this point where the people living
4 beyond those boundaries are rural under the Federal
5 Subsistence Management Program. And so, if they are able
6 to show their address to the Forest Service and
7 permitting, and however that's done, they do qualify as
8 federally qualified subsistence users. Next slide
9 please. So, this is a look at the population over the -
10 - since 1980 when this first determination first
11 happened. And when the first determination happened in
12 1980, it was established that 7,000 -- population of
13 7,000 would be the lower limit of a non-rural area. So,
14 essentially any community with a population of 7000 or
15 more was non-rural. And that in Ketchikan was the
16 smallest of the areas at that point. We do not have
17 information on why they set it at 7,000. We could not -
18 - we looked through everything we could and have no
19 documentation of why that was chosen. But they did, we
20 do know that Ketchikan was the smallest so, they may
21 have said Ketchikan and then decided just to draw the
22 line right where Ketchikan was right above 7,000. But -
23 -I we don't have documentation of that. As you can see,
24 the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and Ketchikan City have -
25 - in the population increase has had has increased a
26 bit, but really we're talking a relatively low
27 population increase. Especially when you consider the
28 growth of Alaska as a State, population wise over that.
29 And I put that in that, there's a line there that's not
30 in the area of population. Actually, page -- table 12,
31 which I don't have on a slide, will show the proportion
32 -- relative proportion of growth. Ketchikan area has
33 actually declined a little bit in its relative
34 proportion to the rest of the state of Alaska. While
35 still maintaining that, you know, this Ketchikan City
36 itself, around 7,000. Now around 8000, and the Gateway
37 Borough starting at 11,000, then at around 13,000. But
38 if you can see Alaska in 1980 was a population of 400,000
39 and is now 700,000. So, proportionately, there's been
40 very little -- it's actually declined, the Ketchikan
41 population. Next slide please. So, this was the section
42 we call testimonies on a rural character of Ketchikan,
43 which begins on page 130 of your meeting books and these
44 testimonies -- these were taken from the three public
45 hearings that we had on the non-rural determination, as
46 well as Council meetings over the last three years on
47 this issue, as well as going back and digging through
48 transcripts. So, we looked through the transcripts and
49 have analyzed the transcripts and came up with three
50 major themes that were being addressed on the rural

1 character of Ketchikan.

2

3 The first of those themes is the
4 economic vulnerability of Ketchikan -- oh, you can go
5 back. I'm just going to stay in that slide. Thank you.
6 -- was the economic vulnerability of Ketchikan, which
7 focused on the disruptions to the supply chain that have
8 left Ketchikan with very limited food supplies and
9 services at times. This theme was mainly addressed by
10 KIC members and others who support the proposal. In their
11 testimonies that focus much on the recent events, such
12 as 9/11, the Covid pandemic, as well as economic
13 downturns such as the closing of the pulp mill that have
14 left residents of remote Ketchikan with reduced access
15 to store foods and have left them with an increased
16 reliance on natural resources such as deer, fish and
17 plant and marine resources. For example, one KIC member
18 said, if something happened to us, where we were shut
19 off like 9/11 when they couldn't bring in the foods, we
20 still have to subsist on what we have here and what we
21 will always will.

22

23 The second theme on rural character of
24 Ketchikan expressed, was the importance of subsistence
25 resources to meet traditional and cultural needs. Again,
26 this was mostly coming from KIC members and others who
27 support the proposal, and these testifiers elaborated
28 on the cultural meanings and identities that are
29 embedded in subsistence and traditional food practices,
30 particularly the harvesting, consuming, and sharing of
31 traditional resources and knowledge. Several KIC members
32 explained that subsistence practices maintain their
33 cultural identities and feelings of personal meaning,
34 and that it is critical to be able to teach these
35 subsistence practices to future generations. It was
36 commonly said that subsistence is sharing, and one
37 example from an elder in the KIC community, who described
38 her life growing up in Ketchikan, said my neighbors are
39 from Klawock. They knock on my door and share food with
40 me, and I knock on the door and share food. We share
41 food with them. So, this is still going on today and so,
42 in some ways it looks like the times have changed a lot.
43 Then in many ways not so much. Also, many of those who
44 discuss the importance of subsistence for maintaining
45 cultural traditions also noted that because they were a
46 non-rural in the Federal subsistence regulations and
47 living in a non-subsistence area by State regulations,
48 they often had to travel far to harvest their traditional
49 resources.

50

1 The third key theme captured during
2 testimonies was the importance of natural resources in
3 subsistence practices as a basis for livelihood --
4 livelihoods in rural communities. This theme was
5 commonly expressed by members of rural communities
6 considered currently considered rural under the Federal
7 Subsistence Program, particularly those of Prince of
8 Wales Island, as they describe the main differences they
9 perceive between their lived experiences and those of
10 the residents of Ketchikan. These people explained that
11 costs were higher in their communities than in
12 Ketchikan, and that there were fewer economic
13 opportunities. Therefore, it was necessary for them to
14 dedicate much of their time to subsistence practices.
15 One man in Klawock explains, there's not a lot of
16 economic stimulus here. What we do in the island is we
17 do as well as we can for ourselves. So, when you're
18 talking about subsistence, my family needs it and uses
19 it. It's a matter of just feeding my family. And also,
20 while this isn't a theme of rural character, it's
21 important to share that tribal representatives during
22 these testimonies of public hearings repeatedly stated
23 that this non-rural process and ANILCA, which only
24 recognizes whole communities, does not have special
25 specific provisions for Alaska Natives and tribes, is
26 ultimately putting tribes against each other. Next slide
27 please.

28
29 Okay. So, the use of wild resources. Now
30 we're going to look at this, that -- what we have
31 quantitatively through surveys on the use of wild
32 resources. And this begins on page 135. But before
33 looking at harvest numbers, I want to note once again
34 that Ketchikan has been located in a Federal non-rural
35 area and a State non-subsistence use area for over 30
36 years. As a result, Ketchikan residents have generally
37 not had the same hunting and fishing opportunities as
38 other nearby communities and areas in Southeast Alaska,
39 including those under Federal regulations and nearby
40 State subsistence fisheries. Residents of Ketchikan have
41 therefore had to travel far to harvest fish under State
42 subsistence regulations, which reduces the number of
43 people who -- a number of residents in Ketchikan who are
44 able to do it. ADF&G Division of Subsistence also has
45 not conducted a comprehensive subsistence survey in
46 Ketchikan. Much of the harvest data that we have comes
47 from a 2005 study by the BIA and the University of Alaska
48 Marine Advisory Program, from ADF&G sport hunting and
49 fishing surveys, and from the Department -- or for the
50 Board of Fish Personal Use and Subsistence Reports --

1 Sorry, not Board of Fish, but from ADF&G Personal Use
2 and Subsistence Reports for fisheries. Table four on
3 page 36, which is up on the slides, is taken from the
4 2005 survey and shows Ketchikan area residents harvest
5 and use a variety of fish, wildlife and plant resources.
6 Most harvesting activity is within an hour or less away
7 by boat, if not road -- direct road access from
8 Ketchikan. On the next slide, table five, which is on
9 page 137, shows overall harvest in terms of pounds.
10 Ketchikan residents do harvest a substantial amount of
11 wild resources, with 231 pounds per person and 91 pounds
12 -- or 231 pounds per household and 91 pounds per person.
13 While this is a large amount of resources, it's
14 comparatively lower than nearby rural communities, as
15 well as those communities mentioned in the proposal,
16 Kodiak and Bethel. Of note, salmon was the main resources
17 harvested in rod and reel is the principal means of
18 harvesting. Probably because residents of Ketchikan do
19 not live near a non-subsistence area. On the next slide,
20 table six shows the percentages of households and
21 communities using wild resources, and this is measured
22 in terms of the estimated rates of use, attempted harvest
23 and harvest of wild resources by residents. Again,
24 Ketchikan has significantly high number of households
25 using and harvesting resources at 80% and 72%,
26 respectively, although this is lower than the nearby
27 lower communities, but it's still pretty high. As
28 explained earlier, sharing of resources is a main
29 component of both subsistence terms and distributing
30 resources. And we can look at that in the next slide.
31 Table seven on page 141 displays quantitative
32 measurements of household sharing. Ketchikan whole
33 households shared much less than those in other
34 communities, but there's also a -- much less of a gap
35 between Ketchikan and other households in the number of
36 households receiving wild resources. So, you can see how
37 35% reported giving and 61% did -- or 61% reported
38 receiving. And a possible -- a plausible explanation of
39 this gap is because Ketchikan again is in a State non-
40 subsistence area and is in a Federal non-rural so, it's
41 harder for residents to harvest large amounts of
42 resources locally and give them away and residents -
43 more residents are receiving resources from their
44 friends in Ketchikan or in friends and family who are
45 able to go into these areas, or have from friends and
46 families who live in rural communities away from
47 Ketchikan.
48
49
50

1 Now, if we look at some of the
2 harvesting statistics through ADF&G, which start on page
3 142 in your books. Tables nine and ten, which aren't
4 displayed here, are in your meeting books on pages 143
5 and 44, respectively, show the amount of salmon
6 harvested under sport licenses and table 11 displayed
7 here, and on page 145 compares the reported salmon
8 harvest under State subsistence and personal use
9 permits. On average, Ketchikan residents harvested a lot
10 of salmon, but less again than the residents in the
11 rural communities. To repeat, this might be because its
12 residents live far from State subsistence fisheries. The
13 next slide is table 12, this shows the permitted --
14 there's a look at measuring wildlife harvesting and
15 consumption. This is the permitted Ketchikan deer
16 hunters, which average harvest nearly as many deer as
17 the nearby rural communities at just below one deer per
18 permitted hunter. It's just that proportionately, there
19 are far fewer permitted hunters living in Ketchikan than
20 in smaller communities -- smaller communities. So, the
21 average deer harvested per resident is much lower for
22 Ketchikan than for the communities on Prince of Wales.
23 But it is about the same and a little bit higher than
24 that of Juneau. Okay. Next page -- or no, go ahead
25 Kristin. Pass the mic.

26
27 MS. MORROW: For the record my name is
28 Kristen Morrow. I'm going to be going over some of the
29 economic indicators and employment data that's included
30 in the analysis. So, to start with, available economic
31 data shows that while Ketchikan's economy was fairly
32 robust and growing when it was designated non-rural in
33 1992, there have been significant changes to the economy
34 since that time. Some sectors, such as tourism, are
35 strong and growing, but many others have declined
36 significantly. Overall, the data shows that Ketchikan's
37 economy is highly seasonal and vulnerable to disruptions
38 such as Covid-19. In terms of household income,
39 Ketchikan's median household income is less than that
40 of Juneau or Sitka's, but much more than that of Prince
41 of Wales Island communities. If you're looking at per
42 capita income, which some people argue is a better sort
43 of measurement of income across communities, Ketchikan
44 and Sitka's per capita income is quite similar. Juneau
45 per capita income is higher than Ketchikan or Sitka's,
46 and the per capita income is lower on Prince of Wales
47 Island. Poverty levels and Ketchikan have consistently
48 been higher than those in Juneau or in Sitka, but lower
49 than those on Prince of Wales Island. For the areas
50 included in this analysis, poverty -- poverty rates

1 increased across all communities during the Covid-19
2 pandemic, but that rate of increase was notably higher
3 in Ketchikan than in other communities, which likely
4 points to their greater reliance on seasonal employment
5 opportunities such as those provided through tourism.
6

7 In terms of cost of living, the housing
8 costs in Ketchikan are lower than those in Juneau and
9 Sitka. If you're looking at sort of rental prices or
10 median household sale prices, but higher than those on
11 Prince of Wales Island. Lack of affordable housing
12 options does remain a significant issue in Ketchikan,
13 as in other areas of Southeast Alaska, and there is a
14 good amount of information to indicate that the tourism
15 industry is one of the pressures that creates, or at
16 least exacerbates the lack of affordable housing in
17 Ketchikan. In terms of other expenses, barge expenses
18 are lower in Ketchikan than in other southeast
19 communities because they are much closer to Seattle, and
20 that generally translates to a lower cost of goods. Next
21 slide please. In terms of employment data, employment
22 is highly seasonal across the southeast region,
23 including in Ketchikan. If you're looking at the monthly
24 unemployment rates over time, Ketchikan has had
25 consistently higher monthly unemployment rates than
26 those seen in Juneau or in Sitka. However, the Prince
27 of Wales Island unemployment rates have had the -- have
28 consistently been the highest when compared to those
29 other areas. I will note that unemployment data is a
30 little bit challenging in that it does not capture
31 employment through opportunities like fishing, for
32 instance, or income that might be earned so, if someone
33 may consider themselves employed through commercial
34 fishing, for instance, that won't necessarily be
35 captured in unemployment data if those opportunities are
36 lost. In terms of general unemployment opportunities,
37 there are more opportunities in Ketchikan than some of
38 the other communities in Southeast Alaska. But many of
39 these jobs today are lower paying and seasonal. Whereas
40 in the past there was a greater availability of year
41 round, stable, higher paying positions.
42

43 Today, tourism is the main industry and
44 is consistently growing from year to year, with the
45 exception of the few years around Covid-19. So, the
46 complete halt in 2020, and then it took a few years for
47 the tourism numbers to increase but at this point they
48 do seem to be continuing to grow. However, several other
49 key industries have declined. So, the timber industry
50 began declining in the 1990s and the closure of the

1 Ketchikan pulp mill in 1997 caused a major shock to the
2 economy, which led to notable job loss, decline in
3 population and for several years a decline in average
4 income in the community. A similar process did occur in
5 Sitka, when their pulp mill closed in what I think was
6 1994. In terms of commercial fishing, the increases in
7 earnings from commercial fishing since 1980 have been
8 very similar in Ketchikan, Juneau and Prince of Wales
9 Island, and have been notably higher in Sitka. Both
10 Juneau and Ketchikan have seen the greatest declines in
11 the number of resident commercial fishing permit
12 holders.

13
14 In terms of seafood processing jobs,
15 Ketchikan, the number of positions available has been
16 consistently declining in Ketchikan since 2002, whereas
17 the number of these types of positions have grown in
18 Sitka and Juneau. In Ketchikan, the majority of seafood
19 processing jobs have consistently been held by non-
20 locals, and that means people, not residents of
21 Ketchikan, not necessarily out of State but that number
22 has been consistently high, around 60% or more since
23 2002. And some of the other communities like Sitka,
24 Juneau and Prince of Wales, there have been years where
25 the proportion of people -- non-local employees earning
26 wages at seafood processing jobs has also been quite
27 high. But that's been a lot more variable in other
28 communities, where in Ketchikan it's consistently
29 primarily been earned by non-locals. Government jobs
30 historically have been a really important source of
31 stable, higher paying employment positions for Southeast
32 Alaska communities. But across the region, the number
33 of those jobs has been declining since 2012. Ketchikan
34 and Sitka both have seen very large decreases in the
35 number of State government positions. And in Ketchikan,
36 they've seen the largest decline in the number of Federal
37 employment positions and the least growth in the number
38 of local government positions and those local government
39 positions can include teachers or people working at
40 municipal governments. Some industries that remain
41 relatively important in Ketchikan, and maybe a bit more
42 stable than some of the other seasonal positions, like
43 through tourism, include health care and shipbuilding
44 and repair. There are a good number of health care
45 positions in Ketchikan, but there's been relatively
46 little growth in that industry compared to some of the
47 other communities in the Southeast. And many of those
48 jobs are often held by non-residents through sort of
49 short-term contract positions like travel nursing jobs.
50 And that is a pattern that's true throughout the

1 Southeast as well. Shipbuilding and repair is one sector
2 that exists in Ketchikan that is not really available
3 in other communities and does provide relatively stable,
4 higher paying positions that are held primarily by
5 Ketchikan residents. Next slide please.
6

7 In terms of availability of services
8 there certainly are more services available in Ketchikan
9 than other communities, particularly the smaller
10 communities in the Southeast. Ketchikan does act as a
11 transportation hub for the region with a regional
12 airport, and they are the headquarters of the Alaska
13 Marine Highway System. However, Ketchikan and other
14 communities in the Southeast have suffered recently from
15 less frequent ferry service due to generally, like
16 staffing shortages for this area -- ferry. However,
17 Ketchikan does still receive more ferry routes than some
18 of the other smaller communities, and there is daily
19 ferry service available between Ketchikan and Prince of
20 Wales Island.
21

22 In terms of receiving goods, Ketchikan
23 receives barges first and more frequently from Seattle
24 because they are much closer. It takes several more days
25 for those barges to get out to the more remote
26 communities. However, they do still face challenges
27 because there are really very few companies that the
28 transport goods between Seattle and Southeast Alaska.
29 So, Ketchikan and all of the other communities in the
30 Southeast are really subject to very few providers of
31 that service and the cost increase each year.
32 Historically, the timber industry helped sort of buffer
33 the cost of barge expenses, but that buffer does not
34 really exist anymore. In terms of social services, many
35 organizations in Ketchikan do provide very critical
36 social services that benefit residents of Ketchikan and
37 may also provide services to residents of the region
38 more broadly. But there's often funding and staffing
39 challenges to provide these services. And just earlier
40 this year, one of the most critical shelters did close
41 permanently. And with that, I will pass it back to you.
42 Thank you.
43

44 MR. VICKERS: Thank you, Brent Vickers,
45 OSM. Okay, so let's get to the alternatives considered.
46 And these are plausible or possible alternatives,
47 working to borrow an analogy from yesterday with the
48 tools that we have, which unfortunately we don't have
49 many and we don't have many, mainly because we have to
50 consider geographic area. And since those CDPs were

1 incorporated, we don't have many hard boundaries to work
2 with. So, alternative one, which is on page 168 and
3 there's a map on 169, is to effectively make the
4 Ketchikan non-rural area smaller by bringing in those
5 boundaries to just include Ketchikan City. And
6 therefore, the Ketchikan City would remain non-rural and
7 then the rest of the non -- of Ketchikan area or the
8 Ketchikan Gateway Borough would become rural, and the
9 residents living outside of Ketchikan City would become
10 Federally qualified subsistence users. This is a
11 compromise alternative, since there would be -- where --
12 -- while not doing what the proponent set out to do it.
13 If you're looking at just numbers, it would result in
14 much -- many fewer Federally qualified subsistence
15 users. However, if we want to -- let's go ahead and look
16 at the page next map. So, this is the current -- again
17 this is the current boundaries. And if we want to go to
18 the next one, this is what we would be looking at as the
19 Ketchikan non-rural area under this alternative and
20 while this is a compromise there isn't any harvesting
21 data. And very limited economic data. But really there's
22 no harvesting data to distinguish those living in
23 Ketchikan City from those living outside of the city.
24 So, we really wouldn't be having resource use and
25 consumption data, all that to base this decision on, it
26 would just basically be shrinking the area. Next page,
27 please.

28
29 This is alternative two, which is to
30 make the non-rural area larger. This was actually -- so,
31 basically, we would extending that non-rural area along
32 the roads of the Tongass Highway, except for Saxman.
33 Saxman remains untouched in this in this proposal. And
34 you know so, basically everyone living in the Gateway
35 Borough except for Saxman would become non-rural. This
36 improved -- as it says, it improves consistency and
37 fairness for all those living along the Tongass Highway.
38 This would actually result in fewer Federally qualified
39 subsistence users. Go ahead and look at the next page.
40 So, again we have the current Ketchikan non-rural area
41 and if you look at the next page it would just be
42 extending along the non -- Tongass Highway both on the
43 very north part and the south part to include the --
44 where there's currently road and housing. And this was
45 a decision that the Board had made in 2005 but rescinded
46 it along with rescinding the non-rural determination of
47 Saxman and many a series of non-rural determination
48 decisions that had been made in 2005. We don't have any
49 documentation of why they rescinded this decision, but
50 it was decisions that rescinded and that's why we

1 continue to have the same border boundary for the non-
2 rural area as it was in 1990. So, this would make it --
3 well, this would -- because this would increase the
4 number of non-federally qualified users. This is
5 actually an alternative that would have to have a lot
6 more time for public comment. Generally, the Board isn't
7 going to make a decision that would reduce federally
8 qualified subsistence users without a reasonable amount
9 of time for the public to comment on this. Being that
10 this wasn't really part of the proposal, I don't even
11 know what the process would be for the Board to actually
12 consider this an alternative.

13
14 Okay. Let's go to the next slide. So,
15 this is the potential effects of the proposal as written.
16 If this proposal is adopted as written, then Ketchikan
17 non-rural area would become rural under Federal
18 subsistence Regulations, and all residents of the area
19 would become federally qualified subsistence users for
20 hunting many of the -- hunting and fishing fish and
21 wildlife on Federal lands, which includes those lands
22 managed by the U.S. Forest Service. And from what I
23 understand, the National Parks and Preserves in the
24 Southeast Alaska region. This does not include lands and
25 waters managed by the State, and does not include plant-
26 based resources, and does not include resources in
27 marine waters. A table on page -- next slide please --
28 oh, back, never mind. I guess that -- oh, that's right,
29 I forgot it. There's a table on page 118 -- on table 18
30 on page 173 that displays a list of anticipated changes
31 in fishing and hunting opportunities for residents of
32 the Ketchikan area if the proposal is approved as
33 written. And to quickly -- we quickly summarize changes
34 in that on the slide up here, just to read it out there
35 would be greater -- for residents living in Ketchikan
36 if they became recognized as rural, they would have
37 greater opportunities for hunting deer, elk, and goat
38 in Units 1 through 4. Greater opportunities for salmon,
39 eulachon trout, dolly varden in Units 1 and 2, and they
40 would be eligible for the designated hunting permits
41 under Federal regulations. These most significant
42 effects would be the deer in Unit 2, eulachon on the
43 Unuk River, and salmon in Units 1 and 2. I also want to
44 note that we -- that it is outside the scope of this
45 proposal analysis to consider -- to anticipate any
46 changes that this would have on harvest levels, as well
47 as anticipated changes on the resources themselves.
48 That's just outside of the scope of this analysis. So,
49 if there's a question about that, we don't have any
50 answer. If this proposal fails as written, then

1 Ketchikan non-rural area remains the same and its
2 residents would not become eligible to be federally
3 qualified subsistence users. Next page.

4
5 OSM preliminary. So, this is our draft
6 conclusion, which is on page 173, is to be neutral on
7 non-rural determination proposal 2501. We at OSM believe
8 the data that we have before us is inconclusive, because
9 there's evidence to suggest that Ketchikan area is both
10 rural and it is non-rural. The population is relatively
11 large for Alaska, but the population growth overall has
12 been very low, especially compared to the State as a
13 whole. Poverty has increased and there are housing
14 shortages. Goods and services are shipped in -- are
15 vulnerable and to disruptions from the outside events
16 such as Covid. The economy in general is very vulnerable.
17 Most of the residents of Ketchikan area are -- the
18 residents of the community use and rely on wild resources
19 and many of these residents, particularly those who are
20 Alaska native KIC members, clearly use fish and wildlife
21 for subsistence purposes. It's very important to KIC
22 members to have substantial opportunities to harvest and
23 share traditional foods and to teach their cultural
24 practices to their children. At the same time, there are
25 differences between Ketchikan and nearby smaller
26 communities that are recognized as rural and under
27 Federal regulations. The community of Ketchikan is --
28 the community is relatively remote and isolated, or --
29 Ketchikan area is a hub for most of the services and
30 economic opportunities, smaller nearby communities such
31 as the POW are more remote and more isolated. Most of
32 the residents of these smaller rural communities
33 dedicate much of their time and significant amounts of
34 their time and energy into subsistence, often because
35 economic opportunities in their communities are very
36 limited. Most quantitative information on the use of
37 harvest of wild resources demonstrates that residents
38 of smaller communities are more dependent on fish and
39 wildlife. Residents have -- as we have said many times,
40 residents at Ketchikan have more limited opportunities
41 to harvest large amounts of resources because they are
42 non-rural and they are in a State non-subsistence area.
43 Furthermore, this is the first time that the Council has
44 been able to provide a recommendation on Ketchikan
45 status in this program. We owe assembly -- the Council,
46 which is comprised of the expert representatives of the
47 region, should have the opportunity to make one of the
48 first comments on this proposal. OSM believes that the
49 Council's input will have invaluable -- will be
50 invaluable to any decisions -- or additional decisions

1 made on this proposal. That concludes the presentation.
2 Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
5 Brent, Kristen and Jason. Open it up to questions from
6 the Council. I know there's a lot to think about here.
7 And as we, you know, get further into this, we may have
8 to call you back at times to answer questions, but first
9 thoughts. Are there any? Cathy.

10

11 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
12 just have a couple of procedural type questions, not
13 necessarily on the analysis. One would be what would be
14 the effects of us making a neutral recommendation to the
15 Federal Subsistence Board as well, based on your
16 analysis, I mean, you've given us the information. You
17 guys have come up with a neutral recommendation, and we
18 might -- what if that's as far as we can get as well,
19 what would be the effects of that? Like, where does it
20 go from here? And then I have a second question kind of
21 related.

22

23 DR. VICKERS: Excellent question
24 Council member Needham. I really think that the effect
25 of that would be the Board would really be in the hot
26 seat without more direction from you. We -- OSM still
27 has time to change our preliminary conclusion based on
28 what we hear here today. And any information received,
29 you know, relatively recently because we do have to get
30 that -- our final conclusion out relatively soon. I do
31 -- obviously, there's a plausibility and I know people
32 will cringe if I say this, but I perhaps without more
33 direction, the Board might decide to defer for more
34 input. I believe the proponents would be particularly
35 hard to hear for them. But I guess I -- once again, I'm
36 laying out what possible alternatives there would be.
37 But yeah, the Board would really have to pay a lot of
38 attention to the analysis to hear input, the records --
39 we might have to improve our presentation to include as
40 much input for their direction into the Board meeting.
41 And they would have to make a decision one way or the
42 other, I guess.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And a follow up,
45 Cathy.

46

47 MS. NEEDHAM: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
48 And my follow up does kind of come into what partly what
49 you just kind of explained is that, you know, there is
50 a lot of information and we've been talking about this

1 for several meeting cycles. And there are a couple of
2 alternatives presented in here, and potentially other
3 alternatives that haven't gotten information back from
4 the public on it. One that comes to mind for me is
5 separating out the City of Ketchikan and the Ketchikan
6 Gateway Borough and looking at the -- all of the factors
7 separately for each of those things. Which is kind of
8 like a twist on alternative 2, I think, which could be
9 alternative 3. So, if that's if that's where we get to
10 deferring the -- would it be -- would a recommendation
11 to defer or take no action be better in those
12 circumstances? If we want to tweak something beyond what
13 the current analysis really kind of covers, or if we go
14 in that direction? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 DR. VICKERS: You know, Brent Vickers,
17 OSM. That's a complex -- I'm going to call upon anyone
18 from OSM that might have a better -- at this moment,
19 more clear idea of what procedurally take no action
20 deferment. What that might mean, if anything,
21 differently -- the well, first of all, I want to say --
22 oh, go ahead.

23
24 MR. ROBERS: Sorry. Through the Chair.
25 Member Needham. This is Jason Roberts. I think defer
26 would probably be the better move there, because that
27 guarantees that it would come up again. I'm not sure
28 about how take no action works in a circumstance like
29 that. Whether it would come up again or not.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Kristen Morrow
32 has some data related.....

33
34 MS. MORROW: Thank you. Through the
35 Chair. This is Krsiten Morrow. Member Needham, it sounds
36 like you were maybe thinking about potentially looking
37 at data for Ketchikan City versus the borough as a whole.
38 And the challenge with that, with the economic data and
39 the harvest data, is that a lot of it can't be
40 disaggregated at that level. So, a lot of the economic
41 data is available at the census level, not at the City
42 versus the rest of the Borough. And the harvest data is
43 so limited that I'm not sure we could reliably
44 disaggregate it that way. To see if there were any clear
45 differences between Ketchikan City proper and the rest
46 of the residents of the Borough. That is something we -
47 - I think, looked to do with some of the data we have,
48 and in many cases it just can't be broken up that way.

49
50 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Another follow

1 up, Cathy.

2

3

4 MS. NEEDHAM: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 I'm just trying to get a like, what are our options at
6 this table in terms of our recommendations? Obviously
7 support, oppose, modify and defer, take no action. There
8 are, you know, a number of things that we could be
9 considering as we, you know, hear from other folks in
10 the room as well as when we get into deliberation. And
11 so, I'm kind of trying to get an idea of what each of
12 those actions would actually -- how they would carry
13 forward after our meeting in that aspect and so, on that
14 part it would be good for me to know if we oppose this,
15 then could somebody submit another non-rural -- recent
16 non-rural determination based on kind of a different
17 alternative aside from that. So, somebody outside -- you
18 know somebody else -- can we be going through this with
19 another approach as well.

19

20

21 DR. VICKERS: Great question. As you
22 remember the -- this proposal, a non-rural determination
23 proposal has to go first through a threshold assessment
24 which we did two years ago, and the Council and the
25 Board would have to determine that there's been
26 significant new information or change has been done
27 since the last proposal in order to go to the point
28 we're at today of full analysis of the proposal. So, if
29 there was a -- if it was opposed and the new proposal,
30 that proposal would have to have for what the Council
31 and the Board consider significantly different in many
32 respects for it to continue to take it on.

32

33

34 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I've
35 just been told that we have somebody on the phone at the
36 OSM office that might be able to address some of this.
37 Robbin La Vine, are you on the telephone?

37

38

39

40

41

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49

50

MS. LA VINE: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Loud and
clear.

MS. LA VINE: Hi. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Council, this is Robbin La Vine,
subsistence policy coordinator for OSM. And it sounds
like most of our team in the room is really doing an
excellent job at addressing your questions. But I did
want to point out just a couple of items for you to
consider as you think about your action on this proposal.

1 First, you should consider that you are setting a
2 precedent. You should also -- that it will impact, as
3 somebody mentioned earlier, the state of Alaska. But and
4 how other people and -- move forward with a non-rural
5 determination proposals of their own. Disaggregating is
6 challenging. And when you think about disaggregating
7 within your area, one of the questions that we were
8 looking at for the Moose Pass proposal was what
9 constitutes a community? And do you feel, and can you
10 identify the community of Ketchikan? So, I want you to
11 think about who's part of the Ketchikan community and
12 then most importantly, you as the Council play a
13 tremendously important role in informing the Board on
14 what it looks like to be rural in your region. And so,
15 part of the -- part of the role, of the analysis is to
16 say these are the characteristics we found and then you
17 confirm, identify. Yes, that looks like a pattern of
18 rural practice, rural subsistence -- the rural
19 subsistence way of life in Southeast Alaska. You either
20 identify that or you say, no, it's very different. We
21 are relying on your expertise. The Board is relying on
22 your expertise when they consider this proposal. So, I
23 just wanted to provide a little bit of background and
24 foundation for your role now and the work before you and
25 then finally the other actions that you might consider
26 to defer, you would need to consider how much information
27 and whether or not further information might benefit
28 your decision-making process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
31 Robbin. Anything further on this question? John.

32
33 MR. SMITH: Yeah, (In Native) John Smith
34 I represent Juneau and I'm also a Sealaska, Goldbelt,
35 Shee Atiká shareholder. And I just share that point of
36 view that I live in a non-rural area, and my fridge is
37 full. But I'm very much data driven, and I went through
38 your document quite a few times, and maybe the question
39 ain't to you, but maybe to the KIC and even Saxman, that
40 may be at some time they can give us some numbers. And
41 what I would like to see or here is in KIC of how many
42 of our Alaskan native families are actually that are you
43 know, they're resident here? And how many exactly? I'm
44 not asking for the total KIC because, you know, even
45 Sealaska, a lot of our shareholders live in Seattle and
46 California and other countries, but just understanding
47 who is under Ketchikan that's actually right here in
48 Ketchikan that's being left out of our traditional
49 harvest and also even Saxman to -- I shared my name and
50 my grandmother's, Edna Fulton (In Native) who was

1 married to John Abbott. And, you know, our family has a
2 connection to Saxman. So, it's a great honor to be
3 sitting here in my grandmother's country. So, I'm (In
4 Native) Kaagwaantaan. I'm also what they would call (In
5 Native), I'm a spokesman for my Eagle Nest House people,
6 my Kaagwaantaan people. So, as far as Saxman too if they
7 can share with us, maybe their community that's here,
8 resident that actually, you know, they're participating
9 in their subsistence, our way of life. But actually,
10 seeing how many of them are resident here and seeing
11 that data will really help me understand what the concern
12 is here. And I appreciate your time. Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Brent. Go ahead.

15

16 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brent
17 Vickers, OSM. DeAnna, if you can turn back on your slide,
18 your -- we have some additional slides for potential
19 responses or questions. So, just give us a second here
20 and page -- on slide -- what I have here, number 31.

21

22 (Pause)

23

24 There we go.

25

26 MS. MORROW: Through the Chair. This is
27 Kristen Morrow. Yeah. We did just want to share the
28 table on page 129 with population information does
29 provide the proportion of residents in the 2022
30 population that identifies as Alaska native or American
31 Indian. So, that's not to say that they're necessarily
32 members of KIC, but just to give an estimate. So, for
33 the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, 14.6% of residents
34 identify as Alaska native or American Indian. That
35 proportion is a little bit higher for Ketchikan City,
36 17.4%. And for Saxman 73.7%. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

39 Follow up? John.

40

41 MR. SMITH: Yeah. So, that number there
42 is actually people living right here? Okay. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Patti. Go ahead.

45

46 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Chairman. I
47 have a rather crazy question. Okay so, to be a registered
48 voter in a community, you only have to be there for 30
49 days with the intent to return. To be a Federal qualified
50 user, you have had to have lived in the community for

1 12 months prior and live there 12 more months. So, of
2 the residents in the Ketchikan area -- non-rural area,
3 how many of those residents would be Federal qualified
4 users? Because if they're seasonal, they're not Federal
5 qualified users because they go live somewhere else.

6
7 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Council member
8 Phillips. We do believe that this population based on
9 the census is for permanent residents. So, as far as we
10 know, everyone listed here. And just to clarify, to be
11 a -- to qualify, you have to be -- to qualify to be a
12 federally qualified substance user, you have to be an
13 Alaska resident, which means to live in the state of
14 Alaska for a year and then to have your permanent
15 residence in a rural community. So, you don't have to
16 have lived in that rural community for one year. You
17 just have to be a Alaska resident who now lives in that
18 community permanently. So, basically, someone can move
19 from Anchorage -- a resident who grew up and lived in
20 Anchorage, can move to Craig and become a rural Federally
21 qualified subsistence user as long as that new household
22 in Craig is now their permanent residence.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
25 else? Cathy.

26
27 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In
28 our supplemental materials, there was information that
29 was provided from a study that KIC did. Was that taken
30 into consideration in your guy's analysis and its
31 application to your decision to become neutral? And then
32 if the answer is yes that it was taken into or no, that
33 it wasn't taken into consideration because it came after
34 the fact, because I understand like sometimes it's about
35 the timing of having information to be published, if it
36 wasn't in this analysis, do you think -- is there
37 information within that study that helps make a
38 potential case for any component or portion of the things
39 that we're using to make a decision regarding the
40 determination?

41
42 DR. VICKERS: Thank you for that
43 question. Council member Needham. Yes. Short answer.
44 Yes, we did consider it. And we found much of what was
45 said and written, the results to align with our own
46 interpretation of data. And so, I don't believe and maybe
47 Jason and or Kristen can have something different, but
48 we do not believe that it changed our -- it more or less
49 just continued with the themes that we'd already been
50 doing. It didn't really change the way we looked at it.

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1 There was some new ways of putting things, some different
2 perspectives that KIC can speak to, but from our
3 interpretation, we did not feel that it changed our
4 position. But we did consider what had been looked at.
5 And it's a great report. So, thank you.

6

7

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Patti. Go ahead.

8

9 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. On table three,
10 it -- demographics. It shows Ketchikan Gateway Borough
11 2022 population at 13,762. And then Ketchikan City at
12 7,998. So, is that 7,998 a part of the 13,762? Okay. So,
13 it's saying that 17% of Ketchikan City, 17.4% is Alaskan
14 native or American Indian. So, roughly 3% are Alaskan
15 native or American Indian outside of Ketchikan City
16 proper or...?

17

18 MS. MORROW: Thank you. Through the
19 Chair. Member Phillips, this is Kristen Morrow. I don't
20 believe we can differentiate a -- so the population of
21 Ketchikan City from the census data, we have 17.4% of
22 those residents are Alaska native or American Indian.
23 Ketchikan Gateway Borough as a whole, which includes
24 that same area of the city, it's 14.6%. But I don't
25 think we can say definitively, you know, only 3% of the
26 area outside the city. I'm not.....

27

28 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay, I get it.

29

30 MS. MORROW: Yeah. Thank you. Sorry.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
33 else? Patti, doing a follow up? Okay. We'll wait.

34

35 MS. PHILLIPS: So, Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

38

39 MS. PHILLIPS: Oh, sorry. Yeah. Kristen
40 or Ms. Morrow. So, if you do the math, 14.6% of 13,762
41 means there's 2,009 Ketchikan Gateway Borough wide
42 Alaskan native or American Indian. And if you take
43 the.....

44

45 DR. ROBERTS: Sorry, I just wanted to...

46

47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Jason.

48

49 DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. If you
50 look on page -- the last paragraph on page 126, this

1 came from something we received from KIC. It says as of
2 2022, the Ketchikan Indian Community represented over
3 6,400 members, of which approximately half lived in the
4 Ketchikan Gateway Borough. That's page 126. The last
5 sentence before the Ketchikan area population and non-
6 rule boundary issues section.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Other
9 questions? Cathy.

10

11 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
12 think this is my last question. So, I think I remember
13 the Council discussing this previously about what we
14 wanted to see in the analysis, or at least there was a
15 question in a discussion about it that I was hoping to
16 refresh on. And that was the definition of rural for
17 other Federal programs. And I believe KIC talked about
18 some of those other rural Federal programs that they
19 were qualified -- or were defined as rural for. I'm not
20 sure if you looked into that or whether or not you have
21 a list of what those programs would be, but at some
22 point in time in our discussion, it would be nice to
23 know that -- where the -- where they are rural or
24 considered where Ketchikan is considered rural under
25 other programs. Thank you.

26

27 DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair. I'll
28 have to look into that a little bit more. I know it's
29 in there somewhere, but I can't remember exactly.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Patti,
32 again.

33

34 MS. PHILLIPS: So, according to your
35 history of this rural nonrural determination that this
36 is a State, State action that the Federal program took
37 over, and were you able to review State action of why
38 they were hostile to rural -- to rural designation for
39 Ketchikan?

40

41 DR. VICKERS: Through the Chair. This is
42 Brent Vickers, OSM. And I think Jason or Kristin might
43 correct me. The original 1980 designation was based, I
44 believe, on Congress determination, which then as part
45 of the program, because the State was managing the
46 program at that point continued with and they as we said
47 before, this was based on the census population at that
48 time and we could not find any documentation of reasoning
49 for Ketchikan being set other than it saying that
50 Ketchikan was a city in the population level at that

1 point was going to be 7,000 for non-rural, and any
2 community with 2,500 or less would automatically be
3 considered rural. We do know that that 2,500 or less
4 came from where?

5

6

DR. ROBERTS: Census.

7

8 DR. VICKERS: From the census. So, a
9 census definition of rural. But we didn't. They don't
10 have the same definition of non-rural, which I
11 completely believe, if the census had a population
12 definition of non-rural, that would not apply well to
13 the state of Alaska because it's very different here
14 from in the Lower 48 and what constitutes rural and what
15 doesn't. And I think that gets back to definitions from
16 other bureaus. And one reason we didn't -- I know it has
17 been brought up, and I think rightly so. But we really
18 want to focus on Alaska and your region and in general,
19 and what you and what your communities that you represent
20 -- what you see as rural. As Robbin La Vine had said
21 earlier, this is a -- we -- even the Board in 2012 or
22 2015 said we can't paint rural or non-rural with one
23 brush across the State. It's different now, not only is
24 it very different for Alaska and the rest of the Lower
25 48, it really differs amongst the different regions and
26 even subregions. And so, that's why they decided to make
27 this a much more holistic process to decide for us --
28 to help OSM, to help for public to have testimony and
29 for the Council to make a recommendation based on being
30 experts of their regions for which the Board can make a
31 conclusion on what is non-rural. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Cathy, you're up
next. But could I ask a question first relating to this?
So, we're kind of going back, you know, in history here
a little bit and something that I've been kind of
wondering about, you know, when these designations were
originally made, might be a question best asked of, you
know, some of the KIC representatives when they're up
here. But in your research, did you see anything that
indicated that you know, the Ketchikan Indian Community
had an opportunity to advocate for a rural status other
than the fact that it almost sounds like it was just an
arbitrary decision? And you know, the discussions that
we're having here were not even available to people back
then. And I don't know, maybe there's kind of a amends
to be made, I don't know. Did your research show anything
at all?

1 DR. ROBERTS: So, through the Chair. You
2 know as I said before, the regulatory history on this
3 thing is a bit of a quagmire, to put it politely. But
4 you know, when it first started -- going back to the
5 initial Senate report that identified Anchorage, Juneau,
6 Fairbanks, and Ketchikan as examples of non-rural
7 communities in 1980. And so, in those examples,
8 Ketchikan was the smallest at 7,200 people. And then
9 they identified examples of Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome,
10 Bethel and Dillingham as examples of rural communities.
11 And it seems like that was taken as a starting point for
12 developing this rural - non-rural determination process.
13 And so, it kind of went from there. And yeah, we have
14 not been able to find a lot of information about how
15 7,000 became this cutoff point at the time for automatic
16 determination as a non-rural community. Though we have
17 looked quite a bit. But I could see as how it would look
18 like they just basically set it up so that the Ketchikan
19 was slightly outside that mark. But looking back, you
20 know, they -- at the beginning, the Board -- their
21 initial determinations of rural or non-rural status in
22 the 1990s, they initially proposed communities to be
23 involved to be considered non-rural. And then there was
24 a period of public comment that went through, and this
25 is the reason why Saxman was removed initially, this was
26 the reason why Kodiak and Sitka also were removed from
27 the initial list of non-rural communities, was primarily
28 through this public comment period. Now, whether
29 Ketchikan Indian Community knew about that period, we
30 don't know. Yeah.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. That be a
33 question for them. Cathy.

34
35 MS. NEEDHAM: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 I guess not on that subject, but back to the rural
37 definitions. Just as an example of why I feel like that
38 information would be important for me to look at, it's
39 just one question that comes out of it is what the rural
40 definition for HUD would be for housing. Mainly because
41 we look at housing for Ketchikan would they have --
42 because they're considered rural under HUD, would they
43 have opportunity for funding that might help change that
44 housing picture over time? And so, that was the reason
45 why I was asking, not necessarily all the definitions
46 and not trying to make our definition fit into anything.
47 But if Ketchikan is considered rural by another Federal
48 agency, that would benefit them into helping to change
49 portions of their socioeconomic picture. That would be
50 helpful. Thank you.

1

2 DR. ROBERTS: Through the Chair, I just
3 looked up the HUD definition of a rural area. And so,
4 it says the program is established to assist nonprofit
5 organizations and rural communities across America, HUD
6 defines rule in three ways. A place having fewer than
7 2,500 inhabitants. A county or parish with an urban
8 population of 20,000 inhabitants or less, or any place
9 with a population not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants
10 and not located in a metropolitan statistical area. And
11 so, this is part of the problems we ran into with all
12 those -- it gets pretty confusing pretty quick.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Okay,
15 Harvey.

16

17 MR. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
18 struggle with a lot of this talk on the -- if you look
19 at the Southeast communities, basically, by every
20 definition, we're rural. We only have contact either by
21 barge or plane or ferry system. I know in Ketchikan got
22 a little more access to the ferry system, but a lot of
23 the places are really rural. We really notice the
24 difference in the cost of shipping, especially now. The
25 higher the cost of shipping, the less our money can go
26 around. We have to be able to subsist to get our basic
27 needs at this point to -- so, we can have money for our
28 children and other things. The cost of living is really
29 skyrocketing and most of our communities in Southeast
30 because of the cost of shipping. As it gets more rural
31 and gets harder and cost more to ship stuff in, we become
32 even more dependent on what you guys call subsistence.
33 This is food that we traditionally live on. Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
36 Harvey. Any other questions or comments from the
37 Council? Not seeing any at this moment. So, comment.

38

39 MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
40 is Kristen Morrow. I just wanted to very quickly go back
41 to your question earlier about whether KIC has had
42 opportunities to comment in the past. So, in addition
43 to what Jason mentioned with the public comment period
44 when the program was established, Ketchikan status as a
45 rural community was considered in 2005, and at that time,
46 Saxman status was also considered, and the status of
47 those areas along the road beyond the current boundary
48 were considered as well. And so, there were public
49 hearings and comment periods throughout that time, and
50 some of the information in the available transcripts

1 from those -- that process is included in the analysis
2 in front of you. So, there was testimony provided during
3 that consideration as well. Where members of KIC and
4 Ketchikan more broadly spoke to whether or not they,
5 they thought Ketchikan should be designated rural.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
8 for that follow up. Anybody else? Jim.
9

10 MR. SLATER: Just a perspective from --
11 we're looking at rural versus non-rural from population
12 statistics and so on as designated by government
13 agencies. For our purpose, we look at it -- I mean, I'm
14 thinking about it from the aspect of subsistence
15 management. And if you -- if the designation of one area
16 from non-rural to rural affects subsistence activities
17 for areas around it, I think we have to take that into
18 account as well. And whether or not what that designation
19 would mean. So, in this case if we say that by
20 designating Ketchikan as a rural area, it's going to
21 negatively affect subsistence lifestyles and surrounding
22 areas like Prince of Wales or the ability for us to
23 manage things like the eulachon situation on the Unuk.
24 Then I think that, and our only mechanism is rural versus
25 non-rural. And that has to be considered as well. Just
26 a comment.
27

28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
29 Jim. Anybody else. Patti.
30

31 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. I was on the
32 RAC in 2006 when the RAC supported, you know, a rural
33 designation for Ketchikan. Ketchikan came to our RAC
34 meetings, or the tribal entity came to our RAC meetings
35 with their, you know -- we really are losing our culture
36 and our way of life. And so, the RAC, you know, I guess
37 made a motion to support their efforts but left it in
38 the tribal association's hands to further their efforts.
39 But I will say that Alaskan natives, you know, during
40 the time of limited entry for salmon, the highest
41 education was generally an eighth-grade education. And
42 they were basically -- had their hands tied on trying
43 to deal with a bureaucratic government that was beyond
44 the -- I don't want to say beyond the scope of
45 understanding, but almost like a roadblock on how do you
46 get around it. I'll tell you, back in the 80s, I served
47 on the Regional Advisory Council under State management,
48 and Pelican didn't have subsistence status because this
49 structure didn't recognize us as being rural or even
50 having subsistence, you know, being able to do

1 subsistence. And I'm just like, this makes no sense. Who
2 makes these decisions? I mean, I'm out there in the
3 middle of nowhere and they say I don't have subsistence
4 status. So, you had a structure that wasn't even open
5 to subsistence as a common form of resource management.
6 And we really had to battle our way through it from the
7 very beginning, from the 90s, from the 93, our first
8 meeting just to -- okay, let's set up you know, some of
9 these preferences for subsistence. And we would just run
10 into obstacles from, you know, State management, no
11 support. Don't support, don't support, don't support.
12 But we, you know, we -- and I know I should be saying
13 this in deliberation, but I mean, you know, there there's
14 a lot more to it that isn't in these -- this is well
15 written analysis. Thank you. I really got a lot out of
16 it. But there's still more that's buried that we can't
17 get to. So, I just want to acknowledge that. Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
20 Patti. And yeah. Just remind Council that we will have
21 an open discussion, you know, during the deliberations
22 when all these, you know, issues can be brought forward
23 and we'll, we'll hash it all out. But Ted, did you have
24 a question or comment?

25
26 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, you know, I
27 appreciate this analysis, you know, but it's obvious
28 that no analytical data is going to help this Council
29 make a slam dunk decision you know, it's not there. And
30 although I appreciate that, it kind of puts a lot of
31 pressure on this Council to affect the lives of people
32 one way or the other, depending on which way we go. So,
33 I'm just making an observation and, you know, I'm -- I
34 apologize for bringing this up now, but thanks for doing
35 it. But you know. Jeez. Thanks. Yeah.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Albert, go
38 ahead.

39
40 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
41 Through your analysis process can you tell me what the
42 difference is going to be once -- if they become rural
43 as far or in regards to access to resources? So, now you
44 can access the same resources through the State process
45 and we do that in Angoon. The only time ANILCA kicks in
46 is when we need special action that designates a
47 federally qualified users special access to a resource
48 and no one else. A good example is the recent proposal
49 that was passed that, that only federally qualified
50 users are able to hunt on the south end of Admiralty

1 Island from the 1st of November to the 10th of November,
2 and no one else. My concern is not necessarily the
3 Ketchikan Indian Association, but the people you guys
4 don't have control over and our culture and our
5 communities, we hold ourselves accountable if someone
6 is abusing the resource. I don't -- my concern is how
7 are you going to control -- and this may be a later
8 question, but the question is, what do you see as the
9 difference between the way it is now and if they become
10 rural designation as in regards to access to resources.
11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 DR. VICKERS: Through the Chair. This is
14 Brent Vickers, OSM. Again, I'm not going to speak on
15 anticipated impacts on specific resources. I don't want
16 to make that leap. That's out of scope. What I will talk
17 about is process wise. If this proposal is approved,
18 those as written or modified in some way, those whose
19 non-rural status is rescinded become federally qualified
20 subsistence users. And because of your well, commendable
21 efforts to be inclusive in the Southeast region, that
22 means that the residents of the, let's just say, rural
23 Ketchikan would have customary and traditional use
24 determination for most resources because of how the
25 customary traditional use determinations are written in
26 regulations, which quite often say all residents of Unit
27 one, which by default would include residents of rural
28 Ketchikan. So, automatically they become eligible just
29 like anyone else. All rural residents like yourself,
30 Council member Howard with same eligibilities. Now, if
31 there becomes conservation concerns, and DeAnna, if you
32 don't mind bringing back up your computer and going to
33 slides, this has been thrown around. So, what the heck?
34 Let's just get into it while we're here. If there's
35 conservation concerns and for research -- resource any
36 resource we have been discussing the section -- ANILCA,
37 section 804 user priority. And this is something we went
38 over at the All Council meeting in March. I do have a
39 few slides on it. And what this is -- there's a stepwise
40 thing to make this. If we can go to slides 36, please.
41 And sorry, we don't have this in the meeting books, but
42 I believe DeAnna is actually putting this on Teams for
43 any -- and so, I'm going to go back to that -- thank
44 you, Deanna -- to that presentation. When there is a
45 conservation concern, and this is actually something
46 going on currently, proposal for this exact process for
47 the Nelchina Herd in Unit 13 -- Nelchina Caribou Herd.
48 The population of the herd collapsed. It went down and
49 they had -- there was a proposal right away to close off
50 the herd. And if you can go to the next slide, please.

1 That's a crucial step in the process is that first of
2 all, there has to be a determined by the Board that
3 there's not enough of that resource for non-federally
4 qualified subsistence users. And only allow for
5 federally qualified subsistence users to harvest that
6 resource. The next step is basically saying, well,
7 there's not enough of that resource for all federally -
8 - all those with customary and traditional use
9 determination, all federally qualified subsistence
10 resources. There's some -- there may be enough for
11 harvest, but definitely not for all of those with a
12 customary and traditional use determination and that's
13 where a proposal for a section 804 user prioritization
14 among federally qualified users would kick in. And if
15 you can go to the next slide. Yep. Sorry. Next slide.
16 Basically, that would shrink the pool. There would be
17 an analysis which is currently happening with the
18 Nelchina Caribou Herd, in which all communities with
19 customary and traditional use would be analyzed and a
20 recommendation would ultimately be made. Next slide
21 please, DeAnna. For those communities to be prioritized
22 based on the customary and direct dependence upon
23 official -- whatever resources and shortage based on
24 local residency, essentially, access to that resource,
25 which communities have the best access to those
26 community resources, and the availability of alternative
27 resources, which means both subsistence resources or any
28 additional resources. And so, that proposal for section
29 804, while we consider a stepwise process of closing
30 first to non-federally qualified like in the case of the
31 Nelchina Heard it came simultaneously a proposal to
32 close off to all users and for a section 804 user
33 prioritization to go into effect when there is a
34 harvester -- surplus that we can harvested by some
35 Federally qualified subsistence users. I hope that
36 answers questions. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Thank you,
39 Brent. Cathy.

40
41 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you. It did answer
42 questions, but it also brought up a couple more. I was
43 hoping you could talk to the timeline of that process
44 and then given that that timeline might be within a
45 proposal cycle, if it could happen in an out of -- if
46 it can happen, you know, like out of cycle or whatever?
47 If it was for, like, wildlife, if they wanted to do that
48 for wildlife, could it happen during a fish cycle? And
49 then the third part of the question then is the timeline.
50 So, timeline where it fits into the cycle for doing that

1 process, and then while we're waiting for all of that
2 to happen, whether or not a special action could close
3 like a particular unit until the process to the till a
4 potential C&T determination was made?

5
6 DR. VICKERS: Thank you. Through the
7 Chair. Great questions. Yes, these are all great
8 procedural questions. So, and there was a couple of them.
9 So, let me kind of walk through my thinking here. First
10 of all, a section 804 user prioritization request can
11 come through either a regulatory proposal or a special
12 action request. The special action request, however,
13 will -- the first -- when that request is made, the
14 first step will be for the Board and OSM to determine
15 is this an emergency situation? Okay. Do we need to do
16 this through a special action right now or is there a
17 more adequate and really we do -- would prefer the Board
18 and the whole -- let's say everyone would prefer it to
19 go through a proposal, because that would allow for the
20 whole proposal process and for a Council recommendation
21 for testimonies, whereas a special action request would
22 have a public hearing, but the Council probably wouldn't
23 be able to provide a recommendation unless they just
24 happened to have a Council meeting during that time
25 frame. So, if there is a situation that OSM and the
26 Board determines, okay, this is actually something we
27 can do right now, we can allow for some public input.
28 We can go through with a special action. Otherwise, it
29 will be deferred for regulatory proposal. That is
30 actually what happened again with the Nelchina Herd.
31 This did come through a special action request, but they
32 -- because in that situation, the Nelchina Caribou Herd
33 had -- it really dropped to a point where there
34 definitely is no serve -- it's closed to all users, and
35 the 804 prioritization will go into effect when in the
36 future, and probably not for several years. The proposal
37 is going to go before the Board at the regulatory meeting
38 and anticipation for when it gets to that level. So, I
39 forget where my train of thought was there, but at least
40 describing that process and how special actions and
41 regulatory proposals can be a little different for
42 section 804. And you know what, if you had asked the
43 question about fisheries or wildlife a year ago, I would
44 have said, I think you have to do wildlife during
45 wildlife and fisheries during fisheries. However, the
46 precedent has now been made on that section 804 user
47 prioritization for the Nelchina Herd to consider it
48 during the current fisheries regulatory process. Because
49 of -- and that was because there had been so many
50 requests coming from the tribes, from the Council and

1 everything to consider it as soon as possible. But we
2 also wanted to allow for the public input process. So,
3 we decided to not do it as a special action, but to
4 instead do it during the fisheries cycle, even though
5 we were dealing with caribou. So, that is a special
6 circumstance, but again, it is setting some precedent
7 depending on the circumstances when we could consider
8 these things.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
11 A lot to consider there. Is there anybody else with a
12 question? Patti, then Frank.

13
14 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When
15 we implemented or when we recommended implementation of
16 the of the C&Ts region wide, you know, on deer, we
17 started. So, it gives C&T to residents of units one,
18 two, three, four, five. Trusting the 804 process would
19 work if we do have times of shortage. So, we do, you
20 know, we hear from our federally qualified users on
21 Prince of Wales Island, you know, they're telling us
22 that deer numbers are down due -- and largely due to
23 wolf predation. But how quickly could a tribe or a
24 Federal user request an 804 implementation, either as a
25 special action or as a proposal? How quickly can that
26 happen? With concerns that if a rule designation was
27 provided to Ketchikan, you know, there -- they would go
28 from only being able to harvest two to, you know, under
29 to now being able to harvest six. So, you know, is that
30 -- could that closure or could that 804 reduce them back
31 down to two, for POW. I'm just -- you know, these are
32 sort of a scenario. Thank you.

33
34 DR. VICKERS: Thank you. Through the
35 Chair, Brent Vickers, there's a lot of ways of looking
36 at this, you know, well, what about this? What about
37 that? And so, these are great questions because I happen
38 to be in a position where I get to talk about this with
39 my colleagues every day. And there's a lot of whoa, can
40 we -- What if this happens? What if that -- it's not
41 easy. And it takes a lot of us who do this professionally
42 to get our heads together and think out possibilities.
43 So, I just want to say that your questions are great
44 questions, and I encourage more questions about this.
45 As we said, anyone can submit a special action request
46 at any time and depending on if that special action was
47 going to be in effect for 30 days or 60, is a difference
48 if it's an emergency or a temporary and then a temporary
49 special action would have to have a public hearing. So,
50 that would prolong the process, whereas an emergency

1 special action doesn't have to go through that process,
2 but it would only be for maximum 30 days, whatever that
3 request was. So, a closure, for example. And I'll get
4 to deer. And I'm going to speak hypothetically on deer
5 as best I can for Unit 2. As we said, the first steps
6 have to be a closure to federal -- non-federally
7 qualified subsistence users before consideration of a
8 section 804. And there is no -- we looked through and
9 there's no precedent -- let me just state this -- no
10 precedent at this moment in which that -- an 804 --
11 essentially what I'm trying to get to is that the basis
12 for that closure would it -- would strongly recommend
13 that that would be for conservation concerns that the
14 deer population has dropped to a point where we have to
15 close it to not all non-federally qualified subsistence
16 users. We would need to have the deer data to support
17 that. The Board would really want to have -- want that
18 rely on that data to support that the conservation levels
19 are to that point. And then at that point, once that's
20 closed for conservation reasons, then there is a
21 basically a foundation for the section 804
22 prioritization. So, I -- in a hypothetical world it would
23 -- until there's that closure for conservation reasons
24 for deer, it would be very -- there's a very small,
25 unprecedented reasoning for doing a section 804 analysis
26 before that would happen for conservation reasons. I
27 also say that there another potential avenue would be
28 to reconsider -- you know what? Never mind. That's not
29 even a -- I'm just spit balling but forget it. Go on.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I'm gonna jump in
32 here. I know we have some people who want to testify
33 that are not going to be here all day, and it's getting
34 really late, and I don't know exactly what their time
35 frames are, but I think we're kind of running up against
36 it here and kind of puts me in a bad position here.
37 Because I know I told them that I'd make sure they have
38 an opportunity to testify. So, I think their time
39 schedule might even run up against our ability to have
40 lunch here. I was thinking 2:00 was kind of a cutoff
41 date for some folks. Is that true? That's cutting it
42 real close? Okay. I'm going to keep that in consideration
43 here. I think I'm going to knock this off. I mean, we
44 can -- a lot of this is kind of getting into
45 deliberations as well and minutia. So, well, here's what
46 I'm going to do. I think I'm quite sure that most, if
47 not all the folks that have to leave are tribal
48 representatives. So, maybe I will go to the comments and
49 tribal entities come up pretty quick so, maybe I will
50 at least go through that portion. And then we're going

1 to have to take a break and come back with the rest of
2 the public comments. If that will work. So, let's jump
3 to tribal consultation first. Do we have tribal
4 consultations on this proposal or tribal or ANCSA
5 corporations saying no? Okay. How about Alaska
6 Department of Fish and Game, did they put in any comments
7 on this proposal? DeAnna.

8
9 MS. PERRY: I have not received any, Mr.
10 Chair.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Other
13 Federal Agencies, no?

14
15 MR. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Tribal
18 entities. So, for this, I know there's a lot of KIC
19 members in the room, but, you know, for this purpose, I
20 want to hear from tribal presidents representing their
21 tribes. And we have at least one here that I know of,
22 Clinton Cook. Do you want to come forward?

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 MR. COOK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like
27 to thank the Regional Advisory Council for being here
28 today. As a tribal leader I know the time commitment it
29 takes to be away from home, be away from family, be away
30 from times we harvest. Your commitment to our
31 subsistence way of life is greatly valued. My name is
32 Clinton Cook. I'm the Tribal President of the Craig
33 Tribal Association in Craig, Alaska. Which on that map
34 is referred to as Unit 2. OSM sure it took a long time
35 for not having an opinion, but in my opinion, their
36 opinion said Unit 2 deer would be greatly affected by
37 this rural status. And all four tribes in Unit 2 have
38 spoken and will speak here about this issue. Today I'm
39 writing to formally express my opposition to the
40 application for the community of Ketchikan to gain rural
41 status. While I recognize the importance of supporting
42 subsistence rights for Alaska communities, I believe
43 granting rural status to Ketchikan would be
44 inappropriate for several reasons. First and foremost,
45 Ketchikan is not a typical rural community in the context
46 of the standards established under ANILCA. The
47 population size, level of development, and availability
48 to modern amenities such as large-scale stores, health
49 care facilities and public services make it distinct
50 from other communities that depend on subsistence

1 resources for their survival of daily life. Ketchikan
2 is a regional hub, serving not only its residents but
3 also surrounding areas, which reinforces its status as
4 an urbanized area. Granting rural status to Ketchikan
5 could have potentially significant adverse effects on
6 the subsistence resources available to genuine rural
7 communities. Ketchikan has easy access to resources
8 through commercial means and expanding subsistence
9 opportunities in such a large and economically diverse
10 city risks overtaking of our local wildlife and fish
11 populations in Unit 2. This could have unintended
12 consequences for smaller, more isolated communities that
13 are truly dependent on our resources. Additionally,
14 rural status for Ketchikan could undermine the integrity
15 of the rural subsistence management system as it would
16 blur the line between communities with genuine
17 subsistence needs and those where subsistence is a
18 supplement rather than a necessity. This could set a
19 precedent for other urban centers in Alaska to seek
20 similar status, diluting the intent of subsistence
21 protections. I urge the Board to carefully consider the
22 implication of this application and the potential harm
23 it could cause to smaller, truly rural communities.
24 Ketchikan's application should be denied to preserve the
25 integrity of subsistence rights for those who need them.
26 Thank you for hearing my concerns today.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
29 Cook. Any Council members have questions for Mr. Cook?
30 Thank you very much. So, and you have this as a letter
31 that you have submitted to the Subsistence Board, is
32 that correct?

33
34 MR. COOK: Yes, Mr. Chair, I submitted
35 one for the Craig Tribe. I've also submitted some on
36 behalf of other tribes that could not be here today.
37 Klawock Cooperative Association, the Federally
38 Recognized Tribe in Klawock, Alaska. Hydaburg
39 Cooperative Association from Hydaburg, Alaska. Kasaan
40 Tribe is here. We also have letters we've handed in from
41 Petersburg Indian Association. Kake -- Organized Village
42 of Kake has also signed on with a letter as well as
43 Wrangell Cooperative Association.

44
45
46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
47 Anybody else on the Council question or comment? Okay.
48 Thank you. Oh, there's one. Jim.

49
50

1 MR. SLATER: Just a thanks and I just
2 wanted to let you know your concerns are heard. Thank
3 you.

4
5 MR. COOK: Thank you for that. And,
6 Chairman, I really appreciate you moving times for the
7 people in the rural communities to travel home today.
8 Most of you might not know this, but tomorrow the Forest
9 Service is having a wolf meeting to determine our take.
10 And as Keenan said earlier, we can't be in two places
11 at once. I can't stay through tomorrow because I got to
12 go protect our deer from our wolf tomorrow. So, I really
13 appreciate the opportunity for you to give us the time
14 on the agenda that wasn't maybe necessarily our time.
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any
18 other tribal representatives? We have Norm Evans.

19
20 MS. PERRY: No, Skan.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Oh. Excuse me.
23 Norm Skan. Yeah, I see that now, put my glasses on.

24
25 MR. SKAN: Thank you very much. I
26 appreciate each and every one of you. I know it's a
27 difficult situation when we start thinking tribal and
28 subsistence. And I really appreciate your time. And the
29 first thing I want to do is to thank the Taant'a Kwáan,
30 the traditional people of this land for the -- being
31 able to hold our hearing here on their lands today. I
32 respect every one of them. I am -- as you mentioned,
33 Norm Skan, President of Ketchikan Indian Community and
34 I appreciate the presentation, the analysis and
35 especially all the questions that followed up because
36 it really gives context to our report, right. So, and,
37 and I really was absorbing a lot of that. I have a
38 thousand things bouncing in my head right now, but we
39 definitely stand by our proposal. We feel that -- the
40 first thing I got to say is I'm not really happy with
41 ANILCA. And I think, Madam Phillips, were you up in the
42 AFN? Somebody was there, and I just said, I wish I could
43 throw ANILCA in the garbage, you know, that's a big --
44 that's a bit extreme. And I have had more coffee today
45 so, I'm a little more a little more settled. And I think
46 that it's as Mr. Casipit stated, that's what we have to
47 work with and unfortunately, that is what we have to
48 work with. The Federal and State governments did not
49 know how to deal with the tribes. They really didn't.
50 They could -- and that's how IHS and BIA and the State

1 through Medicaid, that's how these programs came into
2 place because they had to have the Western type of
3 thinking to be able to deal with tribes. And, and I'll
4 be honest I'm a member of the community of Ketchikan,
5 but I -- in my role today, I am speaking for our tribal
6 members and the ANILCA really, it has -- the way it is
7 constructed is pitting tribe against tribe. And that's
8 so wrong on so many levels. And I was talking to Clinton
9 earlier, and I respect him and I respect their position.
10 They have to watch over their interests, you know. And
11 as the presentation progressed, I saw that their like
12 section 804, there are things in place to protect any
13 over overuse of any of any of the wildlife or the
14 fisheries or the plants and we support 804. Our intention
15 has never been to -- let's go to Prince of Wales. You
16 know, I think the State's handling of the hunting through
17 their program Fish and Wildlife has probably already
18 done enough damage. We know that there's been a lot of
19 overhunting over there, and then couple that with the
20 wolf predation and it -- we support anything that would
21 restrict -- maybe to make it a positive, not restrict
22 our use, but to prioritize anybody over on Prince of
23 Wales. A lot of them are friends and relatives of mine.
24 We have Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian in our tribe and
25 if there's Natives that moved out of the community
26 Ketchikan, I guarantee you they are in our tribe. We
27 adopt -- we have a section for adopting the tribal
28 members into our tribe, and we take care of them in
29 many, many of our services. And I appreciate some of the
30 questions on the size -- I -- in the analysis, roughly,
31 it was about 2,000 members. I don't believe that's
32 accurate. We always say roughly half of our membership
33 reside here, and that's closer to the 3,000 number. And
34 another thing I really found issue within the report was
35 there's like a moderate cost of living here. And I, you
36 know, we have \$400,000, \$500,000 homes if not more. And
37 many of our tribal members are poor. We are the biggest
38 employer of the tribal members in this community because
39 it's out of necessity. And also, we know each other and
40 we know how to take care of each other. There's no way
41 around that. And I don't see us as a tribe flourishing.
42 And also, that -- and this is nothing against any other
43 people from anywhere else. I see we have Three Bears,
44 we have Walmart, right. We all know that. We got Safeway.
45 I see many, many, many vehicles coming from Prince of
46 Wales to load up from those stores. I see skiffs coming
47 down from -- right down the channel from Metlakatla,
48 heading to Three Bears and loading up in -- it is nothing
49 against them because we all take -- do what it takes to
50 survive. And to us the -- we support that. I probably

1 give more people a ride to the Walmart than I care to
2 admit but that's what it takes. And we feel that the
3 issue of subsistence and I'll be honest, I do not like
4 that word. I appreciate Mr. Nix, his statement and I
5 wrote it down, and I better read it just so that I don't
6 misspeak it because it's a customary and traditional
7 harvest. That's what we do, and that is what we're about.
8 And to lump us all together and just say, well, no, it's
9 subsistence and it's based on all this criteria. You
10 know, some of it I agree with, like I said, some of it
11 I don't. And we strive to live our lifestyle, our way
12 of life, we call it. And I have real issue with the
13 state of Alaska, it -- they never even formally
14 recognized tribes till like, July 28th. Of 2022. You
15 know, I know they weren't there to document us about
16 15,000 years ago, but I would think about 100 years ago
17 or more when they started coming around here, they might
18 have noticed. So, you know, and that just is kind of
19 emblematic of symbol -- symbol of how they see tribes
20 and how that -- we're treated as a whole. And I think
21 ANILCA was created for a way to control the fishery but
22 the biggest flaw I saw was the tribes were just lumped
23 in. No matter that we've been here for thousands, 10,000
24 years, harvesting the exact things that we're talking
25 about today, that is a huge flaw. And -- but we do have
26 to work around that. But I don't see I -- in my position
27 as President, I travel to many, many places, whether
28 it's a conference or training or what, you know, and I
29 don't see this community with 32 miles of road and two
30 stores -- two major stores and being non-rural, I'll say
31 urban, but we -- the right term out here is non-rural.
32 That that that's crazy to me because we all grew up
33 here. We live off of the lands and the waters, and we
34 want to continue to do that without the restrictions
35 that have been put upon us. We totally support the rural
36 status. And we asked you know -- I'm trying to be done
37 by 2:00. So, we ask that this Board really seriously
38 consider the proposal that we have. We are going to
39 continue to advocate for it. And as far as the
40 alternatives, I don't -- we could talk about it as a
41 Council, but making the area smaller still encompasses
42 most of our tribal members and that would not do anything
43 for KIC. And then, of course, making it bigger really
44 is contradictory to what we're trying to accomplish
45 today. Thank you very much.

46
47
48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
Skan. Questions? Cathy.

1 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
2 President Skan for coming before us to give that. I'm
3 hoping I can ask you a question about what KIC has
4 considered. You're working within, I'm gonna use the
5 analogy, a toolbox and this is a tool for trying to get
6 to it. But I'm kind of wondering about whether or not
7 we're in the right toolbox, of course. I wanna read
8 something into the record and get a answer or
9 consideration from you about whether or not, what else
10 you have tried to do outside of ANILCA cause as you have
11 admitted, ANILCA doesn't, you know, you want to throw
12 it in the garbage, right. It doesn't actually apply or
13 whatever. In 1971 Congress passed ANCSA, I am not an
14 expert in ANCSA, I'm reading this off of the Federal
15 Subsistence Management Program's website so, I trust
16 that this has been, you know, vetted and actually
17 represents ANCSA correctly. ANCSA extinguished
18 aboriginal hunting and fishing rights, the conference
19 committee report expressed the expectation that the
20 Secretary of the interior and the state of Alaska would
21 take action necessary to protect subsistence needs of
22 Alaska Natives. In 1978, the State subsistence law
23 created a priority for subsistence use over all other
24 fish and wildlife, but it did not define subsistence
25 users. Then, in 1980, ANILCA was brought in, of course,
26 and Congress passed that and ANILCA defined subsistence
27 users as rural Alaskans. So, a little bit of a history
28 lesson, but a kind of a good succinct summary that makes
29 me wonder, well, has KIC gone back to and tried to use
30 ANCSA or whatever has come out of this and back in 1971
31 to think about ways to restore aboriginal rights, the
32 hunting and fishing. I know that's, you know, you're
33 putting this proposal in because this is a tool within
34 a toolbox. But what about going back on that government
35 to government, you know, tribe to Department of Interior
36 level. Have you guys made any attempts to do that to
37 accomplish the same thing that you're trying to
38 accomplish under the Federal Subsistence Program?

39
40 MR. SKAN: Thank you very much for that
41 question. The short answer is no. But the longer answer
42 is we have been in discussions with that and actually I
43 did talk to Mr. Cook about that earlier today. Right
44 now, the toolbox is ANILCA, right. So, that's where we
45 are focusing our efforts. And we have been silent for a
46 lot of years as far as wanting our rural status. But
47 that doesn't mean that we wanted it, you know, we've
48 just been silent about it and we feel like the time is
49 now. If not now, when? Right. So, but to answer your
50 question, that will be one of our next steps. We do feel

1 that the government's government is an important tool.
2 But I must say that as a sovereign government who should
3 make decisions on their people in the water. We have to
4 go to the Federal government, the U.S. Federal
5 government, for permission on such things. And really,
6 that doesn't sit right with me either but it is a process
7 that has been put in place for many years, and it is
8 something that we will probably -- we will have to
9 address it in different venues. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
12 Anybody else with a question for Mr. Skan? Albert.
13

14 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
15 Albert Howard from Angoon. I certainly hope you don't
16 throw ANILCA in the garbage because we've learned how
17 to take care of our tribal members in Angoon through
18 that process. A process that was put in place, and we've
19 learned to operate within the guidelines of that. I asked
20 OSM this question earlier, and I have to kind of agree
21 with the gentleman that said they kind of kicked the can
22 down the road, and they did that to me because I didn't
23 get the answer. So, I'm going to ask you the same
24 question. Through the State process, you're allowed the
25 same resources as we are through the Federal process.
26 The only difference is when there's something wrong with
27 the State process, we can go through the Federal process
28 and create a special use area for federally qualified
29 users. You can't do that through the State process. So,
30 I'm wondering what's gonna be the difference between the
31 way things are for your tribal members now through access
32 to the resources around here and if you're become
33 designated non-rural, what does that do for the tribal
34 members? Cause in my mind and all the reading I've done
35 on both sides of this, the only difference will be you'll
36 have what you want to throw in the garbage as a tool to
37 restrict other user groups. As an example, tour guides.
38 I'll just put that out there. You can restrict their
39 access to the same resources as tribal members, but you
40 have to use ANILCA's process to do that. You can't do
41 that through the State process, I believe. So, currently
42 you have access to the resources you're wanting through
43 the State process. You have sport fishing licenses and
44 I've been told this time and time again that you have
45 access to the resources. And the only difference is
46 you're gonna add ANILCA to this. So, I'm trying to wrap
47 my head around this cause I understand the impact it's
48 gonna have on Angoon. I'll give you an example and this
49 body knows I've talked this thing to death, but we
50 finally closed off an area to non-federally qualified

1 users. And my thought process is you go down the harbor
2 down here and you take someone that's not Native, and
3 this isn't prejudice or anything in any other way other
4 than the word subsistence has become a TV thing.
5 Everybody wants to say, I'm a subsistence user,
6 everybody wants to say -- and it's because the TV. TVs
7 made the word subsistence famous now, and it's gotten
8 kind of ridiculous, but anyway. So, my thought is, what
9 if a gentleman with a big seine boat or a tender out of
10 Ketchikan says, hey buddies, let's go hunting on
11 Admiralty we hear there's a lot of deer based on the
12 video that Fish and Game put out during the process, and
13 they take their boat and six other little boats and come
14 into a bay. How are you gonna prevent that from happening
15 from the tribe's point of view? You can control your
16 tribal members somewhat, but you can't control everybody
17 in Ketchikan know, I'm wondering, what's your -- what's
18 the difference between the access you have now and the
19 access you'll be given through ANILCA?

20
21 MR. SKAN: Great, thank you. I need to
22 preface everything by saying I did not want to throw
23 ANILCA in the garbage can. What I was emphasizing is I
24 -- it was not happy with the way that we have to go
25 through the process to get rural status, but that's all
26 it was. So, I want to make that clear because -- and I
27 also said that it is what we have in place and we are
28 willing to work within ANILCA. It has done some good
29 things. So, yeah, I definitely don't want to have that
30 resonate with anybody. I do not want to get rid of
31 ANILCA. And what -- to your question on what does it do
32 for a tribe? Number one is our sovereignty; we do not
33 have our sovereignty over our -- the control of the land
34 and water around us. We were here many, many years before
35 ANILCA. I mean, pick a number over 10,000, that and also
36 that we are under the State fishing and hunting and we
37 don't -- I don't -- we haven't really discussed this as
38 a tribe, but we will. The management of the fishery is
39 a disaster. And the priority -- if you just look at the
40 numbers, the priority is to the charter boat captains,
41 which generally here especially are not -- are non-
42 Natives. And it's just a prioritization that I think
43 that we have the right to and we also that -- yeah,
44 okay, yeah, thank you. That's basically what I'm saying
45 here. And we do respect your position on another user
46 group going from one Unit to the other. But there are
47 Native and non-Native in every community that's rural
48 already. Probably including Angoon and definitely, I
49 would say Sitka and many other places, and it would be
50 unrealistic for me to say, okay, here's how I'm gonna

1 control it, you know. I think there is a inherent
2 authority -- well, maybe not authority, but control that
3 each individual has to take on their own initiative. And
4 there is no way that we can stop a boat going from Angoon
5 to here if the hunting is better, right. So, yeah, that's
6 just -- I can't express enough that I feel that it's
7 unrealistic how I would control anybody going anywhere
8 else.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
11 Skan. Anybody else? Okay, let's -- I see one card from
12 I believe is the Tribal President of Kasaan. Are you on
13 the same travel crunch here? If so Mike Jones, you --
14 if you would want to come forward.

15

16 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
17 Council. Appreciate your time and being here. I want to
18 start with acknowledging my respect for my cousins at
19 Ketchikan Indian Community. I'm gonna start with a
20 letter that we wrote up and had signed by fellow tribal
21 presidents and leadership. We, the undersigned,
22 presidents of the Organized Village of Kasaan, Craig
23 Tribal Association, Wrangell Cooperative Association,
24 the Organized Village of Kake, Klawock Cooperative
25 Association, and Hydaburg Cooperative Association write
26 to express our strong opposition to granting rural
27 status to Ketchikan. This proposed action would have
28 severe consequences for our truly rural Native
29 communities and the delicate ecosystem of Prince of
30 Wales Island, POW. Our opposition is rooted in the
31 following critical concerns. Number one, the threat to
32 subsistence resources, our communities rely heavily on
33 subsistence resources for cultural practices and food
34 security. Granting rural status to Ketchikan would
35 dramatically increase competition for these limited
36 resources, devastating our way of life. The challenges
37 we face in our rural communities, including limited job
38 opportunities and high living costs, make these
39 substance [sic] resources even more crucial for our
40 survival. Number two, the environmental impact on POW.
41 Prince of Wales Island ecosystem is a finely balanced
42 and already under pressure. Additional harvesters from
43 Ketchikan would significantly increase the strain on our
44 land and resources. This will lead to overharvesting,
45 habitat disruption and long-term damage to the
46 biodiversity of our communities and the steward --
47 stewarded -- that we have stewarded for generations.
48 Number three, cultural preservation. Our connection to
49 the land and subsistence practices is integral to our
50 cultural identity. The potential influx of harvesters

1 from Ketchikan threatens not just our food sources, but
2 our ability to pass down traditional knowledge and
3 practices for future generations. Number four economic
4 disparities, unlike Ketchikan, our truly rural
5 communities lack diverse economic opportunities. We face
6 high unemployment rates and limited access to services.
7 Subsistence practices are not just cultural, but
8 economic necessities for many of our residents.
9 Ketchikan's developed economy, including tourism,
10 fishing, government sectors, stands in stark contrast
11 to our rural realities. Number five infrastructure and
12 services. Ketchikan's development or Ketchikan's
13 developed infrastructure including advanced health care
14 facilities, retail options, transportation systems
15 clearly defines it as a non-rural area. Our communities,
16 on the other hand, struggle with limited infrastructure
17 and services, emphasizing our genuine rural status and
18 need for protected subsistence rights. Number six
19 population considerations. Ketchikan's population of
20 over 13,000 residents far exceeds any reasonable
21 threshold for rural designation. This large population
22 base, if granted rural status, would overwhelm the
23 subsistence resources that our much smaller communities
24 depend on. Number seven, intent of ANILCA. Granting
25 rural status to Ketchikan would contradict the intent
26 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act,
27 ANILCA, which aims to protect subsistence rights for
28 rural Alaskans. Our communities embody the spirit and
29 letter of this act. Number eight, sustainability
30 concerns. The potential increase in harvesters on POW
31 raises serious questions about the long-term
32 sustainability of our natural resources. Our tribes have
33 been stewards of this land for millennia. Maintaining a
34 delicate balance and influx of harvesters from Ketchikan
35 will quickly upset this balance, leading to resource
36 depletion and ecosystem damage.

37
38 We urge decision makers to recognize the
39 clear distinctions between Ketchikan and our genuinely
40 rural communities. Granting rural status to Ketchikan
41 would not only be factually incorrect, but would also
42 pose a serious threat to the subsistence lifestyles,
43 cultural practices and environmental balance of Prince
44 of Wales Island. We stand united in our opposition to
45 this proposal and call for the protection of our truly
46 rural communities, rights and resources. We request your
47 support in preserving the integrity of rural designation
48 and ensuring the sustainable future of our lands and our
49 way of life. Sincerely, Michael Jones, President of the
50 Organized Village of Kasaan; Clinton Cook Sr., President

1 Craig Tribal Association; Joel Jackson, President of the
2 Organized Village of Kake; Dennis Nickerson, President
3 of Klawock Cooperative Association; Sid Edenshaw,
4 President of Hydaburg Cooperative Association, and
5 Edward Rilatos, President of Wrangell Cooperative
6 Association. Would also -- back in June the Organized
7 Village of Kasaan passed a resolution. It's resolution
8 OVK 24-06-045, a resolution of the Organized Village of
9 Kasaan Tribal Council opposing Ketchikan Indian
10 Communities' request for -- to change Ketchikan Alaska
11 status from non-rural to rural. And I did hand that in,
12 back in June. So, you guys have copies of that. That's
13 what I have, thank you so very much for your time and
14 allowing me to speak today.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
17 Mr. Jones. Do you have time to answer any questions from
18 the Council. Any questions? Okay.

19

20 MR. JONES: Okay.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
23 much.

24

25 MR. JONES: (In Native) gunalchéesh (In
26 Native).

27

28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Looks like we do
29 have Joel Jackson on the phone. Just mentioned as the
30 Tribal President for the Organized Village of Kake. Mr.
31 Jackson, are you with us?

32

33 MR. JACKSON: I am, can you hear me?

34

35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes, go ahead.

36

37 MR. JACKSON: Okay, yeah. Like you said,
38 my name is Joel Jackson from Kake, I'm the tribal
39 president at the present time. You know, I just signed
40 on to that letter that Mr. Jones just read -- President
41 Jones, just read. And you know, what's listed on there
42 is exactly what we've been talking about here too, the
43 -- our island, Kupreanof Island has a moose population,
44 and it's heavily impacted by non-Native that's come from
45 all over, Juneau, Petersburg, Wrangell. I don't [sic]
46 where else they come from, but they come here for our
47 one month moose season and, you know so, we already feel
48 the impact of, you know, having a open season of hunters
49 that can come in here and hunt on our island. I have no
50 problem with it, I - it wouldn't take anybody's food off

1 their plate if they needed it. You know, that's the way
2 I feel about everything. But on this issue, I agree, you
3 know, with Mr. Jones what he just said. And we support
4 our fellow tribes on Prince of Wales Island. What's to
5 stop -- for instance, what's to stop Juneau from applying
6 for a rural status. If Ketchikan gets it there a little
7 bit bigger in Ketchikan, but you know what's to stop
8 that? Where is gonna stop? And where is that gonna put
9 the small villages like Mr. Jones stated? Where is that
10 gonna put us? We're in the same situation as Kasaan and
11 all those tribes on Prince Wales, everything is
12 expensive, way more expensive than Ketchikan, Juneau,
13 all those bigger places, everything. So, we heavily rely
14 on our subsistence way of life. So, it's not something
15 we take lightly and I know those other communities, I've
16 been down there, I've witnessed how they go out and
17 they, like ourselves spring and summer, it's busy, busy.
18 We're getting ready for the winter. We gotta get ready
19 to make our food supplies last or until the next season.
20 I can't go to Costco, I can't go to Fred Meyer's, any
21 of those places, unless I travel to Juneau. And that's
22 almost 500 round trip and by the time I do that, I might
23 as well have bought from our store, you know. So, there's
24 a lot of things that I believe that this rural status
25 is so important to the smaller communities as stated in
26 ANILCA. So, that's all I gotta say about it.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
29 Jackson. Any questions for Mr. Jackson?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Apparently not. Thank you for calling
34 in. Okay, I'll -- none of our other cards identify
35 anybody as a tribal president. Just want to check in the
36 room, see if there's anybody that I've missed. I see
37 somebody in the back. Come forward.

38
39 MS. GITNACK'ANSEAK: Good afternoon. My
40 name is Ahl'lidaaw Gitnack'anseak, I am the president
41 of Tsimshian Tribal Association Incorporated here in
42 Ketchikan and (In Native) Norma Fawcett (In Native)
43 Matthew Fawcett. (In Native) Margaret Ridley (In Native)
44 1887. Good afternoon. My name is Ahl'lidaaw
45 Gitnack'anseak. I am Tsimshian Gispwudwada, Killer Whale
46 clan from Ketchikan, Alaska. And I'm here to speak on
47 behalf of Tsimshian Tribal Association here in
48 Ketchikan. I represent over 1,400 Tsimshian, mostly
49 living in the City of Ketchikan, not the Borough area.
50 I know my tribal members very well. They're in -- oh,

1 gosh, about ten years ago, on North Prince of Wales,
2 there was a discovery in a cave. They call that discovery
3 on your knees cave and there was DNA testing done of the
4 fisherman that was found there. And he was what Tsimshian
5 and Tlingit and the testing also showed that those
6 remains were about 17,000 years old. And so, I don't
7 feel uncomfortable about being proud about my Tsimshian
8 nation's heritage in what they call present day
9 Southeast Alaska. Our tribes, our nations, have
10 intermarried and worked together for thousands and
11 thousands of years. I was happy to learn that in Canada,
12 that there was a lawsuit regarding land and chief from
13 Vancouver used his Aadawoo his -- their traditional
14 history as a court document and he prevailed in his
15 case. We all in our traditional nations have our own
16 laws and our own history that is way older than the
17 European, and the Constitution, and the U.S. Government.
18 This is -- you guys are puppies on this land, and it's
19 a colonial view to come here and count. It sounds like
20 you're counting shoes. It sounds like you're counting
21 cars when you tell us about your analysis. The -- there
22 were thorough studies I was happy to hear about. But
23 also, you have no ability to appreciate the history in
24 the traditional nations of this land and the connection.
25 Thank you, Patricia Phillips, for pointing to that. Long
26 time ago here in Ketchikan, the waterfront was covered
27 with the, with smoke houses. And I know down by where
28 they have the potlatch in Thomas Basin and that was all
29 smoke houses and most of those homes were Tsimshian
30 homes. We didn't ask for the Europeans to come here and
31 bring their industry. They were here for natural
32 resource extraction, and they landed on us. And our
33 rights are still intact, our indigenous rights are still
34 intact. Nobody keeps me from my salmon and in my family
35 stories, I've never heard of anybody going to Prince of
36 Wales for their deer. You know, that's a new thing, it's
37 almost like a luxury. But I know of a lot of family
38 stories where our Tsimshian, and Haida, and Tlingit
39 people, and Aleut people all helped each other to get
40 by when times were tough. And a lot of times it wasn't
41 because of lack of fish, it was because of politics or
42 war. Our Tsimshian Tribal Association does support rural
43 status for Ketchikan. All we want to do is live like we
44 always have. I have great love for all nations and all
45 tribal people in the state of Alaska. And our Tsimshian
46 Tribal Association would never take a position to cut
47 you off of your heritage.

48
49 And that kinda talk is really
50 disturbing. I see that a lot of tribes have learned well

1 through the Boarding School System, and we shouldn't
2 follow suit so fast when the Federal government wants
3 us to fight each other, you know, we're not strong that
4 way. So, just I'm here to say, yes Tsimshian Tribal
5 Association stands with Ketchikan Indian Community and
6 our fight for subsistence rights for everybody. We share
7 this island with people who are not Native. And it's
8 hard work and if you've got the boat, and the rope, and
9 the energy, and the health to get out there and set your
10 skate, and you got the people ready to smoke fish, that's
11 a lot of work. You really gotta put a lot of time in and
12 take a lot of time out of your life to live well. So, I
13 wouldn't want to take that right away from anybody.
14 Living in Alaska, we have a beautiful lifestyle here,
15 and it's not for the weak so, that cuts out most people.
16 So, the resource looks good to me. Yeah, I do very well.
17 So, anyway, that is my testimony today is just Tsimshian
18 Tribal Association stands with KIC, and we are in favor,
19 and it is the right thing to do. It is Saanya Kwáan and
20 Tongass Tribe have their inherited rights as they always
21 should have, all people should. And please don't move
22 in a way that would take that away. It's not just fish
23 and deer, it's also culture and it's also spirit. (In
24 Native) I am done.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Any
27 questions? Albert, do you have your hand up?

28

29 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I ask
30 this of Mr. Skan earlier, and I don't really think I got
31 an answer then either so, I'll try another way, Mr.
32 Chairman. What currently is preventing you from
33 practicing your traditional way of life? I'm full-
34 blooded Tlingit, by the way. And I understand ANILCA
35 forwards and backwards, because you can't hang around
36 Cathy and Patricia and not know how the process works.
37 So, I'm wondering, how does ANILCA and urban status
38 prevents you from practicing your traditional way of
39 life. Now keep in mind my son went to school and now
40 lives in Juneau, so he's an urban Indian, I call him and
41 he gets offended by it, but it is what it is. So, he's
42 learned to live his traditional lifestyle in Juneau, and
43 he still practices who he is. And my daughter goes to
44 school in Juneau, and it's interesting if you talk to
45 the northern Tlingit, Angoon is known for the last
46 strongholds of our culture. The language, the protocol
47 on how koo.éex' are done, there's no wavering from the
48 traditional way things have always been done. So, I
49 mentioned my daughter cause she's learning our language
50 in Juneau. So, I'm wondering what urban status is

1 restricting you from practicing your cultures? I could
2 hear every excuse, but I also have instances in ways to
3 demonstrate that my kids living in Juneau it [sic] not
4 restricting who they are. They're still Tlingit and
5 they're still Native because their mother is. So, I'm
6 wondering, how is this restricting your tribal members
7 from being who they are? I sympathize with the fact that
8 the non-Natives moved into your area and now prohibit
9 you from being a part of a process that one gentleman
10 decided he wanted to throw out the window.

11
12 MS. GITNACK'ANSEAK: Thank you, Mr.
13 Howard. Your -- I really love your question because it's
14 not just -- you're not only talking about the salmon and
15 the deer that your son has access to in Juneau, but this
16 question goes to the highest level and to the most sacred
17 level, the highest level in Washington, D.C. with
18 Federal policy. That's the difference, who goes to jail?
19 You don't have to go to jail, the city people gotta go
20 to jail. The authorities will be following them and
21 looking to give citations and arrest them. So, that's a
22 big difference. On the historic side the difference is
23 that our ancestors knew and our ancient history tells
24 us where we got the salmon. Now a European comes over
25 and says they've got different laws. We had villages
26 that had thousands of people. By this -- by these Federal
27 standards, there were villages that would've -- would
28 not have qualified for subsistence status. The Federal
29 threshold is BS, it doesn't hold, it doesn't make any
30 sense at all. So, the -- what is written on paper, it's
31 too bad that we can't have people perform and be counted
32 on based on their integrity. But so, we have these
33 written laws that we -- that need to be followed. But
34 there has not been much regard from Washington, D.C. and
35 the Federal levels. So, I love that places far away and
36 smaller communities got some sympathy, but that has not
37 happened here and we want our rights and that's why
38 we're here. So, it's what's on paper. There is not this
39 class of the city Indian is worth less than the rural
40 Indian, that is not so. And we shouldn't act like it's
41 okay. You don't trash us. And in hoping that you can
42 keep all your -- all of your rights. The thing is, is
43 that we all should have these, and we're not to be
44 thought of as less. I want to give the example of, years
45 ago there was a referendum on the state of Alaska
46 election for English First Initiative. I have friends
47 way up north, and they were worried because some people
48 will -- were still struggling with English in the courts.
49 And so, I heard on the news that that English First
50 Initiative got passed overwhelmingly. So, I went to my

1 mom's house with my daughter and it was seven at night.
2 She was already in bed, and I asked her if she heard the
3 result, and she said yes. And she started laughing and
4 I asked her, how come you're laughing? And she said,
5 yeah, in this State I can't speak my language, but I can
6 roll a doobie. This is the standard of the voters of
7 Alaska. It's not very far different for the people, for
8 the voters in the United States government. But, you
9 know, it's not good enough for our history, and it's not
10 good enough for our culture, we have a much higher
11 standard. The thing is, I learned from my mother, nobody
12 stopped her from speaking Shm'algyach or -- and teaching
13 it, even though government tried and those policies were
14 there. Now, with the subsistence, those laws are there,
15 you're trying to draw a line now. And you know, a lot
16 of people live very well regardless of any of those
17 papers. Yes.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Albert,
20 have a follow up.

21
22 MR. HOWARD: So, in regards to access to
23 resources, Mr. Chairman what would be the difference
24 between the way it is now and if you get rural status?

25
26 MS. GITNACK'ANSEAK: Oh, that. I would
27 have expanded time in a season to harvest possibly other
28 areas that I could go to. Yes, and hopefully if, only
29 if the stocks were healthy even more access to more
30 volume. And in my family, I come from a huge family. The
31 last time we counted, like ten years ago, it was over
32 200. What little fish I have, most of it has went to the
33 elders so, I'm rationing myself.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Can we see
36 if anybody else has a question? Albert. Anybody else?
37 Apparently not.

38
39 MS. GITNACK'ANSEAK: Okay, thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

42
43 (Applause)

44
45 And once again, is there anybody else
46 that I've missed who would identify themselves as a
47 tribal president? No, okay. I know we have a lot of
48 tribal members. Okay, another person with a time
49 constraint. Okay.

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MR. EDWARDSON: I apologize for barging in. I know you had a list. I was surprised you didn't go by the list, but I have about an hour to get back to Prince of Wales Island. First, I find it very difficult to sit here.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Could you identify yourself first, for the record?

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MR. EDWARDSON: I will in a moment. I find it very difficult to sit here and ask permission to access something that has always been ours. For the record, (In Native) Ketchikan (In Native) Nora Kogo (In Native) Robert Kogo (In Native). Good people, greetings. My Haida name is One Raven. I am from the Raven Clan and Ketchikan is my home. Nora Kogo is my grandmother, Dr. Robert Kogo is my grandfather. Verna Edwardson is my mother. My English name is Charles Edwardson. I was born in Ketchikan, raised here in Southeast Alaska, my career started at the age of 14 as a deckhand on a seine boat. I spent the first part of my career fishing off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. And I've worked hard all of my life ever since then. Ultimately bringing me to this table. I grew up in a traditional household, a traditional Haida household. I am a Ketchikan Indian Community Tribal Council member, I'm treasurer of the Ketchikan Indian Community. I serve on the Sealaska Board of Directors. I currently am the Director of Education and Cultural Heritage for the Tlingit and Haida Central Council's Generation Southeast Prince of Wales campus, located on Prince of Wales in Klawock. I live here and I live there. I work and live on Prince of Wales, I was born and raised in my family's here. I have a house on both islands. Also, I'm a general contractor for 30 plus years.

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So, we've been waiting years, decades. So, forgive me if this takes about ten minutes. I tried to read it off my notes, but sometimes I have to ad lib. The question is -- has been posed, I'll get back to my notes here. The question has been posed what difference would it make if we are rural or non-rural in our -- accessing our traditional foods or what difference at all? If there is no difference in access to the resources for rural or non-rural status, I challenge you all to give up your rural status. Tell me what the difference is then. What are you protecting? If there is no difference, give up your rural status. See where that puts you. I know one thing would change. I would have

1 access to deer on the 24th of July on my island. We
2 don't need to go to Prince of Wales. We got more deer
3 here than they got there. Look at the data. Hopefully
4 Keenan Sanderson has some data on our harvest here. It's
5 easier to get deer here than Prince of Wales. We have
6 more. It's not gonna affect Prince of Wales. I live
7 there, I know. If rural status was granted, it would
8 actually reduce the need for us to travel to other areas.
9 And the protections have been talked about all day long.
10 Of course there's protections. So, this misnomer that
11 all of a sudden 20,000 people are gonna go to Prince of
12 Wales Island is just false because you can look at the
13 deer harvest tags and we tag out here. Very few go over
14 there anymore. We have more roads here now than we had
15 even two years ago. So, just to get that question off.
16 If there is no difference, you guys give up your rural
17 status.

18
19 I wanna put a few things in context just
20 for this discussion today. Metlakatla, southwest of here
21 is rural, Prince of Wales west is rural, Saxman they
22 call it South Tongass it's more east is rural, Ketchikan
23 sits dead center in the middle. We all use the same
24 infrastructure, we all use the same airport, we all use
25 the same ferry system, and we are as vulnerable in it
26 as any community for AML or Samson [sic], if we missed
27 a barge, we'd be in tough shape as well as Prince of
28 Wales, Wrangell, everybody. If the argument is that we
29 have a Walmart (distortion) hear that? That's gonna be
30 the argument you guys got at Walmart. Well, our sister
31 tribe one mile down the road past the Coast Guard base
32 has a Three Bears, it's a chain, Three Bears is a pretty
33 good chain. They have a hardware store, sporting goods
34 store, liquor store, as well as a very large grocery
35 store. Does that rural community of Saxman lose their
36 rural status because they have a Three Bears shopping
37 center or are they simply a rural community that has a
38 Three Bears shopping center? They are no less rural
39 because they have a Three Bear shopping center.

40
41 Saxman also has a deepwater port --
42 conceptual deepwater port, it's not built yet. They also
43 have the ability and the wherewithal to apply for an FAA
44 permit for broadband to serve the broader community.
45 High speed internet, sounds pretty urban. They have Cape
46 Fox Corporation, which is a wildly successful
47 corporation. In fact, they own much of the real estate
48 in downtown Ketchikan. Saxman is very powerful, we're
49 proud to call them a sister tribe. All these amenities
50 and successes don't make them any less rural. Prince of

1 Wales has a Federal Scenic Byway designation. That is a
2 huge accomplishment for Prince of Wales. The roads, the
3 transportation, people work for years. A scenic byway
4 designation, I could only wish to have that, they have
5 the best highway system in Southeast Alaska. The best
6 maintained highway system by far. They have four school
7 districts, an airport, FAA approve instrument flights,
8 airport. In fact, this morning, I got a cup of coffee,
9 jumped on the plane and Klawock five to seven, five
10 minutes to seven. I walked in here, I was the first one
11 in here, five minutes to eight. My coffee didn't even
12 get cold yet. For a rural community, that was a pretty
13 urban commute. We have better access to our State capital
14 in Juneau from Klawock than we do from Ketchikan. Does
15 that make them urban or rural or non-rural? Prince of
16 Wales also has three large grocery stores, a vibrant
17 mariculture industry developing, at least three major
18 Alaska Native Corporations based there. The birthplace
19 of Sealaska, by the way, and a small but resilient timber
20 industry, as well as a huge charter industry, a
21 phenomenal cottage industry, as well as a developing
22 tourist industry, not to mention a daily ferry system
23 from Hollis to Ketchikan that brings POW residents over
24 daily. Yes, to go to Walmart and Three Bears. So, this
25 is just a context cause I know some of you don't really
26 -- are not really familiar with the area. So, just to
27 put it into context, what we're talking about today is
28 rural designation. I've just demonstrated that all of
29 our rural communities have the same amenities we do. Of
30 course, we have more jobs here, we're slightly larger
31 in population, but we still have our struggles. I'm
32 winding down here. I got some prepared comments. These
33 are this stuff I jotted down here. And you'll have to
34 excuse me for a second. I got to get a cup of water,
35 hold on.

36

37 (Pause)

38

39 Rural status, this gonna go on for a
40 little while and I will try to hurry, guys, I know people
41 wanna talk. Traditional and customary use is the issue.
42 It's not just about shooting deer. A lot have been -- a
43 lot of rhetoric has been thrown around about the deer
44 on Prince of Wales Island. But this isn't about the
45 deer. I've already explained we can get our own deer.
46 We're not looking for more access to Prince of Wales.
47 We're looking for access to our own homeland. Why would
48 we be denied our cultural traditions because we have a
49 Walmart, just because there are potential alternative
50 resources available, by the way, we don't want any thing

1 but rural status. A couple of options were presented,
2 those aren't realistic and they don't meet our goals.
3 We want rural status. Not this or that. It's one or the
4 other and you guys have to make the decision. You were
5 put here to make a decision. I don't want a deferral.
6 We'll go another 20 years trying to get our rights back.
7 These are hard decisions. Believe me, guys, I'm on
8 Boards, I'm on several, and we make hard decisions and
9 they're not gonna be popular with everybody. Don't make
10 them on a political pressures. Make them on practical
11 decision making. Do we meet the threshold? Yes. Is
12 everybody around us rural? Yes. Is our two-and-a-half-
13 mile radius all of a sudden non-rural? So, alternative
14 resources was mentioned, stores and whatnot. Our
15 population is economically disadvantaged by many
16 metrics. Just because there's a big grocery store here
17 doesn't mean that it's available due to limited incomes
18 of our people. Not just Natives, non-Natives are also
19 struggling with the inflation and the high cost of
20 living. The cruel irony is, though our natural resources
21 are available right here and yet still unreachable due
22 to the regulations promulgated upon us as indigenous,
23 traditional and customary food to gathers that do have
24 indigenous sovereignty.

25
26 One thing I can mention, and this
27 doesn't have -- it's a NOAA issue so, I don't even want
28 to bring it up but it's related. We're not a rural
29 community so, we have to go three miles off to gig up a
30 few halibut on a long line -- to long line. And gigging
31 is getting harder because of the charter industry. That
32 would be one significant change. We could -- if we were
33 designated rural, we could fish closer to home, safer.
34 We -- and I mentioned earlier we could start on July
35 24th where the deer taste better, July and August. We
36 could get a doe. We wouldn't have to travel to Prince
37 of Wales and get the first two tags and then hopefully
38 come back here. But there are a couple other examples
39 that I could think of what would change if we were rural
40 versus non-rural. What would change is we'd be
41 designated, like all our tribal brothers and sisters in
42 their own homeland as a rural community in our tribal
43 home. But much, not much other differences, to tell you
44 the truth, I can still get my -- what I need, but it's
45 harder for me. I have to go farther from home and things
46 of that nature. So, anyway, I got the stage, I got one
47 more.

48
49 We went over cultural practices, I went
50 over how our communities compare. Why I don't think

1 they're that much -- more disadvantaged than we are. We
2 all share the same infrastructure, things of that
3 nature. And it's my tone of voice. I'm not yelling at
4 you, guy [sic]. I mean, you know, this is my smile, by
5 the way. I wanna tell you guys, I -- we all appreciate
6 the respectful, professional manner that business is
7 being conducted here. And we know this is a heavy weight
8 that you guys have to bear. We do appreciate all the
9 hard work that you all do for us. Today we are requesting
10 that the Southeast RAC concur with our position that we
11 are indeed a rural community. It is good to see our
12 brothers here, although in opposition we did it
13 respectfully, we acknowledged each other. President
14 Cook, great friend, President Jones, is a great friend
15 of mine. I see Saxman representatives, our brothers and
16 sisters here. And if I forget to mention anybody, I
17 apologize. But they stated their position respectfully
18 and we respect their opinion. We have a different
19 opinion. It was good to see everybody here.

20
21 The reason I wanted to acknowledge the
22 Prince of Wales folks, specifically, as we are here to
23 assure our neighboring tribes of a consultation process
24 to support their efforts in the resource conservation
25 and utilization as well. So, there is no overlap in
26 resources harvested. Our goal is not to better access
27 our neighbors resources, but to access our own. We will
28 help ensure that clear guidelines and regulations will
29 be implemented for responsible harvest here on our land,
30 on our island. I will say we actually do even have a
31 Tribal Council resolution, which I think our attorney
32 might have here, that expresses our tribe's support for
33 Prince of Wales conservation efforts. If they put forth
34 a rural preference request, emergency management of any
35 kind that they may need for any resource. We as a tribe
36 support that to demonstrate that we are not trying to
37 have more access to their island, just access to ours.

38
39 So, in closing, I just want to keep this
40 one thing in mind, given that we have a neighboring
41 tribe that is considered rural, occupying the same
42 island a mile away, using the same road system, the same
43 healthcare facility, we share the same schools, and has
44 the same transportation limitations in and out of our
45 community. It would have to be a very compelling
46 position, a very compelling -- remarkable position, in
47 fact to hold that we as a tribe and as a community, the
48 Ketchikan Indian Community and our residents do not
49 warrant that same status. It would have to be really a
50 compelling, remarkable position to hold. So, I hope, I

1 wish you guys the best of luck. And thank you, thank
2 you. This is a very weighty position to put in. But
3 again, you had to accept the appointment, right? You
4 knew something was coming. And this is the tough one
5 that you guys were fearing, I think. But we -- we'll
6 just hope for the best for Ketchikan. And we'll hold you
7 up regardless of your position as human beings. That's
8 just the way we are. So, we'll be mad if it doesn't go
9 our way. But we still hold you up and we thank you for
10 your efforts. Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
13 Louie.

14
15 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have
16 one question. I'd like to see how you could answer for
17 our Council here. What did KIC promise my people for
18 Metlakatla that would leave their rural community, and
19 their homes, and their family to come over to Ketchikan?
20 They -- apparently.....

21
22 (Simultaneous speech)

23
24 MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah, we didn't.....

25
26 (Simultaneous speech)

27
28 MR. WAGNER: Enough not to.

29
30 MR. EDWARDSON: So, the only thing I can
31 say is that I think you guys supported our request,
32 Metlakatla Indian Community, I think, I might be wrong.
33 The only reason I pointed out Prince Wales and committed
34 a tribal Council, in fact, I think I made the resolution,
35 the motion is because they are the ones most openly
36 objecting for the reason that their perception was, we
37 would overrun their area. So, if Metlakatla wanted the
38 same type of resolution, I'm sure we would have given
39 one. But I believe Metlakatla supported our decision. I
40 don't know that for a fact. Maybe one of my KIC tribal
41 folks or a lawyer can talk to that. But if there was
42 opposition we would have tried to build -- we would have
43 had tried to build a consensus with you. So, why there's
44 no deal in place? Probably was cause there was no
45 opposition. I don't know if that answers your question.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: A response,
48 Louie.

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1 MR. WAGNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As far
2 as I know, I'm the tribal rights representative for
3 Metlakatla. And they would've told me if they signed
4 sign that cause I give a report on the Council meetings,
5 after a trip and I haven't heard one word of that
6 but.....

7
8 MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah, no I.....

9
10 MR. WAGNER: The people left for a
11 reason, so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 MR. EDWARDSON: No, I'm sorry I cut you
14 off. What did you say just now? I missed that last part,
15 sorry I cut you off.

16
17 MR. WAGNER: Our people left for a
18 reason. So, KIC offered them something to give up their
19 rural status. That was my question. What were they
20 offered? So, thank you.

21
22 MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah, I don't quite
23 honestly, I can tell you we -- Metlakatla as far as the
24 meetings I was in, really never even came up cause -- I
25 don't know why, but maybe somebody can tell me. I know
26 there's other KIC representatives here.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. That
29 question can be answered later. Did I see your hand up,
30 Albert?

31
32 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You
33 kind of almost got to answering my question. Now, keep
34 in mind I'm building a case in my own head on. Am I
35 gonna support this or am I not gonna support?

36
37 MR. EDWARDSON: Yes, I understand, thank
38 you.

39
40 MR. HOWARD: So, it isn't -- I'm not
41 asking these questions to offend anybody. I've got to
42 have a full understanding. It's part of my
43 responsibility of sitting here.

44
45 MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah.

46
47 MR. HOWARD: And this is my smile, by the
48 way. And so, what is preventing you access to your deer
49 and what would rural status allow you access to the
50 deer. So, currently why are you not allowed access to

1 the deer that you mentioned and has the State -- have
2 you tried to go through the State process to gain that
3 access, because they seem to be the managers and telling
4 us what we can and can't do.

5

6

MR. EDWARDSON: Right.

7

8 MR. HOWARD: Because we sit here and we
9 have to deal with both processes, the State and the
10 Feds. The shortcut would've been to go to the State, and
11 the precedent has been set. And I've been trying to
12 figure out how to do that as well, was Tenakee. As an
13 example, they went and shut Tenakee Inlet off to
14 crabbers, and I've been trying to figure out what process
15 they used to do that so I can do something similar around
16 Angoon. Now, I mentioned that because there's ways to
17 access your resources without throwing Title 8 of ANILCA
18 in the garbage, because that's important to me, that's
19 important to Angoon. We don't have a Costco, we don't
20 have an airport. And as the example, we just submitted
21 a proposal that was finally passed by the Federal Board
22 that these -- everyone around the table helped me get
23 to the Federal Board. And when I ask questions, it's to
24 help me get to a conclusion that's important to you as
25 well. I feel here and I keep my son in my mind, the fact
26 that he has to live in the urban environment and make
27 the best of it. And I know who he is. I raised him, he
28 had the choice to stay home with his mom and do dishes
29 or go hunting and fishing with his dad. And like me, he
30 went hunting and fishing. So, I feel what you guys are
31 saying, but I'm bound by the position I'm put in to help
32 Angoon maintain their way of life.....

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MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah.

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MR. HOWARD: To prevent -- here -- so,
the proposal was -- we put in to protect our area, to
keep Juneau boats out and I know those people that went
by my front living room window towing six or seven boats.
I know them and I ask them, please stay out of -- go on
the other side, there's plenty of deer. They wouldn't
do it cause they knew there was deer where they were
going. You take a boat like that, anchor it in a bay
with six or seven small boats, hunting that bay is done.
You know it as well as I do. You probably learned this
like I did. My dad said, if you shoot at a deer and
miss, you're never gonna get another opportunity. That's
what was happening. So, this process, I'm never gonna
throw it out because it serves the purpose of the
community, as intended. So, I don't sit here to offend

1 anybody. I sit here to help you find a solution to your
2 current problem. That's why I ask questions. And if it
3 doesn't work through this process, maybe I can come up
4 with an idea to help you have access to your deer through
5 the State process. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

6
7 MR. EDWARDSON: Yes, I appreciate that.
8 What initially comes to my mind, as I said, this is just
9 -- not just about deer. Although we -- I made it a big
10 deal as well, customary and tradition and -- when I was
11 in the back, when this question was asked a few times,
12 I was racking my brain. I said, I gotta have an answer.
13 Initially, my first answer was the seasons would be the
14 same as everybody else's. We have to wait. If we were
15 gonna hunt on Prince of Wales, let's say. We have to
16 wait cause it's a rural community, non-rurals [sic] like
17 myself, have to wait anywhere, anywhere there's rural.
18 If you're non-rural resident you can't hunt till August
19 1st, and then you can only hunt State and Federal land
20 -- State or private land, not Federal, State or private.
21 So, generally I go to Sealaska land cause it's private
22 land. But what it would give us is more access to rural
23 areas initially. And we don't start -- if you're a rural
24 resident, you start July 24th. Like I said, they -- we
25 can't start till August 1st, that's a two week jump on
26 top of that, over on Prince of Wales, specifically,
27 whether it's your first two deer or not, your first two
28 tags count for Prince of Wales. Whoever did that was a
29 genius. And they did that for the rut. But if I shoot
30 two here, that counts for my two over there. That doesn't
31 make much sense. Also, customary and traditional access.
32 We have greater bag limits, longer seasons, access to
33 the Unuk resources. You know, it definitely would help
34 us access areas closer to home where we wouldn't have
35 to do that two deer thing on Prince of Wales. But does
36 that make sense? If I shoot here even, I can't go
37 anywhere else that's rural. Those two tags count for
38 Prince of Wales. As I said, I live over there too, many
39 of us do. Many of us here from Ketchikan Indian Community
40 originated from Prince of Wales. So, otherwise Albert,
41 that's the only thing I can think of specifically on the
42 deer. But what we're really after is our customary and
43 traditional access to all resources, not just the deer.
44 What if it was sea cucumber, or what if it was clams,
45 or what if it was something else, or what if we wanted
46 to use, you know, some of the byproducts off of these
47 resources? Can we do that as non-rural folks or only
48 rural folks? So, probably not what you want fully, but
49 that's what it -- related specifically to deer rural and
50 non-rural. And we don't really know all the implications

1 that, all the benefits that we might get from being a
2 rural tribe versus an urban tribe or maybe we can learn
3 that from you guys. And that's why I came in here hot
4 and said, you guys give up your status. Maybe you can
5 tell me the advantages that you guys have that we can
6 benefit from. Why are we fighting so hard for this, you
7 know, other than it's on a -- my tribal Council, and
8 that was our main goal for this couple of years. I think
9 it's incumbent on us to fight for our tribal members to
10 get the same designation as everybody else. So, that's
11 -- it was a kind of a smart-ass way to ask, you know,
12 why don't you guys give up yours? But let's have that
13 conversation later. Maybe we can learn what are the
14 advantages you guys have. Because we don't know. We've
15 never been rural. What are we missing? I definitely would
16 like to -- a longer hunting season, bigger bag limit,
17 but again. Any other question?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I think we're
20 gonna have to cut off the questions here. We can't spend
21 this much time on everybody that comes to give a public
22 testimony. It's just not possible.

23
24 MR. EDWARDSON: Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Hopefully.....

27
28 MR. EDWARDSON: Thank you for listening.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ:some of
31 these questions can get hashed out. I mean, if we have
32 a chance to take breaks maybe you can hash some of this
33 stuff.

34
35 MR. EDWARDSON: Yeah, and I do appreciate
36 you letting me cut in line. I gotta get back over to the
37 island. I just.....

38
39 (Simultaneous speech)

40
41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: So, that.....

42
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44
45 MR. EDWARDSON:felt kinda rude
46 doing it, but like everybody else here, we sat for four
47 and a half hours. Thought was public comment, but then,
48 you know, some of these questions, I think you guys
49 could've asked these guys prior to the meeting, because
50 I used up a lot of our time. So, respectfully speaking.

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1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
4 Edwardson, and you know I am.....

5

6 (Applause)

7

8 So, I am trying to prioritize some folks
9 that say they're getting on the ferry. But I'm a little
10 confused with this list cause I see some Ketchikan
11 addresses here, but I also see people want to get on the
12 ferry. So, let me just say, if there's anybody here that
13 is leaving on the ferry that has to testify now, please
14 identify yourselves and I can accommodate you, but
15 otherwise we'll take a break. Have to come back. Anybody
16 else on the ferry?

17

18 (No response)

19

20 Okay, not seeing anybody. So, we'll need
21 a lunch break here. Boy, looks like we're gonna come
22 back at three o'clock and resume this. And then maybe
23 we'll have to order in dinners or something. I don't
24 know, but we'll see what we can do. But I will say that,
25 you know, I can put a -- I don't like to do it, but I
26 could put a time limit on the testimonies, but I can't
27 put a time limit on the question periods. I just have
28 to ask the Council to be aware of our time constraints
29 here and try and limit your amount of questioning. So,
30 thank you.

31

32 (Off record)

33

34 (On record)

35

36 MS. PERRY: Good afternoon, everyone.
37 This is the Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory
38 Council. Our council members are making their way back
39 to the table. It'll be just a moment. We'll be starting
40 maybe just a few minutes late, but I did want to let you
41 know that everyone's getting reassembled, and we'll get
42 started here very shortly. Thank you.

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. We can get
47 started here very shortly. The Council members are all
48 coming back to the table. Looks like we might have
49 everybody in the room. So, as soon as everybody gets
50 their fresh supply of water and whatnot, we'll resume

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1 with the public testimony. And looks like we're pretty
2 much down to the general public. And I do have to back
3 up because I did go a little bit out of order. So, I do
4 have to back up and ask about some other folks first.
5 So, I think I'll just go ahead and do that. So, DeAnna,
6 do we have any other Regional Advisory Council
7 commenting on this?

8

9

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

10

11

12

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. How about
Fish and Game Advisory Committees?

13

14

MS. PERRY: No.

15

16

17

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: No -- or Federal
Resource Commissions?

18

19

MS. PERRY: No, Mr. Chair.

20

21

22

23

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. And then we
ask for a summary of written public comments. Do we have
that?

24

25

26

27

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, I believe we've
got several written comments that were given to us today.
If you'll hold on just a moment, we're getting assembled.

28

29

30

31

32

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, so that's
the -- this is the order we typically go in and then
before we go to the, you know, actual public testimony
up at the table there. So, Brent.

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brent
Vickers, OSM. We do not have a written, submitted comment
that was made during the -- the period for written
comments to be submitted. What we do have is comments
that have been submitted to us recently for the Council
meeting, and those will be read into the record during
the public testimonies.

41

42

43

44

45

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
So, we'll get started on the public testimony then. And
I have a list here. And I will just take them as they
come up. First name is Franklin James.

46

47

(Pause)

48

49

50

MR. JAMES, SR.: Oh, okay. Can you hear
me? Yep. Yeah. My name is Franklin James, Sr. I'm from

1 the Sanáa Eedi Tribe, and I am a double headed raven. A
2 double headed raven has two meanings, two different.
3 That means we're looking at two lands we own. We own all
4 of Kosciusko, all those islands, all the way out towards
5 Skookum Chuck and then we own all of Kuiu. Of course,
6 we gave half of Kuiu to Kake. That's the first meeting
7 -- meaning. The second meaning is, I'm from two first
8 houses. I'm from the first house of the Kuyéik'adi and
9 the first house from the (In Native). And I am the head
10 tribal spokesman for the (In Native) and we don't use
11 the word chief. That was never a Native word. And so,
12 we use head tribal spokesman. So, what it is -- what I'm
13 going to speak on is something that I didn't learn this
14 [sic] yesterday. This was taught to me going back into
15 the latter part of the 50s from -- I have so many
16 mentors. One of my mentors was Jimmy Martin from Hoonah,
17 Richard King from Klukwan. I'll just name a few, in
18 those early days, and William Paul, of course, he really
19 Wrangell but in Seattle, who was my main mentor as we
20 can go on down, then later on, Frank Peratovich. Roy
21 Peratovich, who are my uncles. William Paul is my uncle
22 -- my wife's great uncle. So, we had so many big mentors.
23 Then later on years this stuff I'm going to be bringing
24 up was -- been taught to me. In Juneau, I used to have
25 to go up there for many meetings and met with old men,
26 George Dalton and Richard Dalton from Hoonah. George Jim
27 and Robert James of no relation of mine from Angoon.
28 Both Albert, Davis, from Kake and from Sitka, Herman
29 Kitka from Sitka. You know, I -- a lot of these people,
30 Joe Bennett. So, this stuff is not hearsay. And I didn't
31 get it from a book, you know. So, this was passed down
32 to me because for what I am. What it was -- what I want
33 to speak on is our people. Now right here, as you can
34 see signed March 13th, 1867, Article 3, the inhabitants
35 of the territory, according to their choice, reserving
36 their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within
37 three years, but they should prefer to remain in the
38 territory. They, with the exceptions of the uncivilized
39 Native tribes, shall be admitted to enjoyment went off
40 all rights, signed by William H. Seward. And this one
41 here, I can -- maybe my son can pronounce it.

42

43 MR. JAMES, JR.: Eduardo.

44

45 MR. JAMES, SR.: Is a Russian name in --
46 one that I had at that time when they signed this. What
47 were the Russians were saying, the Russians have stated
48 the U.S. data to the U.S. uncivilized tribes should
49 always enjoy their freedom. Is that what we're talking
50 about here today? Our freedom. Their lifestyle, that's

1 another thing we're talking about today. You guys are
2 going to have to excuse me, I got an accident and I kind
3 of lose my voice. Our lifestyle and the United States
4 should never interfere with the uncivilized tribes. They
5 called the Tlingit uncivilized for they could not
6 control them. That's Tlingit controlled the Russians.
7 Okay, this one here is an -- they call it.....

8
9 MR. JAMES, JR.: Inalienable.

10
11 MR. JAMES, SR,: Inalienable rights. What
12 the Russians are saying, rights which are not capable
13 of being surrendered or transferred without the consent
14 of one possessing such rights. Freedom of speech or
15 religion, due process, equal protection of the law. So,
16 what it is that -- what we're talking about when it
17 comes to subsistence, the people knew what subsistence
18 mean. Subsistence is something that was brought to us
19 many years ago. We never knew what subsistence was or a
20 welfare, that was forced on to us. We always had the
21 enjoyment of putting up all our own foods no matter
22 what, we didn't waste. So, subsistence support means of
23 support provisions of that which procures provisions or
24 livelihood, support one to maintain, to provide for, to
25 enable, to continue to carry on, to provide a means of
26 livelihood, yo vindicate the -- to maintain, to defend,
27 to uphold and the aid of continuance. Support to that
28 which furnishes a livelihood, a source of means of life.
29 Subsistence -- I don't have my reading glasses.
30 Sustenance, maintenance or living in a broad sense, the
31 term includes such means of living that would enable one
32 to live in the degree of comfort suitable to becoming
33 his own station of life. Okay, this is another thing
34 that we want to really hit on, on the con game. A swindle
35 of any arrangement in which persons are deliberately
36 defrauded because of his trust in the one who's
37 swindling. The Government, we're supposed to trust them.
38 There are so many things that our people don't understand
39 which was passed on to us for years. As you go on down
40 the line there, as I talked to old man -- these people
41 are all deceased. When I talked to Jimmy Martin, George
42 Dalton, Joe Bennett, Richard King, you know, you take a
43 look at Robert James, George Jim, has it going on to
44 William Paul. I can go on and on. They all said the same
45 thing. Russia sold something they never owned. I can go
46 back to you in history. You can get it from Sand Point,
47 Naval Station in Washington. We fought the Russians in
48 three wars. One outside Angoon, one in Chatham Straits,
49 which defeated three of their battleships. Then we
50 fought them again in Sitka. The three tribes that fought

1 them in Sitka, the Shee Atika and the K'leen Aadi more
2 than then the Sanáa Eedi and the (In Native). How do you
3 say it?

4

5 MR. JAMES, JR.: (In Native).

6

7 MR. JAMES, SR.: Fought them there. Not
8 too long after that. That's when the -- they sold Alaska,
9 something that they never owned. The U.S. knew it, they
10 said that, William Powell said that, Frank said they
11 knew it. The Russians never own it so, why did they buy
12 it? You know, this year I want to get to the people
13 here. Now, you -- I fought in courts. Why -- I know so
14 much about it. But I'm sorry, I would have happened in
15 my accident. That really kind of hurts my talking, but
16 I fought in courts from 1991. Before I went to courts
17 [sic], I met with all these people for about 15 years.
18 We won our case in 2011. A fishing rights case. The
19 first case I won was in 2005, for fishing all of Kuiu
20 Straits, all the way out to (indiscernible), outside of
21 Hazy Island, from there cutting into Cape Lynch and all
22 the way to Turn Point and cutting all the way down
23 through some of the straits to Threemile Arm all the way
24 to Snow Pass. That's the first one. I got bookwork on
25 that, but I turned it down. I decided to open it up for
26 the all rural area fisheries to everybody. I didn't think
27 it was going to take this long, otherwise I wouldn't did
28 it [sic], you know. So, we were in court so darn long,
29 half of my attorneys retired of old age, and I -- I'm
30 there too, you know. So -- but what I want to get at is
31 why do we have to come every year? You know, somebody
32 coming and telling me, Frank, now you can go fishing,
33 get sockeyes. But you only allowed ten. You can go all
34 the way up to Quadra, cost me over \$100 in gas, but
35 you're only allowed 12. You can go to Karta Bay, you're
36 only allowed 20. So, I brought this up, which many people
37 use in their meetings. You know, like the late Bill
38 Thomas and them. I tell them now, let's put this
39 restrictions on them. You're only allowed 5 pounds of
40 potatoes. You can't get much bacon and I expect you to
41 last -- that bacon lasted two months. But I'll give you
42 3 pounds but you got to go to Wrangell to buy it. Got
43 to buy your potatoes from Craig. That's what they're
44 doing to us. Why can't it get through the Government's
45 head that they're leading this round for something that
46 we've been doing for over 30 years -- 30 million --
47 30,000 years. Okay. We got reason why I can go that way.
48 Because we got the most petroglyphs. Got them of the
49 double headed raven, the shield of ownership, the seals,
50 you'll see. We got -- they found recently, Sealaska found

1 outside of our village in Neets, a fish trap, 12,000
2 years old. Neets cave, 9,000 years old on those bones.
3 That one there, snow pass -- I mean, dry past. We got a
4 carving underwater. That's 3.5 feet underwater. That
5 means we've been over 22,000 years. So, we've been here
6 a long time. So, what I would like to get at is, you
7 know, I've been battling so long now you take a look at
8 -- and Saxman, they wouldn't let me speak. A second
9 person to sign, finally Tate London had to get up and
10 say, let Frank James speak. You know, once Saxman lost
11 the rural status. Why did they lose it? Because they had
12 a road coming into the business area. My attorney said
13 old later, I don't care if you have an airport right
14 here, up here in the muskeg, the airport over here in
15 Pennock Island, the airport over in Gravina. You guys
16 have shopping malls here and you have hotels and
17 everything. It does not mean nothing [sic]. Saxman was
18 a village before Europe was born and it will always be
19 a village. I don't care how many businesses. Okay, now
20 go back to -- let's go back a few years. My grandfather
21 came over from Craig, North Scotland, on a sailboat. At
22 one time -- I'm not going to tell the whole story. But
23 anyway, one time they were towing the big sailing ship
24 from Wrangell out to the ocean with all the
25 (indiscernible) foods and all the Chinese on there. It
26 was a steamship and the engine start cutting power, and
27 the captain wanted to cut it loose. And my grandfather
28 kept telling him, no, don't cut it loose, don't cut it
29 loose. He says, I'll get it going, but they cut it loose.
30 Today they called that China Cove. Reason why I brought
31 that up, my grandfather married my grandmother from
32 Chikan, and all the non-Natives stayed in Loring.

33
34 This guy named Mike Martin, I think it
35 was, bought some land from Chief Kyan, here in Ketchikan.
36 That land went with the spot my grandfather moved here.
37 Ketchikan wasn't Ketchikan. It's just like Sitka, they
38 change the name Klawock. They change all these different
39 names all the time, you know. But they still -- a lot
40 of them still held their real status. Ketchikan -- I
41 don't know. I asked James Landis if he could pronounce
42 it, and I asked, how do you call a -- how do you call
43 Frank Wright, but I didn't. They didn't have all the
44 markings, but it's a Kutschk-hin or Kitschk-hin. I mean,
45 h-i-n, Kitschk-hin. That was the name here when my
46 grandfather moved here. Okay, now let's go back.
47 (Indiscernible) Saxman will always be a village, so will
48 Ketchikan. Ketchikan, my attorney says they'll never
49 lose their status. My attorney says you let me represent
50 you, they'll never bother you again. No one else in my

1 case -- I sent paperwork out to everybody to intervene
2 in my case. And though anyone intervened in my case with
3 the (In Native), the Takuáadi that intervened with -- so,
4 but what I'd like to say is now we're bad like this
5 almost every year. I've been going to this kind of
6 fishery meeting since the early 60s, you know, just
7 seemed like we spend all our time trying to talk about
8 the same issues over and over again. Going out there
9 trying to get our foods in the water. That's our foods.
10 We know that's our foods. You guys know it's our foods.
11 We're not going to go out there and destroy it. Now you
12 take a look when I won my case, this came to a close
13 last month. Finally, after -- since 1991, it says we
14 have priority. I know what priority means, I think I do.
15 I know Webster's Dictionary say it means I know what the
16 black law book says it means. But what does the
17 Government say it means? That's the puzzling part, you
18 know, so we have this priority. Now I got the list, I
19 told the -- Harvey, let's email them a copy of the
20 guidelines that they're going to -- that they came up
21 with. I -- hopefully it's good there, but anyway I really
22 appreciate you guys, you know, letting me come and talk,
23 you know. So, it's kind of hard for me to talk, you
24 know. So, when I just got done with radiation, eight
25 weeks of it, then it's kind of makes it a little hard.
26 And that's why I had to come up here. I was one of the
27 first person to sign the paper, and all of a sudden, I
28 was at the bottom of the deck. I had to go up and approach
29 that young lady to see if they can find me. Anyway, so,
30 and she was good enough to put me up there. And I
31 appreciate everything, but I really, in my heart -- get
32 these issues solved. Our indigenous people were doing
33 this stuff for over 30,000 years. Europe wasn't alive
34 yet when we were doing the -- this here, and we shouldn't
35 be restricted on what we can do and what we can't do.
36 And I appreciate everything, and I hoping that you guys
37 and the people will open their eyes. I worked with Calvin
38 before. If you remember Calvin, he had the -- on some
39 paperwork that I had to draft for Cape Fox to get their
40 rural status back. And so, I was living in Ketchikan,
41 talking to them there. Now I'm living out there talking
42 for Ketchikan. But anyway, I'm a KIC tribl member
43 gunalschéesh to you guys. And I wish you guys all put
44 your heads together in the right direction to what's
45 right. Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
48 James. That really gives us a good historical
49 perspective on all of this. And I really appreciate your
50 knowledge, and I do remember your testimony down at

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1 Saxman. I was at that meeting as well. It was -- made
2 an impression on me there as well. So, thank you for
3 coming before us this afternoon.

4
5 MR. JAMES, Sr.: Thank you. I really had
6 to talk, talk my head off to this young lady because
7 we're taking off in the morning. I cancelled my trip
8 that I was leaving yesterday to Tok, yesterday. But
9 today. But if I cancel my trip, my wife might take off
10 without me, you know? So, okay. Thank you very much.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. And,
13 yeah some of your fellow tribal members have kind of
14 helped arrange these cards so we can get some people up
15 that might not want to be here, you know, all evening.
16 So, appreciate their help on that. Next card I have is
17 for Rodney Dial.

18
19 (Pause)

20
21 MR. DIAL: Hello, my name is Rodney Dial.
22 I'm the mayor of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and I
23 want to thank you for allowing me to give my comments
24 regarding a request for reconsideration of the non-rural
25 determination for the Ketchikan area. Two years ago, the
26 Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly passed resolution 29-
27 68 supporting the Ketchikan Indian Community's proposal
28 to rescind the non-rural determination for the Ketchikan
29 area. As you know, for generations, the residents of
30 this island have relied on subsistence resources as a
31 vital means of support. To answer a frequently asked
32 question that we've heard today, as to why this is so
33 important and what would the changes be? I will give you
34 my response as an elected official, and this is in
35 addition to the reasons that have already been given.
36 Number one, it is a statement of equality that the tribal
37 members or culture and needs are just as important here,
38 as in other areas. And number two, it's a statement that
39 the needs of the people come first. I would argue to
40 those in current areas designated rural, by the grace
41 of God, go us all, as we've seen in the past, how a
42 mineral discovery, gold mine or in the Prince of Wales
43 Islands case, a significant rare earth deposit. All of
44 those, and many more, have the potential to
45 significantly change population levels rather quickly.
46 By the standard that we set, could also be the standard
47 that we are someday judged by. Another population
48 example would be the military component, which I did not
49 hear addressed in your analysis today. In addition to a
50 large and growing U.S. Coast Guard presence here, we are

1 adding NOAA personnel with the homeporting of the
2 Fairweather research vessel and even the naval facility
3 at Back Island. Now, if you remove these members and
4 their families from our population calculations, the
5 population decline becomes far more apparent for our
6 region, because this group usually does two-year
7 assignments and the -- to the community, and because
8 many are not residents, their impact with a rural
9 designation change would be very minor. I must confess
10 that I'm a bit concerned that what I've heard here today
11 seems to be more of an effort to find reasons to say no,
12 versus finding the good in this to get to yes. Yes
13 supports unity and no maintains division. I would ask
14 where in this country could you go and approach people
15 on the streets and have anyone say that a community of
16 13,000 residents on a remote Alaskan island, with no
17 road access, limited ferry access where food and
18 supplies are barged in, if you go to our store on a
19 Saturday or Sunday, you'll see that the shelves are
20 already getting bare in anticipation of the next barge,
21 how could you say that that's anything but rural? There
22 are literally neighborhoods at many U.S. cities with
23 more people than our borough, and I would like to close
24 by saying it should break our hearts just a little bit,
25 that the people, families who have lived a subsistence
26 lifestyle here for untold generations are now
27 disadvantaged and have to petition for the same rights
28 that everyone around them currently enjoys. In a borough
29 of 13,000, a rural designation would impact perhaps a
30 few hundred families at most. These are people that would
31 actually use this designation and the additional harvest
32 that they would utilize above what they are currently
33 using now would amount to a drop in the bucket in the
34 scheme of things. But for those families, the impact
35 could be profound. And for the local community, it would
36 help us keep people self-sufficient and keep some from
37 dependency on State and local governments. It's also the
38 right thing to do, to support equality and affirm our
39 commitment to preserving and maintaining the rich
40 cultures of this region. So, please look for reasons to
41 say yes and not no. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
44 much, Mr. Dial. Jeremy Bynum.

45
46 MR. BYNUM: Thank you very much for the
47 opportunity to be able to come here today and speak.
48 I'll try to keep my comments brief. My name is Jeremy
49 Bynum. I'm currently elected on our Ketchikan Gateway
50 Borough Assembly, and I'm also the director of our

1 electric utility. But today, I'm not here talking on
2 behalf of those organizations. I only mention them
3 because they inform my decisions, they inform my
4 contacts throughout the communities and how I'm
5 interacting with our people from our community. But not
6 just here, but throughout the State. Today, this Board
7 -- when I looked at the makeup of our Board here, I
8 looked around and I didn't see anyone on this Board --
9 and correct me if I'm wrong, that rep -- is represented
10 from Ketchikan. But from other places that have the rule
11 designation, with the exception of Juneau. And so, with
12 that, you have a big burden. And that burden is to speak
13 on our behalf, to speak for this community, to make a
14 decision for this community, when you're not from this
15 community. So, we've given you a lot of trust, and we
16 do appreciate the opportunity to advocate through the
17 public comment period. As the Mayor had indicated,
18 there's tremendous local support by all of our
19 governments on the island for this particular item. This
20 is to protect our people. This is to give our people the
21 rights, like all of our neighbors have. The food supply
22 issue is something that's been talked about. I won't get
23 into it, but there's two alternatives that were posted.
24 And of those two alternatives, one was to basically
25 expand the area to non-rural, and the other one was to
26 shrink the area to encompass just the city limits. I
27 would like to point out that when we talk about trying
28 to do that, we will be disadvantaging the majority of
29 the people that need this the most. When you look at the
30 statistics and the data, this is a lifeline for them.
31 And so, I would encourage you to consider that if that's
32 something that you're going to talk about as an
33 alternative. I don't believe it solves the problem. One
34 thing I also didn't see as part of this analysis was the
35 environmental impact. And if I missed it, I apologize.
36 But the ability to have this tool saves not only money
37 for these families that are doing it, it saves
38 environmental resources, like fuel. Another part of the
39 study that I didn't see is it talked a bit about the
40 amount of product that's being used in our community
41 versus other communities through subsistence. He didn't
42 talk about the cost of that. And so, I think that would
43 be something that is -- that you should take into
44 consideration that although some folks that don't have
45 this designation, their freezers are full, it takes them
46 longer to make that happen. They're using more fuel and
47 resources to make that happen. And that ultimately has
48 a cost impact to our community members. We talked a
49 little bit about how do we get to a solution or a yes.
50 We looked at the evaluation of the report. It gave a

1 neutral, didn't say yes or no. I've been a basketball
2 official for 24 years, certified basketball official.
3 And sometimes when you're out there on the court, you
4 have to make a really tough call. Sometimes we have
5 50/50 calls where it can go either way. And your job as
6 an official is to protect the game, protect the people.
7 And today, I'm asking you to protect our people with the
8 right to be able to sustain themselves. Hard work is
9 part of what this takes. In order to do this, you're
10 going to need to put in hard work. And I know our people
11 will put in the hard work to sustain the community and
12 make sure that they're prepared for the future. As a
13 utility director, we talk a lot about inner tied
14 communities, and Ketchikan is tied with Wrangell and
15 Petersburg through a power inner tie. And for 56 years,
16 there was conversations with our neighbors over in
17 Metlakatla and about having an inner tie -- a power
18 inner tie to Metlakatla. I know we're not talking about
19 inner ties here. We're talking about rural versus non-
20 rural, but that was an issue between two communities
21 that went on for 56 years. 56 years, it was a hard
22 problem. But the communities got together. And two years
23 ago this month, two years ago, we solved that problem
24 and we came up with an agreement for an Intertie. And
25 one of the things that the leadership in Metlakatla had
26 told me, they said, what's good for Metlakatla is good
27 for Ketchikan, and what's good for Ketchikan is good for
28 Metlakatla. So, I'd like to apply that to this particular
29 issue. What's good for Prince of Wales, what's good for
30 Kake is good for Ketchikan, and what's good for Ketchikan
31 is good for Prince of Wales, Kake, Metlakatla. We're all
32 community members. Let's keep that in mind. And then in
33 closing, I just would like to say thank you very much
34 to Ketchikan Indian Community for bringing this to the
35 forefront and making this known that this is important
36 to not just Ketchikan, but to the Native people of this
37 land that had been here for generations, and I stand in
38 support with them. And I urge you, I urge you to please
39 rescind Ketchikan non-rural determination. Thank you
40 very much for your time tonight. I guess it is almost
41 tonight.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Thank
44 you, Mr. Bynum. Do we have any questions from Council?
45 I see some discussion.

46

47 MR. BYNUM: Thank you very much.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Michael Robbins.

50

1

2 MR. ROBBINS: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Michael Robbins. I'm superintendent of schools of the
4 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District. Before that,
5 I was a principal in Toksook Bay, Alaska, which is a
6 small fishing village, Yup'ik in -- on the Bering Sea.
7 And so, I'm going to start with a little story, and I
8 try to be quick. One thing superintendents can do is
9 talk a lot, as you guys probably already know. So, I'm
10 going to start with a little story here. I was a
11 caregiver for one of my partner's grandchildren, Agana.
12 Agana was -- is her Yup'ik name, Nataline is her English
13 name. And one of the things in the village, and I think
14 everybody here who lives in the village knows this, that
15 the gift of food is one of the greatest things you can
16 receive, particularly when you live in a village.
17 Correct? Salmon or seal. And I got a call from one of
18 KIC tribal members when I first got here. And he said
19 to me, he goes, we have some seal if you'd like some.
20 And we don't have access to a lot of Alaska native food
21 here in Ketchikan, particularly seal, which is a
22 delicacy that's up north. And Agana got so excited
23 because she thought that she was going to be able to
24 process the seal, right. Harvest the seal. So, I asked
25 the person who gave it to me. I said, is it okay if
26 Agana comes over and helps? Because she lived in the
27 village and he goes, no, no, we already have it. It's
28 already in our freezers. We can give it to you. And I
29 thought about that today as we were having that
30 discussion and that, how excited she got. And she had a
31 really difficult time coming from here. I mean, imagine
32 going from a village of 700 where, you know, every kid,
33 every family, every person, and you come here to
34 Ketchikan and you know me and I'm great, but like, you
35 know and to see what that did for her, I think is an
36 impact that it has on students. And so, I'm here to talk
37 about how subsistence and how subsistence lifestyle
38 impacted not only our students in Toksook Bay. And I was
39 there for four years, but how it may impact our students
40 in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District.

41

42 So, let me get started. When I served
43 as principal in Toksook Bay, I saw firsthand how deeply
44 subsistence living was woven into the fabric of the
45 students' lives. In Toksook Bay, the primary source of
46 food came from hunting, fishing, and gathering.
47 Continuing a tradition that lasted over 10,000 years.
48 The practice of subsistence not only nourished families
49 but passed down essential skills and values from one
50 generation to the next. The year before I arrived at the

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1 school, we had a 36% graduation rate. By the time I
2 left, that rate had climbed to 95% and we won a State
3 championship in basketball. And no, I think 95% is more
4 important, but they think the State championship is, I
5 get it. Without the support of the community, this
6 transformation would not have been possible. The
7 connection between the school, the students and the
8 broader community was incredible, and it made all the
9 difference in motivating students to succeed and stay
10 in school. Even though the tools of hunting and fishing
11 and gathering have changed, the core principles remain
12 the same. Subsistence teaches young people the
13 importance of patience, responsibility, and respect for
14 the land and its bounty. It connects the students to
15 their ancestors, grounds them in their identity, and
16 fosters pride in their culture. Research shows that a
17 strong connection to cultural identity serves as a
18 protective factor against mental health challenges. One
19 CDC report noted that culturally connected Native youth
20 exhibit lower rates of suicide, depression, and
21 substance abuse compared to those without such ties.
22 However, we cannot ignore the mental health challenges
23 that our Native Alaskan communities' face. In 2021, the
24 suicide rate for Native Alaskan students was 28.1 per
25 100,000, nearly one and a half times higher rate than
26 caucasian individuals. Among Native youth aged 10 to 34,
27 suicide is the second leading cause of death. And all
28 of us have lived in the state of Alaska, and all of us
29 who've lived in the village can say that unfortunately,
30 we've been touched by suicide of loved ones and care for
31 -- and those who care for them. This has an incredible
32 impact on students, families, and communities. These are
33 sobering statistics that highlight the importance of
34 creating environments where young people feel connected
35 to their culture, their community, and the caring adults
36 around them. Through efforts like the Tribal Scholars
37 Program, the integration of tribal values into our
38 schools, we are making progress. In the past three years,
39 we've increased the graduation rate in the Ketchikan
40 Gateway Borough School District of Native Alaskan
41 students by 13%. 83% of our Native Alaskan students
42 graduated last year. It's a phenomenal number and we are
43 incredibly proud of it. These achievements demonstrate
44 the impact of culturally responsive education and
45 community engagement, programs that honor cultural
46 traditions like the inclusion of subsistence activities,
47 foster belonging and purpose among students. One of my
48 proudest moments is one -- of my proudest moments of my
49 time as superintendent, was standing with the district
50 and the community to defend the inclusion of tribal

1 values in our schools. My first week as superintendent,
2 I was sued about our tribal values being posted in our
3 schools. It's a case that we fought and that we won. Our
4 victory in court was phenomenal, but the victory was
5 more than a legal triumph. It reaffirmed our commitment
6 to celebrating and preserving the cultural identities
7 that shape our students' future. Even during the
8 challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we saw the power
9 of subsistence and cultural connection in action. When
10 schools closed and Toksook Bay, younger students spent
11 more time participating in subsistence activities with
12 their families. This not only strengthened practical
13 skills, but also deepened bonds with elders and
14 reinforced cultural traditions. When students return to
15 school, they came back with a stronger sense of who they
16 are and where they came from, a foundation that we must
17 continue to nurture.

18
19 Looking ahead, the importance of rural
20 designation cannot be overstated. Such a designation
21 will create more opportunities for students to engage
22 in their cultural heritage, allowing them to work with
23 elders, participate in traditional practices, and
24 connect more deeply with their past. Research
25 consistently shows that students who feel culturally
26 connected and supported are more likely to stay in
27 school, graduate, and thrive. These connections not only
28 improve academic outcomes, but also foster resilience,
29 mental wellbeing and lifelong success. By ensuring
30 students remain connected to their past, we help them
31 create a future filled with possibility. A rural
32 designation with open doors -- will open doors to deeper
33 cultural engagement, which will shape their identities
34 and broaden their horizons. When young people feel pride
35 in who they are, where they come from, they develop the
36 confidence to dream bigger and to pursue more
37 opportunities. This combination of honoring the past,
38 while building a future and rooted in tradition, will
39 make a lifetime of difference for them and for all of
40 us. I know how difficult your jobs are, trust me when
41 it comes to becoming a leader. And so, I just want to
42 thank you for all the difficult decisions that you're
43 going to have to make around this issue. And I just look
44 at it as if this happens and it can save one more of my
45 kids or two more of my kids, that's a good thing for me
46 and for my community. So, thank you. Quyana, be well.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
49 Robbins. Frank, you wanna [sic] make a comment. Go ahead.
50

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MR. WRIGHT: Thank you for being here. You know, being happy is a healing thing. And, you know, I was -- I used to be on a search Board for about ten years, and we promoted that, you know, the elders have their Native food, and whenever they saw their food, they would have a big smile on their face. They're so happy, you know, and I think that what you're doing is so honorable that, you know, make -- making sure that the young children of the indigenous community know who they are. You know, I'm an advocate of it. I live in Hoonah and whenever I speak, I speak to say look at these children, look at them, whether they have blonde hair or not, if they have 1/60th, they're up there dancing just because their heart is -- they're so proud of who they are. And children being proud is so uplifting that, you know, I don't know how to how else to say it, but I'm so happy for what you're doing, you know, that, like I said, the elders were happy. And being happy is a healing thing. Gunilscéesh.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Frank. Thank you, Mr. Robbins.

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MR. ROBBINS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Next up is Trixie Bennett.

MS. BENNET: Good afternoon, almost evening. Quyana (In Native) My name is Trixie Bennett. I'm a Tlingit from Wrangell, but I've been here for about almost 30 years working with the tribe. I said I belong to the Kaach.ádi. We're a raven-frog clan from Wrangell area. The Stikine River, we are the raven side of the Chief Shake's lineage. My mother was Minnie Larsen and my grandmother was Emma Shakes. I want to express my gratitude for being able to speak to you today, and for the work that you do. Gunalschéesh, Mr. Chair, Council, the OSM, the outer coast kids, the elders, the leaders, the members from the community that came here to give you information. I'm the KIC tribal health administrator. I'm here on behalf of my community and my family. I'm here on behalf of the Ketchikan Indian Community. Of course, one of the two federally recognized tribes here in Ketchikan. And on the homelands of the Taant'a Kwaan and the Sanyaa Kwaan people. I'm here in support of KIC's proposal to designate Ketchikan as a rural area, enabling it to claim its status as a subsistence hunting and fishing

1 community. As someone who's dedicated my career to
2 tribal health care administration for our people and who
3 has served as a past President of our tribe, I recognize
4 that our culture is not only a form of medicine, but our
5 traditional foods are essential for our well-being. Our
6 community has faced significant challenges due to
7 historical injustices and ongoing pressures on our
8 subsistence resources. Since the 1890s, the Tlingits
9 have fought for recognition of our inherent right to
10 hunt and fish and gather on our traditional lands. My
11 ancestor, my grandfather, Gush X'een, Chief George
12 Shakes, represented our people in a landmark lawsuit
13 demanding recognition of our land rights. Sadly, these
14 requests were largely ignored but the fight has
15 continued for over 130 years. We're still fighting for
16 our rights here in Ketchikan. Successful legal battles,
17 such as the Katie John case in 1994 reinforced our
18 Federal subsistence rights, yet the equities continue,
19 particularly here in Ketchikan, where we weren't even
20 included in ANCSA. Restricting our access to traditional
21 resources has profound implications for our culture and
22 our health. Research indicates that Tlingit ancestors
23 consumed over 400 different foods, yet today our diet
24 averages fewer than 30 varieties. The high costs and
25 lower nutritional value of imported foods only
26 exacerbate our health issues, including rising rates of
27 diabetes and diet-related illnesses. We know that
28 traditional diets are vital not only for our physical
29 health, but also for our cultural identity, as you've
30 heard over and over. The influx of tourism in recent
31 decades has intensified pressure on our traditional food
32 sources. Without a rural designation, there is no
33 priority for subsistence use, not over commercial
34 interests, making it increasingly difficult for our
35 community to thrive. Other Southeast Alaska communities
36 like Sitka and Saxman have already been designated as
37 rural, and we deserve the same rural recognition.
38 Designating Ketchikan as a rural area will empower us
39 to reclaim our subsistence rights, allowing us to
40 connect with ancestral lands and foods. This is
41 essential for the preservation and the revitalization
42 of our culture. Furthermore, it represents a moral
43 obligation to address the historical injustices that
44 have marginalized our people. I urge the Council to
45 consider not only the legal framework that allows for
46 the designation, but also for its deep cultural
47 significance and the critical health implications for
48 our community. Supporting KIC proposal will affirm your
49 commitment to justice by prioritizing our customary and
50 traditional foods. Let us work together to ensure

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1 Ketchikan becomes the subsistence community it must be,
2 fostering a healthier future for our people
3 gunalschéesh. Thank you for your attention and your hard
4 work.

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6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms.
7 Bennett.

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9 MS. BENNETT: You're welcome.

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11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Naomi
12 Michaelsen.

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14 MS. MICHAELSEN: Good afternoon, members
15 of the Board. (In Native) My name is Naomi Michaelsen,
16 and my Tlingit name is Kaasei, after my grandmother and
17 Daaw Da Oo after my great grandmother. I have lived here
18 for the last 35 years, and I have five children and
19 raised my five children here in the beautiful lands of
20 the Sanyaa Kwáan and Taant'a Kwáan people. One of my
21 greatest joys is my nine grandchildren. And so, I'm here
22 as a Ketchikan Indian Community tribal member, but
23 mostly important, I think, as a grandmother. I am here
24 in support of the proposal from KIC for rural status.
25 We are living in a time of great change, where so many
26 of our tribal members and our elders no longer have
27 access to their traditional foods and plants, and this
28 lack of access contributes to poverty, inequity, and a
29 wide variety of health and social issues. And I know
30 that some of this has been said before, but I don't
31 think we can say it enough. And I believe that we're --
32 even though we live in different communities. We have a
33 lot of the same issues and challenges and really were -
34 - it is one big family. I have relatives and all of the
35 communities that were mentioned earlier today. And it's
36 just -- it's -- it makes it hard. It feels like you
37 know, sometimes in order to protect what we love
38 sometimes people feel that they have to pit ourselves
39 against each other, which I think is something that
40 living in this Western way and this colonial way and
41 this world view is -- sometimes doesn't work for us as
42 native people. And so, the more that we can get out of
43 that and kind of work together, wooch.een the more we
44 can solve these problems that we have and so, I believe
45 that the issues that we have here in Ketchikan aren't,
46 you know, I think that you can help with those. After
47 working over nine years for the tribe here in Ketchikan
48 and economic development and nine years as the director
49 of the domestic violence shelter here, I started a
50 business called Kaasei Indigenous Foodways to help

1 inspire people to learn more about traditional foods and
2 plants and medicines. And the reason why I did that is
3 that after taking people out on the land and when people
4 were down and out, I saw the change it had on people.
5 And it really is prevention. Our cultures are
6 prevention, our cultures are intervention and our
7 cultures are healing. And this is this rural status can
8 help us to continue on our healing journeys. As
9 indigenous people of Alaska, we are on a healing journey,
10 and we've seen a lot of wonderful changes, and I'm hoping
11 that today can add to that. Continued limits on accessing
12 our lands and foods through policies still threaten the
13 health and stability and growth for our indigenous
14 communities and ultimately all people.

15
16 As Trixie mentioned earlier, there are
17 over 400 foods and plants that we used on Tlingit Aaní,
18 and most of us don't remember those all. And so, having
19 access to the land and having the education and learning
20 together again, how to process those foods together, how
21 to harvest those foods respectfully and doing that in a
22 way that brings honor to the land and to the people is,
23 you know it's the way that we are going to be able to
24 move forward together. Because our parents were
25 separated and disconnected from this land, our languages
26 and our songs, our stories and each other. So, when we
27 come together and we have come together in some ways
28 around some workshops, around our plants and foods I
29 could see that our people are hungry for this information
30 and hungry, and we all want to just be well, the comments
31 coming from our tribal members when we had gatherings
32 together around our foods have been, thank you so much,
33 we've been waiting for this. My heart is full. And people
34 from all ages, even especially the elders, are just you
35 know, somebody mentioned the gift of food and how
36 important that is, because our food is our way of life.
37 And again, subsistence wasn't a word that we grew up
38 with. It wasn't a word that -- and we didn't have that
39 in our language. Our food is our way of life. And not
40 too long ago, a clan leader and a community leader was
41 determined by how well the community was taken care of.
42 What they had didn't mean anything, it was what they
43 gave. And so, making sure that everyone in our community
44 has the food that they need and not just -- it's not
45 just about food. It's about taking care of our spirits.
46 We know that our food, the animals, the land, the water,
47 everything is connected and everything has a spirit. And
48 so, these -- our history is, you know, been here.
49 Somebody also mentioned petroglyphs. That's our history.
50 Our history is written in stone. And it's been here for

1 a very long time. And so, with your decision today and
2 you have the opportunity to help our community. And as
3 some have mentioned earlier, we suffer from the highest
4 rates of the social ills that we do not want and that
5 we all want to be well. You have the opportunity to help
6 us in our community, to really strengthen and grow and
7 to remember that we belong to this place.

8
9 I love to hear about our superintendent
10 today, talking about traditional protective factors and
11 how these are the best ways that we can support all
12 children, not just our Native children, but all
13 children. Growing up in our traditional values and the
14 way we take care of each other and the way we harvest,
15 and education still needs to be around -- how do we take
16 care of the land and each other? And so, this, you know,
17 the -- I also love what the Mayor said about you know,
18 the division is creating -- is not allowing us to have
19 unity.

20
21 We are also fortunate to have nearly 900
22 place names here in Tlingit Aaní, and over 100 of those
23 names are referenced to our foods and medicines. And so,
24 this -- I know I'm preaching to the choir that this
25 isn't anything new and that it's nothing new. But what
26 is -- it's so tiring to have to come back and back and
27 back after, you know, so many years to have something
28 that is our inherent right. To try to explain how
29 important it is to us, to our hearts and to our
30 spirituality and to our wellness. And I really
31 appreciate listening to everyone today and then also
32 being here and appreciate your time taken in making this
33 really huge decision, which I think is real critical to
34 our well-being. We know that our traditional foods are
35 whole foods. They're organic and that our wild foods are
36 packed with more nutrition than anything you can buy in
37 the store. And so, it's so valuable. It's just more
38 valuable than any mineral that we can find. It's more
39 valuable than -- it's just so ingrained and part of our
40 culture and it's so important to us.

41
42 So, as part of the learning about the
43 foods and learning how to process the foods, where our
44 children will also be able to pass that down to their
45 grandchildren. And right now, we are limited and
46 restricted in doing those things. So, our children need
47 access to be well and your children need access to be
48 well. And I would like to end with a quote. I shared
49 this before, but I think it says it all. "Food is a
50 gift. Elders remind us that true wealth is having access

1 to Native foods, along with the knowledge of how to
2 gather, prepare, and serve them. Our values and food
3 traditions are a living legacy that links us to the
4 past, present, and future generations. Several times a
5 day, we encounter opportunities to reflect on what we
6 eat and how our choices change our world. When we harvest
7 Native foods and incorporate them in our modern
8 lifestyle, we strengthen our cultural identity, our
9 relationship to the land, and tribal sovereignty. It
10 will take all of us to feed the next seven generations."
11 Gunalschéesh and thank you so much.

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13

14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms.
15 Michaelsen, and next up is Richard Jackson.

16
17

(Pause)

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19

20 MR. JACKSON: Good afternoon. My name is
21 (In Native). Father is from Klukwan, I want to
22 acknowledge my father's people who are sitting here
23 today. Gunalschéesh listening to me. And the
24 grandchildren of the Teikweidi that are here, I know
25 there are some here. And all the subsistence communities
26 represented and the others that are represented. In
27 1980, ANILCA was formed. It was done so for the Natives,
28 because they were excluded from the land claims and the
29 aboriginal rights. I was in Vietnam, 1968 to 1971. So,
30 I got home and the lands claims was being finalized. In
31 1980 when they tried to correct this, the State was not
32 forthcoming to work on this issue because the
33 Constitution said everybody in the State should be
34 included. When the initial reason for ANILCA and you
35 should remember this was for the Natives, Alaska
36 natives. And then later on, as a Vietnam veteran, you
37 had the Native allotment, which is based on use and
38 occupancy. I was denied my place where I wanted to select
39 in Klahini River because it was in the Misty Fjords
40 National Monument area, area where they kicked my
41 grandfather off because he had a smokehouse in the
42 Kiks.ádi area because he was from Wrangell. Very true.
43 My grandmother (In Native). My grandfather's name was
44 (In Native) from Wrangell, Richard Harris. You'll see
45 it in the (indiscernible) reports, which is really quite
46 -- it's the definite recognition of the elders in 1946
47 of land usage of the Taant'a Kwáan. I'm speaking for the
48 Taant'a Kwáan, because I have only that right to follow
49 me -- we -- me will be James Llanos, speaking for the
50 Saanya Kwáan. And the Taant'a Kwáan had their areas
identified in that report. It was an important canal,

1 Pierce, Fillmore, Willard Inlet, Nakat inlet up to Tree
2 point, southern and eastern Revillagigedo. It was
3 Gravina, Annette Island before it was a reservation,
4 Duke Island before it was Canada. Dundas Islands, Moria
5 Sound and that was shared by the Haida, Kassan and the
6 Tlingit of the Taant'a Kwáan, specifically talking about
7 George Keegan, who had an area over there, and Moria
8 Sound and Keegan Cove, and also there was Kitkun Bay.
9 But in the 1880s they moved us to -- the Organic Act --
10 we moved to (In Native) Tongass Island, where the
11 cottonwood grows, to Ketchikan would be Kichxáan, which
12 means thundering water. We call it thundering wings now,
13 but it was thundering water. That was originally owned
14 by the Taant'a Kwáan, and the Sanyaa Kwáan gifted it to
15 the Taant'a Kwáan, to the (In Native), whose land you
16 are standing on right now. And they have a house called
17 the Drifting Ashore House, (In Native), which is where
18 the (In Native) Pole is now. They call it the Johnson
19 Pole, but it's a (In Native) pole, that's the Golden
20 eagle. And they had their village there. In 1890, there
21 were only nine non-Natives here and there were they said
22 there were 26 Natives, but there was more than that
23 because 173 left Tongass Island. They were out fishing.
24 They didn't count them, and they had a waterfront. And
25 in that -- during that time they made it a reserve --
26 Indian reserve. Now, why did they do that? Because the
27 reserves were in front of the water. The canoes were put
28 up on the shore to house all their equipment, the fish
29 and to hunt fish eggs, whatever they did. Then the town
30 encroached upon that because there was a sawmill, there
31 was mining, and above all there was fish canneries. Then
32 later on, houses of ill repute grew up around our village
33 and they kicked the Natives out on trust land that they
34 owned. And they built a baseball field where we used to
35 put our canoes up. But the town could have, which was
36 incorporated in 1905, could have their baseball games.
37 And we weren't citizens. Natives weren't citizens until
38 they could vote, that was 1924. They couldn't own
39 anything. They couldn't own property. They couldn't own
40 licenses because they weren't citizens. We were really
41 in a quandary here. That wasn't only here, but it was
42 everywhere. And then they -- they -- in 1905, they made
43 the city incorporated and made it a township and gave
44 all the land to everybody else. By the time the Natives
45 became citizens, there was no land available. They were
46 put in Indian Town. Indian Town is from the tunnel all
47 the way out to the Coast Guard base. Actually, by the
48 time I was ten, I never went past this tunnel here
49 because we were told to stay in Indian Town. And that
50 wasn't just for the Natives, it was for everybody who

1 was not Caucasian. Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, we
2 stayed in Indian Town. And the village is here the
3 village, here were all we just said we're Indians. We
4 didn't know we were Haida, Tlingit or Tsimshian or we're
5 in the back. We have no clothes back there that support
6 our cultural. Sitting back over in the corner, we all
7 spoke. I work with them. We do cultural events. I
8 incorporated the Tongass-Tlingit Cultural Heritage
9 Institute with my wife, Janice, who's a granddaughter
10 of two jets and brown (In Native) from Klukwan so that
11 we can continue the culture. The culture is very
12 difficult to do that without access to the land. (In
13 Native) We already are suffering from a language loss.
14 I think all of you are aware of that. And with that,
15 with exclusion of this land here in Ketchikan by virtue
16 of the fact of our numbers, when the fact is we are
17 being considered, or whether we are qualified to be or
18 recommended by you to be included or not, because of the
19 basis of those points they put on the Board. I say the
20 number one, we are qualified because Taant'a Kwáan was
21 here before the town was incorporated. Taanta Kwáan
22 never left. They were told to leave their villages, and
23 they left with Francis Paul and Samuel Jackson, I mean
24 Samuel Saxman and another name. And they were drowned
25 on their way to find a place. They found their place
26 here in Ketchikan and Saxman when Ketchikan and we were
27 already here anyway, because our clan houses are up, and
28 we put together our clan. And it was small because we
29 have been decimated by diseases. When we came up through
30 Portland Canal and moved around to the islands all the
31 way from the point of southern Prince of Wales, which
32 we call (In Native) or properly the whole island on the
33 south is called (In Native), which means the head of the
34 sea lion, because we're where the sea lion people. So,
35 we came here and then in 1937 to the Indian
36 Reorganization Act, we became a recognized tribe along
37 with those that were here. It was a small tribe then
38 which developed into a bigger tribe later on, KIC. But
39 we are the original base members. In 2012 KIC got a new
40 constitution and everybody that was a member were then
41 considered lineal descent. Base members or those in that
42 larger numbers, children could be included. That was to
43 preserve what is ours, our rights and sovereign rights.
44 When we talk about subsistence (In Native), this is our
45 land, that are our inherent right. And those that came
46 here from the hub areas, from the villages, from the
47 Tsimshian and Haida, they joined KIC with the Taant'a
48 Kwáan and the Saanya Kwáan. And we included others from
49 other places. And we exist on our own as a compact tribe.
50 And this opportunity before you is not for us to have

1 you recommended you -- to the Board its to tell you that
2 it is our inherent right. Those villages that have
3 questions about that they had their inherent right to
4 their opportunities. It wasn't our fault that the town
5 got greater. We were here. We lost our village. Many of
6 our people left because we didn't get the land claims,
7 which is part of that issue there. So, KIC is the
8 resource we have for helping us in every way. The
9 cultural resources department is headed by Jennifer
10 Hanlon and Irene Dundas, who is part of us and part of
11 the Cape Fox and from Kake as well.
12

13 So, I look at all of this and we support
14 that resolution for Ketchikan NDP25-01, which requests
15 a change to -- or in the alternate designate recognition
16 of Ketchikan Indian Community service area as rural. In
17 the Ketchikan Indian Community is in concert with the
18 Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Our -- that is our
19 jurisdiction. So, there will be no mistake on that. And
20 that just defines that area. And we go as a Taant'a
21 Kwáan we go beyond that. But we know the rules of the
22 management is -- are limited in their areas and how they
23 depict their units. But we don't have that opportunity
24 now we have to go and wait on someone to help us. Like
25 Tlingit-Haida, they just recently gave us five fish.
26 When my wife and I have to have fish, we have to go buy
27 it. You can go out and fish all you want. The fish we
28 buy is dry. It's old. What I want to have a party next
29 month for my -- transfer the hat to me from my brother
30 (In Native). And I couldn't even get a salmon. So, we're
31 having to have beef like those who say we're near
32 supermarkets. Well, beef is not good for me, you know
33 that. It's full of hormones. Natural food is the best
34 thing for Natives. Seaweed, halibut, deer meat, moose.
35 The Unuk river is the traditional area of the Taant'a
36 Kwáan, and the Saanya Kwáan, Teikweidí. Mostly they
37 Teikweidí from the Saanya Kwáan. That's called the (In
38 Native) Teikweidí are my dreams, my dreams area. That's
39 where there is moose. Were not there to compete with
40 people over that hunting right. It's the right we have.
41 And that -- the best thing to do today is to try to
42 convince you that you must honor that right. That as was
43 mandated in the original intent of ANILCA. And I thank
44 you for the opportunity to speak to you. I look forward
45 to your decision with hopes and (In Native) and dreams.
46 Thank you. Gunalchéesh.
47

48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
49 Jackson. Thank you for bringing all that traditional
50 knowledge to our attention. That's much appreciated.

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MR. JACKSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Next person is James Llano, Sr.

MR. LLANO: Richard gave a lot of information, some of which I thought about presenting. But then I look at who's here to listen. And I think, more importantly, you saw the resolution in your packet. Having to do with Alaska Native Brotherhood, Richard represented Grandcamp. He's the Grand President Emeritus of all ANB's everywhere. Me, I'm just poor Jim at Ketchikan Camp 14. Treasure forever. My name is (In Native). I'm Saanya Kwáan Teikwedí (In Native) from the Harvey' houses. Oh, God. And when I left Ketchikan, I went to become civilized. I tried my best, but it didn't work. I still came back a Tlingit person that witnessed some strange things in the Lower 48. But what got me interested in trying -- I've been an ANB member since I was eight years old, and ANB is way over 100 years old. And we had some great leaders, and all the clan leaders created ANB because they didn't know how to deal with these strange people that came to our lands that seemed to be in charge of everything. So, what did they do? They sent us to ANB. And they told us to get educated, us young people. Now, I was -- it was 1950 when I was being -- when I was born and being told that I'm -- I have to learn everything and bring it home to tell my grandparents, this is what this document says, because they didn't understand. A lot of you know the same story. Those of you from the villages (distortion) strange things were happening that we didn't understand. So, that's why ANB was created to help us understand this other society, these other people, and what was it they were trying to do or say? So, what got me to write this resolution, with the help of Richard and others, was at the flick of a wrist, just a simple flick of the wrist, all the clans in Southeast Alaska lost your clan territories. They were gone. At the flick of the wrist that was replaced by ANILCA, ANCSA and other things that came along. And some of us still didn't know what all that meant. But at the flick of the wrist, we hope we can get the rights of the clans, the clan territories back. And it isn't ownership back, like a landowner like you own your land on your house. It's your clan's property, which is real important when you're trying to keep your clan alive, keep your people alive.

1 Most of these younger people that are
2 in this place, and maybe some of you, even have no idea
3 of your clan histories. Some of you really do know, but
4 there's some that are still lacking in total
5 understanding. Like where did the Kaagwaantaan come
6 from? Where did the people in Pollock come from? I mean,
7 they had to come from somewhere. There are people --
8 they all came down the rivers 10,000 years or so ago,
9 and some of us were already there. And we met them and
10 told them, you can go here, or you could go there. That's
11 not being used. And that's how the clans migrated all
12 over the place. But at the flick of the wrist, those
13 traditional areas that they use for customary and
14 traditional use to survive, that's how they created it.
15 That's why you know about the words customary and
16 traditional, because we were practicing it thousands of
17 years ago. I would never think of going into Harvey's
18 territory to go hunt or fish without asking permission.
19 And in doing so, if I acquired that permission, I would
20 have to bring some of what I harvested to that clan. I
21 had to share kind of like subsistence. You share what
22 is available and you share what you can give. It's your
23 responsibility as a member of the clan. Yet we still
24 practice that here at Taant'a Kwáan. I'm Saanya Kwáan.
25 I'm Teikweidí from (In Native) from (In Native). And
26 that means something. That's my home territory. And the
27 Unuk Rivers are other territory. They're important
28 places. Our people are buried there. So, it's more than
29 subsistence. You know, hoping to get rural status, I
30 keep thinking that possibly we'll gain permission to go
31 hunt and fish in our territories again, because there's
32 a lot of people competing out there, competing for the
33 resources that we brought out to many of these places. Do
34 you think they were king salmon on the Unuk River all
35 along? Do you think the coho were -- and the sockeye
36 were always in parts of Misty? Do you think all the
37 salmonberries and blueberries grew naturally in places?
38 That the clams and cockles were always there? No, we
39 brought them there whenever we moved to a village, we
40 knew how to do our own aquaculture, our own farming,
41 things that were important to us. We seeded Southeast
42 Alaska, all the Natives, 10,000 years ago. And it was
43 because of us that a lot of you enjoy the fruits of our
44 labor back then. So, I keep hoping that someday we're
45 going to get access back to our lands. We still know our
46 -- those of us in the Ketchikan area know our clan areas.
47 We know who belongs to what clans, and we know who's
48 next in leadership positions. And we know a lot of our
49 names, but not the young people. The young people are
50 lost. They're lost to McDonald's and Coca Cola, to the

1 iPhone, to a lot of things that are temporary, not
2 lasting. They're lost. They don't know their relatives.
3 Some don't even know if they are true members of the
4 clan or are they slaves taken that become members of the
5 clan. Some of them don't even know how to speak their
6 own languages. Tlingit, Haida, Sm'algyax, (In Native).
7 So, we could go on and on. There's more than Tlingit,
8 Haida and Tsimshian living in Southeast Alaska that you
9 guys never talk to, but we do. So, there is a problem
10 with the analysis that I watched earlier. Gustavus,
11 what's that -- Juneau. Different communities. Point
12 Baker. Some of you guys enjoyed the fruits of ANCSA and
13 Sealaska. I did. I enjoy it, and my grandchildren and
14 my great grandchildren and my great great grandchildren
15 enjoy it. I think I have 139 children, grandchildren and
16 great grandchildren and great, great, grandchildren. And
17 so, everything I do is for them. They're for my wife's
18 children. And I'm just the man of the house. You guys
19 know what I'm talking about I'm just the man in the
20 house. They follow their mother. So, my point in bringing
21 up ANCSA is Yakutat, Yakutat, Petersburg. What -- which
22 of your communities have an ANCSA Corporation? And how
23 much money has your Corporation or Sealaska sunk into
24 your community that isn't reported on those nice
25 spreadsheets? They are very good professionally made
26 spreadsheets. Cal can vouch for that. I mean, he and I
27 worked -- I used to work for the Forest Service, by the
28 way, for a number of years. I was the regional tribal
29 program manager. I made sure that the Forest Service and
30 subsistence community people understood what was being
31 said to them. And I was obligated to tell the Natives,
32 what did those people from Washington mean when they
33 were talking to you. That's what liaisons do. They serve
34 both to make sure communication happens. And we -- I
35 even worked on this Board. Oh. How many years ago was
36 that 20, 25? Something like that. Years ago, as one of
37 your people that would -- I'd be available for analysis.
38 That's what I did, I was an analyst, amongst other
39 things. I was a civil rights coordinator. I was -- you
40 remember how they packed jobs on us? They didn't have
41 enough employees. But next time you do the analysis,
42 take a look at how much money each Corporation sank into
43 the community. It wasn't on those spreadsheets it talks
44 about. This is how much they made on their job. It
45 doesn't talk about how much on Prince of Wales, the
46 ANCSA Corporation put into financing fish to return to
47 hatcheries or to improve the fish runs, or to improve
48 the hooligans on the Unuk, or to improve the water
49 quality and so forth. All those kinds of things. That's
50 what our ANCSA Corporations did for us. And it has a

1 value. And when you do the analysis, you will find that
2 all these communities, a lot of these communities have
3 ANCSA ties, except for Ketchikan. Ketchikan was left out
4 of ANCSA. Ketchikan was removed and made an urban-type
5 community. Ketchikan lost its pulp mills. Ketchikan lost
6 a lot of things. And it's not just the monetary value,
7 it's the -- you know what I'm trying to say? The value
8 that these things have that are not money. They are
9 things that bring your community together. So, we fight
10 extra hard. Richard and I, we both belong to the Alaska
11 Native Brotherhood forever. I'm currently -- Richard is
12 the Grand President Emeritus, and I serve the post of
13 consultant to the grand president of the ANB. And I do
14 it willingly because I'm called upon to do that. A lot
15 of you are sitting here because you were called upon to
16 do it. You know what I mean, Harvey. There comes a time
17 when you're called upon and it's not by you. It's that
18 your ancestors telling you it's time for you to come
19 forward. Come out of the dark, come out of the shadows
20 and be up front and tell them what you -- what needs to
21 happen. So, I'm hoping that Ketchikan can gain some kind
22 of access. I mean, come on, people of Prince of Wales,
23 they can come to Ketchikan, they can come to Rivella,
24 they can go to the Cleveland Peninsula and have
25 subsistence rights of harvest to resources there.
26 They're coming to our territory. Some of them to fish,
27 some of them to get hooligans, some of them to get --
28 well, we all get herring eggs. So, if you have any
29 questions, ask yourself first, what is the right thing
30 that has to happen for your communities? And it's not
31 just Petersburg or Yakutat, it's not Pelican, it's not
32 Angoon, it's not Sitka. It's all of us. All of us are
33 the community. And what's good for the community is going
34 to be good for the Natives. That's about all I have. I
35 hope you enjoy my typing. Believe me, it takes a lot of
36 work to do this stuff, right? That's all I have.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
39 Llano. And yes, we have here -- we have your resolution
40 here. It's it was.....

41
42 MR. LLANO: It's in the booklet, right?

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Janalee
45 Beige? Beige? Gage, got it.

46
47 (Simultaneous speech)

48
49
50

1 MS. GAGE: Yeah, Hi. I'm Janalee -- I'm
2 Janalee Frost Hunt Snartemo Wick Talbot Church Minnich
3 Gage. And I am a guest on the lands of the Taant'a Kwáan
4 and Saanya Kwáan. I support the change of the -- for
5 resident -- for the subsistence. Because I'm 58, I'll
6 be 59 in June of this next year. And I grew up alongside
7 most of these people in the room. And my family was
8 subsistence. My dad's side of the family is Norwegian
9 Sami, which I learned later in life because we didn't
10 talk about those things because they were colonized
11 also. And the language was lost and when I was doing
12 some research, I had some letters from my great
13 grandmother that I had asked a friend of my mother's who
14 spoke Norwegian, fluently and read fluently to translate
15 them for me, and she explained to me that they were
16 actually in the old language. When I think about my
17 grandma Thelma Minnich, she actually worked in the
18 school district as a cook, and on Fridays you get the
19 halibut lunch. And everybody would leave their big lunch
20 at home and get fresh halibut. And I think everyone
21 knows what I'm talking about, behind me. But it took for
22 granted what we had as kids so, I was always jealous of
23 all the kids that got to get spaghetti and mac and cheese
24 out of the box, which I didn't know existed until I went
25 to college, I was really behind. I grew up on the boat.
26 I grew up out fishing, basically ate fish most of the
27 time. We were lucky if we got mac and cheese, that was
28 a good night. And when I smell seal, I smell my
29 grandmother. So, my memories of my grandmother were her
30 boots, and they -- she always had these boots that were
31 from Norway that were seal. My -- I have to admit when
32 the superintendent was speaking about the village where
33 he came from and the seal oil a few years back, my kid
34 -- I actually lived in Kotzebue for five years. And when
35 we talk about people knowing that they could subsistence
36 in an area and thinking that when we open it up that
37 everybody is going to do it. I have to beg to differ
38 because if you didn't grow up doing it, it's very hard.
39 It's not something you're just going to do. The -- When
40 I went to Kotzebue to work I didn't know the region. I
41 didn't understand their lands, I didn't understand their
42 waters. So, fishing for me there was uncomfortable. I
43 understand it here. When we went out in the boat we
44 didn't go to POW. We didn't go over -- we stayed in our
45 area. We stayed around Loring. We stayed around
46 Revillagigedo. We went in the back of the island. When
47 we hunt, we stayed around the island of Ketchikan. We
48 did not go to POW. I think the first time I ever went
49 to POW was for school, for an event for school.
50

1 As -- you know, I heard people speak to
2 the health of food. I grew up with subsistence. I didn't
3 grow up with packaged, and I wasn't beholden to the
4 grocery store. And I think it's very dangerous when we
5 force people to live by beholden to a grocery store.
6 I've gone to the grocery stores where the -- during --
7 even during Covid, and even now you go in to Safeway and
8 the shelves are bare. I still am very careful about the
9 foods I put in my body. Because they -- I can't eat
10 processed food. It hurts me. When I went to college, I
11 thought, oh, I'm going to go to LA and I'm going to see
12 the world and be different. And the thing was is, I was
13 different there too. I didn't belong there, I belonged
14 here, I've lived in many places, and I know now what I
15 grew up with was a privilege, and it was one of the best
16 lives I could have lived. The one thing I like you guys
17 to take away from this is that it just takes one
18 generation to lose that. I learned from my parents, I
19 learned from my grandparents how to subsistence, how to
20 hunt, how to fish. I had that privilege. Now, I can't
21 say that that lasted like, I'm the oldest out of my
22 family. So, of my three sisters, I have more of the
23 memories of that than my sisters. And it takes just that
24 thread, that lifeblood thread of that knowledge. And
25 when I see people speaking their language and enjoying
26 their foods, and I can remember the smorgasbord that the
27 Sons of Norway that were -- felt like they were a mile
28 long of lutefisk and, and lefse and krumkake and fish
29 cakes and all these foods that -- the last time I had
30 pickled herring was in 2006 and Kotzebue. And before
31 that it was when my uncle made it. It was one of those
32 things that I never learned to make, and that -- that's
33 a regret for me.

34
35 I think it's really important for the
36 health of any community and all communities. There's a
37 degree of colonization. And yes, that's a word that gets
38 thrown around a lot. However, when I look back on my
39 family history and those things, my fear is that we're
40 beholden to a grocery store, and we have a generation
41 that doesn't know the value and the benefits of being
42 able to eat their traditional foods on a daily, regular
43 basis where you're, you know, have that little package
44 of food in your freezer, and you're kind of holding on
45 to it because you don't know how long it's going to
46 last. Whereas, you know, we know that meat is better
47 when it's when it's hunted at a certain time of the year
48 and in Ketchikan you can't do that. So, I don't -- I
49 just think that when we talk about these things and the
50 effects of and all the damage over the last 150 years,

1 and there needs to be a recognition [sic] of
2 acknowledging the need of our community as a whole, even
3 today, although, you know, the fear that everyone's
4 going to start hunting and fishing, I don't believe that
5 will happen. Most people -- like, when I was growing up,
6 I think -- I was always jealous of the kid that came
7 from Seattle that moved to town, that got to eat all the
8 packaged food. I didn't -- we didn't have that little
9 pantry with all the goodies in it. The white bread, I
10 didn't get white bread. And sometimes we got powdered
11 milk. And I prefer halibut over salmon because I swear
12 it was like, that's what -- we ate that a lot or, you
13 know, sockeye. Now, I'll eat it all. Because I see the
14 value. I won't buy it in the store. I have my -- I get
15 my small amount. One thing I learned, even in Kotzebue,
16 is that when you -- you have the right to subsistence
17 there, regardless of whether you're a tribal member in
18 the region or not. And -- but what I saw there was, you
19 have people who are very understanding of their
20 resource, and they do not go out and just rape and
21 pillage the land. They are very consistent in knowing
22 that they need so much to get through the winter and
23 feed their family and the elders, and that's what they
24 do. What I did see a lot of times is what I like to call
25 the Cabela hunter, which is -- the guys that come or the
26 mulugmi that comes from the Lower 48 -- mulugmi in
27 Iñupiaq means outsider, mean they would come up and their
28 Cabela outfits. They bought everything on Cabela and for
29 some reason didn't realize it was spring and at all
30 white because we're in the Arctic so, we'd giggle. I had
31 to make you laugh. And they would waste -- that's where
32 the waste comes from. You have people who -- they're
33 here to sports. It's about sport for them. And then, you
34 know, so to be worried about the community of Ketchikan,
35 I mean, I don't see too many of the older families other
36 than, you know, that are of non-Native in the room. And
37 I could be wrong, I mean, maybe I don't recognize people,
38 but I just feel that we -- we're right in the middle,
39 and we are in a position where we are not safe when we
40 are beholden to a grocery store situation. And it is
41 definitely not good for our health as a whole. It doesn't
42 matter. Even in Norse -- Norwegian culture. And one thing
43 I learned about my health is that we are designed to eat
44 fish, meats from our homeland. We are not designed for
45 bread. We were never designed to eat bread at all. It
46 is not good for us, I am -- I do not eat it anymore
47 because it hurts me so much. I am very careful on what
48 meats is, Mr. Jackson said, I can't eat processed food.
49 Our foods in the grocery store have a lot of sodium put
50 in it to make it look bigger, and that is not good for

1 most of us. So, I would ask that when you think about
2 this community as a whole, food is not only about
3 substance, it's also about healing and health, mental
4 health. And when I smell anything with cardamon, the
5 first person who comes to mind is my grandmother and my
6 great grandmother. And when I smell seal, my
7 grandmother, my great grandmother, and on my mom's side
8 even my grandfather Jim he, like, just teaching us how
9 to drive a boat. Girls weren't supposed to learn anything
10 back in those days, you know, 60s, right? Well, I knew
11 how to drive a forklift and a boat before I was ten. So,
12 anyway, I -- It's been a long day. I really hope that
13 you guys -- I know this is a long meeting, and I
14 appreciate everyone here at this table listening to me.
15 And I hope you guys have a good night. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms.
18 Gage. Looks like, Rushcelle Hull.

19
20 (Pause)

21
22 UNIDENTIFIED: That's a pass, Mr.
23 Chairman. She wasn't able to come back.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you.
26 Merle Hawkins.

27
28 MS. HAWKINS: Good afternoon, everyone.
29 So, good to see you all. Merle Hawkins lifetime resident
30 of Ketchikan. I'm Kaigani Haida, born and raised here
31 in Ketchikan. My grandmother was from the Village of
32 Howkan. My mother was born in Hydaburg in 1915, and she
33 moved to Ketchikan 1944 when she was widowed. And I knew
34 many community members that had to move into Ketchikan
35 because they didn't have high schools in the villages.
36 So, Hydaburg, Klawock, Craig. That was when I was about
37 in sixth grade or so. And so, we're from a very mobile
38 people. We moved around a lot. And like Richard was
39 saying, when I grew up, we weren't Haida, Tlingit or
40 Tsimshian. We just all lived in Indian Town and survived
41 as best we could. This is my second time going through
42 this rural status so, I'm hoping this time will be more
43 successful. At that time, 2006, we didn't have any staff
44 and all these other wonderful resources, but it was
45 really disappointing to me that a year later that they
46 took Saxman's rural status away and they lost it for
47 like ten years. And that was really unfortunate, and
48 really disconcerting to me to hear other tribal entities
49 not supporting our status, but it's all about the
50 resources. And that's what I've been taught my whole

1 life. I was taught by my grandmother, we went and picked
2 berries, and that was the resource that we had access
3 to here in Ketchikan. And I still do a lot of that. I
4 pick berries and make jam, and I trade with the fishermen
5 or the hunters or whoever else I'm lucky enough to trade
6 with. And I got trade beads, too. Those are a lot of fun
7 to trade with. So, here we are. In our culture, it was
8 all about resources, and everything was negotiable. So,
9 we're negotiating today one resource against the other.
10 And I think we can all come out winners.

11
12 I've been very fortunate in the last few
13 years, and our tribal entities have been helping out.
14 Otherwise, we wouldn't have got herring eggs. But KIC,
15 our local tribe, imported herring eggs from Sitka in
16 Prince of Wales Island, and they distributed them to all
17 of our tribal members. What a concept, I loved it. 700
18 of our tribal members lined up on the docks, and we each
19 got a bag of herring eggs a couple of years in a row.
20 And then this year, Tlingit and Haida started
21 distributing salmon. Hallelujah! What a joy that is.
22 Because as you get older, it's harder to get those
23 resources. And especially for me, I'm the youngest in
24 my family. I have three older sisters, and it's always
25 been my job to bring the resources to them. Because once
26 you're born here as a clan member, you're always a clan
27 member and a member of this community. So, I share with
28 my older sisters, and -- but there's still a lot of
29 unmet needs. And access is one of the main issues, we
30 have to go so far. But I think most significant for me
31 was the loss of our hooligans in the Unuk River. And
32 that was -- the hooligan was the very basis of one of
33 our trade networks, and they had extensive trails
34 between here and the Nass River, the Skeena River, and
35 even to this day, hooligans are pretty hard to come by.
36 You usually get them from the Anchorage area. They're
37 not as oily, and they're not as good as ours were but
38 you have to make do. And also, we lost our clams. I
39 don't think I've had any wild clams since 2013. And
40 that's when the climate change started happening. El
41 Nino came in in 1986, and I've talked extensively about
42 that. So, there's been a lot of losses. And I think we
43 need to just stand together and hopefully get what is
44 needed. And I was very fortunate this year, KIC hosted
45 a cultural camp for our kids out in Saxman, and it was
46 for 11- to 18-year-olds, and they were out there for
47 five days, and I got to do my little part making devil's
48 club necklaces with them for an hour, which I enjoyed.
49 But it was amazing what they did with those kids because
50 a lot of them hadn't been exposed to the culture, but

1 within a week they made a drum, they learned how to sing
2 and dance and drum, they made their own tunics with
3 their clan emblems on it. They learned about protocol,
4 and at the end they were able to distribute gifts to all
5 the guests that they had invited. So, all of that, but
6 not much access to our resources. So, KIC, we're looking
7 forward to when we can develop our trust -- well, it
8 isn't trust land. We bought land out at Totem Bight and
9 been trying to get it into trust so we can have a real
10 cultural camp and teach our kids about the resources and
11 the gathering, because it's more than just gathering
12 resources. We shared our values during those times. I
13 said, my grandmother taught me, my aunts and we'd go
14 berry picking and my aunt Vesta Johnson, she moved here
15 from Sitka, she would take all of us kids. She'd loan
16 like ten of us kids up into the van and take us berry
17 picking all day. And we were only allowed to pick at one
18 bush. I had to be in charge of the younger kids. I had
19 to help the elders. We were never done until everything
20 was washed and put away. So, the very strict protocols
21 on how everything was done. But those berries were a
22 very important natural resource for us. And I remember
23 when I went to Sitka, when they hosted us as on the RAC
24 committee, because I was on this committee before, and
25 they carried in in a bentwood box, their box of berries,
26 and they treated it like it was so sacred, which it is.
27 And I didn't realize until I had started talking about
28 it in my job at the Forest Service, how valuable those
29 lessons were. They taught us tribal values in the
30 gathering of our food. And so, that was invaluable
31 lessons for me.

32
33 So, the Haida, as we viewed the world
34 totally different back in the day. We saw the people
35 from the land, the people from the sea and the people
36 from the sky. And that included the animals, because we
37 believed it -- believed in transformation. We believe
38 that the salmon was brought to us. We respected all the
39 resources. And so, I'm hoping that you'll vote for rural
40 status and that our tribal entities will continue to
41 share our resources openly and within the law. So, thank
42 you for your time.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
45 Merle. And you just briefly mentioned you used to have
46 a seat on this Council, and....

47
48 MS. HAWKINS: That is correct.

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I think you may
2 have been the last council member from Ketchikan that
3 we've had, so.....

4
5 MS. HAWKINS: I'm working on it. We got
6 some young people that are coming up.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Glad to
9 hear it.

10
11 MS. HAWKINS: Yeah.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Nice to see you
14 again.

15
16 MS. HAWKINS: You bet.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. And I
19 think it is 5:00. I'm certainly not going to recess, but
20 I think we need to take a short break. There's still,
21 you know, a fair number of testimony cards here. So, we
22 will be back for a while this evening. And during the
23 course of the break, I kind of want to get a sense from
24 the Council members about how we want to proceed with
25 the deliberations. So, come back at say, 5:15.

26
27 (Off record)

28
29 (On record)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Hey, everybody.
32 Let's get ready to resume here. Let's not make it any
33 later than necessary here, so.....

34
35 Okay, yeah. Thank you everybody. So, as
36 I mentioned before the break, we still have a fair number
37 of public comments to go through. There are some written
38 public comments to read-in as well, besides what I have
39 here in front of me. So, I guess I was asked to you
40 know, give a little notice of who's coming up in the in
41 the lineup here. First up, we'll have Clarence Peele,
42 Jarred Haynes, Jennifer Hanlon and Steve Hartford, are
43 all coming up next. And now, this late hour and in the
44 evening, I kind of hope that the folks doing their public
45 testimony could try and stay a little more on the more
46 directed topic of you know, how this would impact --
47 this decision is going to impact them. So, Clarence Peele
48 still in the room? Yeah. Okay. Come on up.

49
50

1 MR. PEELE: Oh, there we go. Thank you.
2 I appreciate the time. I'm Clarence Peele. I'm a resident
3 of Ketchikan and I'm a KIC member. I'm here to oppose
4 the rural status, and for several reasons. I'll give
5 those. I was born here in Ketchikan, but I was raised
6 in Hydaburg. I have my father, my mother, my brother,
7 my sister, my nephews, my nieces all live over in
8 Hydaburg still and the reason why I want to oppose this
9 is because the -- it's very difficult -- I'm here to
10 help protect my homeland. That's what I'm here to do.
11 The Hydaburg itself has one store and one gas station.
12 The gas station is \$5.34 for a gallon of gas, milk \$10.49
13 chips \$12.50 and it's a glorified convenience store,
14 that's all Hydaburg store is. It has no meats, it has
15 very little nutritional snacks and it has a lot of
16 freezer foods that they could -- kids could grab and
17 just throw in the microwave. That's what Hydaburg is
18 facing. And then they have to drive to Klawock, 45
19 minutes to an hour to get food if they want to have any
20 kind of other meals for themselves for the week. So,
21 it's very difficult to not oppose this because, I mean
22 over here in Ketchikan, we have nine gas stations. Six
23 of those are convenience stores, which has every snack
24 available, four grocery stores on the island that have
25 multiple meat sections that you could buy a lot of meat
26 for yourselves. The commute for our people over on the
27 island, our brothers and sisters that are struggling to
28 survive -- Hydaburg has very little opportunity of any
29 kind of jobs, also. The people that are working are very
30 fortunate to have a job there because of the logging
31 industry that had cut out the long shorships that had
32 stopped going there. So, that took out a lot of money
33 for those people over there. That's rural status. They
34 have to sit there and go out and fish and hunt. My dad
35 is 64 years old and still has to go out and fish and
36 hunt because, I mean, there's not a lot of stuff that
37 he could buy over there. And the prices for everything
38 is 5 or \$6 more than what we pay over here and their
39 jobs that they have, they're getting paid 18, \$19 an
40 hour. So, it's so much more different on the island than
41 Ketchikan. Ketchikan has so much more different routes
42 that we could take to get off island. We have the airport
43 across the bay or across the waters there that you could
44 take any flight out that you would like during the day
45 from 7:30, and I believe the last flight is at 8:30 at
46 night. We could take ferry systems out of here if we
47 wanted to. We could jump on any ferry. I think it's
48 twice a week that it goes down south and several times
49 it goes up north. And it's -- growing up over in
50 Hydaburg, my dad had taught me how to fish and hunt for,

1 you know, 30 years. And in those 30, the -- I moved over
2 here in 2010 so, the time that I spent over in Hydaburg,
3 I got to go out and see a lot of different land, Dall
4 Island, Long Island, the south end of Prince of Wales.
5 And I could not tell you how many different times that
6 I have seen boats down there from Ketchikan loaded with
7 deer, because nobody is monitoring anything down there.
8 It's Southeast Alaska, wide open area, you can't see
9 people up there so, all they're going to do is take what
10 they want because nobody is monitoring it. And I've
11 watched this with my own eyes, I remember my dad going
12 up on one of the boats when I was a kid -- well, just
13 driving up on it. We didn't go on to the boat, but we
14 noticed about 12 deer with two people on that boat. And
15 that type of stuff happens every year. So, when it's -
16 and it's not everybody that does that but I love the
17 question that you asked and it gave -- it's very
18 difficult for me because I love all of my people. I love
19 Southeast Alaska, and I'm not trying to say that we are
20 in the wrong for trying to go rural. I am saying we
21 should protect our smaller communities that have -- that
22 are struggling and will continue to struggle no matter
23 -- if we go rural or not, over here in Ketchikan, it's
24 not going to affect us very much. It will make people
25 mad and hurt about it. But I'm willing to deal with hurt
26 feelings. I'm not willing to let people go over there
27 and ransack that island more than they need to already.
28 I mean, I went over to Cholmondeley this last weekend,
29 and I think I heard like 10 to 12 shots so, many boats
30 over in that area. And I guarantee half of them didn't
31 even take their deer because that's what a lot of them
32 do. I know for a fact that some of these people over
33 here don't take their deer, because I see them, and I
34 know them. So, I stop, and I talk to them while we're
35 out hunting and it's very difficult over here to hunt
36 because you go on the road system, you're running into
37 70 people on the road system. You go across on the
38 Gravina, it's the same thing. You run into 70 people on
39 the road system. You go south on your boat; you have to
40 go 40 miles south because every nook and cranny has a
41 boat anchored there up in the bay hunting somewhere. And
42 it's -- when I heard some of the speeches earlier, it -
43 - they contradicted themselves with, you know, Ketchikan
44 has more deer than Prince of Wales Island so, Prince of
45 Wales people are coming over here. I never seen that.
46 But also, in the same speeches, that we have to go an
47 hour drive on a boat to get away from everywhere, because
48 we can't get a deer around here. That -- it's over
49 hunted, it's over -- it will do the same thing if it
50 goes over to Prince of Wales Island also. The backside

1 of Prince of Wales Island is never monitored. The Cordova
2 Bay and all of the territories in front of Hydaburg are
3 very limited on the monitoring because who has the gas
4 money to run all over Southeast Alaska monitoring to see
5 who is taking how many deer out of which place? The --
6 if there is a way that KIC would be able to go rural
7 status themselves. I would love it. Absolutely. And if
8 there's a way that that could happen, and if there's
9 anybody that knows the direction that KIC need to take
10 to do that, please give solutions for that part. And it
11 isn't -- I don't have anything against Ketchikan and all
12 the people, but 13,000 people going over to Prince of
13 Wales Island. Not all of them are going to do that, but
14 the people that hunt, and I know a lot of them, are
15 greedy. And it's going to -- you know, I know they did
16 a -- they do every year they have to bring in a
17 mechanical deer over on the Prince of Wales Island
18 because people night hunt. Seven people got busted down
19 towards Hydaburg this year. And every year a lot of
20 people get busted for night hunting. So, Hydaburg said,
21 why are we the only ones getting monitored on night
22 hunting when you have 150 miles of State Road on this
23 island? So, they want to check the north end, and within
24 that month they had 30 people night hunting up there
25 that got tickets for that. There's a big difference in
26 the way that we look at rural and the way the villages
27 look at rural. We are not struggling nowhere near what
28 our brothers and sisters are over on that island. And I
29 would really reconsider putting anything more out like
30 this. Because if we have to -- if we are going to put
31 stress on our smaller entities, I can't live with that.
32 So, I appreciate the time for this, and I appreciate the
33 moment.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
36 Peele.

37
38 MR. PEELE: Yeah.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: How about Jarred
41 Haynes?

42
43 MR. HAYNES: Hi, everybody. I'm Jarred.
44 I have a little thing written up here so, let me bring
45 it up real quick. It's millennials and our devices.
46 Right. Thanks for letting me speak real quick. I'll try
47 to keep it brief. I work for Ocean and Earth
48 Environmental Consulting. I've been in Ketchikan for a
49 little over a year now. I've played a coordinating
50 position in KIC rural status project as well as some

1 other climate stuff, grants and things like that. I'm
2 originally from Maine. I came here for my master's
3 degree, and I worked with KIC and I -- part of my job
4 here is I've been speaking with members of the community
5 about their perspectives and thoughts on rural status,
6 character of Ketchikan, and practices within subsistence
7 broadly, and how it looks uniquely to the community here.
8 As I was not born in Alaska, I recognized that I bring
9 a unique perspective that might vary from locals, long
10 time locals here, and I respect that. And so, I'll try
11 to present the spirit of the words that have been
12 presented to me with -- accurately and sensitively. One
13 of the things that's been pointed out a couple times
14 that -- I'm sorry to reiterate but it will come full
15 circle in a second. Is that the definition of subsistence
16 as used in ANILCA section 803, the customary and
17 traditional uses by rural Alaskan residents of wild
18 renewable resources for direct personal or family
19 consumption, ellipses. The definition of subsistence
20 according to the dictionary, the action or fact of
21 maintaining oneself at a minimum level. The comments
22 I've heard today from opponents, and I don't mean to
23 diminish these experiences whatsoever. This is purely
24 semantics here, but largely they're based on the idea
25 that communities that are currently considered rural
26 have a higher physical and economic need for traditional
27 resources. This makes sense. However, it's also an
28 oversimplification of the RACs intended use of ANILCA
29 definition as you all said earlier. Put simply,
30 subsistence is so much more than a community or
31 individual's physical or economic needs. Accordingly, a
32 determination should be based on so much more than a
33 community's basic physical needs. When you base a rural
34 determination and thus a subsistence priority protection
35 not just for people but for the resources on a basic
36 need for these traditional resources, you reduce the
37 definition of ANILCA as intended purpose to that given
38 by the dictionary. Does that make sense?

39
40 I have a few thoughts on some prevalent
41 themes and interviews that I've conducted and
42 observations in general, and largely has to do with gift
43 giving and sharing within the community. A frequently
44 noted and observable phenomenon, in my experience, has
45 been the grace and generosity with which Ketchikan
46 residents share their resources and time, whether it be
47 sharing harvested food, a car, housesitting for a
48 neighbor in exchange for salmon, assisting in harvesting
49 and processing, etc. There's a giving culture in this
50 community, something I don't often see on the East Coast.

1 Again, I'm from Maine. I'm from Portland, Maine. It's
2 unique. It's not something you see in metropolitan
3 areas. It's not an individualistic community. It is a
4 cohesive community. And what brings that together are
5 these small-town values and practices of sharing and
6 network building. What's more, the gift of sharing can
7 play a pivotal role in the life of one person compared
8 to another. There are those in the community who may not
9 have the time, knowledge and capacity handed down to
10 them by their parents to harvest these resources. Under
11 current State regulations, one cannot proxy, hunt or
12 fish for another unless that person is 65 years or older,
13 legally blind, 70% disabled, or developmentally
14 disabled. Two of these criteria require a legal
15 affidavit to receive that proxy permit. From my
16 observations, this runs counter to the culture of giving
17 and sharing. For one to give enough, they must be able
18 to harvest enough, they must have enough time, it must
19 be cost-effective. It must be effective, and it has to
20 be safe. An individual harvester may be providing for
21 several elders in their network, and this does happen.
22 There's a traditional food sharing program. There's an
23 elders traditional -- there's an elders program that
24 serves traditional foods every Friday.

25
26 And other things that require these
27 traditional foods are cultural events and in interviews
28 that I've had, people have spoken to the validity of a
29 ceremony and how the presence of an array of resources
30 is what makes the ceremony strong. And if it's lacking
31 something, say someone didn't have herring eggs or say
32 someone didn't have xyz, that ceremony may come into
33 question. And these are someone else's words. As you saw
34 in the OSM analysis, the 30% of the sample shares with
35 60%, another 60%. So, essentially one third of the
36 community is sharing with another two thirds of the
37 community. This is a pretty big ratio. So, sharing and
38 gift giving, when you're limiting one person on what
39 they can give, you're also limiting their entire
40 network. Those elders that cannot get out on a boat
41 themselves. And I'm really impressed by the 65-year-old
42 that's getting out there on a boat and harvesting for
43 himself. That's fantastic. Not that he should have to.
44 My primary point being that Federal regulations would
45 allow community members not just to harvest enough for
46 themselves, but also to harvest enough and share with
47 the people that cannot access traditional foods for
48 themselves. A few other points that have already been
49 pointed out. Ketchikan is a landless community. It was
50 left out of ANCSA. Ketchikan is currently removed from

1 the Unuk-Hooligan fishery, a traditional fishery. Was
2 relatively recent closure. Federally qualified users
3 that don't even live near Revilla can travel and gather
4 their five-gallon bucket of hooligan, and still KIC runs
5 multiple programs stewarding that river. They raise
6 funds, they spend weeks and months planning their time
7 and resources to send staff out onto the river to measure
8 the water quality, whether it be regarding trans-
9 boundary mining, addressing hooligan populations
10 themselves using novel methodologies like eDNA. Forest
11 Service will be able to tell you more than I can. They
12 run an elder's program. They run a traditional foods
13 program. They run a distribution program with herring
14 eggs. These social environmental programs are -- they --
15 -- in some ways, they're stressed. You know, there's
16 only so many people to run these things, and they do it
17 effectively. And to tell the people that are stewarding
18 their people and stewarding their resources and
19 stewarding the environment that they then can't benefit
20 from the fruits of their labors. It seems -- you can
21 draw your own conclusions on that.

22
23 Again, not being from here the concept
24 of rural versus non-rural in terms of fish and wildlife
25 regulations was rather foreign to me until I came to
26 Ketchikan. Historically, it was based on a fundamental
27 -- on fundamental community characteristics such as
28 population and economic indicators. When in 2014 the
29 process was amended, it was in response to massive
30 numbers of comments and general discontent. We all know
31 this. Therefore, it stands to reason that this change
32 in policy shall be the precursor to a change in the
33 practice of a non-rural determination. In other words,
34 a change in who and what is considered rural, how it is
35 considered and more importantly, why is it considered.
36 It also stands to reason that Federal acts written in
37 1971 and 19 80th may not be completely suited to a
38 contemporary context. That's not saying they should be
39 gotten rid of all the way. Not at all. They're invaluable
40 tools. Rather, what I'm saying is that as communities
41 develop and globalization brings what it was, it begs
42 the question, who and what is rural status protecting?
43 For how long, and who was it originally meant for? And
44 that's all I have. Thank you for your time, everybody.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
47 Haynes. Jennifer Hanlon.

48
49 MS. HANLON: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
50 Council and staff. For the record, my name is Jennifer

1 Hanlon. I'm speaking mostly today as an individual
2 tribal citizen, but I'm honored to serve as the Cultural
3 Resources Director for Ketchikan Indian Community.
4 Before I go into my remarks, I'll give my proper
5 introduction. (In Native) Teikweidí (In Native)
6 Norwegian (In Native). In our Tlingit culture, we are
7 taught to be supportive of other families and clans,
8 especially in times of need. And I'm here today to honor
9 that calling for Ketchikan to obtain rural status. This
10 is in response to those that I've heard from that have
11 expressed their hunger pains, not just for traditional
12 foods, but also the cultural and traditional livelihoods
13 that are derived from that special relationship to our
14 traditional homelands and waters. Our traditional foods
15 provide a sense of not only cultural identity, but it's
16 also the backbone of our economies. I grew up in Yakutat,
17 but I've been fortunate enough to live here in Taant'a
18 Kwáan, Saanya Kwáan territory for the last couple of
19 years. My clan, the Teikweidi, we have historic roots
20 to Ketchikan. So, in a way, this has been a traditional
21 homecoming for me.

22
23 I've been told all my life that there's
24 only one Teikweidi, even though our clan migrated and
25 ended up in various communities. So, an issue that
26 affects my clan, brothers and sisters here in Ketchikan
27 affect us all and vice versa. Our cultural identity and
28 livelihoods rely on an interdependent relationship with
29 our lands and waters. And like many others, I've been
30 fortunate to grow up in a fishing and hunting family,
31 witnessing the hard work that instills cultural values
32 we all live and benefit from. That includes one, respect,
33 respect for the land, respect for the waters, respect
34 for the clans that manage certain areas, respect for the
35 fish and wildlife that give themselves for our
36 nourishment. Two, sense of community in taking care of
37 one another. We all share the harvest with family,
38 especially elders and those that cannot harvest for
39 themselves. Three, stewardship. These principles include
40 to not waste, to only take what is needed and that -
41 that stewardship principle encourages conservation
42 measures that take care of not only current generations,
43 but the generations to follow. These values are common
44 throughout Tlingit Aani Southeast Alaska. It is this
45 love for culture, community and our traditional ways of
46 life that have personally motivated myself and others
47 to derive or to pursue a career in tribal, environmental
48 and natural resource management to protect not only
49 these lands and waters, but our community and culture.
50 Our values in action provide for our ability to have

1 food security and economic vitality. We can only uphold
2 these values and practices if we are granted adequate
3 access to our traditional homelands for nourishment. So,
4 we call upon the Southeast RAC to support Ketchikan in
5 this time of need. To help ease these cultural hunger
6 pains, by allowing us to have access to our traditional
7 foods and support our cultural well-being. Gunalchéesh.
8 Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms.
11 Hanlon. Next step is Steve Hartford and then after Mr.
12 Hartford comes Thomas Smith, Lewis Hiatt, Oliver
13 Peterson and Brita Ander. So, Mr. Hartford, go ahead.

14
15 MR. HARTFORD: Yes, good evening members
16 of the Council. You know me, I'm Steve Hartford. I'm the
17 in-house counsel for Ketchikan Indian Community. I live
18 in Ketchikan, and I'm currently actually serving as the
19 interim tribal administrator for the tribe, while the
20 Tribal council searches for a replacement to our prior
21 -- previous tribal administrator. I've been working on
22 this project for nearly three years now. You've seen me
23 at all of your meetings, I'm sure, and I've seen you.
24 And it's been a long process. It's been a good process.
25 I think it's been a thorough process. It's certainly
26 been thorough. I appreciate the work that Brent and his
27 team on the OSM have done, and the consideration they've
28 given us and our team as we worked to provide as much
29 data as we could. To that end, I did want to point out,
30 I think Ms. Phillips brought up early in the hearing
31 today about the reference -- the designation by other
32 Federal agencies of Ketchikan as rural. And those were
33 actually contained in our original proposal, in section
34 D of our proposal, we cite the designations of Ketchikan
35 as rural by the Department of Agriculture, the Indian
36 Health Service, the National Library of Medicine, the
37 US Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Transportation,
38 the U.S. Department of Treasury, the Department of
39 Health and Human Services, and we attached an exhibit
40 at exhibit three that -- from the Federal -- from the
41 Federal sources that verify those designations. So, I
42 wanted to add that to the record. And in addition to
43 that, a couple of points. I just wanted to either make
44 or underscore that were made previously that I think are
45 worthy of consideration is that this is really the first
46 time since we've been pursuing this, what we see as a
47 correction to an unfortunate decision that was made many
48 years ago. This is the first time where there's been
49 unanimity of support within the community as you've seen
50 today by the testimony. But the assembly of the Ketchikan

1 Gateway Borough, the City Council of the City of
2 Ketchikan, the Tribal Council of the IRA of Saxman, as
3 well as the Tribal Council of Ketchikan Indian
4 Community, have all adopted resolutions either
5 designating -- in the case of KIC designating our
6 territory as rural or voting unanimously in support of
7 that designation and urging both the RAC and the Federal
8 Subsistence Board to approve this proposal this year. I
9 would also point out that the record of the staff report,
10 the recommendations and the report are replete with data
11 that supports -- that would support this decision. Yes.
12 They didn't make a recommendation; they left that
13 decision ultimately to the RAC and then to the FSB. But
14 there's more than sufficient data and they even state
15 that to support a finding that, in fact, Ketchikan should
16 be designated as rural. Including the remoteness, the
17 isolation, the economic issues, the poverty levels in
18 the community, the reliance on traditional foods by
19 members of the community, the long-time reliance not
20 only for sustenance and subsistence, but also to
21 preserve the very invaluable culture of, as you heard
22 by so many of our witnesses, including our own
23 superintendent of schools. Also, I would like to point
24 out that -- why is it different today? Because the
25 standards have changed. And there's a reason for that,
26 because the previous standards did not address the
27 unique qualifications or the unique circumstances for
28 each community because it was strictly a numbers game,
29 right. It was population, it was number of grocery stores
30 or it was number of gas stations, or it was access to a
31 hospital. Those kind of data points that were really a
32 scorecard that didn't reflect accurately a community's
33 traditional reliance on subsistence lifestyles. And I
34 think if you take into -- I know that if you take into
35 consideration the entire record of the data presented,
36 the findings of the staff, as well as all of the
37 testimony that has been had in these last two and a half
38 years and presented, you will see that it is clear that
39 Ketchikan meets the test to be determined as rural and
40 meets -- does have the unique qualities that would --
41 that justify allowing the residents of Ketchikan,
42 particularly the Native community, but the but the
43 entire community, to have priority access on federally
44 managed lands over other users, over nonresidents, over
45 sports fishermen, the sports hunting -- sports hunters,
46 over other commercial interests. That's why we're
47 seeking it. It's critical to us rebuilding the tribe,
48 rebuilding its culture and rebuilding -- regaining its
49 sovereignty.
50

1 So, I think I would -- oh, the other
2 point I want to make is and I think Mr. Slater made it
3 early on that we need to vote -- we may need to vote no
4 to protect the resources. Well, of course we take great
5 exception to that. And I think it's clear now, especially
6 when you listen to your own staff, that, no, that is not
7 the tool -- that would be the wrong way to vote no would
8 -- to keep Ketchikan residents out of this process is
9 the wrong way to protect the resources. The right way
10 is what's already in place, which is if there -- if
11 there's a -- if the stock or the resources are
12 jeopardized in any particular Federal area that that
13 area or anyone could seek a closure first to non-
14 federally qualified users. And if additional protections
15 are required under section 804, the access to the
16 resources in any particular area can be limited to the
17 residents of that area. So, those are the tools. Those
18 are the correct tools. And you may want to -- you may
19 think that you want to stop Ketchikan residents from
20 getting into the system. You may think -- you may think
21 that that's the right way to vote, but you can't say
22 that. Don't say that that's the tool, because that's the
23 wrong tool. The right tool is a closure and an eight --
24 section 804 application. And we heard from your own,
25 from the OSM staff today, that can be done in multiple
26 ways. It can be done in a special action, can be done
27 in a regular action can be done outside of the cycle.
28 It can be done within the cycle. It can be done without
29 public hearing. It can be done on an expedited basis.
30 So, those tools are there, and those are the tools that
31 are in place that would protect all of us, that would
32 be subsistence users in any area of the State including
33 here in Ketchikan. The other thing I would point out is,
34 you know, we -- Ketchikan is just as remote as, as the
35 -- as a lot of these other communities we've talked
36 about, we've talked about. It may be bigger, but it's
37 still remote. It's still on an island. It still doesn't
38 have access to other communities and other economic
39 opportunities by access through a road system or regular
40 commercial transportation that is enjoyed by the rest
41 of the State and the rest of the country. For instance,
42 Klawock is bigger than Kasaan. Does that make Klawock
43 less rural? Of course not. Craig is bigger still than
44 Klawock. Does that make Craig less rural? I think not.
45 Ketchikan is bigger than Craig, but it's still a remote
46 community on an island in Southeast Alaska. And there's
47 no -- I don't think there's any credible way to argue
48 that the community of Ketchikan should be designated as
49 a non-rural community. There's no way today, especially
50

1 under the new standards, to justify that kind of
2 conclusion.

3
4 And I would conclude with this and that
5 is, what your staff indicated I would characterize their
6 recommendation at and their conclusion as this decision
7 is within your discretion. So, it's up to you to decide.
8 And there's plenty of data to support a decision -- a
9 favorable decision. It's up to you. A wrong, we contend
10 -- Ketchikan Indian Community contends, that a wrong was
11 created when this scheme was initially set up in 1980
12 and 1990 between ANILCA and Federal Subsistence Board,
13 where Ketchikan and Ketchikan Natives and the rest of
14 the subsistence community were left out. And it is within
15 your discretion and you now, today or tomorrow morning,
16 if you choose, you have the power to right this wrong.
17 And we ask you to take that responsibility seriously and
18 to give it serious consideration and to vote yes. Thank
19 you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
22 Hartford. Thomas Smith. Oh. Sorry, Patti.

23
24 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 Quick question. I know you didn't bring this up in your
26 testimony, but can you tell me the population of the
27 military component here in Ketchikan?

28
29 MR. HARTFORD: Get it -- yeah. I don't
30 have that in mind. No, I think the mayor mentioned that
31 -- if you take that out the actual impact is, you know,
32 of a long-term permanent residence is much smaller. But
33 also, since you raised the question, I did note that I
34 did the math as well with respect to the percentage of
35 Native population. And if you take out the City from the
36 process, it's more than half of the Native community
37 lives within the city. That's the traditional Indian
38 Town that one of our elders talked about today.

39
40 MS. PHILIPS: And just a correction, it
41 was it was Chairman -- Chair or member Needham who asked
42 about the rural designation.

43
44 MR. HARTFORD: Oh, yes. Okay. Thank you.
45 Excuse me. Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you again,
48 Mr. Hartford. Thomas Smith is up next.

49
50

1 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (In
2 Native). Hi, everyone. My name is Thomas Smith. I am
3 Yup'ik and Athabascan. Born in Anchorage, raised in
4 Iliamna in Alaska. Currently a second-year high school
5 at Mount Edgecumbe High -- or second year senior at
6 Mount Edgecumbe High School, sorry about that and I will
7 be representing myself today. If there is anything I've
8 learned from yesterday about it is the importance of
9 subsistence resources around Southeast Alaska. This
10 topic is especially important to me because of my double
11 life being raised in a rural village and a smaller
12 Alaskan city. I grew up between learning how to drive a
13 four-wheeler, fishing, hunting, and learning how to
14 write, draw, paint, and do math. This division helped
15 me understand the rules and regulations around rural
16 status. As a child, I never understood these why --
17 understood why these differences were in place. But now,
18 as I've learned more about regulations and laws around
19 wildlife, I have realized why these regulations are in
20 place. For example, the laws insist -- for example, in
21 Kenai, the laws and systems in place prevent a majority
22 of Native practices and make it very difficult to
23 practice traditional beliefs versus in Iliamna, just a
24 45-minute flight away is built around our traditional
25 ways of life and our indigenous practices. These
26 differences seem subtle on paper, but in reality, many
27 of these laws dictate where, when and how we can fish
28 and hunt. In front of Nondalton Alaska, about an hour
29 drive away, we have a lake called Six Mile Lake. It's a
30 large lake but connecting the end of Lake Clark to the
31 beginning of Newhalen River. This is -- this area is
32 completely allowed to snag but in Seward, we are allowed
33 to snag under different circumstances. In Seward, these
34 fish that we snag are stocked by the hatchery and have
35 no purpose other than for the enjoyment of the residents
36 and non-residents. In Dalton -- in Nondalton we snag to
37 live. I have watched my communities get worse and worse
38 at providing local resources with nothing reserved for
39 the aboriginal peoples who I watch struggle just to find
40 the same resources. Many Alaska native populations have
41 been forced to adapt to a Western style. Some have, and
42 others are struggling with providing basic needs for
43 their families, let alone passing along traditions and
44 cultural values. I have watched native peoples around
45 Kenai struggle and compete against the bureaucracy and
46 non-residents to find these resources, like salmon and
47 berries.

48
49 We watched the small children -- Oh. Oh,
50 yeah. Okay. We're back. We watched the small children

1 try their best to catch small trout, while the moms and
2 aunties cut salmon on the dock. The kids and I -- the
3 kids I watched in Kenai would go to the store and pick
4 out their favorite candies and fruit snacks for a slumber
5 party. Teens would walk the beaches and have bonfires
6 in Kenai while teens around Iliamna would take four
7 wheelers to the river and mess around with hooks or look
8 for berries. These differences show the dramatic impact
9 of rural status has that -- the dramatic impact rural
10 status has on our youth, and how we learn to provide for
11 ourselves. Some of the best moments I've ever had have
12 been spent with my grandma, my (In Native) cutting fish
13 or processing row. Passing these on to future
14 generations is one of my favorite topics, and it's why
15 I take this proposal very seriously, because it impacts
16 the future -- what future we will grow up with. Instead
17 of McDonald's and Walmart, they will discuss where they
18 want to go hunting and if their best friends want to go
19 pick berries, they will spend time beading and weaving
20 instead of doing drugs and feeling like they don't
21 belong. All of our cultures have been taken from us one
22 way or another. With this proposal, we will make progress
23 and have a chance to bring pieces back. This leads me
24 to -- back to our main proposal. The rural status of
25 Ketchikan determines how and where local people can
26 practice their subsistence. Not only can all members of
27 Ketchikan participate in these activities, indigenous
28 people around Ketchikan can practice what their
29 ancestors have passed on to them since time immemorial.
30 I would like the Board to take all of this into
31 consideration when moving forward, and decide carefully
32 for our generations to prosper -- for future generations
33 to prosper. I know everyone here is concerned with future
34 -- the future of our resources, and we must cooperate
35 with indigenous tribes who have been stewards of this
36 land since time immemorial to make our resources last
37 as long as they lasted for everyone before us. Thank you
38 for listening to my testimony and if you have any other
39 questions -- and if the Board has any other questions
40 you want me to know, feel free to reach out to me and
41 I'll be happy -- more to talk more about this. Thank
42 you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
45 much, Thomas. That was very insightful and well
46 delivered. And it's good to hear, I mean, you just
47 brought us a perspective from, you know, another area
48 of the State and, you know, how that might affect people
49 that you say are not necessarily here in Southeast
50 Alaska. So, thank you very much.....

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MR. SMITH: Quyana.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ:for doing that.

(Pause)

Excuse me. Lewis Hiatt.

MR. HIATT: Good afternoon. My name is Lewis Hiatt. I'm a resident of Prince of Wales. I resided in the community of Hollis. I'm here representing myself today. I'm going to offer a different perspective. I do not support the request for rural status. That being said, I certainly understand Ketchikan's -- I understand and respect Ketchikan's request and pursuit of this of this status. My concerns are the impact or possible impact on a limited resource pool. We see or have seen or seen now on Prince of Wales, a declining deer population. We are limited on our predator control. We're currently confronted with the chinook salmon dilemma. We're seeing a sea otter population explosion and the unchecked charter and larger growth. I -- like I said, I understand their quest, but I don't want to get to the point of diminished resource and then we all lose. I just lost my train of thought. I would ask that the Council consider or carefully consider their impact to outlying communities as they begin their deliberations on this proposal. I also want to thank you for your time, and I've learned a great deal here in the last couple of days. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Hiatt. We're all learning a lot here at this meeting, so thank you. Oliver Peterson.

MR. PETERSEN: Thank you. My name is Oliver Petersen. Thank you to the Board for letting me give my testimony. I am a senior at Petersburg High School, and I have lived in Petersburg all of my life. I get my name from my great grandfather, Oliver Hofstad, who was one of the founders of Petersburg Fisheries Incorporated. I am currently a seiner for OBI on The Ocean Maid. During my time with this job, I have seen the decline of salmon firsthand. I love my job and wish to continue working in the fishing industry long after high school, but I can't do that without the salmon. Even during the past two seasons, I've seen our seiners come back with back-to-back deck loads, my first season.

1 And it has gone to most of our seiners opting to do dock
2 delivery because they can barely fill their holds in
3 this previous season. I hope to uphold and represent the
4 values of our commercial fleet, my family and my
5 community as a whole. That is why I want to learn as
6 much as I can about everything that goes into preserving
7 this valuable natural resource in Alaska. Alaska is
8 truly a special place, and I believe that it is important
9 for our generation and future generations to learn as
10 much as possible about these processes so, that everyone
11 who calls this land home for decades to come can enjoy
12 the vast natural resources that Alaska has to offer. I
13 want to help the salmon population grow and thrive so,
14 that people who need these resources can have the access
15 they need. The salmon population has been decreasing,
16 and as a result, people have had trouble getting the
17 food they need. Our commercial fleet is struggling too,
18 as we've seen in the past two years with rock bottom
19 prices and less fish overall. This is due to a number
20 of factors such as global warming and overfishing. It
21 leaves many people without food and money, and I believe
22 that adding to the number of people who get subsistence
23 is not going to help these factors at all. Subsistence
24 is meant for people who have very limited access to
25 basic resources and Ketchikan, at least from my
26 perspective, is not short on these resources. The prices
27 are cheaper, and jobs are more abundant than most other
28 places in the Southeast, including my hometown of
29 Petersburg. For instance, there is Walmart and Safeway
30 here, as well as many more stores than where I am from.
31 On top of that, the stores have longer hours, which
32 means more jobs for the people in the community. I see
33 people from the surrounding islands coming here to get
34 food and supplies they need, because it is simply easier
35 to get. I have come here many times throughout the years
36 for sports and activities through the school, and every
37 time we go to the store, the shelves are fully stocked
38 and the stores have -- no excuse me, and the stores have
39 a full workforce. While I am not from Ketchikan, my
40 perspective from both a commercial and a subsistence
41 standpoint as well as from a smaller community should
42 be considered. I recognize that subsistence isn't only
43 about food, but also about tradition. I do believe that
44 if we can get the salmon population back to the way it
45 was the previous years, there can be a place for
46 Ketchikan in the Federal subsistence. But now is not the
47 time to allow such a large group of people into the
48 Federal Subsistence Program. The current amount of
49 resources in Alaska cannot support the amount of people
50 we have -- the current amount of resources in Alaska

1 cannot support the amount of people we would have if
2 Ketchikan were to join. It will cause a detrimental
3 impact on the salmon population, taking this valuable
4 resource away from so many who need it. Mr. Howard
5 brought up a good point after I gave my introduction
6 this morning. He said issues like this can divide us and
7 cause conflict among people and communities. My goal
8 here is not to create a divide, but to bring us together,
9 not necessarily for the good of the people, but for the
10 good of our fish and our wildlife. Alaska would just be
11 a big empty forest without the fish and wildlife, and
12 we need to consider them just as much as we consider the
13 views of our people. We need to consider the effect it
14 will have on Alaska as a whole. No one community is as
15 valuable as all of the traditions and the economy of
16 Alaska. Thank you for your time and your consideration
17 and for helping communities of Southeast.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
20 much, Oliver. Another good perspective from a different
21 part of the region. So, appreciate that.

22

23 MR. PETERSEN: Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: We have Brita
26 Alander.

27

28 MS. ALANDER: Josephine Alexander, (In
29 Native) Victor Haldane (In Native) Shirley Boyd (In
30 Native) Brita Alander, English. (In Native) My
31 grandmother was Josephine Alexander, and she was born
32 in Howkan on Prince of Wales Island. My (In Native) was
33 Victor Haldane, and he was born on the leeward side of
34 Grindall Island, not far from Kasaan. His parents -- it
35 was 1906, and his parents jumped in their skiff and
36 rowed down to Grindall Island on the leeward side, and
37 were hunting well, fishing for halibut. And my great nan
38 went into labor, and they pulled up, and there was a
39 cabin on Grindall Island, and she gave birth on that
40 island, and pretty special. When he got to be about 9
41 or 10 years old, they moved to town, which was Hydaburg,
42 so that he could go to school. So, there's some history
43 there. So, and my grandmother was born in Howkan, same
44 situation. They moved to town, which was Hydaburg, so
45 that she could go to elementary school. So, there's a
46 rich history in the area. My mother moved to Ketchikan
47 as a young woman and so, I was born and raised here in
48 Ketchikan. I'm looking at the map here, and I'm looking
49 at all of these places, you know, I'm 58, and I'm looking
50 at all of the places where my parents took me to dig for

1 clams, to dig for cockles, to pick seaweed, to fish for
2 salmon, depending on what was running, you know. It was
3 my job to sit on the beach when we were drying halibut
4 jilts, making jilts. And it was my job to sit and on
5 that, that red cedar log or yellow cedar log and keep
6 the flies off the Halibut as it dried and I hated it.
7 Man, I tell you what I'd give for that now. What I'd
8 give for my children to be able to have that experience
9 right now. I'm talking to you from the heart. From my
10 heart. I'm talking to you as a (In Native), as a mother.
11 I'm talking to you as someone who gathers medicine. I
12 go and pick tea and medicine, I pick seaweed. I do what
13 I can. I teach my daughters that we're going to get this
14 stuff right now. We're in the woods twice a week, and
15 we're getting our teas and our medicines, and we're
16 sharing it with the elders. And that's what we can do
17 right now. And as the seasons move, we do what we can
18 with what we have available to us, and it's not what I'd
19 like, but it is what it is. What is -- so, I am so
20 saddened today. This is not the way we are. This is not
21 who we are. As people of this land to be pitted against
22 each other, this is not our way. I live on -- I'm very
23 honored to live on Taant'a Kwáan and Saanya Kwáan; and
24 I'm a guest here. Our people -- I'm Kaigani Haida -- our
25 people -- I like to -- every time I speak to the City
26 Council or the Borough, I introduce myself in (In Native)
27 Xaad Kíl I want you to know my Haida name. I want you
28 to know it. I want you to know that our people have been
29 here for tens of thousands of years. I want you to know,
30 we were here before you and will be here long after
31 you're gone. So, I get pretty emotional. And, you know,
32 I appreciate the job you have. But it frustrates me when
33 the colonizers came, and they signed treaties with the
34 first people of this land. And by the way, Haida means
35 people. It doesn't mean this people or that people. It
36 means people. We only knew people. We are the people.
37 Same for the Tlingit, same for Tsimshian. People, we are
38 the people. So, I just want you to know that. So, when
39 treaties were signed with us, the people of the land
40 that inherently recognized us as self-governing people,
41 right? No one else in America has that right. It
42 recognized us as sovereign, self-governing people,
43 right? Along with that, you know, we get our own money.
44 We have government to government rights of negotiating
45 with everybody. If you're a government, we -- you have
46 to come to the table and negotiate with us. Along with
47 that is food sovereignty. Somewhere along the lines, it
48 went sideways, and somebody took that away from us. This
49 is our land. This is our traditional land. So, I go to
50 my freezer and to me, my food is medicine. To me, my

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1 food is who I am, the very fiber of my being, the very
2 fiber of who my children are. Last year we didn't make
3 it through the winter with our salmon. We didn't make
4 it through the winter with our halibut. I have a medical
5 condition where I take a medication that's got a little
6 bit of chemotherapy in it, and I call it chemo light.
7 And there's a seaweed that you can harvest, and there's
8 a compound in the seaweed that helps you process the
9 toxicity of that chemotherapy. Nature gave that to us
10 in our land. There are medications on our land, we've
11 known of for tens of thousands of years. Hey, colonizers
12 haven't discovered all of them yet, thank God, because
13 if you go and look, you know, so many of our traditional
14 foods have been overfished by commercialization. You
15 know, what kills me is to go to the airport in the
16 summer, and I see these big fish boxes with thousands
17 of pounds of our food on Gravina Island in our territory
18 getting on the plane, going south. And you want to
19 begrudge us rural status and to have someone from another
20 tribe begrudge us rural status. And they're worried
21 about the price of a soda pop or a bag of chips over in
22 Klawock or something. I don't want a bag of chips. I
23 don't want a soda pop. I want salmon in my freezer. I
24 want to feed my kids. When we go in harvest, we sing the
25 (In Native) song; thank you, thank you, thank you,
26 salmon. When we harvest cedar, we thank the tree. When
27 we eat fish eggs, we rejoice. Crunch, crunch, crunch
28 around the house. It's healing. It's who we -- I said
29 it before, it's intrinsic. It's who we are. It's in
30 ourselves. And you want to begrudge us that? It's so
31 important. What will change if you give us that rural
32 status, what will change? What will change is we'll have
33 more access to our food. So, all of my friends, their
34 freezers won't run out of fish in the middle of winter.
35 And we're hungry for it because that's who we are. We
36 need that food. I need that food. It's medicine to us.
37 My little daughter, I -- a lot of us are raising children
38 from our families. That's how we do it, right? And so,
39 I'm teaching her. We go into the woods every weekend,
40 twice a week, and I tell you in -- on this island, you
41 can't go into the woods and spit and not hit a deer. We
42 got plenty of deer on this island. Don't be worried
43 we're going to take your deer POW, we've got plenty of
44 our own. But there's the language that goes with it. We
45 speak the words I -- we have the hot kill words for the
46 foods we are harvesting. We have the songs. We have the
47 prayers. I'm teaching my daughters. My daughter's a
48 weaver. It's all related and it ties into the food. The
49 names of our places, it's all tied into the food. I
50 really ask you, you know, this isn't a political issue.

1 I wish I had brought photos of my children so you could
2 see -- or brought them with me so you could tangibly see
3 who this affects. These are my children. They eat this
4 food. They love this food. It hurt my heart last year
5 when my daughter said, you gotta go to the fish
6 marketplace out in Ward Cove and buy me a coho fillet,
7 we're out. What in the world? Are you serious? I had to
8 go buy a filet. Think about that. We're down to -- we
9 can't catch king salmon, but yet you've got sport
10 fishermen in our waters. We need preference over sport
11 fishermen. We need preference over commercial fishermen.
12 This is -- we are the people of the land. This is our
13 land. It's our inherent right. It's our sovereignty.
14 People throw around that word all the time. It truly,
15 truly has a meaning. And this is a big one. This is food
16 sovereignty. I want my food. We all do. Also, you know,
17 these other rural areas, they're having trouble
18 protecting their rural rights and other people coming
19 in. They need to take a look at it. I happen to have a
20 lot of faith in our government. With the IRA, the
21 reorganization and our -- we have our local government
22 KIC, I have faith in them. You know, POW may not that
23 they can't keep track of who's coming and going, but I
24 have faith in our government, I really do. I want to
25 thank KIC for advocating for this. It's a lot of work.
26 I really, you know, if you do this, it would mean the
27 world. And it would change so much for our people on
28 this land. Think about what's going to change for us.
29 Think about how you will impact our families and our
30 children and their children and their children. Think
31 about the happy families singing and crunching on fish
32 eggs that we were able to get in, the salmon that we
33 were able to get. We're not sad because we ran out
34 because the sport fishermen got it all. I think that's
35 it, you know, and I think that's it. I just really hope
36 you take this to heart. Thank you. (In Native)

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms.
39 Alander. And as far as I see, that is all the testimony
40 from folks that we have here in the room. However, I
41 believe there's still a few folks on the phone lines.
42 DeAnna, is that so?

43
44 MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair, if there's
45 anyone online who would like to testify, if you are on
46 the phone, please press star six. That will unmute your
47 line. And I'll hold just for a second to make sure if
48 anyone would like to speak on the phone line that we
49 hear them again, press star six if you'd like to give
50 some testimony at this time.

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And not hearing one on the phone at the -- Okay. So, for folks who are participating on Teams, if you would like to testify at this time, if you could use the raise hand feature so that we know you'd like to speak. It's at the top of the Teams bar, and I'll wait just a moment to see if we have anybody online who would like to speak.

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Mr. Chair, I don't see anyone either online or on the phone who would like to speak at this time. I would, however, like to take a moment and pass along some information that Mr. Hartford emailed to me. It was an answer to Council Phillip's question. The military population totals approximately 750, and that's including members and families. And, Mr. Chair, I know we have a number of written testimony, and I believe Mr. Vickers wants to read one of those into the record at this time, if that's acceptable.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Sure. Yeah. Go ahead, Brent.

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DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Brent Vickers from Office of Subsistence Management. This was emailed to OSM. I'll just read it. It's a letter. It says opposition to Ketchikan application for rural status. Dear Federal Subsistence Board. We, the undersigned, write to express our strong opposition to the application for rural status for the city of Ketchikan. Ketchikan is home to diverse businesses, a thriving tourism industry and infrastructure that serves not only local residents but also neighboring communities. The City's urban services, transportation networks and public amenities require support and funding that align with its role as a larger, more urbanized center. Reclassifying Ketchikan as a rural would potentially jeopardize access to these critical resources. We urge decision makers to consider the full impact of this application and reject the rural status Designation to ensure Ketchikan remains on the path to sustainable growth. Thank you for your attention on this matter. And there's a list of 40 signatures. The locations -- residency is not given for any of these signatures. They signed on either on the 21st or 22nd of October, and I was not provided with a organization that or a location that these people represent. I will hand it to DeAnna. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
2 DeAnna, do you have some written comments to read as
3 well?

4
5 MS. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Chair, we have
6 received a number of written comments given to us at
7 this meeting. One gentleman was here in person, and he
8 gave me his written testimony as he had to catch the
9 ferry and leave early. That was Mr. Bob Jahnke, and I'll
10 go ahead and read his statement. I am 100% against rural
11 status in Unit 1A. I've been here going on 54 years. I
12 have two daughters in their 40s that live and work here
13 along with four grandchildren. I am a personal use year-
14 round resident, and we all subsist on venison, salmon,
15 etc. Our unit 1A is perfect in its predator management
16 with wolves where Unit 2 under rural status is not. I've
17 trapped wolves every year since 73 and took three wolves
18 just where I hunt deer last year. Unit 2, under rural
19 status, had in the past an eight-day wolf trap season,
20 one year and a nine-day season another year and a 30-
21 to-31-day season last year. While we have a six-month
22 wolf trap season here in 1A, we keep them in control
23 because of the corridors coming out of British Columbia
24 that transfer wolves to our coastal areas, including
25 Unit 2, all of southern Southeast Alaska needs predator
26 control. In the 70s I trapped wolves in Unit 2 for three
27 years for a short time each year in areas where there
28 are no roads, these areas are still not studied. I was
29 on the AC in the late 70s and early 80s watching over
30 game issues. I've experienced a lot of southern
31 Southeast Alaska wolves. I am once again on the Ketchikan
32 AC. Prior to my wolf trapping start in the early 70s,
33 the Federal government poisoned wolves here in southern
34 Southeast and hired outsiders as predator control
35 agents. We also had a bounty in my first year on Wolves,
36 but when the bounty went away, so did the old timers
37 because they felt let down by the politicians. Still no
38 shortage of wolves in Unit 1A or Unit 2. I am, along
39 with many others, against the rural status in unit 1A.
40 That concludes the written statement by Bob Jahnke.

41
42 I do have another written statement by
43 Haida Corporation. It's in the form of a resolution,
44 resolution 2024-12, a resolution of Haida Corporation
45 opposing Ketchikan Indian Community request to change
46 Ketchikan, Alaska non-rural status to rural status.
47 Whereas the Board of Directors of Haida Corporation
48 herein, Board of Directors and Haida Corporation is
49 organized pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims
50 Settlement Act, U.S.C. 1601 et seq. here in the AnCSA

1 and is authorized to hold, invest, manage and or
2 distribute property and funds for and on behalf of its
3 shareholders. And whereas Haida Corporation Board of
4 Directors opposes the Ketchikan Indian Community request
5 to change Ketchikan, Alaska non-rural status to rural
6 status. And whereas the current standard to designate a
7 community as a rural is 1,500 residents or less, and the
8 Ketchikan Gateway Borough currently has over 8,000. And
9 whereas Haida Corporation Board of Directors identifies
10 that Prince of Wales Island is currently providing
11 several fisheries which are already negatively affecting
12 the rural residents' traditional harvesting. And whereas
13 Haida Corporation Board of directors recognizes that the
14 deer harvest is already fully utilized, and that
15 treating Ketchikan Gateway Borough residents as an equal
16 to the rural citizens of Prince of Wales Island is not
17 acceptable. And whereas Haida Corporation Board of
18 Directors recognizes that the rural residents of Prince
19 of Wales Island are already feeling the impact of our
20 lands being over, harvested by outsiders and affecting
21 our harvesting of traditional food security. And
22 whereas, Haida Corporation Board of Directors also
23 identifies the potential impact of devastation that this
24 would have on our traditional values, respecting the
25 land, taking only what we need and not depleting our
26 fishery. And whereas Haida Corporation Board of
27 directors believes that there needs to be a process for
28 prioritizing subsistence harvest for enrolled tribal
29 citizens residing in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough on
30 their traditional homelands, while not imposing on other
31 tribe's traditional homelands. And now for, be it
32 resolved that Haida Corporation Board of directors
33 opposed the Ketchikan Indian Communities request to
34 change Ketchikan Alaska non-rural status to rural status
35 as submitted. There's a certification. I hereby certify
36 that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board
37 of Directors of Haida Corporation in accordance with
38 Articles and Bylaws on October 22nd, 2024, and is signed
39 by Alfred Nicks, President, and Donald Namkung, who is
40 the Secretary treasurer. And that concludes the
41 resolution by Haida Corporation.

42
43 We also received another written
44 letter, this by the Petersburg Indian Association.
45 Opposition to Ketchikan application for rural status.
46 Deere Federal Subsistence Board, I am writing to
47 formally express my opposition to the application for
48 rural status for the City of Ketchikan. While I recognize
49 the importance of supporting subsistence rights for
50 Alaskan communities, I believe granting rural status to

1 Ketchikan would be inappropriate for several reasons.
2 First and foremost, Ketchikan is not a typical rural
3 community in the context of the standards established
4 under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation
5 Act, or ANILCA. The population size, level of
6 development, and availability of modern amenities such
7 as large-scale grocery stores, health care facilities,
8 and public services make it distinct from the other
9 communities that depend on subsistence resources for
10 their survival and daily life. Ketchikan is a regional
11 hub, serving not only its residents but also surrounding
12 areas, which reinforces its status as an urbanized area.
13 Granting rural status to Ketchikan could potentially
14 have significant adverse effects on the subsistence
15 resources available to genuinely rural communities.
16 Ketchikan has easy access to resources through
17 commercial means and expanding subsistence opportunities
18 in such a large and economically diverse city, risks
19 overtaxing local wildlife and fish populations. This
20 could have unintended consequences for smaller, more
21 isolated communities that are truly dependent on these
22 resources. Additionally, rural status for Ketchikan
23 could undermine the integrity of the Federal Subsistence
24 Management system as it would blur the line between
25 communities with genuine subsistence needs and those
26 where subsistence is a supplement rather than a
27 necessity. This could set a precedent for other urban
28 centers in Alaska to seek similar status, diluting the
29 intent of subsistence protections. I urge the Board to
30 carefully consider the implications of this application,
31 and the potential harm it could cause to smaller, truly
32 rural communities. Ketchikan's application should be
33 denied to preserve the integrity of subsistence rights
34 for those who truly need them. Thank you for considering
35 my concerns. I trust that you will make a decision that
36 is in the best interest of both the subsistence resources
37 and the communities that depend on them. It is signed
38 by Deborah O'Gara, Tribal Council President, Petersburg
39 Indian Association.

40
41 Another written comment received today
42 was all my relations and I apologize, the pronunciation
43 is also in Tlingit. That I would not pronounce correctly,
44 I'm sure. So, please forgive me for using the all my
45 relations next to that. We, the undersigned presidents
46 of the Craig Tribal Association, Organized Village of
47 Kasaan, Klawock Cooperative Association and Hydaburg
48 Cooperative Association right to express our strong
49 opposition to granting rural status to Ketchikan. This
50 proposed action would have severe consequences for our

1 truly rural Native communities and the delicate
2 ecosystem of Prince of Wales Island. Our opposition is
3 rooted in the following critical concerns. Threat to
4 subsistence resources. Our communities rely heavily on
5 subsistence resources for cultural practices and food
6 security. Granting rural status to Ketchikan would
7 dramatically increase competition for these limited
8 resources, devastating our way of life. The challenges
9 we face in our rural communities, including limited job
10 opportunities and high living costs, make these
11 subsistence resources even more crucial for our
12 survival. Number two, environmental impact on Prince of
13 Wales Island. Prince of Wales island's ecosystem is
14 finely balanced and already under pressure. Additional
15 harvesters from Ketchikan would significantly increase
16 the strain on our land and resources. This will lead to
17 overharvesting, habitat disruption and long-term damage
18 to the biodiversity that our communities have stewarded
19 for generations. Number three, cultural preservation.
20 Our connection to the land through subsistence practices
21 is integral to our cultural identity. The potential
22 influx of harvesters from Ketchikan threatens not just
23 our food sources, but our ability to pass down
24 traditional knowledge and practices to future
25 generations. Number four, economic disparities. Unlike
26 Ketchikan, our truly rural communities lack diverse
27 economic opportunities. We face high unemployment rates
28 and limited access to services. Subsistence practices
29 are not just cultural, but economic necessities to many
30 of our residents. Ketchikan's developed economy,
31 including tourism, fishing and government sectors,
32 stands in stark contrast to our rural realities.
33 Ketchikan's developed infrastructure, including
34 advanced health care facilities, retail options and
35 transportation systems, clearly defines it as a non-
36 rural area. Our communities, on the other hand, struggle
37 with limited infrastructure and services, emphasizing
38 our genuine rural status and need for protected
39 subsistence rights. Number six, population
40 considerations. Ketchikan's population of over 13,000
41 residents far exceeds any reasonable threshold for rural
42 designation. This large population base, if granted
43 rural status, would overwhelm the subsistence resources
44 that are much smaller communities depend upon. Number
45 seven, intent of ANILCA. Granting rural status to
46 Ketchikan would contradict the intent of the Alaska
47 National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which aims to
48 protect subsistence rights for rural Alaskans. Our
49 communities embody the spirit and letter of this act,
50 and diluting its protections would be a grave injustice.

1 Number eight, sustainability concerns. The potential
2 increase in harvesters on Prince of Wales Island raises
3 serious questions about the long term sustainability of
4 our natural resources. Our tribes have been stewards of
5 this land for millennia, maintaining a delicate balance.
6 An influx of harvesters from Ketchikan will quickly
7 upset this balance, leading to resource depletion and
8 ecosystem damage. We urge decision makers to recognize
9 the clear distinctions between Ketchikan and our
10 genuinely rural communities. Granting rural status to
11 Ketchikan would not only be factually incorrect but
12 would also pose a serious threat to the subsistence
13 lifestyles, cultural practices and environmental balance
14 of Prince of Wales Island. We stand united in our
15 opposition to this proposal and call for the protection
16 of our truly rural communities, rights and resources.
17 We request your support in preserving the integrity of
18 rural designation and ensuring the sustainable future
19 of our lands and way of life. This has been signed by
20 Clinton Cook Sr., President Craig Tribal Association;
21 Michael Jones, President Organized Village of Kasaan;
22 Joel Jackson, President Organized Village of Kake;
23 Dennis Nickerson, President Klawock Cooperative
24 Association; Sid Edenshaw, President Hydaburg
25 Cooperative Association; and Edward Walrus, President
26 of Wrangell Cooperative Association. And that concludes
27 that public comment.

28
29 The last public comment written that was
30 given to me earlier today is from the Klawock Cooperative
31 Association. It reads regarding opposition to
32 Ketchikan's application for rural status. The Klawock
33 Cooperative Association, a federally recognized tribe,
34 formally opposes the designation of rural status to
35 Ketchikan, per the application filed by the Ketchikan
36 Indian Community. While we recognize the tribes such as
37 Ketchikan Indian Community should be able to hunt and
38 fish in their ancestral lands, the community members of
39 Ketchikan traveled to Prince of Wales Island Unit 2, as
40 evidenced by the continual flow of hunters and fishermen
41 traveling on the Inter-Island Ferry Authority each
42 summer and fall. Each fall during the rut, the ferry
43 between Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island is packed
44 with hunters, their trucks, campers and all-terrain
45 vehicles. This continued hunt by non-rural hunters in
46 Unit 2 continues to put a stress on the Unit 2 deer
47 population and threatens the subsistence periods for
48 rural hunters. According to Federal Subsistence Wildlife
49 Regulations, rural residents of Units 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
50 may harvest five deer with no more than one deer being

1 a female while hunting in unit 2. Federal subsistence
2 wildlife regulations also state that non-federally
3 qualified users hunting in Unit 2, may only harvest up
4 to two male deer. The Ketchikan Indian Community argues
5 that they have suffered a loss of a significant grocery
6 store in Ketchikan, with the loss of Tatsuta Grocery
7 during a rockslide. While this was true at the time of
8 filing the application, they did not include in their
9 proposal that they have a Walmart as well. Ketchikan now
10 has the following grocery stores with significantly
11 lower prices than all of the other outlying areas,
12 Safeway, Alaska Proud, Three Bears, and Walmart.
13 Ketchikan is also in close proximity to Seattle, and
14 with weekly barge service from Seattle, they are able
15 to maintain a lower price for groceries than Alaska's
16 more northern communities and even those in the
17 surrounding outlying communities in Southeast Alaska.
18 Ketchikan is the regional hub for outlying communities.
19 Alaska Airlines has daily service, with service also
20 provided to outlying communities by Island Air Express,
21 Inter-island Ferry Authority and the Alaska marine
22 highway. This supports its status as an urbanized area.
23 The majority of federally recognized tribes on Prince
24 of Wales Island oppose the rural status determination
25 request filed by the Ketchikan Indian Community. The
26 Craig Tribal Association, Hydaburg Cooperative
27 Association and Organized Village of Kasaan noted that
28 Ketchikan is not a typical rural community in the context
29 of the standards established under the Alaska National
30 Interest Lands Conservation Act. The Klawock Cooperative
31 Association, the federally recognized tribe, joins in
32 with the three federally recognized tribes located on
33 Prince of Wales Island. We agree that rural status for
34 Ketchikan could undermine the integrity of the federal
35 subsistence management system, as it would blur the line
36 between communities with genuine subsistence needs and
37 those where subsistence is a supplement rather than a
38 necessity. Thank you for hearing our concerns and we,
39 along with our tribal partners on Prince of Wales Island,
40 trust that you will make a decision that is in the best
41 interest of both the subsistence resources and the
42 communities that depend upon them. This was signed by
43 Dennis Nickerson, Tribal President. Again, Klawock
44 Cooperative Association. And that concludes that
45 comment. Mr. Chair, all of these written comments were
46 saved towards the end so that we could accommodate
47 schedules for those folks that were in person and wanted
48 to provide testimony. We do -- we did have enough copies
49 for all of the Council members. We did not have enough
50 for the public table. But if anybody is interested in a

1 copy of all of these, I'd be happy to provide that. You
2 can email me. My information is on our program website
3 or deanna.perry@usda.gov. And again, I'd be happy to
4 provide that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And thank you,
7 DeAnna. So, I'd say it's time to recess for the evening,
8 and we will come back tomorrow at 8:30. And as usual,
9 the first item of business will be anybody who wants to
10 testify on non-agenda items. That's kind of a standard.
11 We may have already heard most of that, but right after
12 that, we will go into the Council's deliberation on this
13 non-rural determination proposal. So, everybody get a
14 good night's sleep, and get ready for a busy day
15 tomorrow, because we also have a lot of other business
16 to take care of as well so. I am no longer setting
17 expectations for where we want to be tomorrow, but we'll
18 get it done.

19
20 (Off record)

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22 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 159 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 23rd day of October;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 2nd day of December 2024.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager