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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME I

LAKEFRONT ANCHORAGE HOTEL

Anchorage, Alaska

February 4, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Charles Brower, Public Member
- Raymond Oney, Public Member
- Frank Woods, Public Member
- Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service
- Erika Reed, Bureau of Land Management
- Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Chad VanOrmer, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 2/4/2025)

(On record)

MS. LEONETTI: Good morning everybody. We're going to go ahead and get started. For those in the room, I know there are people online as well, but for everybody in the room please make sure, including Staff that you sign in at the front desk.

Appreciate that.

MS. LEONETTI: We will start with roll call and then I'll hand the meeting over to our Chair.

Chair, Tony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: Public Member Chief Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Here.

MS. LEONETTI: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Present Director Leonetti.

MS. LEONETTI: National Park Service.

MR. ALBERG: Present. Sarah's on her way in but she.....

MS. LEONETTI: Press the button, thanks.

MR. ALBERG: Present. Sarah's on her way in and will be here in just a moment.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, David.

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1 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Jolene John.

2

3 MS. JOHN: Good morning. Present.

4

5 MS. LEONETTI: Quyana.

6

7 U.S. Forest Service, Chad VanOrmer.

8

9 MR. VANORMER: Good morning, I'm here.

10

11 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks Chad.

12

13 Bureau of Land Management, Acting State
14 Director, Erika Reed.

15

16 MS. JOHN:

17

18 MS. REED: Here.

19

20 MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Erika.

21

22 And new Public Member, Frank Woods.

23

24 MR. WOODS: Present.

25

26 MS. LEONETTI: New Public Member,

27 Raymond Oney.

28

29 MR. ONEY: Present.

30

31 MS. LEONETTI: And new Public Member,

32 Benjamin Payenna is on the phone but not is able to

33 vote today.

34

35 So with that, Mr. Chair, we have a
36 quorum. I will also note that we have Department of
37 Interior Solicitor Ken Lord. Do we have U.S. Forest
38 Service General Council Boykin Lucas.

39

40 MR. LUCAS: Yes.

41

42 MS. LEONETTI: Hi, Boykin. Nice to
43 meet you. Do we have Alaska Department of Fish and
44 Game, Ben Mulligan or Mark Burch -- maybe online?

45

46 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair.
47 I have word that Ben will be -- is on the premises and
48 will be with us shortly. Thank you.

49

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1 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Robbin.

2

3 And we have Regional Advisory Councils

4 -- let's see, Seward Peninsula.

5

6 MR. GREEN: Louie's here.

7

8 MS. LEONETTI: Hi, Louie.

9

10 Eastern Interior.

11

12 MR. WRIGHT: Good morning. Charlie

13 Wright here.

14

15 MS. LEONETTI: Hey, Charlie.

16

17 North Slope.

18

19 MR. FRANTZ: Brower Frantz here for the

20 North Slope.

21

22 MS. LEONETTI: Hi Robert [sic].

23

24 And Kodiak/Aleutians.

25

26 MS. SKINNER: Rebecca Skinner here for

27 Kodiak/Aleutians.

28

29 MS. LEONETTI: Hi Rebecca. Okay. Any

30 other Regional Advisory Council Chairs present online.

31

32 MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western.

33

34 MS. LEONETTI: Hi Jack.

35

36 MR. REAKOFF: Good morning.

37

38 MR. HERNANDEZ: Don Hernandez,

39 Southeast.

40

41 MS. LEONETTI: Okay, thank you, Don.

42

43 Bristol Bay.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 MS. LEONETTI: No, okay.

48

49 Northwest Arctic.

50

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1 (No comments)

2

3 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. Southcentral.

4

5 (No comments)

6

7 MS. LEONETTI: All right, and Yukon

8 Delta.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 MS. LEONETTI: Okay. I think that's it

13 so turn it over to you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. A
16 quorum established. Thank you for the introductions,
17 Crystal, and welcome to the new Board Members.
18 Exciting to see the dynamic change of the Board and
19 welcome to all the guests we see here today, it's good
20 to see a full room, the body of students. Last week I
21 was able to do a little interview and question and
22 answer with them so I'm glad to see you all present
23 today and hopefully we have a productive meeting.

24

25 With that, I'll look to review and
26 adopt the agenda at this time so we can move forward
27 with Board information sharing.

28

29 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Charlie.

32

33 MR. BROWER: Move to adopt the agenda.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion's been
36 made.

37

38 MR. WOODS: Second.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Second been
41 made. Any additions, deletions, comments, questions.

42

43 MS. LEONETTI: Do like an overview.

44

45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, we'll do
46 an overview, was this a.....

47

48 MS. LEONETTI: Yeah, and I'll say that.

49

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. So
2 Crystal will do an overview.

3
4 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 For those folks who are listening I just want to
6 mention that the Board's agenda and informational
7 materials are all on the Federal Subsistence Board
8 Website at www.doi.gov/subsistence/board.

9
10 So moving into the overview of the
11 agenda Item No. 1 is call to order and welcome so we've
12 gotten through that.

13
14 Hi Sarah.

15
16 And we're now on Item 2, which is
17 review and adopt the agenda. I'll just mention that
18 this would be one of the times when any Board member
19 wishes to remove an item from the consensus agenda can
20 do so.

21
22 Agenda Item 3 is Federal Subsistence
23 Board information sharing. That's an informational
24 item.

25
26 Agenda Item 4 is the Regional Advisory
27 Council Chairs discuss topics of concern with the
28 Board. This would be an opportunity for any Chairs who
29 want to remove an item from the consensus agenda can do
30 so at that time.

31
32 Agenda Item 5 is a correspondence
33 update, which is a review of recent Council
34 correspondence to and through the Board. This is
35 informational.

36
37 Item 6 on the agenda is public comment
38 period on non-agenda items. This public comment period
39 will be available at the beginning of every day of the
40 Board meeting this week.

41
42 Agenda Item 7 is review and action on
43 the 2025/2027 fisheries proposals and closure reviews.
44 This has numerous action items and it will be divided
45 into two sections, the consensus agenda and then the
46 non-consensus agenda items.

47
48 Old business is Agenda Item 8. There
49 is one action item here and I will note that the Board
50

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1 is welcome to add any others as the Board is adopting
2 the agenda right now.

3

4 Agenda Item 9 is also an action item,
5 it is the non-rural determination proposal 25-01 for
6 Ketchikan. This item is time certain and will be held
7 at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 5, that's tomorrow.
8 I'll also note here that on the same day at noon,
9 tomorrow at noon we will have a dance group so
10 hopefully everyone can be here and join in on the
11 dancing.

12

13 Agenda Item 10 is Board meeting
14 guidelines and that is an action item.

15

16 Agenda Item 11 is an overview of the
17 Federal Subsistence permit database update and that one
18 is informational.

19

20 Agenda Item 12 is the schedule of
21 upcoming meetings.

22

23 And, finally, Agenda Item 13 is
24 adjournment.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Crystal. After hearing the agenda, is there any
30 additions or deletions the Board would like to see.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 MS. JONES: Question.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been
37 called, all in favor say aye.

38

39 IN UNISON: Aye.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
42 sign.

43

44 (No opposing votes)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
47 unanimous to approve the agenda a presented by Staff.

48

49 At this time we'll move on to the Board

50

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1 information sharing session and we'll just -- we'll
2 offer to start at this end.

3

4

5 MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
6 those listening online this is Sara Boario with the
7 Fish and Wildlife Service. First of all I want to
8 welcome Frank and Raymond and Benjamin online. It's
9 great to see you and have you here at the meeting this
10 week. I know for many people you're wearing many hats
11 for your communities, your tribes, your organizations
12 and there's a lot going on this week and I apologize in
13 advance, there's a lot going on for me as well and I
14 have to step out a couple times today for tribal --
15 government to government tribal consultation and ANC
16 consultation on our ongoing review of marine mammal
17 harvest eligibility alongside the National Marine
18 Fisheries Service. so I know there are folks in this
19 room that have an interest in that as well and I just
20 want to assure everyone these are just very initial
21 consultations in the new year and there'll be much more
22 to come and more opportunities to engage in that but I
23 do apologize that I'll be stepping out a couple times
24 today. Jill Klein will be stepping in for me and
25 carrying on business for us.

25

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Second, I wanted to note a Staffing
update. Boyd Blihovde, who many of you know from his
time as our Refuge Manager out at Yukon Delta National
Wildlife Refuge in Bethel and also with his work on
Western Alaska fisheries issues is stepping in to be
our statewide Refuge supervisor. That's the job of --
the person oversees all of our Refuge managers so he is
joining our Chief of National Wildlife Refuges Karlin
Itchoak's team. In the meantime he's still engaged
with salmon fisheries issues and this week he also will
be filling our seat at the North Pacific Fisheries
Management Council as we continue to figure out the
best way to have a presence in that forum as well, and
I know that's of interest to many of our RACs and many
people in this room.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair, and that's it
for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Sara.

Raymond.

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1 MR. ONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
2 For the record my name is Raymond Oney. I come from
3 the village of Alakanuk on the mouth of the Yukon River
4 that spills out into the Bering Sea. I've made that my
5 home for the last 40/50 years. I raised my family
6 there. I have two grown children and about seven
7 grandchildren. We've made Alakanuk our home because of
8 my wife that lives there. We continue to live off the
9 land as we try and make ends meet in our village. As
10 you know we've been struggling with salmon for the last
11 how many years now and I'm very thankful, I'm very
12 thankful for the tribes that have pushed to get three
13 more seats on the Federal Subsistence Board and I thank
14 you all for making that effort and you're seeing the
15 results of it today with the two here and the one
16 online. So I'm looking forward to working with all the
17 Board and everyone present and glad to be here.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 MS. JOHN: Waqaa. Good morning.
22 Jolene John with BIA. As Sara mentioned, we're all
23 pulled in so many directions and I'm practically
24 signing things right here as we speak. It doesn't help
25 when your leadership is four hours away and they wanted
26 it yesterday. But I also want to welcome the new
27 members of the Board who are here with us today. It's
28 amazing to see the spread of years of experience across
29 this table and looking forward to our discussions this
30 week and moving forward.

31
32 The BIA Alaska is thriving. We are
33 continuing to help our tribes during this time. As
34 I've reported in the past we had one employee who was
35 detailed to the White House by the name of Rosalie
36 Debenham, she is now back with us at the Alaska Region
37 and we're happy to see that. She came back in early
38 January.

39
40 I'd like to share that we have people
41 acting in positions during this transition. Within the
42 Bureau of Indian Affairs our nationwide director, the
43 permanent one Bryan Mercier is exercising the detailed
44 authority of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs
45 and in that time that he's in that position we have an
46 acting BIA Director by the name of Stephanie Conduff
47 she's generally already a Deputy Bureau Director with
48 BIA -- DOI. And as you know, the new Secretary of the
49 Interior has been in position now.

50

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1 In the week of March 9, 10 the BIA's
2 going to hold its tribal interior budget council
3 meeting so during that time they'll be reviewing the
4 fiscal year '27 priority of tribes and just an open
5 extension for those of you that are interested in that
6 meeting to please consider it.

7
8 And that is it from the BIA. Qu yana.

9
10 MS. PITKA: Thank you. My name is
11 Rhonda Pitka. I'm Chief of the Village of Beaver and I
12 still live there. I've been a public member since
13 2016, I think the beginning of the last Trump
14 Administration. I'd like to welcome all of the new
15 public members, it's really exciting to get new members
16 on this Board, and not in the exciting, everybody at
17 the agency heads turnover exciting, you know, this is
18 more of a happy time.

19
20 I'd like to thank everybody for their
21 attendance today. I know that there are a lot of
22 different meetings that are competing right now for
23 everyone's attention, including mine and Charlie Wright
24 over there, he's supposed to be at North Pacific, but,
25 you know, there's a lot of different areas that we need
26 to be in, you know, as people and tribal members and
27 tribal leaders so I really thank everybody for coming
28 and filling this room. Especially all the students,
29 that's always really encouraging. That's the funnest
30 time for the Board, I think, you know, when we get to
31 meet the students. So welcome everyone.

32
33 2019 was the last year we fished on the
34 Yukon River. We've been in this salmon disaster
35 thoroughly for the last four years, going to be five
36 years soon. We haven't fished for so long it's
37 getting, it's ridiculous. This disaster has affected
38 our health, our mental well-being and the economy of
39 our regions so horribly, it's -- this disaster has been
40 so horrible for us. So right now at Yukon River Panel
41 we're working on a Yukon River rebuilding plan and it's
42 in the beginning stages of that. It just seems like
43 sometimes with these government processes everything
44 takes so long to get anything done. Somebody told me
45 that there was like a 13 year plan for salmon, and I
46 was like I cannot plan for 13 years, that sounds
47 horrible, I'd rather not, so I was going to dip out but
48 somebody told me it was in a river system that hadn't
49 had fish for 70 years and they're finally getting like
50

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1 five fish back a year so there's definitely
2 encouragement out there.

3

4 I appreciate everybody's time today.

5

6 (Open mics on Teams)

7

8 MS. PITKA: It's so funny to hear my
9 own voice, yuck.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 MS. PITKA: I apologize in advance you
14 guys. Thank you.

15

16 MR. LORD: Good morning. My name is
17 Ken Lord, I'm with the Solicitor's Office. I have been
18 grateful -- I am grateful and have been honored to be
19 working with this program for 25 years now and with all
20 these amazing people up here on the Board and a lot of
21 you out there in the audience. Today my mission is to
22 introduce Lisa Doehl. Lisa, please say hi to everybody
23 please. Lisa is also with the Solicitor's Office. She
24 actually joined the Solicitor's Office in 1992, part of
25 the Solicitor's Office Honor's program in Washington
26 D.C., where she worked for the Division of Parks and
27 Wildlife. She came to the Alaska Regional Office in
28 1998 and aside from a multi-year break where she tried
29 her hand at private practice and working for the State
30 Department of Transportation has been working with our
31 office ever since and she's done a huge diversity of
32 different legal areas, everything from BIA work to
33 personnel work. So now she's going to be helping out
34 this Program as well and brings all that experience to
35 the table so I'm really pleased that she agreed to come
36 help us out. So when you get a chance say hi to Lisa
37 please.

38

39 Thanks.

40

41 MR. BROWER: (In Inupiaq) Good
42 morning. I'm Charles Brower. I'm from Barrow, Alaska.
43 I've been with the Federal Subsistence Board for about
44 seven years, too, I believe so seen a lot of people
45 come and go and it's always nice to see more people
46 come to these meetings and understand the functions of
47 the Federal Subsistence Board's activities so I
48 appreciate everyone for being here.

49

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1 And also just for your information
2 we're having our Barrow, Alaska Eskimo Whaling
3 Commission meeting and Kivgiq convention at the same
4 time next week from February 11th through the 14th, I
5 believe is our big convention for the Whaling
6 Commission and after that we're having our Messenger
7 Feast called Kivgiq so anyone's welcome to come to
8 Barrow, bring a shovel there's no more hotels, got to
9 make some igloos so.

10

11 (Laughter)

12

13 MR. BROWER: It'd be worth it. So good
14 morning, everyone. Thank you.

15

16 MS. CREACHBAUM: Good morning
17 everybody. My name is Sarah Creachbaum, Regional
18 Director for the Alaska Region for the National Park
19 Service. And a few remarks this morning.

20

21 First of all, most importantly I'd like
22 to welcome Frank and Ray and Benjamin to our loose
23 confederacy here of the Federal Subsistence Board.
24 Thank you for giving your time and your heart to this
25 learned body that's incredibly important work that we
26 do.

27

28 I, too, will be in and out this week
29 and so I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce
30 to you Mr. David Alberg who is the Deputy Regional
31 Director for the Park Service for the Alaska Region.
32 He looks very dapper today in his suit and tie and
33 he'll be sitting in for me when I have to step out for
34 other consultations and meetings so I beg your
35 patience. Not optimal, of course.

36

37 We have a Staff change in the Regional
38 Office for the Park Service and Grant Hilderbrand has
39 taken a job with the Washington Office and he's now the
40 lead for the Natural Resources Program. He works out
41 of the Ft. Collins office and so we're happy for Grant
42 but very sad to see him go. And in the interim
43 Elizabeth Bella will be our acting Associate Director
44 for Natural Resources behind Grant.

45

46 And then lastly, not least, I will
47 share with you some sad new for me, maybe it's not sad
48 news for you, you might be delighted, but I am retiring
49 on February 28th and so this will be my last meeting
50

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1 with all of you. And while I have the microphone and
2 because I'm retiring, Mr. Chair, I'm going to say a few
3 things, is that all right?

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You can say
6 whatever you want.

7

8 MS. CREACHBAUM: Okay, great. It's
9 great, when you get old and you can just say whatever
10 you want because you're retiring, it's a very powerful
11 feeling.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MS. CREACHBAUM: I wanted to say that
16 -- to thank you all from the deepest part of my heart
17 for allowing me to share some time with you. The work
18 on the Federal Subsistence Board and the work that I've
19 done in Alaska for subsistence users has been the most
20 important work that I have done in my 35 years of
21 Federal service because it's the way that things should
22 be in the world. We should be bringing all of our
23 smartest minds together no matter who they work for, or
24 what their core beliefs may be and coming together to
25 solve really complicated problems and putting aside our
26 disagreements and bringing our best forward in order to
27 do that and we do that here. It's not always pretty
28 but we do it and I think we do it well and I have been
29 so honored to work with these people around this table,
30 they are truly working hard to get it right everyday.
31 And, though, at the end of a decision we may all
32 disagree, I think at this point we can all agree that
33 what we do is something worth doing and that we all
34 care deeply for it and that's a really great place to
35 start.

36

37 I just want to say how much I
38 appreciate you, thank you and I will hopefully in my
39 future, I'm not finished yet, still be able to work for
40 subsistence and for Alaska in my future, just not from
41 the National Park Service so, thanks everybody and
42 thanks, Mr. Chair, for letting me say that.

43

44 (Applause)

45

46 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
49 Charlie.

50

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1 MR. BROWER: If I may, I forgot one.
2 I'd like to take this time to recognize and welcome our
3 new public members Raymond, Frank and Ben to the Board.
4 It brings a lot of diversity throughout Alaska for the
5 Federal Subsistence Board now to -- you know there's
6 over 100 years of knowledge that's coming to the Board
7 and with the new members I think we have a wide range
8 of representation from all parts of Alaska, north,
9 south, east, west and so on. So I just wanted to
10 welcome the new public members.

11
12 Thank you.

13
14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sarah, I
17 thought you were going to get a little bit -- come on
18 now.

19
20 MS. CREACHBAUM: Ohhh.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, I'm just
23 teasing you, that was a beautiful speech.

24
25 (Laughter)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I was waiting
28 for the grease there, I was like, you're so nice,
29 you're so nice, Sarah.

30
31 MS. CREACHBAUM: No, I said what I had
32 to say, sir.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was
35 beautiful, thank you for your service, I appreciate it.

36
37 Chad.

38
39 MR. VANORMER: Yeah, first, thank you,
40 Sarah, great words and lots of sentiments shared from
41 my perspective as well there.

42
43 I just wanted to say good morning
44 everyone. I'm Chad VanOrmer. I am the Regional
45 Forester for Alaska for the USDA Forest Service and
46 really happy to be here today. I want to certainly
47 welcome the new members. I met some of you at my
48 first Federal Subsistence Board just past the previous
49 one and it's great to see you sitting up here with us
50

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1 today and working with us through these hard decisions
2 we need to make.

3

4

5 I see Heather out there in the audience
6 with the students so it's wonderful to see our students
7 coming and engaging in the leadership from the Sitka
8 Conservation Society and, Heather, in particular, for
9 championing that program and really making an impact in
10 students lives here so much appreciation there.

10

11

12 And I don't have a whole lot to share
13 from the Forest Service side of things. We're kind of
14 humming along without a whole lot of, you know,
15 internal movement or transition at this time. We do
16 have a new Forest Service Supervisor showing up on the
17 Chugach National Forest here at the end of the month.
18 Her name is Jennifer Youngblood, she'll be coming from
19 Wisconsin and she has a lot of experience here in
20 Alaska and I'm excited to get her up here and in
21 engaged with the important work in the Chugach region.

21

22

23 And with that I definitely want to --
24 kind of my final though here is really just acknowledge
25 all the hard work that's put out there to get the
26 decisions in front of the Board here. As I've learned
27 the Federal Subsistence Program over the year or so
28 that I've been in this seat as the Regional Forester
29 and more of the interworkings of it I'm just amazed at
30 the system that is set up and the amount of heart and
31 passion and research that goes into every one of these
32 decisions to get in front of us so everything from the
33 proponent, who sees an opportunity to make a change,
34 our Resource Advisory Councils for really deliberating
35 very hard through these decisions and providing some
36 really good guidance for the Board, our tribes for
37 really engaging and consulting on that government to
38 government basis, appreciate the State's participation
39 in this process also and their perspective, and, of
40 course, our OSM, our Office of Subsistence Management,
41 just the group of professionals that are here to really
42 kind of help guide us and give us the right direction
43 here for good information for decisionmaking. So,
44 yeah, I stand in awe quite often when I really just
45 kind of stand back and look at the big system that
46 we've got here to help make a difference in rural
47 communities and individual lives around the Subsistence
48 Program, so thank you all very much and looking forward
49 to our work together here this week.

49

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1 MR. WOODS: Oh, boy, last. Frank Woods
2 from BBNA. I'll make two points is the snapshot we
3 have today as I work for Bristol Bay Native
4 Association, a member of the Bristol Bay Area Health
5 Corporation, I'm a recipient of the Bristol Bay
6 Economic Development Corporation, also a member of the
7 Bristol Bay Area Housing Authority. We have so many
8 BB's I could go on listing all the complexities of
9 being Native today. I am sitting next to the Forestry,
10 my last name is Woods, I sit in the right spot.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 MR. WOODS: I met Chad last year, I was
15 on that side and now I'm on this side.

16

17 So the first thing is a snapshot of
18 what we're actually faced with today as Native people.
19 The second one is is all the challenges, the ever
20 evolving subsistence activities in the state of Alaska.
21 And as we traverse here, you know, the last few days
22 have been really helpful. We are actually working
23 together and it's really good to -- what did I write
24 down, a collaboration of agencies that promote health.
25 We are your advocate for actually implementing
26 subsistence and the RAC, through that process, enacting
27 the rules that make up the ever evolving subsistence
28 user in Alaska. So when I sit in this -- I am honored
29 and humbled to represent you guys, you, the audience,
30 my tribal membership -- I'm a tribal citizen of
31 Curyung, I'm also a Curyung Limited shareholder, that
32 makes it even more complicated. And I'll get into that
33 later because the land owners, the tribes don't own any
34 land but the village corporations do and as we grow as
35 Native people the competition is only going to get
36 fiercer and fiercer and fiercer for the resources, it
37 already is.

38

39 So long story short, I am honored to be
40 here, I am willing to listen and I am excited to learn
41 and hopefully make the right decisions for you.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 MS. REED: Mr. Chair, may I.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
48 the floor.

49

50

0017

1 MS. REED: Good morning. My name is
2 Erika Reed. I am the Acting State Director for the
3 Bureau of Land Management. Many of you may have worked
4 with Steve Cohn, he has taken a position with the
5 Forest Service and I will be the Acting State Director
6 for BLM for 120 days or until a permanent position is
7 filled. This is my first time participating being a
8 member on the Board. What I've seen over the last two
9 days has been sheerly amazing and I am looking forward
10 to working with all of you, my fellow Board members and
11 the public and learning from you. I also want to
12 welcome and congratulate the new members of the Board.
13 And one of the things that we often hear from the
14 Alaska Congressional Delegation when we meet with them
15 is how many of you Federal managers are from Alaska and
16 I just want to say, born and raised here, my entire
17 Federal career, 34 years has been here in the state of
18 Alaska. So thank you for being here and I'm privileged
19 to be a part of this process.

20

21 MS. LEONETTI: We're fighting over the
22 mic -- okay. Waqaa and now everybody says it back,
23 ready, Waqaa.

24

25 IN UNISON: Waqaa.

26

27 MS. LEONETTI: Awesome. That means
28 what's up in Yup'ik. (In Yup'ik) my Yup'ik name is
29 Ciiquq, given to me in the traditional way by my
30 grandparents and I'm introducing myself because I'm new
31 here alongside Frank and Raymond and Erika. So my mom
32 and dad are Al and Grace Poindexter from Anchor Point,
33 Alaska, my grandparents are the late Harry and Daisy
34 Barnes from Dillingham, Alaska and Chuck and Beaulah
35 Poindexter from Anchor Point, Alaska. I was born and
36 raised on a small farm in Anchor Point and went fishing
37 in the summers in Queens Slough in Bristol Bay and I'm
38 a tribal citizen of Curyung also, like Frank. My best
39 friend, Ed, is my husband and we have two daughters (In
40 Native) or Audrey, and (In Native) or Gigi in high
41 school and college and we live here in (In Native)
42 which is now known as Anchorage where I always said I
43 would never live. So I am an urban Native. But really
44 excited and honored to be here as the Director of OSM.
45 I acted in the position for six months while OSM moved
46 out of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and into the
47 Office of the Secretary, administratively, we did not
48 move physically, we're still physically located here in
49 Anchorage, all of OSM Staff are here still.

50

0018

1 Administratively on the org chart we are under the
2 Office of the Secretary under the Policy, Management
3 and Budget Office and then under the Office of Policy
4 and Environmental Management so that's where we are on
5 the org chart. My direct supervisor is a political
6 appointee, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the
7 Policy and Environmental Management and I don't know
8 who that person will be yet because the Secretary of
9 Interior was just confirmed over the weekend so we have
10 a new Secretary, Doug Burgum, and he'll get started
11 right away appointing people on his team who will be my
12 direct supervisor. However, our real bosses are right
13 here at this table with me and so OSM works for all of
14 you and we're honored to do that. I grew up being a
15 hard worker, I still am a hard worker, and I can
16 honestly say that everyone on the OSM team are the
17 hardest workers I've worked with thus far in my 30 year
18 career in the Federal government and I'm very proud of
19 all of them.

20

21 I'll talk a little bit about the
22 Presidential transition. So starting on January 20th,
23 just a couple weeks ago we transitioned to a new
24 Administration under President Trump and began
25 receiving numerous Presidential Executive Orders. All
26 Presidential and Executive Orders can be found online
27 at whitehouse.gov and direction from the Department of
28 Interior's leadership can be found on doi.gov. So when
29 those executive orders come through we then, at the
30 Department of Interior, wait for Secretarial guidance
31 to step down and begin working on them. We are
32 handling them, the orders and directives as specific
33 guidance is received but I really won't get into the
34 details of things as they are still deliberative.

35

36 All right, just a few updates on OSM
37 Staff.

38

39 Long time Deputy Ameer Howard has moved
40 on leaving OSM in September and we're working to fill
41 that position and waiting on word from HR currently to
42 finalize that selection.

43

44 Sue Detwiler, many of you remember Sue,
45 she was the previous Assistant Regional Director,
46 retired two Decembers ago and then came back as a
47 rehired and she helped us tremendously, I appreciate
48 her guidance as we moved out of Fish and Wildlife
49 Service into the Office of the Secretary and then just
50

0019

1 a week ago she retired again. So we're going to miss
2 Sue but I just wanted to say on the record that her
3 time here has been very valuable and really helpful.

4

5 The regulations specialist at OSM is a
6 critical position which has recently been filled by
7 Justin Koller. He came from OSM Fisheries Division and
8 prior to that from the Forest Service and a lot of time
9 in Southeast Alaska.

10

11 Over the last several months we've had
12 a series of OSM Staff filling in for other OSM Staff.
13 I want to thank Katya Wessels, I want to thank Scott
14 Ayers and Brent Vickers for stepping up into the Deputy
15 role and the Director role over the last several
16 months.

17

18 I want to thank Sheri Gold-Fehrs, Leigh
19 Honig, Katya Wessels, Gisela Chapa for filling in the
20 many duties of the Outreach Coordinator, which remains
21 vacant. That is a lot of work and so it takes four
22 people to fill in for that position, so I want to thank
23 them specifically.

24

25 And then all the people who filled in
26 for Katya and Scott and Brent while they were acting,
27 too many to list here, but just a lot of Staff filling
28 in a lot of places we are stretched thin with many
29 vacancies right now, six vacancies at the moment. So
30 we're waiting to fill those.

31

32 Personally want to welcome the new
33 Board members, Frank and Raymond and Benjamin, your
34 knowledge is very deep. It's not just your knowledge
35 and your lifetime of experience on the land that you're
36 bringing to the table here but it is all of your
37 ancestors and your whole communities, so, Quayana for
38 your dedication and commitment.

39

40 Ken Lord. Ken Lord retired.

41

42 (Laughter)

43

44 MS. LEONETTI: But look he's here.
45 What? What happened? Ken thank you for coming back
46 again, at least for a little while, we hope he stays
47 longer rather than shorter but he's helping us as Lisa
48 gets on her feet and we thank both of them for also
49 their commitment to the Subsistence Program.

50

0020

1 And, lastly, I want to say happy
2 birthday to Chief Rhonda. Her birthday was over the
3 weekend.

4
5 (Applause)

6
7 MS. LEONETTI: And happy birthday to
8 Hannah Voorhees in the back of the room,
9 anthropologist. Wave your hand Hannah.

10
11 (Applause)

12
13 MS. LEONETTI: Any other birthdays?

14
15 (No comments)

16
17 MS. LEONETTI: All right. I did forget
18 an item of business when I opened the meeting here so
19 opportunities for public participation. This is
20 important for everyone here but the students as well,
21 the public will have the opportunity to provide
22 testimony to the Board each day as noted in the agenda.
23 Public testimony on non-agenda items at the beginning
24 of each meeting in person or by phone. Public
25 testimony on agenda items as the Board moves through
26 the agenda and comments submitted by fax or emails
27 during the meeting, these will be forwarded to the
28 Board, but not read into the record. People listening
29 online can find more details on opportunities to
30 participate during this Board meeting on our website.
31 People who wish to provide testimony in person can do
32 so by filling out the public comment cards at our
33 reception desk. We call them the blue cards so feel
34 free to do that. And, welcome, to Deputy Commissioner
35 Ben Mulligan, thanks for joining us.

36
37 All right, that's all I have. Thank
38 you, Mr. Chair.

39
40 MR. LORD: I just thought of a public
41 service announcement. For those of you who have, in
42 the past, emailed with OSM Staff, with the change from
43 Fish and Wildlife Service to PMB all of their email
44 addresses have changed as well. So if you're emailing
45 and you, you know, get an autofill that ends in fws.gov
46 that is no longer a good email for them, you can call
47 OSM and get those updated email addresses.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Did we miss any
50

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1 other updates.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, I'm
6 Anthony Christianson, Federal Board Chair. I'm from
7 Hydaburg. I'm the Mayor, I've been the Mayor there 18
8 years. I worked at the tribe there for about 22 and a
9 half years. I currently work for Tlingit&Haida as a
10 traditional food security coordinator, the senior
11 coordinator there to basically do what we're doing
12 here, bring food to our communities, both urban and
13 rural settings so they continue to engage in the
14 lifestyle through their tastebuds. Right, that's the
15 best we can do and we know our culture, we're providers
16 so it takes a few good men to feed a lot of people, or
17 women, so I just put that in context because lately
18 I've seen a lot of ladies out there working harder than
19 the men. We host a lot of classes and teaching kids
20 how to do it and I tell you the girls jump in two hands
21 swinging with the knife and my nephews all stand back
22 with their Nikes on the wall. So I'm putting a call
23 out boys let's get dirty, and it's on the Federal
24 record here so come on now, I've been doing it
25 everywhere I go, I need more nephews to go out hunting
26 with me. I had to pack all my deer this year, that's
27 not fair I'm old.

28

29

(Laughter)

30

31

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yeah, yeah,
32 I trained a lot of boys. So, anyway, been a good
33 season in our region, you know, we know a lot of
34 regions suffer but Southeast has been fortunate, we had
35 a good sockeye return, we had good hunting seasons, we
36 shared our bounty like we should and so that's my
37 personal life. I'm a grandfather of a two year old
38 now, that takes up most of my time other than fishing
39 and hunting and living the lifestyle we live, which
40 gives us that insight we need to protect it for the
41 rest of the state so my new role allows me to do more
42 of that so really engaged recently wholeheartedly in
43 that lifestyle so coming to these meetings again, I'm
44 regenerated time and time again every year by just the
45 activity that unfolds, the appreciation that people
46 have in our communities for the resources we share,
47 that is our economy. Like Rhonda stated, our economy
48 is based off access to resource and abundance of it and
49 our house is as rich as what we gather. I don't eat
50

1 money and all it buys is a staple, it's a means to get
2 our ends met and so this, I feel, is our bank, and I
3 take it very serious and so I'm here to represent the
4 wishes and well-being of the rural residents of Alaska
5 and their needs and how do we meet those under the
6 current situation. You know there's a lot of demands
7 on both the Federal agencies here in transition, which
8 they did a wonderful job, both being moved into the
9 Department of Interior, you know, that -- I watched the
10 Staff wondering about that, they did a wonderful job in
11 that transition and then a transition here through, you
12 know, a change of a political party and they did a good
13 job with that as well. And, you know, we live in a
14 fear based world and I didn't see a lot of that
15 unfolding here, more just diligence, action and moving
16 forward the goal to provide this opportunity for you to
17 come and testify and to make sure that we hear the
18 voice of the land and so just appreciate that.

19

20 I don't have anything else to share.
21 I'm looking forward to one big thing I have in my life,
22 is, just sharing here, I'm going to carve a totem pole,
23 and so that's probably what I have going on personally
24 that's pretty good, I was sharing a picture here about
25 -- I'm going to carve what they call a good uncle pole
26 so to follow up with my words here that we have good
27 uncles and bad uncles on the land and so we got to
28 remind the good uncles their job is to train the next
29 nephew to provide and to be that protector and to serve
30 our communities with impunity and to do it without any
31 expectation. And so I'm speaking like this because we
32 have students and impressionable people and one time
33 everybody on this side was on that side. And as I look
34 around here, you know, I was just a testifier one day
35 and a young whippersnapper so I see this class has
36 almost tripled in size in the last few years and so
37 that's good to see that there's a new and upcoming
38 resurgence of interest in our way of life and that we
39 do it in a system and as emotional as we are, that we
40 drive ourselves with the law of the land and that we
41 can make that change happen when we engage ourselves
42 our these systems, that we speak with our heart but we
43 work with the people who can do that and that's these
44 people at the table. So I'm always grateful for all
45 these agencies and I've seen over the 10 years that
46 I've been on here a transition from grinding it out to
47 really figuring it out without a whole lot of animosity
48 at the end of the day and that's a testament I think to
49 everybody's wanting to create the atmosphere for our
50

0023

1 rural residents to be successful, to be fed, and to
2 continue their way of life and so just appreciate all
3 of you. The system is for you, and it's a system where
4 the individual has a voice and can change things in
5 their landscape and so I've always appreciated that
6 aspect of the program, so thank you.

7

8 And with that we're going to go ahead
9 and move on to the Regional Advisory Council Chairs
10 topics of concern and discussion to the Board.

11

12 I know we had Judy wanted to wait until
13 she got here and I told her she could, and she said
14 thank you I was a real nice guy.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we'll start
19 with Louie.

20

21 MR. GREEN: Nothing like being first,
22 Mr. Chair. Thank you. Thank you to the Board members
23 here and all those in attendance, along with the Staff,
24 thanks.

25

26 So good morning. It is morning yet.
27 My name is Louie Green, I'm from Nome. Current Chair
28 of the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I
29 also served for a -- on our Bering Straits Native
30 Corporation as a Director. Also our Sitnasauk Native
31 Corporation as a Director that I got excused to be here
32 and was very delighted to have my Chair call me up and
33 offer that opportunity. It's kind of a rare thing for
34 a for profit to be involved in extending their hand to
35 something like this. It was something that was done in
36 the '90s. But the Chair, her name is Gloria Carmen,
37 and I wanted to recognize her name here, very good
38 Chair. The opportunity to serve in the past at
39 Sitnasauk Native level was in 1993 on to the 2000s and
40 there was a lot of support for Board of Fish and
41 through that, and it's just, like I said a rare
42 opportunity because for profits don't necessarily get
43 into it. We own the land and the State manages it but
44 as far as being proactive in how they manage it is, I
45 think is starting to come to light, I think I hear that
46 out of Dillingham, I was pleased to hear that, maybe
47 that will push the envelope a little bit for the rest
48 of us.

49

50

1 So anyway, you know, our area in Nome
2 was impacted heavily in the '70s and '80s and our
3 salmon runs depleted in those times. We lost our
4 kings, we lost our reds. We used to have a thriving
5 biomass, I guess you could call it, of all five species
6 back in the '60s and '70s. And that, you know, you
7 always hear about the mining, the mining's detrimental,
8 it's ruining our salmon. Well, in the '60s and '70s,
9 not 20 years after World War II when they shut down
10 major mining operations on the Seward Peninsula, we had
11 plenty of salmon, we had lots of salmon, there was no
12 complaints. Only until venturing into the '80s, after
13 commercial State fishing and intercept fishing going on
14 in the State waters and in Federal waters. There were
15 people that warned in the early '90s there that
16 trawling and any intercept State fisheries were going
17 to be an issue and, you know, Nome being the first
18 subdistrict basically to witness all this back in the
19 past, somebody was like reading a crystal ball talking
20 about how it was going to happen in the Yukon and the
21 Kuskokwim, it's happened. It's been happening. Rhonda
22 just alluded to that, how things are so bad there on
23 the Yukon.

24
25 We've had, you know, and like I said,
26 Nome experienced the first -- we were the only Tier II
27 fishery in the state, the first and only in the history
28 of the state of Alaska to be a Tier II salmon fishery.
29 You know we were dividing 2,000 salmon out of seven
30 aggregate rivers to 20 families. I served as the
31 Chairman of the Tier II salmon work group under the
32 Board of Fish for a year. It was a challenging seat to
33 be in, and the final outcome was nobody really wanted
34 to sign their name to a framework, you know, telling
35 their neighbor they couldn't fish. So I experienced
36 all of this firsthand in the beginning and, you know,
37 nobody listened to the warning.

38
39 So now I will go and extend that into
40 nowadays, the concerns of the long-term impacts of the
41 trawl fleet fishery. You know our Council continues to
42 be concerned about the long-term impacts of the trawl
43 fishery in the Bering Sea. You know they decimate the
44 bottom. There was supposed to be a pelagic gear which
45 was swimming up here and catching pollack up here but
46 they're down here 40 to 100 percent of the time. I
47 understand that while they're doing their trawls, their
48 trawls are taking -- they're covering -- each vessel is
49 covering about an average of six square miles in a day.
50

0025

1 It's taking them twice as long to fill their gear. You
2 can imagine what it's doing to the bottom of the ocean
3 floor and what it's doing to all the species that are
4 in there that are considered bycatch, wanton waste.

5
6 And example of numbers, somebody did
7 come up with a number, you know, an F Ford 150, the
8 backend of that truck level with bycatch. The first
9 one's parked in Anchorage bumper to bumper, the last
10 one's sitting in Soldotna, that's somebody's brilliant
11 idea of making an example of how much waste is
12 happening every year, 141 million pounds a year, that's
13 documented. It's not unrecorded, that's recorded. How
14 long can our seas sustain that, well, when you talk
15 about the Kuskokwim and the Yukon, the two largest
16 rivers in the state failing to provide for the people,
17 you got to wonder what's really happening. The
18 ecosystem is collapsing maybe. It's not something that
19 hasn't happened in the past. Trawlers have a bad
20 reputation all the way around to the East Coast, it's
21 not rocket science, all you got to do is look at
22 something that happened on the East Coast 20 years ago
23 and you could say, hey, it's probably happening here
24 too. The science is already in.

25
26 So that is our main concern in the
27 discussions we've had at the table of my Council, you
28 know, the destructive practice of decades of
29 significant impacts of our sea life, marine life, and
30 you know what it cannot be overlooked, the fact, that
31 if those fish ain't swimming back to the rivers, those
32 rivers are being damaged, too, the ecosystem in the
33 rivers are being ruined. Where do moose eat in the
34 wintertime, usually on the edge of the river, right.
35 Well, the water in the river you see is also under the
36 ground, it's a water table that spreads out and that's
37 why you see the river valleys that are all full of
38 trees and mass of everything and then you get to the
39 hillsides and it's kind of barren. Well, the water
40 table down there is providing those nutrients that a re
41 being driven from the ocean and salmon are the
42 transporters. You know we haven't done a very good job
43 of taking care of our salmon.

44
45 The richest of the Pacific Rim, I
46 think, is based on salmon, they go back 5 million
47 years.

48
49 So like I said we had multi-species
50

0026

1 into the '60s and '70s and that was, you know, even due
2 to the turn of the century of 19 -- let's just say
3 1900, for 60 years there's been mining on the Seward
4 Peninsula and we had plenty of salmon back then so I
5 don't attribute it to the mining, I attribute it to the
6 mining of the deep sea that we're having problems now
7 and the aspects of the way I described it and dealing
8 with this trawling.

9
10 You know I have knowledge that was
11 passed down to me to take what we need. My grandmother
12 was born in 1918 and she carried on that old school
13 stuff to me, I'm 66 years old and, you know, I've been
14 spending a lifetime passing that on to the younger
15 generation. Maybe not as active as that man right
16 there, I really have respect for what Anthony does, of
17 where he's at with that. So these teachings for our
18 kids, it's really hard to teach when you don't have
19 salmon. We went through a period of time there in the
20 Nome area there where we didn't have hardly any salmon
21 coming and so it's really hard to -- you know, when
22 you're doing okay and you can go to the store and get
23 what you want, but, you know, you see people that can't
24 even go to the riverbank and throw a hook in the water
25 and pull something out of there and go home like we did
26 when I was a kid. So I described the Tier II, what
27 that was like, you know, 2,000 salmon for 20 families.

28
29 And the teachings of our ancestors, we
30 talk about that a lot. It's a -- I guess the word,
31 stark, contrast to what the North Pacific Fisheries
32 Management Council allows in their effort to manage a
33 sustainable fisheries in Federal waters. I mentioned
34 yesterday that I sat in a -- I attended Boys State at
35 the University of Fairbanks in June of '74 and I sat
36 there and listened to Ted Stevens talk about that, what
37 they were going for and how that was going to be
38 implemented and it was going to take care of us, you
39 know, our fish are going to come back. Well, what
40 happened. We're still into the MSA. Where's our fish?

41
42 Our Council feels strongly about the
43 ripple effect and the unintended consequences that all
44 that has on subsistence users. It's affecting our
45 whole western side of the state here terribly. And we
46 asked for collaboration. We asked for the opportunity
47 to develop more sustainable ecosystem based management
48 approaches that integrates the management of salmon
49 across the boundaries and jurisdictions that benefits
50

0027

1 all users. We want to be at the table. We're here.
2 You know I've testified at the North Pacific Fisheries
3 Management Council and said, hey, what can we do to
4 help, what can we do to figure this thing out and make
5 it better. In the last year I haven't heard any good
6 out of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
7 What was it, last year, there was the herring bycatch
8 was getting close to the limit, you know what they did,
9 they doubled it, that's not sustainability. I used to
10 fish herring in the Norton Sound, I had a permit there
11 and we did really good and all of a sudden there's
12 nothing there anymore, there's no market, there's
13 nothing, no fishery.

14
15 We're looking at the effects in the
16 Bering Sea, king crab fishing, opelio, bairdi, they're
17 all having problems, this bottom fishing. Then you
18 hear about a trawler pulling up a crab pot or two every
19 now and then. Maybe they have something to do with it.

20
21 Our Council turns to you for guidance
22 to represent the subsistence users at the table. Our
23 main concern is salmon. I think it goes across Western
24 Alaska without saying.

25
26 I hear Anthony talking about the youth,
27 yeah, we're doing that up there, engaging future
28 generations. And at the Council level I think there's
29 another topic of interest. The Seward Peninsula
30 Council's engaging youth, future generations in the
31 Federal Subsistence Management Program to participate
32 in our RAC meetings. Our Council is fortunate to have
33 some members that have demonstrated exemplary
34 dedication and have served on our RAC for many years,
35 you know, we're talking about -- you know, Anthony says
36 10 years or something, I heard, I got guys like Tom
37 Gray over there since 2003, 13 years -- or excuse me,
38 21 years, and then there's Elmer Seetot, he's out of
39 Brevig he's been there for 31 years and much to my
40 amazement I'm 15 years now and we're all trying to come
41 to the table to find some way to bring ourselves
42 together to get something accomplished here and that's
43 our subsistence needs. And, you know, when you look at
44 it there's very few of us out there. You know when you
45 talk about some people in here, there's Gayla over
46 there, there's a few of us that want to make changes.

47
48 I guess reaching out to the Department
49 of Commerce is probably something that's really got to
50

0028

1 be necessary. I know my Council has done that, through
2 the RACs we've done that, the Chairs, there's several
3 RACs that have done the same thing. How we ring their
4 bell and get them to the table, I don't know.
5 Hopefully this body here, you folks can do something
6 about that for us.

7

8 So going back to the length of time we
9 serve, you know, I think we're doing the right thing
10 moving forward by trying to find young leaders and pull
11 them in and be honed while we're still around to carry
12 the torch.

13

14 We need more, you know, it's not just
15 salmon that we have issues with in my area. We have
16 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd that's in decline and
17 that not only takes us in the Seward Peninsula but it's
18 above us all the way up to Utqiagvik, Barrow, all the
19 way down to us on the Seward Peninsula. And I've been
20 told that collared animals aren't showing up in our
21 area. You know we have to travel 80 to 100 miles just
22 to go caribou hunting. That's a long ways to go. Like
23 I said about the salmon, the salmon's an issue. One
24 thing I do know about salmon, when you take a chum
25 salmon out of the system you start taking the rest of
26 them out and what else follows, the grayling, the
27 whitefish, the sculp and all these little critters in
28 the water. I reflect a comment from a man from the
29 Tanana River in the '90s at a Board of Fish meeting, he
30 says, I'm telling my kids that those little bugs depend
31 on salmon just like we do.

32

33 The moose population up in my region
34 there, we're a three day hunt so we can't just do
35 without salmon and have something else like caribou or
36 moose. Muskox is another issue. They're another
37 animal that's in a decline of sorts.

38

39 And one of the biggest factors and
40 everybody talks about climate change, well climate's
41 been changing for five million years and salmon have
42 been around for five million years and they seem to
43 have done good until the last 30 or 40 years. Caribou
44 are taking it, you know, it's hard -- Charlie just told
45 me today about the rain that's going on in the
46 Interior, you know, we have the same thing on the
47 Seward Peninsula. So we're getting to the point --
48 we're at the point where, you know, you can't depend --
49 because you don't have salmon, you can't depend on

50

0029

1 other protein sources of meat, you know, so it gets
2 really difficult to exist out in rural Alaska. We all
3 know the price of groceries and gas. In Nome I see the
4 Unit 22, that's Sitnasauk land, Unit 22C. I think
5 there was 17 moose that were available in that and it
6 turned out 40 were taken. Somebody says, oh, geez, we
7 must be doing better than we thought we were doing, the
8 population's better in 22C. Well, I don't think so. I
9 think it's the price of gas that's concentrated the
10 hunting closer to town. And the other negative effect
11 was that Fish and Game did, they had 20 year of 20 cow
12 moose taken before they realized they should stop doing
13 stuff like that. So management is a big deal,
14 mismanagement has hurt us all. I have a son that's
15 quadriplegic now but when he was a teenager I caught
16 him in the line at the Fish and Game office one night
17 and I said, what are you doing in this line and he says
18 I'm going to go get a cow tag and he knows I don't like
19 cows taken, at the time, and I said, well, what are you
20 going to do with it and he said well I'm going to burn
21 it, I said, stay in line.

22

23 Protecting what we have is getting
24 harder and harder and we need to find some answers.

25

26 The North Pacific Fisheries Management
27 Council needs to adhere to some type of, what do you
28 call it, brunt of conservation has fallen on all of us,
29 when is it going to be their turn.

30

31 Any other issues that I have?

32

33 I have an issue with the fact that the
34 trawl industry is allowed to take sea mammals as
35 bycatch. I never realized what it was, what was
36 happening out there until I got involved in the last
37 few years. They're going against the Marine Mammal
38 Protection Act. I sat in the courthouse in Nome,
39 Alaska when Ted Stevens was talking about that and
40 where's the protection now. They're allowed 8,200
41 bearded seal in the bycatch industry. Over 9,000
42 ribbon seal. So I've knocked on them pretty hard but I
43 think it needs to be said. It's like the white
44 elephant in the room everywhere you go. We have a
45 program that's called the community development program
46 that's based on profit from trawler industry and I call
47 it the beads and blankets effect. You get beads and
48 pretty beads and the trawler industry gets the
49 billions.

50

0030

1 So with that, Mr. Chair, I think the
2 Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
3 appreciates the Board's attention to these matters and
4 the opportunity to assist the Federal Subsistence
5 Management Program in meeting its charge in protecting
6 subsistence resources uses of these resources on
7 Federal public lands and waters. We look forward to
8 continuing to work with you.

9
10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
13 Louie. Questions from the Board for Louie.

14
15 (No comments)

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
18 that. Eastern Interior, Charlie.

19
20 MR. WRIGHT: I'd like to thank you all
21 for all that you do for us and welcome the new members.
22 I'm really happy to see you all here.

23
24 Eastern Interior, our subsistence needs
25 are not being met still. Haven't been for a long time.
26 A lot of our villages along the river and its
27 tributaries [sic] are at the point of no other
28 means, they don't have a store, can't go down to Costco
29 and get some fish. We're at the point of no other
30 means. I just have to say that again.

31
32 We have low caribou and moose density
33 and as you all know we are in a salmon crisis. The
34 impacts to local people are their health. In the
35 Tanana Chiefs region diabetes has gone up 70 percent in
36 five years. 70 percent. Because people are not used
37 to eating that food so they're getting sick.

38
39 All the fish camps are brushed over,
40 not being used, children are not being taught their
41 traditional way and culture. Salmon culture is going
42 away. We are all connected through salmon in this room
43 and we need to work together across boundaries, with
44 the Federal Subsistence Board, NOAA, State, Tribes,
45 just like Sarah said, it's true, that's the only way
46 we're going to be able to make a difference. We need
47 to come together and do the right thing. It's been
48 going on too long. Our whole ecosystem is in trouble.
49 In the places where salmon spawn, the animals that
50

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1 relied on them coming back every year, from the biggest
2 predators right down to the blue fly and the
3 yellowjacket bee, everything is affected and the longer
4 it goes on the worse it gets. Those places are dying
5 off trying to learn how to adjust. Adjust is hard for
6 animals that have eaten salmon for millennia in those
7 creeks and rivers and tributaries [sic]. Our tribes
8 along the Yukon are carrying the burden of
9 conservation. Subsistence users, they're in trouble,
10 we have nothing, nowhere to go. I've had the pleasure
11 of working on the Yukon River mid-river sonar
12 feasibility study and we did a lot of sonar work
13 through the fish finder and sonar and there's no more
14 fish going up the middle of the river, they're all on
15 the side weak and small. A lot of that is due to lack
16 of food from many different things. We think that
17 salmon are -- you know, they're affected, we call it
18 from a thousand cuts. There's climate, disease,
19 overfishing. You can add them all up. While we carry
20 the burden of conservation bycatch intercept is still
21 happening. One trawl from a trawl boat can take out a
22 distinct stock from a tributary [sic] in the Yukon.
23 One tow can clean out a creek and we have a lot of
24 creeks and tributaries [sic] that have zero fish in
25 them now and they don't know about all of them so
26 they're not being said but people like me that live on
27 a river in my area are watching this happen.

28
29 The EIRAC sent out letters for requests
30 for co-management with the Yukon River Tribal Fish
31 Commission sent to Federal subsistence, Fish and
32 Wildlife Service and the State managers. Yukon River
33 Panel, we're all sitting there working on an agreement
34 that was imposed on us without consultation. One thing
35 that I like about Yukon River Panel right now is
36 they're incorporating traditional knowledge and that's
37 making a difference. The North Pacific, I keep saying
38 that we don't have to etch nothing in stone to change,
39 we can call it a test fishery, I'd like to see time and
40 area closures and protection corridor through Area M
41 and northside trawl fleet to the AYK. It could be a
42 test fishery, it doesn't have to be etched in stone.
43 Let's find out what works. We have to put all of our
44 collective minds together and make a difference before
45 it's too late for the salmon. We're spending --
46 they're already passing out millions of dollars for
47 Gravel-to-Gravel, which is a good thing, but the
48 natural way and the way to save money is to go out and
49 make a difference and find a protection corridor for
50

0032

1 our salmon to make it home naturally. If we put in
2 hatcheries in the upper Yukon River all we're doing is
3 feeding the problem, they're never going to make it,
4 it's never going to happen. We're also working at the
5 Board of Fish. And we're worried about the hatcheries
6 because we believe that since there's Southeast
7 hatchery fish being caught in the Bering Sea fishing
8 that they're getting so they're spreading out, there's
9 so many billions of them that they're eating up all the
10 food for the wild stocks and, therefore, that's one of
11 the reasons our fish are coming back smaller and
12 weaker.

13

14 Maximum yield management is not working
15 at all when it comes to wildlife. And the climate
16 uncertainties management needs to be added where the
17 caribou, moose, and sheep declines. In the bodies that
18 I work in I ask the managers to add climate
19 uncertainty. If they say they can shoot a thousand
20 caribou, do 500. You have to have animals for
21 uncertainties and I told them that this fall when they
22 were opening the Fortymile Herd for hunts, I told them
23 what about uncertainties and climate, I said it could
24 rain again like it's done every year. In the past few
25 years we had smaller rain events than we did in the
26 couple prior years that really bothered the caribou and
27 the sheep, then right after I told them not to do it,
28 to add in uncertainties, it rained really hard again so
29 that's going to be devastating on the sheep and the
30 caribou in the Interior again. It rained so hard and
31 for so long the ground is just a brick of ice. There's
32 no way that animals can eat off of that.

33

34 The Fortymile Caribou Coalition, I'm
35 happy that the Coalition started back up again but the
36 villages in the area are not at all at the table.
37 It's wrong. When I talk to those villages they say
38 they don't even go out on the road when the hunt is
39 going on because they're scared of getting shot. It's
40 such chaos.

41

42 EIRAC's request to the Eastern Interior
43 -- anyway the Dall Sheep Coalition is important going
44 forward because of the uncertainties also. In some of
45 our areas they've been devastated by the rain and
46 they're having a hard time coming back with added
47 pressure.

48

49 We must do better. Everything can't be

50

0033

1 about money. You can't eat that. In the end that's
2 all there'll be. Like I said, rain events are very
3 hard on all the populations. We must change our
4 management to a sustainable approach with climate
5 change uncertainties incorporated. Thank you all for
6 all you do for our natural resources. I appreciate
7 your time today and your consideration.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
12 Charlie. Any questions for Charlie.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
17 that good report.

18

19 Brower. North Slope.

20

21 MR. FRANZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
22 name's Brower Franz, Chair for the North Slope Regional
23 Advisory Council. I'm from Utqiagvik. I was born and
24 raised in Barrow, Alaska. And before I start though
25 I'd like to spend a few minutes remembering one of our
26 Council members who has just passed away in December
27 and he was our Chair for, I'm not even sure how many
28 years, but he was the previous Chair before me and I
29 was lucky enough that he gave me his blessing to take
30 over. But Steve Oomittuk from Point Hope passed and
31 I'd like to take a moment of silence to recognize Mr.
32 Oomittuk.

33

34 (Moment of Silence)

35

36 MR. FRANZ: Thank you very much. So
37 Mr. Oomittuk, he was not one to take subsistence
38 lightly and he always advocated for subsistence and
39 everybody has to remember we're not getting paid for
40 this stuff, we're here, you know, he was here pretty
41 much all the way until the end just to make sure that
42 we're trying our best to make sure our people on our
43 land are getting what we should be and, you know, we
44 fight for that. So it's been pretty hard for us over
45 the last few months but just knowing that he was an
46 advocate for our subsistence and making sure that we're
47 staying on topic and getting things pushed through to
48 the end and following through, he was a great mentor
49 for me and I'll always look up to him and I will always
50

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1 reference Mr. Oomittuk, I'll make sure of it. But he
2 was also a great family friend. He grew up in Barrow,
3 Alaska back and forth to Point Hope. He was a very
4 close family friend for us, they were always along the
5 same areas of my parents, my aunts, uncles, so we knew
6 him not only through this venue but personally and he
7 was a sincere human being. I just wanted to make sure
8 that Mr. Oomittuk was mentioned and that we won't
9 forget him.

10

11 All right, so on to the topics.

12

13 So for the North Slope we do have a
14 couple concerns. One of them being an influx of
15 commercial guided and non-guided fly in hunters. So a
16 lot of them are, you know, not even residents. They'll
17 come up, they'll fly in and out but some of the main
18 issues that we have is some of them are getting left
19 out there and this is -- we're talking the middle of
20 the Brooks Range, above the Brooks Range. How can you
21 get there? You can not get them with a vehicle, yet
22 people are flying them in, dropping them off, their
23 planes are breaking down and even the planes to get out
24 there are scarce. You're flying out of Kotzebue,
25 Coldfoot, anywhere they have transporters that are paid
26 to bring them out there. But when they have issues
27 they end up getting lost or stuck out there with
28 nothing to sustain them with for a long period of time
29 because they're backpackers, they're trying to stay
30 light. We had instances to where bears were eating
31 their caribou that they caught and their flying
32 transportation wasn't able to get them and the bears
33 are eating their caribou, how are they going to bring
34 that home, you know, they paid \$10,000 for something a
35 bear's eating in front of them. So it's an issue for
36 us because not only is it inundating our rescue
37 resources on the North Slope. We have two helicopters,
38 one of them's been down for three years so how are we
39 going to rescue these people especially when there's a
40 minimum of 15 a year that just in the month of August
41 that are needing rescue assistance out there because
42 their guides can't come and get them. It's difficult,
43 to say the least. So, you know, we did submit this
44 last year and the Board had come back and said there's
45 nothing they can really do about this so we're putting
46 our life into this and we're not getting paid for this,
47 we don't make a career out of this but we're also not
48 getting any assistance for this so it almost makes you
49 think, what am I doing here, you know. So for the new
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1 members that are coming on board, welcome aboard,
2 please help us and it's something that we might have to
3 look into other avenues of getting things figured out
4 but it's still an issue. It's still an issue. So if
5 we can't get any assistance on it it's going to happen
6 again and it's going to keep happening.

7
8 I'll try not to harp on that one too
9 much but that one is -- that is a very big issue. So
10 it's -- there are certain ways we look at things. So
11 for every five accidents there's going to be, you know,
12 some kind of casualty. This keeps happening. It keeps
13 happening and pretty soon just statistically speaking
14 something bad is going to happen, it might not be this
15 year, it might not be next year but statistically
16 speaking if this keeps happening something bad is going
17 to happen if you don't do anything about it. So I
18 would urge you to look into that if not -- if you can't
19 help help us maybe help us get somewhere we can.

20
21 Federally-non-qualified subsistence
22 users are competing for the same resource and this may
23 lead to conflict between users and this area, it's
24 something Mr. Oomittuk, this is happening right at his
25 backdoor so this is around Unit 23, where they shut
26 down, they closed a lot of the areas in 23 over the
27 last 10 years or so, they've all moved just north of
28 that line and now they're into 26 over on the western
29 side right next to Point Hope and just below Point Lay
30 and Wainwright but they're in that area around the
31 foothills and around the tail end of the Colville River
32 and that's where they're flying in and getting left and
33 we've had calls to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is
34 normally stationed in Kotzebue all summer and we've had
35 calls to the Coast Guard, we've called them
36 specifically because we couldn't go out and rescue the
37 people that were needing rescue that got left out there
38 with all their gear, their caribou and -- oh, and
39 remember when they get rescued they can't bring that
40 caribou into the helicopters, they have to leave it out
41 there so when that happens and there's, you know, 15 to
42 30 of them a year that are trying to get home they're
43 going to leave all of that out there, all their catch,
44 if they get rescued they have to leave the meat by
45 law. They cannot bring that in the carrier if it's
46 going to be a rescue. So not only is it bad for
47 subsistence, it's also bad for them, it's bad for
48 everybody. It's bad for the people rescuing them,
49 especially if they bring the meat, they could lose
50

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1 their licenses for that. So it's just a huge mess.

2

3

4 The other thing, for all the new
5 members, I would stress is that you need to look into
6 the laws, you need to look into what you're supposed to
7 be doing. You're supposed to have subsistence priority
8 and that is something I'm going to keep saying as long
9 as I'm here. You're supposed to push for subsistence
10 priority. Over the last few years -- I've only been
11 Chair for the last year and I've seen things that were
12 submitted and are accepted that have absolutely zero
13 subsistence priority. You're supposed to be changing
14 things before getting to subsistence and changing the
15 numbers for that. You're supposed to be changing the
16 fly in hunters, non-resident hunters, you're supposed
17 to be changing anything other than subsistence before
18 getting to that point but we are not seeing that,
19 absolutely not seeing that. We are on the front line
20 and we are the first to be changed. Why is that? Our
21 subsistence numbers are changed first before anything
22 else, just like the number, now we can go and hunt 15 a
23 year caribou when it was one a day and we don't even
24 have an issue on the North Slope with caribou. Why?
25 This is the Western Arctic Caribou Herd that we are
26 talking about. And, sure, there are numbers that are
27 declining in central, you know, around the south of the
28 Brooks Range, they occasionally go north of the Brooks
29 Range but why are we changing our numbers when our
30 herds are not affected. The science is not backing any
31 of this up but, yet, here we are changing our numbers
32 because of something else and was accepted and
33 approved. We did take it but we did make it very clear
34 that you are changing things that should not be changed
35 right off the bat, you need to be looking at other
36 avenues. It just doesn't make sense. It doesn't meet
37 anything you have in writing or the law. So for the
38 new members please look into this and it's something
39 that you should be doing.

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40 So another one we continue to hear the
41 same concerns and complaints from Anaktuvuk Pass,
42 Nuiqsut and Point Hope consistently, the number of fly-
43 in hunters in our region have adversely impacted our
44 subsistence hunt north of the Brooks Range. The
45 combination of Unit 23 closures, guided hunters,
46 transporter companies and do it yourself hunters have
47 inundated the North Slope rescue services targeting an
48 area directly affecting the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
49 and diverted caribou from routes that our local

1 communities have made known at every wildlife meeting
2 over the last 10 years. Other than what our Council
3 has discussed on the record no one is documenting any
4 of these user conflicts or trying to understand how
5 these conflicts impact harvest success of subsistence
6 users. So we ask the Board, our Council understands
7 the implications and limitations of dual management but
8 subsistence isn't practiced in a vacuum. Sporthunting
9 for animals that we depend on, even if they're reported
10 to have a minimal impact on Western Arctic Caribou Herd
11 population does not mean it doesn't have other
12 unintended consequences. So we've been saying this for
13 years and I hope the Board and State can understand our
14 concern and hope for an opportunity to share your
15 insights with us to help curb this problem.

16

17 So that's one of the concerns.

18

19 Another one is muskox. So our Council
20 would like to see a wildlife monitoring program that
21 can help improve access to subsistence harvest
22 opportunities in our region. We would like to hunt
23 more muskox. The numbers are higher. It's very clear
24 to us. We see them all over the place now and the last
25 count, I believe, they had 300 or so so it just met the
26 threshold and that was years ago so they put out a very
27 limited hunt and I want to say one, maybe two of those
28 were filled out of five that were given so there was no
29 take really on that. We probably see more dead on the
30 Haul Road from bear killings than we're allowed. And
31 also I think the way they're managing it is not ideal.
32 They're not -- I don't know how to put it. So they're
33 giving other locations or they're allowing other
34 locations to receive some of the permits like AKP, but
35 let's say one of them is around Ikpikpuk River 250
36 miles away, why, there is no road going there, how are
37 they going to get there. Some of my best friends who
38 are avid hunters won't even go that direction because
39 it's too treacherous. So there should be better ways
40 that you can provide the permits and accurately put
41 them where they need to be and for what villages.

42

43 So when important subsistence food such
44 as caribou are not available for harvest the need for
45 other foods to sustain our people is much greater.

46

47 So our Council has heard many barriers
48 that subsistence users must overcome to be successful
49 in their harvest efforts. For example, we have

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1 harvest restrictions on caribou due to population
2 declines, moose is sparse. I go 200 miles just to go
3 get a moose, 300 river miles actually, and it's getting
4 more expensive to travel and put food on the table. So
5 for one moose hunt for me it's about \$2,000 worth of
6 gas just to go find one and hopefully you're lucky. So
7 giving us more opportunity, especially when it's there
8 is something that we can make use of. A lot of people
9 won't even go near them because, you know, if you get
10 one somebody's going to go take your fourwheeler, your
11 boat, your guns, you need to decriminalize a lot of
12 this stuff and all we're trying to do is get one or two
13 muskox. There's not a lot of them around and if we do
14 get one out of maybe six or seven of them, chances are
15 the herd of them is 200 miles away, they're not going
16 to overhunt these things. They're too hard to get to.
17 So making those available, there has to be some kind of
18 algorithm. If you give out five and you only have one
19 successful hunt, look at that algorithm and base your
20 permits off of that. Give them 15, they're probably
21 only going to get three out of those 15. So you need
22 to make it work, you know, and keep an open mind for
23 that. We're not the Fortymile, you're not going to
24 overhunt them all, there's no way that 15 people are
25 going to travel 300 miles just to go get a muskox, you
26 know, you might be lucky.

27
28 Our Council members have seen more and
29 more muskox and we've heard reports from others
30 reporting the same. So basically all of the villages
31 we have reports of muskox nowadays and before that was
32 kind of unheard of but now muskox is being reported
33 everywhere. What this means to me is that we have an
34 opportunity to increase subsistence harvest on muskox
35 in Unit 26 but the regulations are slow to change. A
36 lot of that is because they're not looking into it.
37 They're not flying, especially the State. The numbers
38 were so low they're not going to put a bunch of money
39 into flying over to go and do this and so what we're
40 requesting is to kind of help speed up that process and
41 maybe make some kind of funding source so that people
42 can go out and do the research, go out and do the
43 science and figure out, you know, hey, there's 600
44 instead of 300 so maybe we can double those numbers.
45 Subsistence users in our region would greatly benefit
46 from annual population surveys of muskox. So we're
47 asking the Board to help that in the not so distant
48 future, the Federal Subsistence Management Program can
49 establish a monitoring program for wildlife, moreover,
50

1 muskox, so help us out with that. We have tons of
2 caribou surveys, we have polar bear surveys, people
3 darting polar bears for DNA samples, collecting hair
4 samples but nobody's looking into muskox. So I see
5 multiple benefits in doing so. And this particular
6 example, consistent yearly surveys in our region would
7 help us better understand population trends for muskox
8 and manage the herd accordingly and at times when the
9 population can support increased harvest we can provide
10 access to subsistence users more promptly. I've been
11 trying to work with Carmen Daggett for years on getting
12 a, you know, a permit or even an emergency hunt for the
13 nuisance muskox unsuccessful, you know, and I'm
14 probably one of the only ones that sees them around
15 Barrow because we go so far. I've been shunned in more
16 than one way.

17
18 I believe that's most of my talking
19 points but once, again, I really want to put out there
20 that for all of the new representatives that you should
21 be looking into what this is all about, what we're here
22 for, what am I here for. I'm here for subsistence and,
23 you know, other than per diem not getting paid to be
24 here, this is something that we are advocating for and
25 we're putting our life into this, you know, it's weeks
26 and weeks of discussions, correspondence that, you
27 know, we could be doing other things but here we are
28 because this is an issue. And it's a statewide issue.
29 I'm for the North Slope but if you look at it
30 subsistence priority is not being met throughout the
31 state. A lot of other things are changing. You're
32 changing salmon numbers other than subsistence and
33 before subsistence. I mean you're not doing it
34 properly. There should be a checklist that you follow,
35 you know, have we looked at this, are we prioritizing
36 subsistence, you should be asking yourself that because
37 it's very clear that you are not from what I've seen
38 and, you know, I've only been here three years now I
39 think but one year as the Chair, so I would ask that
40 you don't get complacent and, you know, make sure that
41 you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, you're
42 following the guidebooks, you're following the laws,
43 make sure that subsistence is being prioritized and
44 that's all we could ask for.

45
46 Thank you very much.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
49 Brower and with that we'll take a few minute break to
50

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1 think about that. Thank you. Appreciate those words.
2 Take a five, 10 minute break and then we'll come back.

3

4 (Off record)

5

6 (On record)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
9 we're going to go ahead and get started here again.
10 We'll get back into where we were on the agenda. We
11 were doing Regional Advisory Council Chair reports to
12 the Board. During the break I also found out one of
13 the kids in here won a State championship so I'd just
14 like to say congratulations to Mr. Carney there for
15 being a wrestling champion. The hallway talk is where
16 you find out all the good things so it's good to
17 celebrate and lift up people in areas of success and me
18 being a wrestler myself I see where these young
19 wrestlers end up and they're usually leaders and look
20 at him, sitting up front as well so good job.

21

22 (Applause)

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
25 we'll go ahead and call on a Regional Advisory Council
26 for Southeast and he's online, Don Hernandez. He has
27 travel today, he's trying to get out so if you're
28 online Don at this time we'll give you the floor for
29 Regional Advisory Council report.

30

31 (Pause)

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, do
34 you see Don Hernandez in the cue.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tina, is Don
39 online?

40

41 REPORTER: Yes, he is. Maybe he needs
42 to unmute.

43

44 MS. LEONETTI: Mr. Hernandez, is you
45 are calling in by the phone you can press star six to
46 unmute.

47

48 (Pause)

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MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, am I off mute?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor, Don, thank you for calling in.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Yeah, sorry, I didn't use the phone properly here. Yeah, all right, I'm sorry to say I'm weathered out and been stuck here at home here in Point Baker for the last couple days watching the weather so appreciate the opportunity to participate by phone. And I'm really sorry to miss the meeting and regret getting to meet the new Board members who our Council would like to welcome, Raymond, Benjamin and Frank. Also miss interacting with the Board and the Staff and especially the students, I really miss that part of the meeting.

So as far as our Council business here in Southeast we have submitted two fisheries proposals for the Board to consider at this meeting, Federal fisheries proposals. And we have also submitted three proposals to the Alaska Board of Fish, which, as you know, is also meeting this week and one of those proposals has attracted a fair amount of attention and that's Proposal 104 and that is a proposal that would recognize king salmon in Southeast Alaska as a subsistence species, which it has not been recognized up to this point. And our Council submitted the proposal with the feeling that we think it's consistent with the Alaska Constitution, its regulations and policies that appropriate regulations for subsistence fisheries for king salmon be implemented in Southeast Alaska so we'll see how that plays out this week. Our Council has also commented on 20 other proposals before the Board of Fish that we feel affect subsistence users in Southeast Alaska and we do have one of our Council members attending that Board of Fish meeting to represent the Council and we do appreciate that the Board has been able to support Council members attending Board of Fish and Board of Game meetings as well as our own Board so thank you for that support.

The Council has a number of correspondences, letters that we have been sending out. Some of those are being continued to track this mining on the transboundary rivers that affect Southeast Alaska subsistence users and we have letters out on that. We also have a letter dealing with the extraterritorial jurisdiction petition which Sitka Clan

0042

1 has submitted to the Secretaries. And we also have
2 another letter out there that deals with the Unit 4
3 deer closures which the Board dealt with last year.
4 And we also have a letter addressing the potential
5 compensation for Council members and their work on the
6 Council.

7
8 So our Council is also kind of working
9 on a letter that we want to put together that would be
10 able to go out to different regulatory agencies,
11 primary probably to the Board of Fish and North Pacific
12 Fisheries Management Council, whichever would be
13 appropriate. And it would address a serious concern
14 that Southeast subsistence users have with this pretty
15 much unchecked growth of the unguided non-resident
16 anglers in Southeast Alaska. It's really become a big
17 impact on subsistence users, just the number of people
18 that are coming to Southeast Alaska and staying at
19 lodges but not being provided with a guide, they're
20 just being, you know, outfitted with a boat, a rental
21 boat and so they just fish under sportfish regulations
22 but that segment of the user group has just been
23 growing tremendously over the years and there's no real
24 limitations on it. The only limitations are in the
25 sportfish bag limits but as far as the numbers of
26 people that are coming and taking advantage of that
27 continues to grow and it's having an impact. So we're
28 putting together a letter, like I said, to go to these
29 different agencies that could be regulating that in
30 some way and telling them our concerns.

31
32 We'll also be submitting a request for
33 funding to support having our fall meeting in Wrangell
34 next year. Wrangell is not one of the hub communities
35 that's designated for Councils to meet but we do like
36 to get to some of these smaller communities from time
37 to time. Right now we're only authorized to meet in
38 Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan so we'll be asking for
39 consideration of having a meeting in Wrangell.

40
41 Another thing that the Council is
42 tracking pretty closely is the revision to the Tongass
43 Forest Plan that is underway. Of course the resources
44 on the Tongass National Forest are extremely important
45 to subsistence users and how those resources are dealt
46 with in the Forest Plan is something that we plan to be
47 actively involved in in developing this Forest Plan.
48 It's a multi-year process, it'll go on for some time.
49 So the Council anticipates having this as a topic at
50

0043

1 our Council meetings for some time now and we'll have
2 an opportunity at our meeting coming up this spring in
3 March to review the draft assessment on subsistence and
4 other non-commercial harvest activities that would be
5 allowed under the Forest Service Plan so we'll be
6 tracking that.

7

8 The Council is also keeping track or a
9 process that's going on with the National Oceanic and
10 Atmospheric Administration who are planning on
11 aquaculture opportunities in Southeast Alaska and we
12 see some potential here for conflicts between
13 aquaculture operations and subsistence harvesting and
14 our Council is tracking that issue as well. And we're
15 also keeping a close eye on what's going on with the
16 petitions that have been filed in regard to endangered
17 species designation for Gulf of Alaska chinook salmon.
18 That has a lot of potential to impact Southeast Alaska
19 subsistence users.

20

21 So on the king salmon issue one of our
22 proposals deals with making king salmon a subsistence
23 species so we'll be keeping track of that quite closely
24 here in the coming weeks.

25

26 So a few of our annual report topics
27 that you will probably see when our next annual report
28 comes out, we'll be finalizing that at our March
29 meeting, and one of the issues we're addressing there is
30 a situation that's, you know, happening right now with
31 scheduling of board meetings and other meetings
32 important to subsistence users like what's happening at
33 the -- the Board of Fish is meeting right now, the
34 Subsistence Board is meeting right now and the North
35 Pacific Fisheries Management Council is meeting this
36 week, so I mean that was a big issue that came up at
37 our fall meeting, a lot of problems with this meeting
38 scheduling so we have a topic on that in our annual
39 report.

40

41 Other annual report topics we'll be
42 requesting some better moose surveys of Yakutat area
43 and we'll also be looking for deer surveys in Unit 4
44 now that we have implemented a closure there, we want
45 to keep closer track of what's happening in Unit 4 with
46 deer harvest. So we'll be making a request for that.
47 And we also ask that look at ways to improve the
48 ability for the State of Alaska and the Federal Staff
49 to share information in a timely manner. That's been
50

0044

1 an issue with our Council.

2

3

4 So another really important topic that
5 I kind of want to address here in my Council report and
6 this is something that will also appear in our annual
7 report and it deals with this rural determination
8 process that the Council has been undertaking, been
9 involved in here for -- I think it's been going on for
10 about four years now and this process of rural
11 determination for the city of Ketchikan. The Council
12 has made our recommendation and, you, as the Board,
13 will make the final decision on that at this meeting,
14 but it's been a really difficult process for our
15 Council. At our fall meeting we were really struggling
16 with this and we were trying to work our way through
17 this tangle of Staff analysis, public comments, Council
18 members conflicted thoughts and all of this and through
19 all this tangle, I guess the Council finally found our
20 way to a trail that maybe weeding through this process.
21 And we kind of started down this trail, we don't know
22 where it's leading yet but it could lead to something.
23 And what our Council has always tried to focus on is
24 our role in implementing the provisions in Title VIII
25 of ANILCA and what is the intent of Title VIII, we are,
26 you know, tasked with implementing, helping to
27 implement that statute and as it regards to this rural
28 determination process our Council feels that it is
29 clearly the intent of Title VIII of ANILCA to remedy a
30 situation for the Alaska Native people to remedy a loss
31 that they occurred under the Native Claims Settlement
32 Act. So we see Title VIII as kind of a medial effort
33 to ensure that Alaska Native people would always be
34 able to continue their customary and traditional uses
35 of the resources so that their way of life can
36 continue, you know, far into the future. We see that
37 as the original intent of Title VIII. So, now, of
38 course, you know, the wording in Title VIII sought to
39 protect that use by extending priority to all rural
40 Alaska residents, Native and non-Native alike. It does
41 not state, you know, exclusively to Alaska Natives. So
42 then when we get to a situation that, you know, we have
43 in Southeast Alaska, we have the community of Ketchikan
44 and more specifically the Ketchikan Indian Community
45 who is a sizeable portion of the overall population of
46 Ketchikan. It's a tribal organizations, their members
47 have continued their subsistence uses in their
48 traditional territory for, you know, generation after
49 generation and they want to be recognized as -- the
50 Ketchikan Tribe wants to be recognized as being

1 Federally-qualified under Title VIII of ANILCA. The
2 only way under the present wording of Title VIII is if
3 the entire community of Ketchikan were to be now
4 considered rural, to rescind their non-rural
5 designation. So that's what the Council really
6 struggled with. And when we first started implementing
7 Title VIII of ANILCA the definition of rural was pretty
8 clear, or non-rural I guess I should say and it stated
9 it was policy, it wasn't written into the law, but it
10 was policy that a community of over 7,000 people would
11 be considered non-rural, so pretty definitive Ketchikan
12 with their population at the time was somewhere around
13 10,000 I think so they were considered non-rural. So
14 in the interim that definition of rural has gone away
15 and now we have a new policy which is supposed to
16 consider many factors to make that determination. And
17 so there's no real clear, as we see it there's no real
18 clear definition of rural anymore and that's where the
19 Council really struggled through this. And we had --
20 like I say, we heard lots and lots of public testimony
21 over this, most of what we heard and who we heard from
22 were members of the Ketchikan Indian Community who
23 strongly advocated for their uses, we heard an awful
24 lot about, you know, how they have consistently used
25 the resources in their traditional territory for
26 subsistence but they also had to make the argument that
27 all of Ketchikan would be considered as non-rural and
28 be allowed to have subsistence harvest and that was a
29 problem. There was just a lot of, a lot of negative
30 testimony for the entire city of Ketchikan being
31 considered rural. And, you know, it just gets so
32 murky. We spent a lot of time on the Staff analysis in
33 our discussions comparing, you know, one community with
34 another, what level of services does Ketchikan have in
35 relation to, you know, somewhere else and, I don't
36 know, it was just really difficult. And we also had
37 seven of the local tribes submitting resolutions that
38 were just absolutely opposed to Ketchikan being
39 considered rural. All of those seven tribes also said
40 that they could support the Ketchikan Tribe if there
41 was some way that, you know, they could have a
42 subsistence designation. So that's where our Council
43 kind of started down this trail of is there a way that
44 Native people living in a community which may not
45 necessarily be designated as rural, could they have a
46 rural designation. And, you know, we go into this more
47 in our annual report and the Council [sic] will
48 probably hear more about it, maybe in the
49 deliberations, you know, that you take tomorrow, but we
50

0046

1 think the key is looking at a definition for rural and
2 how that relates to Native peoples who occupy, have
3 always occupied their traditional territories, you
4 know, long before there was a city and is that -- is
5 there some way that they could be considered as rural
6 residents based on that long history of occupation in
7 their traditional territories.

8

9 So we don't know where this is leading.
10 It could go somewhere, we don't know.

11

12 But I'd also like to point out that
13 while our Council was meeting in Ketchikan last fall
14 the Alaska Federation of Natives was also meeting and
15 they took up pretty much this same issue that we were
16 dealing with, the issue of does Title VIII of ANILCA
17 adequately address the subsistence needs of Alaska
18 Natives. And they came out with a resolution and their
19 resolution, you know, calls for a number of issues to
20 be addressed and some of their solutions would require
21 a Legislative change, they actually think that Title
22 VIII needs to be amended and as Councils, we, of
23 course, cannot have any involvement in any kind of
24 Legislative action so we won't be discussing that. But
25 we do offer up that maybe at least to this one issue
26 there could be a policy change or perhaps would lead to
27 a rule change or something dealing with this uncertain
28 means that we're supposed to undertake to determine,
29 you know, what is rural and non-rural communities and
30 how that relates to tribal citizens and their long
31 history of residency on the lands.

32

33 So like I say, you'll probably hear a
34 lot more about it but that's where we are as a Council
35 right now.

36

37 So with that I'd like to thank the
38 Board for this opportunity and we'll look forward to a
39 very productive meeting this time so thank you very
40 much.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.
43 Any questions from the Board for Don.

44

45 (No comments)

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you
48 making the time to call in and good luck with your
49 travel today Don.

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0047

1 MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay, thanks, Tony.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and come back into the room for the next Regional Advisory Council. We'll call on Kodiak/Aleutians, Rebecca, you have the floor.

MS. SKINNER: Thanks. I think we were expecting a different order here. My name is Rebecca Skinner. I was born and raised in Kodiak. I've been on the RAC for 11 years and this is only my second meeting presenting as Chair of the Kodiak/Aleutians RAC. Our RAC covers multiple time zones and stretches from the Kodiak Archipelago out the Aleutian Chain and includes the islands in the Bering Sea. I also spoke to you at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting in April and then at the work session in August of 2024.

Communities and residents throughout the Kodiak/Aleutians region are heavily dependent on commercial fisheries. Patterns of use show that throughout our region fish is often held back from commercial landings to take home for family and community consumption, at the same time there continues to be competition for the same resources between multiple user groups. I like to emphasize that subsistence is about people and communities and the updates I'm going to share are things that are going to impact the communities and residents in my region.

Salmon returns continue to be unpredictable. After several years of closed sockeye subsistence fishing in the Buskin River system on Kodiak Island 2024 saw the highest sockeye return in the last five years. So while that was an improvement as far as the run it's only about half as big as it was back in the mid-2000s so it still continues to be low but it's a lot better than it has been fairly recently. At the recent International Pacific Halibut Commission meeting, which met last week, the Commission reduced the coastwide halibut harvest limit by 15 percent. This would be considered a big reduction for halibut users and the range within Alaska area range from 11 to 22 percent decrease. The halibut biomass peaked in the late 1990s and has now returned to a more average level and you can see that if you look across the entire, about 140 year time series of data they have, however, productivity continues to be low and halibut are about half the size they were compared to the 1980s if you

0048

1 look at the same age of halibut. And if history is a
2 predictor the current low levels of halibut could
3 continue for multiple decades. Over the summer NOAA
4 fisheries released an economic snapshot report showing
5 the Alaska seafood industry suffered 1.8 Billion dollars
6 in loss from '22 to '23, losses stemmed from higher
7 costs including wages, fuel and interest rates, post
8 Covid disruptions in the supply chain that never
9 resolved, competition in international markets and
10 climate change. And there's a quote from the author of
11 the report: commercial fisheries have flourished in
12 Alaska for generations shaping social structures,
13 cultural identity and robust local economies, beyond
14 the economic impacts the decline of fisheries in the
15 region threatens a way of life, sense of place,
16 community and identity.

17
18 Our region also shares concerns about
19 the overlapping meetings, the regulatory meetings and
20 we encourage whatever steps can be taken to reduce
21 future conflicts. Last week the Southeast Board of
22 Fish overlapped with the International Pacific Halibut
23 Commission meeting and this week the Southeast Board of
24 Fish, the North Pacific Council and the Federal
25 Subsistence Board meetings all overlap. In addition to
26 that, I'll also note again the ongoing challenges that
27 result from complicated and overlapping management
28 systems including subsistence, Federal, State and
29 international Treaty obligations, each of which has
30 different priorities and requirements and the systems
31 don't seem to talk to each other or coordinate very
32 well together and this is from the perspective of a
33 subsistence user who lives in a rural community and is
34 just trying to access the resource. Even when
35 subsistence is a stated priority within a system, I
36 wrote, it is not clear how that is actually being
37 achieved, I think I would agree with comments from my
38 colleagues across the table, there's a lot of times
39 where the Federal Subsistence Board priority is not
40 happening at all and it's not clear how it could even
41 happen given our kind of patchwork and overlapping
42 management.

43
44 Our region has a lot of trepidation and
45 questions about Executive Order 14153, Unleashing
46 Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential, and then the
47 subsequent Secretarial Order from Department of
48 Interior that provides more specific direction within
49 DOI. There's a lot of uncertainty about what the EO
50

0049

1 and the SO mean, how they will be implemented and what
2 the implications are for the Federal Subsistence
3 Program. It is also unclear how Governor Dunleavy's
4 November 15th, 2024 request titled: Alaska Priorities
5 for Federal Transition fits into all of this,
6 particularly priority for No. 3 titled Alaska's
7 Recommended Actions Related to Federal Subsistence
8 Management. And, finally, OSM's move from under Fish
9 and Wildlife Service to PMB just happened last year,
10 it's still new to everyone and so that contributes to
11 the high amount of uncertainty within our region. So
12 we're -- I couldn't find the right word but I'm going
13 to put, it's very curious to see how this will all play
14 out.

15

16 On a high note at least for the KRAC we
17 have consistently advocated for building the King Cove
18 Road that will connect the community of King Cove and
19 the access to the airport in Cold Bay, this is a very
20 people centric and community centric kind of a request.
21 During our RAC meeting in King Cove we heard a lot of
22 testimony about challenges with when there's a medical
23 emergency trying to get people from King Cove to health
24 care and the road would greatly help that. So we note
25 that the previously mentioned Executive Order provides
26 for quote: expedited development of a road corridor
27 between the community of King Cove and the all weather
28 airport located in Cold Bay. So we just wanted to note
29 that as a positive from our perspective.

30

31 That's all I have, thanks.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
34 Rebecca. Any questions for Kodiak from the Board.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
39 seeing none, thank you. We'll move on to Judy from
40 Southcentral, you have the floor.

41

42 MS. CAMINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
43 Board members. Apologies for being late today. Only
44 found out late last week I'd be attending today and
45 I've got some pre-scheduled appointments so I might be
46 in and out a little bit here. My name's Judy Caminer
47 and I'm the Vice Chair of the Southcentral Council.
48 I've been on the Council on and off since about 2009
49 and prior to that I served on the Federal Subsistence
50

0050

1 Board as the representative for the National Park
2 Service.

3
4 The Southcentral region is bounded by
5 the Alaska Range to the north, the Canadian Border to
6 the east encompassing all of the Kenai Peninsula to the
7 south, the regions boundaries run through both Lake
8 Clark, Denali National Park and Preserve on the west,
9 the region also contains the waters of Cook Inlet,
10 Prince William Sound, the Copper River from the Delta
11 to the upper reaches of mid-river. These boundaries
12 contain nearly 50 rural communities but also several
13 non-subsistence communities with large urban
14 populations. Aside from the already mentioned Federal
15 lands, the Southcentral region also contains the
16 Chugach National Forest and the Kenai National Wildlife
17 Refuge in its entirety, a large portion of Wrangell-St.
18 Elias National Park and Preserve and also contains the
19 BLM administered lands such as Tangle Lakes
20 archeological district and the Delta Wild and Scenic
21 River. While parts of this report may sound familiar
22 to some, with the new members on the Board and Council
23 and public feel it's important that everyone hear this.

24
25 Some areas of concern for our Council
26 include the omni-present threat of climate change which
27 I'm sure you'll hear over and over again and what it's
28 doing to the wildlife populations, freshwater fish,
29 salmon and marine resources. This includes increased
30 parasite loads in moose, caribou and the changing
31 distribution in timing of paralytic shellfish poisoning
32 in our shell fish. Also the Council's boundary
33 contains within it the highest population in the state
34 and a good percentage of those individuals live in
35 urban centers and are not Federally-qualified
36 subsistence users. There are miles of road and many
37 freshwater and marine boat launches within communities
38 that allow easy access to someone and to many to the
39 resources for both subsistence users as well as those
40 not Federally-qualified. This brings up unique and
41 concerning challenges on several levels. The
42 availability of subsistence resources is decreasing and
43 we talked a lot about that at last years All RAC
44 Meeting, which was really kind of discouraging I
45 thought, and the pressure on those resources from both
46 rural and urban users is not decreasing. How should
47 these resources be distributing, including how should
48 those resources be distributed among only rural users
49 is a topic that seems to be coming before this Council
50

0051

1 more regularly. How to appropriately mitigate
2 conflict between Federally-qualified users and sport
3 fishers and hunters in the patchwork of land ownership
4 and in marine waters that are depended on for
5 subsistence needs but are managed by the State.

6
7 Regional priorities for our Council
8 encouraging further research on climate change and how
9 it affects resources and how to mitigate further
10 affects on subsistence needs. Advocating for our
11 region to receive Fisheries Resource Monitoring funds
12 to enable liable fisheries resources especially in the
13 Copper River drainage and on the Kenai Peninsula and
14 advocating for getting youth involved in the Council
15 and in the regulatory process and I know we've made
16 some progress there and we very appreciate that.

17
18 For our annual report, which will be
19 submitted this summer to you, it's still in draft form
20 but I will mention a few of the topics. One would be
21 reevaluation of the criteria of the Fisheries Resource
22 Monitoring Program. Reviewing the affect of the
23 Chitina subdistrict personal use fishery on the
24 subsistence fishing opportunity and chinook and sockeye
25 salmon returns. Concern with the current availability
26 to collect ceremonial or potlatch harvest for shrimp in
27 Prince William Sound. Interest and information on
28 efforts to the Southcentral region chinook salmon as a
29 threatened species. Ongoing affects of climate change
30 impacting the region in relation to ocean resources and
31 the alarming rate at which the Southcentral subsistence
32 resources are being depleted.

33
34 The Council looks forward to the Board
35 reviewing this report and reviewing and receiving your
36 feedback.

37
38 Thank you, very much.

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
41 Judy. Any questions from the Board for Judy.

42
43 (No comments)

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
46 seeing none thank you for your report. Next we'll call
47 on the YK-Delta, Alissa, you have the floor.

48
49 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

50

0052

1 Through the Chair. My biggest apologies. I might be a
2 little emotional today so my biggest apologies.

3

4 (In Yup'ik)

5

6 I am the granddaughter of Alice (In
7 Yup'ik) Hansen and John Hanson. I'm the daughter of
8 Marty Hansen and also OllerBridget Hill Joseph and (In
9 Yup'ik) Lincoln Fred Joseph. I'm the daughter of Alan
10 Joseph. I am currently stepping in as the Chair of the
11 YKRAC as I am the Vice Chair. I am the Madame Chair of
12 AVAC, Madame Co-Chair of the Kuskokwim River Salmon
13 Management Working Group, Madame Secretary of the
14 Alaska State Bethel Fish and Game Advisory Committee
15 and also First Nations Future Leaders Fellowship with
16 Standard University, I'm also the co-founder of the No
17 Donlin Working Group, the co-founder of the Yukon River
18 River Alliance, co-founder of the Calista Women's
19 Group, Ambassador of NOAA and Alaska Youth
20 Congressional Delegates, member of the Alaska Community
21 Actions on Toxins, member of the Alaska Derelict Vessel
22 Task Force, member of the AFN Committee, also member of
23 the LEONetworking, also the owner of Rogers Limited
24 Liability Contracts in education and outreach
25 development on environmental fisheries and wildlife
26 proposals and regulations.

27

28 I wanted to start off that we need more
29 representation from our coastal communities on our RAC
30 in regards to Mekoryuk, Chevak and Toksook Bay. After
31 our past member from Toksook Bay had passed away we
32 haven't had the same representation and knowledge of
33 what's going on on the coast and I would like to
34 advocate that we need more coastal representation on
35 our board as we do have more interior Yukon and
36 Kuskokwim villages who sit on our board. We are
37 reaching out and advocating to have more membership.

38

39 In all due respect, Mr. Chair, I'd like
40 to take a moment of silence in regards to the tribute
41 of our late Council Member Richard Slats if that's okay
42 with you.

43

44 (Moment of Silence)

45

46 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
47 we're going to start off with Nunapitchuk. There was a
48 lot of migratory birds this year and it was good to see
49 them in big numbers, like even for me it was -- I was

50

0053

1 sitting on my couch in the backyard and just seeing all
2 these birds flying over was the most -- it's always a
3 blessing to see but the number of birds that were
4 flying through it was so great to see that amount of
5 birds, you have never seen that type of migratory birds
6 fly in in a very long time. As for fishing, drying
7 weather was good for the first two openings and then it
8 got raining and people had to really work at trying to
9 salvage whatever fish they could so it was not that
10 great. Nunapitchuk asked that fishery managers need to
11 consider not having openers on Sunday because Sunday is
12 a day of rest, yet they still choose to open fisheries
13 on Sundays.

14
15 From Bethel, there's trouble and
16 concern about potential Izembek Road impacts to our
17 migratory birds especially regarding black brants as
18 they are important resources, they are protected and if
19 Izembek Road goes through then what are we protecting,
20 like what's the point. We do have an implementing 7
21 year moratorium on the chinook salmon fishery on the
22 tribes of the Yukon River and we worry about the
23 ability to pass cultural traditions on to our younger
24 generation if there's no fishing allowed. It's unjust
25 for commercial fishing to be allowed in the marine
26 waters while subsistence users are completely shut down
27 and criminalized for harvesting the foods they have
28 utilized for centuries and decades. I mean what are we
29 doing. Like we have our tradition uses and this is a
30 Federal Subsistence Board, this is regarding
31 subsistence, but we're being -- I want to say like
32 funneled into a system that doesn't make any sense
33 because we are being restricted and if subsistence is a
34 priority for us in the state of Alaska and Elizabeth
35 Peratrovich went to Congress and told them give us our
36 rights back and what are we doing sitting around the
37 table trying to make decisions on our subsistence uses
38 that are supposed to come first yet we're governed and
39 filtered to accommodate regulations. What are we going
40 here, we're wasting money.

41
42 From Lower Kalskag. Local people limit
43 their chinook salmon personally. They personally limit
44 their subsistence harvest so they don't harvest too
45 much king salmon. When you go out fishing, you don't
46 know what you're going to get in your net but as soon
47 as you start seeing the fish flop you immediately go
48 over, you check it, you pull it out, if it's a king
49 salmon you let it go, if it's a chum salmon you keep
50

0054

1 it, if it's a red salmon you keep it, but we're
2 overregulated. They limit their harvest to 30 to 40
3 fish per family at the most. That's the most. Now, I
4 know families who don't even have even one or two king
5 salmon in their freezers or even dry fish or anything
6 over the past 25 years. Now, my family I stopped
7 fishing for king salmon when my grandpa died in 2005
8 and I can relate to these people. They learned through
9 the five years of the moose moratorium how conserving
10 helps bring back numbers for animals, why can't we do
11 that for fish. Shut everything down. Make it so that
12 the populations come back. You're a Federal
13 government, you trump the State. He also said that
14 many people are targeting chum salmon, well, our chum
15 salmon have been dying. If it's too hot they float,
16 they don't make it. And how are you going to put that
17 into your estimate numbers of all of our research
18 regarding -- I'm not trying to offend the State of
19 Alaska, but our escapement numbers, if our fish are
20 dying on the way up that doesn't account for escapement
21 numbers. Long ago they never used to see red sockeye
22 salmon but we're seeing them more and more on the
23 Kuskokwim. We never were a red salmon river and that
24 was the biggest fear because we knew if red salmon came
25 into the river then they're going to wipe out the rest
26 of the species, they're tortuous. They're a type of
27 species that would do whatever it takes to survive.
28 People are upset about not being able to go hunt for
29 caribou. We haven't been able to hunt for caribou for a
30 very long time. And I know at the last meeting I was
31 very advocate that we protect our caribou and we shall
32 continue to do that and I hope the managers in here
33 hear me, protect the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. I'm sorry
34 for all the other regions that want to go hunting on
35 that herd but the biggest thing is we're running out of
36 food resources so if you want to continue your food
37 resources protect them, let them grow, let them become
38 more populated so that we can continue hunting on them.
39 Stop trying to get your fingers in there and take what
40 you need or what your -- what is needed, just like we
41 need to stop all of the trawling fleets and everyone
42 who's doing bycatch, just let the resource replenish
43 themselves so that we can continue having these
44 meetings and discussing the resources that are
45 important to us.

46
47 Also from Kalskag, he said that the
48 Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative is very important and that
49 subsistence users need to keep pushing for marine
50

0055

1 commercial fisheries to do their part in conserving
2 salmon. That's very true. We are a big Board here, we
3 have a lot of push in this so why don't we give our two
4 cents to make this happen.

5
6 From the village of Akiachak. There is
7 good numbers of ptarmigan and migratory birds, fishing
8 was great but the last opener he caught some really big
9 king sized salmon in his six inch net that he's not
10 seen for a very long time. Most of them had roe so
11 they all were female so he was fishing on the peak of
12 the run, which is frowned upon in our region in regards
13 to try and not harvest as many big females as possible
14 but the management decisions for this past year were
15 set up by people who were wanting to fish when they can
16 and I feel that some of these committees and councils
17 that make these decisions are seated at only six people
18 per meeting and it's a closed door meeting in the U.S.
19 Fish and Wildlife Service building and it's not open to
20 the public and I feel that it should be open to the
21 public. These meetings need to be decided between the
22 whole entire region, not just six people who make these
23 decisions.

24
25 Another member from the village of
26 Bethel. Many times the recommendations that local
27 people make are not adhered to. That's in the same
28 reference. People advocate, people say things, people
29 do things, people, they go out of their way to make
30 their voices be heard and they're not being heard. It
31 is not fair that people can be jailed for trying to get
32 food they need, and that is so true. They had a
33 protest fishery because they couldn't go fishing for
34 their food and people will advocate and go do what they
35 need to do in order to make sure that their families
36 are taken care of, but if you're being jailed for it,
37 for your spiritual and your financial rights of food
38 that was guaranteed for you from your grandparents and
39 your great-grandparents that was made for you so you
40 have enough resources to sustain yourself, what are we
41 doing. It is not fair that people, because of tribes,
42 are just being told what they can and can't do, like
43 they have no authority. We're a tribal government,
44 this is a tribal government under the Federal
45 government, we're a Board, you sit up here, you look at
46 the audience, what are we doing, this is getting lost.

47
48 From the village of Marshall. She's
49 concerned about the local Calista rock quarry scaring
50

0056

1 the wildlife away from the communities, especially
2 cranes, and cranes are very important to us, especially
3 on the Yukon. They're also the best chicken, turkey in
4 the world, just saying. But the quarry is also scaring
5 off bears and wolves, which might help reduce predation
6 locally but we need to do something about the mining
7 industry, the development and make sure they do their
8 homework before they start just deciding where and when
9 they're going to make a development on the
10 Yukon/Kuskokwim/Delta because if that's a huge
11 migratory place for cranes then that should be
12 protected.

13

14 From the village of Kwethluk. In
15 Kwethluk not everyone was able to meet their
16 subsistence needs. Not enough people had working boats
17 and had to rely on what was shared with them by their
18 relatives or Alaska Department of Fish and Game
19 fisheries dropping off fish that they caught in their
20 net doing their fish surveys. Climate change remains a
21 major concern in the region and that summer flooding is
22 becoming worse over time. The flooding makes it
23 difficult for fish salmon because the debris tears up
24 the nets and it takes time to fix and mend nets. I
25 mended nets my whole entire life, I was taught since I
26 was four and mending nets is hard. It takes a whole
27 day to fix a lot of holes and we get a lot of debris
28 coming down based on how much snow we have.

29

30 Gas and ammunition prices prevent
31 people from going hunting. Gas right now is roughly
32 about almost 6/7\$ in Bethel so I imagine it would be
33 maybe 12 to 16 in some villages and at least I know for
34 the coastal villages like Hooper Bay it's like \$20 per
35 gallon. And ammunition's not any different. I mean a
36 box of .22 shells in Bethel goes for \$60. I can't even
37 imagine what it's like in the villages, I mean .22
38 shells, .22 shells, those are like BB guns, \$60 in
39 Bethel. You got to be a millionaire to live out there
40 now.

41

42 The ptarmigan migrated from the coast
43 towards the hills much earlier than usual this year and
44 we also have noticed in Kwethluk that less people are
45 trapping because the trapping prices have dropped
46 dramatically.

47

48 From the village of Quinhagak.
49 Increase in northern pike numbers remain a concern

50

0057

1 because they prey on their trout and trout are very
2 important for local subsistence in Quinhagak and they
3 also wanted to emphasize the revitalization of leave no
4 trace outreach. We really need to get on these folks
5 out there. I mean Yup'ik people, we teach our kids if
6 you go somewhere leave it better than you got there,
7 pick up the trash, pick up the pickets, clean the area,
8 if you see trash pick it up, put it in your bag we'll
9 take it home. But due to the amount of trash left in
10 the Togiak Refuge along the Kanektok River they've been
11 experiencing way more trash because of sportshunters,
12 the term -- I'm going to use this term, urban users.
13 We need to do something about it. Start fining them.
14 People who just want to throw their trash anywhere,
15 they should be fined. We're better than that and we've
16 been raised. Everyone in this room has been raised
17 better than that.

18
19 From the village of Russian Mission.
20 His concerns are about the use of four inch mesh nets
21 for fishing. And he said that they will likely kill
22 future stocks and not many people are going to be able
23 to go out fishing and the ones that did struggled to
24 dry their fish.

25
26 Another one from the village of Bethel
27 reported an increase in ptarmigan numbers. And there
28 was a weird phenomenon this year where there was
29 sticklebacks this big that came into the river right
30 before the smelt season. We never had sticklebacks in
31 our river ever this big, there's something going on
32 with the ocean. If it means that sticklebacks are
33 coming into our river and there's -- something is
34 happening, something is going on and we need to do
35 something about it, we need to get to the bottom of it
36 because if sticklebacks are coming back this big into
37 our river, that means something is going on in the
38 marine oceans that we don't know and we need to put
39 more resources in there and find out what's going on
40 because that's probably what's affecting our salmon.
41 And I agree with the message, leave no trace behind
42 because there's a lot of trash out in our area and we
43 definitely advocate the clean up of when you go out you
44 leave it better than you found it.

45
46 Also the increase of ichthyophonus and
47 the poor quality of salmon has increased this year
48 meaning a lot of fish that were caught like chinook
49 salmon had to be trashed or dog food or ground up into
50

0058

1 potato fertilizer or gardening fertilizer just because
2 of these diseases because they're not edible so you got
3 to find something to do with it.

4

5 From the village of Mountain Village.
6 Increase in non-local sportshunting of moose in the
7 lower Yukon region and the conflicts it's creating with
8 local subsistence users is high. People are being
9 kicked out of their natural traditional hunting spaces.
10 People are being pushed out of their areas of natural
11 hunting areas and they're invading people's space.
12 Sportshunters, guides need to know about these local
13 areas to stay away from so that it gives local
14 subsistence users the first hand at harvesting a moose
15 but if you're competing with people who don't know the
16 area who are allowed and just obnoxious, how are you
17 going to get your moose the traditional way.
18 Traditional people are usually quiet. We stage our
19 hunting areas and we hunt there for weeks. But people
20 come in and disturb playing loud music, getting all
21 rowdy, throwing on chainsaws, that scares everything
22 off so why don't we hound down on them.

23

24

25 Another one from the village of
26 Quinhagak. Recent regulatory proposals and special
27 actions requested by the Native Village of Quinhagak
28 and their efforts to engage with the Togiak National
29 Wildlife Refuge to address user conflicts into having
30 ecosystem and subsistence users and there might be a
31 proposal coming in in regards to destructive.

31

32

33 I also want to identify issues for the
34 2024, from our annual report. More balanced geographic
35 representation on the Council. The need for public
36 members for Boards from the YK-Delta region. Thank you
37 Ray. The need for the Board to take the lead on
38 coordinating inter-jurisdictional management of salmon.
39 And what's going on with the ANCSA D-1 protections,
40 isn't that -- aren't we supposed to be protecting our
41 subsistence lands, not giving it up for mining
42 development. We have a lot of resources in Alaska but
43 at the same time aren't we supposed to be putting our
44 people first, our land resources, our resources, that's
45 what we're here for. We have the ability to protect
46 our home land, yet we're allowing mining industries,
47 commercial industries to come and develop on our
48 backyard. I'm a land owner, I don't want someone
49 coming in my backyard without my permission, why are we
50 allowing this in our backyard, this is our livelihood,

50

0059

1 that's why we're having these meetings. The need for
2 the Board to take the Donlin Gold Supplemental
3 Environmental Impact Statement and mining impacts to
4 subsistence and environment. The next one, green
5 habitat near Marshall from the Calista Gravel Quarry.
6 The next one, Mulchatna Caribou Herd population and
7 support for ADF&G predator control efforts. Here's a
8 big one. Yukon River Salmon crisis, what are we doing,
9 what can we do. Where's a powerplay in allowing
10 subsistence users to fish on the Yukon/Kuskokwim, why
11 don't we have more representation, why don't we have
12 more pull, why don't we have more everything on that
13 especially because we have an International Treaty.
14 What are we doing as the Board. Where are we going
15 with this. People need to eat regardless of what part
16 of the river they are in. But at the same time we
17 still need to protect our fisheries and what is Canada
18 doing. The next one is disappearing fish camps and the
19 cultural impacts of little or reducing fishing. I've
20 worked on the Kuskokwim River since I was 14 years old
21 working as a fish tech for the Orutsaramiut Native
22 Council, we used to have over 400 or 500 fish camps,
23 the last route I went on there was less than 50. 50.
24 I can't even imagine what it looks like on the Yukon.
25 Next one. Meaningful tribal involvement in
26 decisionmaking and capacity building of tribal
27 organizations in management and science. They can
28 collaborate and work with the tribes in order to have
29 them involved. ONC is a hub organization that a lot of
30 people look up to but at the same time every single
31 tribe on the river can have the same type of fisheries
32 program, environmental program, we need to partner with
33 them a lot more in order to get the quality information
34 that we need so we can make better decisions at this
35 table. Next one. We need to reduce the total
36 allowable catch for pollack in commercial fisheries. I
37 hate saying that but at the same time if you're truly
38 being responsible and reasonable we need to have that
39 voice put in from this Board in regards to reducing
40 things so that we can allow more salmon to come back
41 into our rivers. I know it's frustrating and I'm sorry
42 for everyone in the public but we need to do something.
43 You're a big body that can make mountains move. Please
44 do it. We're in crisis. We've been crying out loud
45 for the past 10 years, let's do something about it. We
46 have the power to do it, let's do it. Next one. The
47 reduction in halibut sizes and need to reduce bycatch
48 on Pacific halibut. My dad started that. When we
49 first started commercial fishing for halibut my dad
50

0060

1 took me out on a 12 foot Lund 3500 horsepower out of
2 the village of Hooper Bay, no life jackets, we went out
3 in between here and Russia, we were literally in
4 between here and Russia and we dropped our longlines
5 in, there was me, my dad, my mom and my sister, and we
6 went fishing out there for the first time caught
7 halibut, my dad he was like I just want to try it, just
8 to see if it's true, and then we ended up catching a
9 lot of halibut. The biggest one that I caught was
10 roughly about four feet, almost as tall as me, it was
11 hard to hold, I'm very proud of it, and then the next
12 week my cousin caught one that was bigger than a connex
13 van and that's when my dad was like, okay, industry
14 values this to make it a commercial industry. With all
15 of the over bycatch and harvesting of everything that's
16 been going on, no one has seen that big of a halibut or
17 as many halibut as they used to. They're having to
18 move further out and they're also having to move away
19 from certain areas in regards to the change of the
20 inuvuq (ph), and also in between Nunivak Island and
21 that area they haven't been catching as much. Usually
22 you'd go out for like one to three hours and you'd be
23 able to catch a boat load, literally fill your boat,
24 but now it's like only one or three and you're spending
25 six hours out there so we need to pull back on that and
26 put restrictions on it in order to preserve the
27 halibut. We also need to put a stop on impacts of
28 hatchery salmon and released into the wild stocks.
29 There should be a cap of how many hatchery salmon are
30 allowed into our oceans because they're fighting for
31 resources out there and our natural wild stocks that
32 are going out there should have first priority. The
33 next one is the wrongful use of the term anecdotal to
34 describe traditional knowledge held by elders and
35 others. We shouldn't be setting aside what they've
36 learned over the years of what was taught to them or
37 passed down to them. It's not anecdotal, it's
38 traditional knowledge being passed down to the next
39 generation and it should be used the same way as it is
40 here on this Board, this Council, these people, it's
41 not anecdotal. Please delete that from your terms of
42 use for the language that's being used. It should not
43 be ignored. And in regards to our correspondence for
44 our Council, thank you Ms. Brooke, I appreciate you --
45 we are one of the very vocal letter writing Councils --
46 thank you Brooke appreciate you for everything you do.
47 We require to resend all the Council correspondence
48 that have been answered including letters to the
49 Council that has asked to be elevated in repre -- sorry
50

0061

1 -- represents past and joint Council letters from all
2 Council meetings, a letter to the Board of the
3 Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
4 also requiring elevation to the Secretaries and
5 Agriculture, the State Department, Alaska Congressional
6 Delegates, asking all entities to coordinate with the
7 management and protection of the Yukon and Kuskokwim
8 River stocks in the U.S. and Canada using Alaska
9 Migratory Bird Council framework as the template for
10 outreaching structure and process and copying all
11 regional partners on the letter including the Rural
12 Alaska Community Action Program, including Tanana
13 Chiefs Conference, Subsistence Regional Advisory
14 Councils, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Advisory
15 Councils, Yukon and Kuskokwim InterTribal Fish
16 Commissions, Association of Village Council Presidents,
17 Bristol Bay Native Association, International
18 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and, et
19 cetera. We also asked for a letter with comments on
20 the chum fish bycatch with the DEIS and the North
21 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, a letter to the
22 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council regarding
23 the needs to reduce halibut bycatch and a cap on the
24 total allowable catch for pollack. We also ask that a
25 letter to Alaska Department of Fish and Game supporting
26 the continuation of predator control for the Mulchatna
27 Caribou Herd through 2026. And also a letter to the
28 AMBCC and AVCP Water Conservation Committee outlining
29 concerns for emperor geese, cackling geese, black
30 brants and the need for hunting and eggging restrictions
31 for conservation.

32
33 The salmon crisis is a huge thing, and
34 it's the white elephant in the room. I mean we've been
35 talking about this since 2000 -- how old was I -- 1998
36 -- it was 1998 when we started talking about salmon
37 crisis, declines of salmon and fishing opportunities
38 for subsistence users. Look at where we are now. We
39 had all the red flags come in front of us yet we're'
40 still talking about it. We had two salmon decades to
41 try to figure out how to fix the situation that we're
42 currently in and, yet, we're still sitting here
43 advocating for salmon. What did we accomplish in those
44 two [sic] years, those two decades, we're still sitting
45 here talking about it and I don't like it, we should
46 have done something about it already. I know there's
47 loopholes and there's all the things that we have to go
48 through and all the framework, paperwork, all of that,
49 but instead of writing it down on paper and talking
50

0062

1 about it, can we do some action, some real action and
2 get it down right now so that we can nip this in the
3 butt and get done with it so we can have our salmon
4 back. It impacts our local people. I mean it impacts
5 all of us, that's what brings us here. Fish are our
6 life. Like I said before, food brings us together,
7 starvation divides us. We need our agencies to work
8 across jurisdictions, your Board, NOAA, and the State
9 need to work together to find a solution, not just
10 sitting here twiddling our thumbs, making reports,
11 talking about stuff, we need action. I don't want to
12 die knowing that I did not solve this problem.

13

14 And our Mulchatna Caribou, where are we
15 going with that. I've been advocating for the
16 protection of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd for a very,
17 very long time. As soon as I knew our salmon crisis
18 was going to be impacted I knew exactly what's going to
19 happen to our caribou because people need to eat. If
20 they can't get fish, they're going to go get something
21 else and that's going to deplete a resource. If they
22 can't get that, they're going to go deplete another
23 resource in order to survive. Continue to protect the
24 Mulchatna Caribou Herd. That's all I'm asking. That's
25 my baby project.

26

27 In regards to climate change. It is a
28 big worry because so much things are changing but
29 that's life. We evolve around the sun 100 years and
30 everything changes and then it comes back. 100 years.
31 But I don't have 100 years to live.

32

33 We also have to look back at our
34 regulations because we have quite a bit of regulations
35 that need to be removed from the books. We need to
36 remove regulations that work against the people. We
37 have so many moose on the Yukon that they're eating
38 themselves out of home and food and nature itself. But
39 we are the stewards, we can make those changes happen,
40 we can make the regulation changes, we can make things
41 happen for our people and that's what we need to do.
42 Right now we have regulations that are detrimental to
43 the livelihood of the people on the YK-Delta. You're
44 currently not allowed to hunt for other people if there
45 is monetary value. The history of that is that Greg
46 Roczicka and I, who's my mentor, we put that regulation
47 in to protect our subsistence resources on the YK-
48 Delta. I want to remove it because currently right now
49 it is doing more harm than good in what we initially

50

0063

1 had thought. We just want to put in a protection so
2 that sportshunters, guides or someone from the Lower 48
3 coming in and saying, hey, I'm going to give you two
4 \$100 can you go get me a moose even though I'm not
5 legally allowed to, so we put that regulation in but it
6 needs to be removed. Because this current regulation,
7 in order to protect our subsistence users and also our
8 resources and our programs that have been impacted and
9 are deemed to be potentially legally charged for
10 violating or breaking this law, if this regulation is
11 removed this will help bring subsistence food to people
12 that are 65 years and older, blind, legally disabled,
13 low income and those who just don't have the ability to
14 go hunting, and we have a very large resource of moose
15 in the lower Yukon and we need to fix this.

16

17 And we also need to have support for
18 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, George Weir.
19 It is the longest standing weir on the Kuskokwim River.
20 We need to continue to support that as it is a great
21 database for all of our fishing needs in regards to
22 understanding our escapement.

23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Alissa. Any questions, comments from the Board.

28

29 Frank.

30

31 MR. WOODS: Frank here. Thank you for
32 your report. You mention that Alaska Claims, why other
33 people are allowed on our land. Alaska Native
34 Corporation land was chosen for prime subsistence use.
35 Everyone of us in here are here for the same purpose,
36 all those issues that you addressed I wrote down and
37 one of them was you mentioned that why are we allowing
38 other people to hunt and fish on our land. That's up
39 to each region. Like in our area our village
40 corporation limits access and how they limit access is
41 issuing permits. The responsibility of that is huge.
42 I'm speaking for the ANCs that operate in Alaska
43 because those are State managed under State regulation.
44 I pull up the State subsistence and personal fisheries
45 while you were sitting here testifying, we have the
46 right as -- you're right, private land owners, to
47 access and that's Native Corporations, both village and
48 regional. We are sitting in the -- you are sitting and
49 we are sitting in the most educated powerful regulatory
50

0064

1 bodies in the state of Alaska and we're all here for
2 the same purpose, it's a sad day about four years ago
3 when they -- well, it's been awhile since -- it first
4 started with the chum and I'll regurgitate what you
5 were trying to address and I seen it personally, the
6 chum in the early '80s and '90s and the 2000s they shut
7 down to chum fishery in the Yukon Kuskokwim and then
8 now we're -- I couldn't imagine not able to fish in
9 this day and age. I never imagined the kings
10 disappearing, the chums and I couldn't imagine putting
11 up fish for my family. That's unimaginable for me but
12 it's happening right now. In our region we just did a
13 three year moratorium for caribou. Unimaginable
14 growing up. And this is for the young people sitting
15 in the back room, you guys are witnessing something
16 that we are offering you to help be a part of and
17 that's powerful because if we don't pass this
18 information down we're all going to lose.

19

20 I'll save my comments for all the stuff
21 that we got going on here. Thank you for your report,
22 I am grateful to sit here and listen because it's a --
23 we, as this Board sits, our job is to help you help
24 feed your people, and 90 percent of the resource comes
25 out of rural Alaska, less than 10 percent goes back in.
26 And we're sitting in a state of economy where Alaska is
27 unique in a sense that we are rich in resource, but we
28 are poor in people in this body. There ain't enough
29 people in the state of Alaska, especially rural Alaska
30 to sit on every board to help regulate what we're
31 talking about. There ain't enough voices. There ain't
32 enough people to keep an eye on the pulse of everything
33 going on. Every comment -- I heard every Regional --
34 except for Bristol Bay, and I'll defend them because
35 they're not here, they're on there now, I'll let them
36 finish. But under the common denominator, what you
37 brought up, is that the North Pacific Fisheries
38 Management Council and the trawling industry is
39 catching too much bycatch. The regulatory process,
40 State of Alaska is failing in the subsistence arena, we
41 have a lot to learn from you because that's what we're
42 here for so I thank you for your testimony and I'll
43 save my comments for later.

44

45 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
48 thank you Alissa. Hearing or seeing none we're going
49 to go ahead and break for lunch, one hour -- 1:45,
50

0065

1 we'll convene this meeting sharp.

2

3

(Off record)

4

5

(On record)

6

7

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, I'm going to make a public announcement since the gavel didn't work, could we come back to our seats and sit down. Thank you. I'm trying to get out of here by Friday.

11

12

13

(Pause)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We're going to go ahead and get started. I believe we've got a quorum here so we're going to go ahead and begin our afternoon here. We're going to start back up with where we left off with our Regional Advisory Council reports and we have the BBRAC. Nanci you're online, you have the floor at this time.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Yeah, thank you. Can you hear me okay, Tony?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor Nanci.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Okay, thank you. And thank you Board members and new members as well. I look forward to being able to meet you in person in the near future and look forward to working with you in the near future as well and, you know, with these new appointments on the Board I hope to see great things accomplished through our efforts. I'm just like so many have said this morning, having difficulty struggling between meetings and that's why I was unable to make it today as well.

For our Bristol Bay region we had the following concerns and observations through our meeting this fall. As a general throughout the region our sockeye salmon were quite abundant again in a lot of areas, almost all areas, but there was a lot of concern of size, much smaller size than average size that we're used to, even with the bigger runs that we've had over the past three or four years, the salmon average size this year was much much smaller and even gave cause to several of our river systems questioning if the numbers

1 of count were actually accurate because we felt like
2 some of that could have not been true just due to the
3 small size of the fish that could have been missed.
4 Our chinook salmon numbers were low in both the Naknek
5 and Dillingham drainages and on top of that, the
6 Dillingham, the Nushagak fish were extremely small as
7 well as the Naknek, but both areas are struggling with
8 numbers of abundance as well as the actual size, and
9 average size, we're just seeing a huge dive down in
10 that. The bright spot for our salmon fisheries was
11 that we all had observed chum salmon notably increase
12 this year. Runs seemed to appear a little bit later
13 but for a change, something we haven't seen in a lot of
14 years it feels like, we did have a better chum return
15 than normal and don't mistake that for meaning that
16 everything was rosy and good and there were plenty of
17 them, there were not, but there were enough more that
18 it was notable and a noticeable difference for all of
19 us using that resource.

20

21 When it comes to moose hunting this
22 fall Kakhanok reported a real good harvest with four
23 moose taken in that small community. Nondalton had a
24 real difficult time, they faced challenges of weather
25 and needed some clarification on the new hunting
26 regulations that were based out of there. They were,
27 however, pleased that they did not have to struggle as
28 hard this year with low flying aircraft that had been a
29 problem for them in their hunting for the past many
30 years. Just, you know, people out there trying to spot
31 moose and disturbing somebody who is hunting and
32 stalking one and chasing their moose off for them so
33 they didn't have a catch, that was good, but they're
34 suspicious that maybe a lot of that was just due to
35 weather and the planes unable to fly over the area
36 because of the area so I guess it was not really
37 something that they're sure has eased their burden with
38 that issue but it was better this fall for them.

39

40 Manokotak noticed there was a lot of
41 cow moose with twins, however, the bears in the area
42 have grown in abundance and that's pretty much across
43 all areas with these big salmon runs that we've had the
44 sows are showing multiple cubs each year across the
45 board and even some documented cases of five cubs per
46 sow. So our populations of bears have exploded out in
47 Bristol Bay and we're paying for it in our fish camps
48 and in our streams and, of course, our moose as well.

49

50

0067

1 Naknek had limited success with moose
2 hunting mostly due to the warming weather and the
3 weather being affected by climate change with the
4 foliage impacting the visibility out on the hunting
5 grounds and it makes it really hard to see the moose
6 when that brush gets so big and thick, getting through
7 it, and it becomes problematic and a lot of the lack of
8 success in that area was attributed to that fact.

9
10 Dillingham had a successful season even
11 though they had tough weather conditions their moose
12 population seemed to still be strong and in abundant
13 and people were happy with what they put in their
14 freezers.

15
16 Pretty much across our region our
17 ptarmigan populations seem to be increasing in a
18 positive way especially in Kakhanok and Manokotak,
19 everybody's noticing from a couple years ago when we
20 had major concerns about them and a real lack of them,
21 this harvest was much better and even into the winter
22 here we're seeing much better numbers of ptarmigan in
23 our areas. The bear remain an issue in Manokotak with
24 the fish camps and Dillingham is now reporting some
25 major issues out at their landfill that they haven't
26 seen in past years, again, with the abundance of salmon
27 our bear populations have exploded out there.

28
29 With the community challenges that we
30 have observed are more thefts at fish camps in the
31 Manokotak region and bear related damages. The thefts
32 are people related, obviously stupid stuff that just
33 shouldn't be happening and typical with all of our
34 remote communities, you know, the lack of law
35 enforcement to be able to protect the things that we
36 have. So they are a challenge, something we're going
37 to have to address here in the near future.

38
39 On the Naknek we had real problems with
40 the freeze/thaw cycles that we're experiencing again
41 this winter from lack of a real winter and as I said
42 before Dillingham is concerned with their landfill,
43 bear related issues that they're struggling with over
44 there. The cold rainy weather in Nondalton made the
45 hunting difficult but they were still able to take some
46 moose. The warming weather in Naknek affected also the
47 movement of the moose in the area. Manokotak is
48 looking at, and kind of delving into the creation of a
49 State Advisory Committee separate from what we
50

0068

1 currently have, they are kind of an isolated community
2 that doesn't really fit into the current advisory
3 committees that are in the area and they are looking at
4 kind of forging their own advisory committee and
5 hopefully that will come to fruition for them and bring
6 them some success in getting some regulations that are
7 more area specific.

8

9 Berries in the area. Dillingham saw an
10 abundance of salmonberries but had tough time finding
11 the blueberries, huckleberries and cranberries. On
12 this side of the bay we had good numbers of
13 salmonberries as well, that's been true for the last
14 few years, been unusual but our blueberries came in
15 good and our cranberries were in good numbers too.

16

17 Overall, most of our communities, for
18 the people who sit on our boards and we also lack some
19 representation from some crucial areas on our board,
20 especially down south, but for the most part everybody
21 reported that subsistence fish needs generally are
22 being met so we also take pride in sharing what we have
23 with others that are not as fortunate so we do our best
24 there and we believe in that very strongly.

25

26 Through our annual report topics you
27 will see that we will be requesting increased funding
28 for outreach. We'd like to see advocacy for more
29 funding for the Office of Subsistence Management to
30 enhance community outreach in the Bristol Bay region,
31 we're having real challenges in getting people to
32 participate, both publicly and tribally in our
33 discussions and our decisionmaking despite the notices
34 that we're giving out and we feel like community
35 awareness should be raised in a targeted specific way.
36 We have made a lot of efforts by having meetings in
37 schools and trying to get the youth involved and
38 encouraging our neighbors to get involved but we need
39 some -- we feel like if we had some support with direct
40 engagement with tribes and village corporations and
41 residents to educate them about the programs and
42 encourage participation such as maybe, you know, a
43 quick presentation, a 15 minute presentation at Council
44 meetings or at the schools or all of the above, it
45 could be really helpful in getting more people engaged
46 and involved in this process that we find being so
47 valuable.

48

49 Another major concern we have, an

50

1 ongoing concern, is with salmon bycatch. Like so many
2 of the Councils have already reported, we see and feel
3 the impacts of the bycatch. We hear the affects, the
4 long-term, long range affects that it's going to have
5 on our fisheries, we'd like to advocate for
6 collaboration through representation with, you know,
7 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and help
8 them to understand the importance of subsistence
9 fishing to the entire region and help explore solutions
10 and have the ability to have a voice and a seat there
11 to be able to make sure that we are heard. We would
12 also like to see the same done for our chum as well as
13 our king salmon, for all of our fisheries issues, I
14 think it's just super important that people are
15 educated and understand better what our challenges are
16 and what our needs are and it just feels like we have
17 no voice and we would like to have one and we believe
18 we should have one in that arena.

19

20 Some key concerns we have are the
21 Chignik River sockeye salmon that has been a concern of
22 ours for many years now. We really were unhappy with
23 the changes to the management strategy that combined
24 the early and late run escapement goals for the Chignik
25 sockeye fishery. Those could easily really negatively
26 impact subsistence users depending on if, you know,
27 they're weak on one end and not the other and so like
28 if the early fish come in big time and they open
29 everything up and then with everything open they wipe
30 out the later run, it's just not right. There's two
31 distinct separate runs there and they need to be
32 acknowledged as such.

33

34 I know since I've been on the Board,
35 which is a long time, I have been of the strong opinion
36 that we need a solicitor's opinion in our analysis in
37 order to make sure that OSM Staff analysis are
38 compliant with Title VIII of ANILCA. I just feel like
39 there's turnover all the time in the overall Board and
40 a lot of times people forget that ANILCA needs to be
41 followed and I just think it would be -- and my Council
42 has agreed that it would be good to have solicitor's
43 opinion included in all analysis to make sure that
44 ANILCA is being followed. We'd love to see quicker
45 Council appointments. It's very hard on people not
46 knowing if they're still a part of the Board, still a
47 member, still have a valid voice on a Board, with
48 things dragging out and taking forever to receive their
49 appointment letter. And we also advocate for

50

0070

1 compensation for members who are participating.
2 Knowledge has value and the value should be
3 acknowledged. And as many have already said today,
4 too, just the very fact of living out in the Bush is
5 extremely expensive and it should be compensated when
6 time, expertise and taking your time to advocate for
7 others deserves compensation.

8
9 And, with that, Mr. Chair, I will close
10 my comments and, again, thank you for the time.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
13 Nanci. Any questions for Nanci from the Board.

14
15 MS. PITKA: Yeah, hi, this is Rhonda
16 Pitka. You mentioned representation from the southern
17 portion of your region, which communities would that
18 entail?

19
20 MS. MORRIS LYON: That's Chignik, Port
21 Heiden, Pilot Point, everybody down there in the
22 southern portion of our area.

23
24 MS. PITKA: Thank you.

25
26 MS. MORRIS LYON: Yes.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Nanci. Any other questions.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
34 thank you Nanci for calling in and presenting your
35 Regional Advisory Council report.

36
37 Next we'll call on Jack Reakoff. If
38 you're online, Jack, you have the floor.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, do
43 you see Jack in the cue.

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Tina.

48
49 REPORTER: Yes, Jack is on.

50

0071

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Star six if you
2 need to unmute.

3
4 MR. REAKOFF: Okay, I think it opened
5 up. Thank you, Tony. This is Jack Reakoff, Western
6 Interior Regional Advisory Council Chair. Can you hear
7 me fine?

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we hear
10 you loud and clear, you have the floor Jack.

11
12 MR. REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. So I'm
13 Jack Reakoff, I live in the Central Brooks Range since
14 I was three years old. I was born in the Territory of
15 Alaska. I've been on the Western Interior Regional
16 Advisory since 1993. I've been involved in public
17 meetings of fish and wildlife management since the late
18 '80s. I'm the Chair of the Koyukuk River Advisory
19 Committee and Vice Chair of the Gates of the Arctic
20 Subsistence Resource Commission. And so I have
21 considerable experience with fish and wildlife
22 management as you well know, but there are new Board
23 members. And I have appreciated Sarah Creachbaum's
24 participation on the Board, will be sorry to see her
25 going. I'm on the Gates of the Arctic, she was at our
26 meeting in Anaktuvuk Pass last April for two days. I
27 welcome Erika as acting BLM Director. And, of course,
28 welcoming the new members, public members to the
29 Federal Subsistence Board.

30
31 And so the State of Alaska is vast, it
32 has 10 regions and each region has its own unique
33 things that has to be addressed and we have a lot of
34 commonalities and I appreciated the All RAC meeting
35 that we had last March in Anchorage to discuss the
36 various overlapping issues that we encounter.

37
38 The Western Interior Regional Advisory
39 Council is to meet on February 25 and 26 in Fairbanks.
40 The Council will have an evening session with the North
41 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, some members, and
42 some Staff, and so we look forward to interacting with
43 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, which
44 we have had that probably close to 15 years ago.

45
46 The Western Interior is a large region
47 stretching from Unit 24, portions of 21 and 19,
48 basically from the crest of the Brooks Range all the
49 way down to the upper part of the Kuskokwim River down
50

0072

1 to Aniak and all the way down almost to the lower
2 Yukon, middle and lower Yukon at Holy Cross. It's a
3 vast area, there's a lot of different weather
4 conditions and so the largest communities are McGrath,
5 Galena and Aniak and those communities are probably no
6 more than 500 people at the most. So we don't have
7 large urban area problems, you know, we don't have
8 that. We do have lots of people that come in the fall
9 time, we're hearing a lot of complaints out of McGrath
10 about a lot of air taxis flying out of McGrath and
11 there's a lot of rotten meat coming into the
12 communities, and we keep hearing that for the last two
13 or three years, and that's a big concern for local
14 people in McGrath to have -- you know, they would take
15 the meat but it comes in in a spoiled condition because
16 as Brower was stating, the airplanes can't get back on
17 time and they leave their clients in the field too
18 long, these are problems that need to be addressed at
19 the Refuge levels. And so winter conditions highly
20 affect wildlife and fish populations. In the northern
21 part of the region where I live I couldn't participate
22 in this meeting because in the last two weeks we've had
23 three feet of snow, we've had temperatures from 33
24 above to 52 below zero. I have a small village, I'm in
25 charge of plowing out the village, I can't leave in the
26 middle of the winter, leave my household when it's 50
27 below zero or deep snow, I just couldn't do it. So
28 we've had a lot of snow this winter in the northern
29 part, 10 days ago we had a blowing rain and we've got a
30 crust on the snow and so we've had 88 inches of snow
31 fall out of the sky, I take weather for National
32 Weather Service, and we have a standing snowpack at 45
33 inches right now with an ice crust in it. All the
34 moose have come off the mountain, they're down in the
35 valley dragging their bellies. The mountains are
36 covered in plastered snow and the sheep and caribou are
37 going to have a real hard time with that ice crust.
38 It's not as bad as it has been in some years but it's
39 still a crust. This crust will shave the hair off
40 their legs. So this is a taxing thing. We do have, in
41 the last two years, in 2023 and 2024, we've had for
42 dall sheep populations we've had good recruitments in
43 the west, in the Gates of the Arctic Park and the lambs
44 that were born were born and their large cohorts. All
45 of the Central Brooks Range had good lamb recruitments
46 and what I refer to as strong cohorts, they're large as
47 some biologists were mistaking some lambs as yearlings
48 when they were doing some sheep work here this last
49 summer. This will help this cohort get through -- the
50

0073

1 closure that we had was instrumental in protecting the
2 dall sheep ram population so that we could build this
3 cohort into the population, now we have another bad
4 winter but I feel that these cohorts are going to be
5 strong enough to possibly make it unless we get
6 additional late spring or some other, but right now
7 we've got a bad winter going on.

8
9 The middle part of our region, it
10 doesn't have as much snow but they've had a lot of
11 rain, so we've got crusted ground, which is pretty hard
12 on the legs of moose. The lower part of the region has
13 had very little snow and so the wood bison and the
14 caribou in the lower portion of the region should be
15 doing a little bit better, but, still there's rain on
16 snow.

17
18 The caribou herds that are within our
19 region that are associated with our region that we have
20 customary and traditional use are, are the Central
21 Arctic Caribou Herd, Porcupine Caribou Herd, Teshekpuk
22 Herd, Western Arctic Caribou Herd and Mulchatna Caribou
23 Herd and as Alissa was saying, we have deep concerns
24 about that Mulchatna Caribou Herd. That used to be
25 200,000 caribou. We would like to see that herd return
26 back and the protections that are being taken place
27 right now are helping that herd out. So winter weather
28 events with rain on snow is extremely hard on caribou
29 ranges and grazing animals.

30
31 The Council is very concerned, as you
32 full well know, we've had virtually very little, if any
33 salmon fishing on the Yukon River system and we're
34 super concerned about the size of these stocks
35 returning that is few in number and really small and
36 fecundity or the productivity of the female salmon that
37 are actually coming back is actually really low. If
38 you look at what their egg composition is and the egg
39 retention, even after spawning, we're only getting
40 about maybe 25 percent. We might even meet the goal
41 but we're only getting -- egg loads are so low and the
42 energy level are still poor, a lot of the salmon are
43 not actually making destination. So Kuskokwim River
44 had some limited fishing but the Yukon River had a
45 little bit of summer chum harvest. The chinook run,
46 the fall chum run and the coho runs on the Yukon River
47 are abysmal. There's various factors causing. Climate
48 change is major factor reducing the overall
49 productivity of the North Pacific and a lot of the
50

1 stocks of chum, coho and chinook go into the North
2 Pacific. Another major problem is hatchery release.
3 The Alaska hatcheries release between 1.2 to 1.9
4 billion smolt, Washington state releases 200 million
5 pink salmon smolt, Alaska releases 1.2 Billion pink
6 salmon smolt. We're the highest release in the North
7 American continent. Those smolt go into the North
8 Pacific, into the Gulf of Alaska and the current goes
9 north, goes to the north, those fish are directly
10 competing with our smolt stocks that are moving into
11 the North Pacific and so they're highly competitive
12 with the North Pacific and the Board of Fish refuses to
13 reduce the release because it will affect the economy,
14 the major economies of these hatcheries. The
15 hatcheries are producing way too many fish and so that
16 is a major problem. And we have warm waters which
17 reduce productivity. We also have this bycatch issue.
18 So we got salmon that are trying to return, the few
19 that survive try to return through the South Alaska
20 Peninsula, there's too much harvest on the returning
21 salmon and then the North Pacific Fisheries Management
22 Council needs to have corridors during the salmon
23 returns when they're moving through the South Alaska
24 Peninsula and moving across the Bering Sea, they need
25 to have exclusions where they keep them out of the way.
26 They can't have, during the pollack fishery, catching
27 those returning salmon that are coming back to the
28 Kuskokwim and Yukon River systems.

29
30 This situation is a crisis and in the
31 future it'll play out that hatcheries were bad. It was
32 okay to have some hatchery release for chinook or coho
33 release for uses around Juneau and those kind of
34 communities but this massive amounts of pink salmon
35 going out on an annual basis. Washington releases a
36 lot of -- 200million one year but they don't the next
37 year, pink salmon have alternating years and the Alaska
38 hatcheries release static amounts. They can't even get
39 enough salmon back at the hatcheries this year to get
40 roe. So that is a major problem. I feel that with
41 time and with data analysis that they will find out
42 that hatcheries were a bad idea and bycatch is another
43 bad idea and those have to be addressed. And that's
44 just the Council's opinion and it'll play out in the
45 longrun.

46
47 I do want the Federal Subsistence Board
48 to know that the Western Interior Regional Council has
49 been working on a dall sheep management strategy.
50

0075

1 We'll be discussing it again at our next meeting.
2 We've been asking for comments on that strategy and we
3 intend to move this forward to the Federal Subsistence
4 Board as a management strategy for our region. Every
5 region -- we tried to get the regions together, they
6 don't really want to talk, they want to do other stuff,
7 they want to do planning processes. I participated in
8 the State of Alaska sheep dall management planning
9 strategy, it failed, you can't get anybody together on
10 dall sheep but we need dall sheep management and we've
11 developed a strategy that lays out the ecology of the
12 animal and what it's going to take to manage this
13 animal and so we need to have that on the record.
14 Under our Title VIII of ANILCA, the agencies are
15 instructed by the Act to maintain healthy populations
16 of fish and wildlife using recognized scientific
17 principles and we need to move to science. We also
18 need some science for dall sheep -- or correction, for
19 caribou also. There's data lacks. So we need a
20 Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program, just like we have
21 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, FRMP. We need
22 WRMP. We need revenues to look at the issues that the
23 Councils identify that are lacking in wildlife
24 management that's basically ignored or evaded, we need
25 to have -- there's certain specific data that needs to
26 be instituted and so we need to have that funding move
27 forward and so I hear different Councils talking about
28 that also.

29
30 So Western Interior will have, as I
31 said, an evening meeting with the North Pacific
32 Fisheries Management Council and we are hoping for the
33 best, I'm hoping the Council can listen to our input on
34 how to address the bycatch that's affecting returns
35 back to the Western Interior region and we also need to
36 move -- we need to continue to talk about this hatchery
37 problem with Alaska only second behind Russia who's
38 strip mining their oceans also. So we need to think
39 about this hatchery issue. Everybody just gets focused
40 on bycatch but hatchery is the elephant in the room.

41
42 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
45 Reakoff. Any questions for Jack online from the Board.

46
47 (No comments)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
50

0076

1 thank you, Jack, for calling in and sharing your
2 Regional Advisory Council report and all your
3 observations of the land. Thank you.

4

5 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you.

6

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That concludes
9 our Regional Advisory Council report out and so I
10 appreciate all the work that the Regional Advisory
11 Council members, Chairman and representatives to bring
12 those heartfelt concerns here. The Regional Advisory
13 Council Chairs are the voice for the regions they serve
14 and the people who come and testify before them and so
15 it's good for us to be able to feel what it is you have
16 to feel out in each of your regions. I know some of
17 those, which are closer to home to each of the regions
18 and the resources we're discussing and how that affects
19 our people and that you're the front line of the
20 Program and having to absorb that emotional state of
21 being that our people are finding themselves in. So I
22 just commend you for that ability to take that on and
23 to bring it here to the Board and to express it in
24 plain English. I appreciate that we're open and can
25 just have that forum here. It is an emotional thing
26 when people aren't getting their needs met and we're
27 watching communities drastically change in our
28 lifetime. I mean just drastically. Not just in the
29 activity that's happening on the landscape but the
30 people who live there and what they do, where they live
31 and we're just seeing -- what did I say before,
32 subsistence of our type are getting far and fewer
33 between but our reliance on the resource is getting
34 more and more, a part of our life and need with the
35 cost of living in this world now. I mean it's
36 paramount that we create this access and figure out
37 ways to keep our regions hunting and fishing like
38 they've done for thousands of years.

38

39 So thank you guys for that
40 presentation.

41

42 We'll move on now to public comment
43 period on non-agenda items.

44

45 Oh, sorry, State, I didn't mean to do
46 that to you Ben.

47

48 MR. MULLIGAN: I was hoping you were
49 going to skip me, sir.

50

0077

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, no,
2 you're on now partner. Sorry. Sorry, Ben. Mr.
3 Mulligan has the floor.

4
5 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Chairman
6 Christianson. For the record my name is Ben Mulligan.
7 I serve as one of the two Deputy Commissioners for the
8 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I think it's been
9 since the work session, it's good to see everybody
10 again. Welcome to the new members. I think everybody,
11 as I think the other heads of the agencies have said, I
12 mean we're all pretty busy. When I first came into
13 this position six years ago I figured, you know, I'd
14 get my feet underneath me and things would maybe get a
15 little easier, but that is not the case.

16
17 (Laughter)

18
19 MR. MULLIGAN: I think it's just a game
20 of balance of how many extra duties can I get. I'm
21 glad I could make you laugh. And so we're doing a lot.

22
23 As I think many of you know, many of
24 our meetings overlap. We've got this meeting, Council
25 meeting, and then also Southeast Board of Fish is
26 meeting. Luckily the Board of Game is not also meeting
27 at the same time or else I don't know where we'd all
28 be. But, you know, we're working hard.

29
30 You know, just as an example I know
31 that Staff have been talking about muskox up north. So
32 I mean Carmen is -- it's sinking in, we're not ignoring
33 the pleas and so they're talking with area and regional
34 Staff about how that should go. You know, as you also
35 heard, Fortymile Coalition is up and running again,
36 we'll start seeing meetings out of there hopefully soon
37 and so there's going to be a lot going on and a lot of
38 engagement from the public in addition to the RACs for
39 your system, but the Advisory Committees for ours. I
40 mean that's the thing, you've got, what 10 RACs, we've
41 got, I think -- well on paper we've got 80-some odd ACs
42 but about 70-some actually active at any point in time
43 usually only during their region. We do have a few
44 that no matter what are active. But those folks are
45 actively engaged and it's something that we look
46 forward. That engagement is important. I don't know
47 if everybody knows the Board of Fish has started with a
48 local and traditional knowledge portion for public
49 testimony in addition to normal public testimony, so
50

0078

1 they've added that component to their meetings. I
2 don't know if things will progress with the Board of
3 Game. We're not charged with overseeing them so it's
4 up to them to make that determination, but I know the
5 Board of Fish has been now doing that for more than a
6 few meetings and it seems to be flowing well and much
7 appreciated.

8
9 Other than that I'll kind of say that's
10 it because I know we've got a heavy agenda ahead of us
11 and look forward to making it to 5:00 o'clock on
12 Friday.

13
14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Right on, Mr.
17 Mulligan. Such a good day when we can sit across from
18 each other and find humor in it. All of this hardship
19 because, yeah, we got big things and we know the State
20 and Federal Program aren't always eye to eye but the
21 conservation of the resource and access to the public
22 is where we have commonality so we thank you guys for
23 your work and being here to present your position.

24
25 Thank you.

26
27 Public comment period on non-agenda
28 items. I got a bunch of blue forms here so I'm going
29 to go backwards so I get the first one.

30
31 Oh, I'm on the wrong agenda, oh,
32 correspondence update, sorry guys. That's why I'm
33 surrounded by people, see, it's like I don't -- okay,
34 correspondence update.

35
36 MS. WESSELS: I was hoping that you
37 will let me slip by and not do my presentation.

38
39 (Laughter)

40
41 MS. WESSELS: I was just like, oh,
42 good, I'm off the hook.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We don't want
47 to miss Katya's presentation.

48
49 MS. WESSELS: Good afternoon, Mr.
50

0079

1 Chair. Members of the Council. For the record my name
2 is Katya Wessels and I'm Council Coordination Division
3 Supervisor with OSM. And Brooke is passing out this
4 table of the correspondence, that's the way for us to
5 keep track of correspondence and just keep in mind it's
6 a living and breathing document. It is not like a
7 final account of where the correspondence is and I'm
8 just going to talk about it a little bit and it's also
9 on the screen.

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So for the purposes of this presentation, first I'm going to talk about the letters that the Councils ask the Board to elevate and what came out of it. So all of you, of course, know that, you know, the Councils were established by authority of ANILCA and chartered under FACA. And the Councils have the authority to review and evaluate various matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region and encourage local and regional participation in the decisionmaking process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on public lands within the region for subsistence uses. So the Councils -- as a result of this authority, the Councils really, you know, try to pay the best attention they can to the issues -- subsistence issues happening in their regions. And the Councils are advisors to the Board and they love communicating with the Board and they ask the Board to help to elevate the issues.

So the first category that you see on the Page No. 1 is, you know, there are several categories with the letters that were sent. It's D-1 lands. And you heard from many Chairs that the subsistence users are interested in keeping the D-1 land protections. So a couple of letters were sent to the Board then the Board elevated them to the Secretaries in July of last year and at that point it was more of an informational item because the D-1 land protection was kept at that time but the Councils and the Board still received a reply back from the Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaskan Affairs and Strategic Priorities. The reply was received in November of last year.

So the next category of the letters is about the compensation for Council members time for serving on the Councils for their time and expertise. As you see there were many letters that were sent by various Councils to the Board asking to elevate this to

0080

1 the Secretaries and the Board did so last July and the
2 Secretaries replied and basically the Secretaries, in
3 their reply, recognized that the financial compensation
4 is an important issue to Council members and the
5 Secretaries agreed that the Council members should be
6 compensated for their work on behalf of the Federal
7 Subsistence Management. So that was the Secretaries
8 from the previous Administration, but the previous
9 Administration did not have an opportunity to carry out
10 the steps necessary to request the funding for
11 anticipated compensation. And in their letter they're
12 suggesting to bring the same issue to the attention of
13 the current Administration, which is going to be up,
14 again, to the Councils and to the Board to bring it up
15 to the attention of the current Administration and
16 request this compensation.

17
18 So the next category of letters, just
19 one letter by two Councils, is the need for Magnuson-
20 Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
21 revisions and the Board elevated that letter as well to
22 the Secretaries last year and we have not received a
23 reply to that correspondence sent by the Board.

24
25 So moving on to bycatch and
26 interception issues. Salmon is a huge deal for all the
27 Councils across the board, it was brought up many times
28 during the Chairs reports. And as you can see there
29 are several letters that were sent to the Board asking
30 again to elevate them to the attention of the
31 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, which Board
32 also did and the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
33 exercising the delegated authority for Assistant
34 Secretary of Policy Management and Budget replied to
35 these letters as well. So the Secretaries acknowledged
36 that this issue have been front and center for long
37 time now and they shared these concerns also with the
38 Department of Commerce and the Secretaries directed OSM
39 to work with RACs to draft recommendations for
40 departmental guidance that will ensure the protection
41 of subsistence uses and resources on Federal public
42 lands and waters that support collaborative ecosystem
43 based salmon management across all jurisdictions. So
44 that's the followup that OSM will need to do.

45
46 Also several requests in the joint
47 seven Council letter were addressed specifically to the
48 Board and they require Board's consideration so the
49 Councils are awaiting for the Board's response to those
50

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1 specific requests, requests from five to nine. So the
2 Board will need to address that in the future and see
3 how they would like to reply to these requests.

4
5 The next one is correspondence process
6 and it's on the next page. So also, as you see,
7 several letters about correspondence. Issues with
8 correspondence, how long it takes, that sometimes
9 letters are sent, no replies received. So the Board
10 elevated these concerns to the previous
11 Administration's Secretaries as well and they received
12 a reply, again, from the Principal Deputy Assistant
13 Secretary which acknowledged that there is a lot of
14 frustration coming along and basically to report to you
15 and this is what the reply also said, that the Office
16 of Subsistence Management is streamlining its process
17 for drafting, transmitting and responding to Board and
18 Council correspondence. OSM and the ISC, InterAgency
19 Staff Committee are developing an approved system for
20 tracking and transmitting Council correspondence, the
21 request elevation by the Board and they request the
22 answers by the Board and this is done in an effort to
23 expedite the process. The Board is now including
24 Council correspondence on the agenda items as we are
25 doing right now. So hopefully in the future our
26 process will be more streamlined. We have now a
27 process how to elevate these letters to the Secretary's
28 office and we are going to verify with the new
29 Administration how they would prefer this done. As for
30 OSM we are going to put our best foot forward and make
31 sure this process works as smoothly as possible.

32
33 Okay, moving on to the next category,
34 Notification and Consultation on Tribes -- with Tribes
35 on OSM move. That was a single letter from
36 Kodiak/Aleutian Councils [sic]. And the Board elevated
37 this concern as well. The Secretaries from the
38 previous Administration acknowledged the frustration
39 associated with that the tribes and the Council,
40 Kodiak/Aleutian Councils were not invited to these
41 consultations and in the future it was suggested that
42 to work with OSM to make sure that -- to establish a
43 proper -- exclusive and meaningful process for
44 consultation on this and other topics with the Council
45 and other stakeholders.

46
47 Moving on to the next topic, and that's
48 Transboundary River Watershed also a single letter from
49 a single Council, Southeast. The Board elevated that
50

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1 letter and received a reply from the Principal Deputy
2 Assistant Secretary replying on behalf of the
3 Secretaries, the reply basically highlighted the work
4 of the previous Administration through Council of
5 environmental quality and engaging tribal nations and
6 diverse stakeholders on addressing impacts of
7 transboundary pollution from mining development.

8

9 Okay. Moving on to the next table and
10 this is the Board, the Board direct letters to the
11 Secretaries and that Board -- that letter, the only one
12 letter that's in that table is the elevation of Sitka
13 Kaagwaantaan Clan Petition for Extraterritorial
14 Jurisdiction. The Board is obligated to pass this
15 along to the Secretaries because the Secretaries retain
16 their authority to restrict eliminate (ph) fishing
17 activities that occur on lands and waters other than
18 Federal public lands that result in a failure to
19 provide the Federal subsistence priority, the Board
20 does not have that authority. So the petition was
21 elevated and in the reply the Secretaries authorized
22 the Board to evaluate and consult with the State of
23 Alaska Councils and other Federal agencies and evaluate
24 the petition, accept public testimony and make
25 confidential recommendations to the Secretaries.

26

27 Moving on to the next table and that's
28 kind of a large table here. Council letters to the
29 Board. These just list letters to the Board that where
30 Councils were sharing some of their concerns but did
31 not specifically ask the Board to elevate that to the
32 Secretaries so there is quite a few letters that the
33 Councils is still waiting for response from the Board.
34 Some of them got the movement, like for example Eastern
35 Interior letter on Fortymile Caribou harvest, you heard
36 that the Fortymile Caribou Coalition is going to meet
37 in late February of this year. The other one, the four
38 Council Western Arctic Caribou Herd letter that was
39 sent to the Board and to the ADF&G, the Councils
40 received reply for ADF&G still waiting for reply from
41 the Board. So I'm not going to address every specific
42 letter in this table unless you have a question.

43

44 And moving on to the last table and
45 this table lists the letters from the Councils to the
46 Board agencies specifically. So there is like several
47 letters that are still waiting for reply. Some of them
48 do not actually require a reply like concern regarding
49 oil and gas exploration in the Yukon Flats. The letter

50

0083

1 was addressed to Fish and Wildlife Service that no
2 response was requested from the Board, or from the
3 agency. The letter on cabin uses for subsistence that
4 was addressed to BLM, the Board replied topic in their
5 FY23 annual report reply and discussed at the August
6 '24 work session and Council is waiting for update
7 after BLM and ISC review of cabin use and fee
8 structure.

9

10 So that concludes my brief overview of
11 the Board correspondence and if you have any questions
12 please ask.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
15 Katya, for your report and your table here. I know
16 there was some comments here, they appreciated the way
17 you laid that out for us to look at so thank you for
18 that presentation. Any questions from the Board for
19 Katya.

20

21 MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. Sara.

24

25 MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service.
26 More of a comment for listeners out there and
27 especially on the heels of Nanci and Jack's report out
28 from the RACs as well, only to note that we have for
29 the last couple of North Pacific Fisheries Management
30 Council meetings and for the upcoming one, our interim
31 approach has been Boyd Blihovde who has been leading
32 many of our salmon crisis response issues in Western
33 Alaska and as I noted earlier, is stepping into our
34 Refuge Supervisor position, he will be in that seat.
35 That is our interim approach going forward and I just
36 wanted folks who have been tracking that issue to hear
37 from us on that.

38

39 Thanks.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
42 other questions from the Board for Katya.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Comments.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
2 your presentation Katya.

3
4 Okay, we'll move on to public testimony
5 on non-agenda items. So we'll go ahead and start in
6 the order we got them and so we'll call on Gayla
7 Hoseth, you have the floor.

8
9 MS. HOSETH: Good afternoon, Mr.
10 Chairman and members of the Board. Sorry, I just
11 walked in, I wasn't ready to make comment, but for the
12 record my name is Gayla Hoseth. I'm the First Chief of
13 Curyung Tribal Council located in Dillingham, Alaska.
14 We represent about 3,200 people in Dillingham. For my
15 day job I'm the Director of Natural Resources for
16 Bristol Bay Native Association in Dillingham and I also
17 serve on Alaska Federation of Natives as a village rep
18 Board member and also the subsistence Chair. I'm just
19 going to be commenting today on behalf of our tribal
20 council on some non-agenda items.

21
22 In regards to the OSM moving out of
23 under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with the
24 actions that took place from the Department of Interior
25 and Agriculture just for that good move for it to be
26 moved under the Assistant Secretary Program Management
27 and Budget. We were really supportive of that as a
28 tribe and we're really happy to see that move and going
29 into this time that we are and congratulations to
30 Crystal Leonetti who is also one of our tribal members
31 from our tribe, we're very, very proud of her to be
32 sitting in this seat so I just wanted to put that on
33 the record as well.

34
35 For the three tribal seats,
36 congratulations to Ray Oney, Benjamin Payenna, and also
37 Frank Woods, III. Frank Woods is the tribal chief of
38 our tribe and our tribal council. We nominated him to
39 serve on this Board and we're very proud of him as well
40 and know that he'll be able to bring some good insight
41 to the Federal Subsistence Board through this process.
42 And just a little bit of history of Frank and I, I know
43 we like to kind of -- Frank is my ex-brother-in-law,
44 but we also worked together in natural resources.

45
46 (Laughter)

47
48 MS. HOSETH: And we worked as a team
49 and I was pretty green when I came to this arena, I
50

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1 came to these meetings and understood the Federal
2 Subsistence Board and the Board of Game and you talk
3 about like being a good uncle, well, he's a really good
4 uncle to my son and also taking my son out hunting and
5 I really appreciate that as a mother. And so as he has
6 -- we worked side by side and, you know, learning this
7 stuff was challenging. It's like a different language,
8 these regulations and how these processes work and
9 everything and sometimes when he would be talking I
10 would be saying, you know, I don't know what you're
11 talking about.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MS. HOSETH: And we were sitting in the
16 office together one day and it was like, and it
17 clicked, and I said I understand what you mean now
18 because it is a long process and I thought, Heather, is
19 here with all of the students. Hi you guys. I was
20 able to present and talk to her class last week before
21 coming to this and so the growth that everybody has
22 been on through this journey from the time of knowing
23 and understanding and learning and growing and tribal
24 leadership and then advocating for our subsistence way
25 of life has been very rewarding and very beneficial to
26 the region and then also to the State of Alaska on
27 subsistence issues.

28

29 So congratulations, Frank, very proud
30 of you and Ray and Ben.

31

32 Having -- you know, I was looking at
33 the make-up of the Board and looking at everybody
34 sitting here. I think there's one person that I
35 haven't worked with or that I know and that's this lady
36 here on the left. And as we go through these
37 challenging times and as we come up to the microphone
38 and we're here and I guess maybe that's just an
39 indication that I'm getting older in this line of work
40 that we get to build these relationships across the
41 state of Alaska. I could say I've known all of you who
42 are sitting here in some way, shape or form, or have
43 seen you and talked to you before and it's only one new
44 person here, and even the fill-ins, we get to know the
45 fill-ins of these agencies, but it's a revolving door
46 and so when I look and I see Ray and I see even Jolene
47 there with BIA and Rhonda and Crystal and Tony and
48 Charlie and Frank and Ben, wow, what tribal -- what
49 Native leadership we have. And as we're going through
50

1 this process of educating like the youth in the room
2 and talking to people, now we're actually talking to
3 people who understand what it's like to go to fish
4 camp, what it's like to learn from our aunts and our
5 uncles and our grandparents teaching us. You know, I
6 grew up packing water, splitting wood, putting out my
7 own net, fishing and living that lifestyle with my
8 grandmother and my dad was here for the first time
9 today too and he had to go but he's actually the acting
10 CEO for BBNA right now and for him to see the work that
11 we do and be in this space he's very interested. So
12 just as we go through that, and now when we have a --
13 looking at the make-up of the Federal Subsistence Board
14 and the knowledge that is behind with this table that
15 we have and then also the RACs beside us it just warms
16 my heart to see the Native leadership that we have.
17 And also the leadership that we have that is also non-
18 Native, but I'm speaking as a tribal chief and it just
19 makes me really proud.

20

21 So with those revolving seats and I'm
22 sorry that Sarah's not sitting here and I know that she
23 probably had to leave, but I really enjoyed working
24 with Sarah with the National Park Service and I just
25 wanted to say that I will greatly miss working with her
26 and the conversations and just the respect that she had
27 for subsistence and our ways of life and she really
28 took the time to learn and understand. I went to a
29 dialogue training with her before last year and got to
30 sit at a roundtable with her and got to know her a
31 little bit and I think that when we engage and we build
32 those relationships with one another you build those
33 relationships and then you gain a better understanding.
34 So that was really, really nice, and I wanted to say
35 thank you to her as she retires. And then I also thank
36 you, Ken, for coming back as well as you're training
37 the person who's replacing you as you go off to
38 retirement, so thank you. Definitely we'll miss Ameer
39 Howard with OSM, what a loss for us. I enjoyed -- she
40 was always full energy, always happy, always happy and
41 eager to help so definitely miss working with Ameer.

42

43 Last year, you know, we did a
44 historical thing as Curyung Tribal Council, Togiak
45 Traditional Council and Manokotak Village Council with
46 WP24-18, when we moved that boundary beyond what was
47 over from Kulukuk all the way over to 17A and through
48 that, you know, we took a lot of heartache from even
49 within U.S. Fish and Wildlife employees, of Refuge
50

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1 employees and speaking from what it is to be done to
2 stand up for subsistence and our subsistence way of
3 life and to get that boundary change beyond to have the
4 access for Togiak and Twin Hills, that's a big huge
5 thing for us in our region. So it's success stories
6 like that and it's successes like that that really make
7 a difference coming to these meetings.

8

9

10 You know we heard a lot about salmon
11 and hearing the stories of the loss of salmon in the
12 different regions throughout the state of Alaska
13 saddens my heart coming from a region that we're the
14 world's largest sockeye -- wild sockeye salmon return
15 area in Bristol Bay. We have a king salmon stock
16 management concern where I live on the Nushagak River,
17 we also finally met chum escapement goals after the
18 fifth year, where four years we didn't have an
19 escapement goal well we missed it for one year and I
20 was wondering if we were even going to get a stock of
21 management concern for our chum salmon because we're
22 seeing those declines of those different species even
23 though we have an abundance of sockeye. One of the
24 things that we did this last summer in Dillingham, I
25 personally did, on my setnet site, is there was a lot
26 of people that came from the Yukon, from Nome and we
27 fished my site, we fished my site subsistence, we boxed
28 up and we sent out how many fish to the Nome region, to
29 the -- and helped people get subsistence and we fished
30 differently than people fish in different areas so
31 there's also knowledge sharing of how we set out our
32 net and how we fish off of the beach versus how people
33 might seine or how people might fish differently, so
34 there's that knowledge sharing and, you know, I have a
35 place, people are coming, people are already planning
36 on coming back and harvesting on Kakanak Beach and
37 for a return. So as we go through this time there's
38 also ways that we need to look at bartering. I want to
39 bring back bartering again into the state of Alaska to
40 where we actually do barter. There's different
41 resources across the state that have -- that might have
42 a decline for salmon but there's an abundance of moose,
43 in some areas, muktuk, herring eggs and one of the
44 things that I would like to see through this time that
45 we're at the Federal Subsistence Board is a bartering
46 area. I could bring in salmon, Tony you could bring in
47 herring eggs and we do a trade. We do a trade. It
48 could be small, it could be a short thing but we have a
49 venue to where we can actually trade without dollars,
50 where people aren't having to buy salmon or buy herring

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1 eggs or buy anything, that we incorporate some kind of
2 bartering in our state. We could either do that
3 through the Federal Subsistence Board, we could do that
4 during AFN, more people come to AFN, but that's
5 something that I want to work on is to integrate a
6 bartering in our state again and really go back to our
7 customary and traditional ways of sharing. So we have
8 a lot of salmon to share and I love muktuk Charlie.

9

10 (Laughter)

11

12 MS. HOSETH: So, you know, we could
13 always do a trade. So lastly, you know, as we have
14 these Executive Orders coming upon us, we talked a
15 little bit about it yesterday during tribal
16 consultation and then this new Secretary Order and
17 looking at how is that going to affect us, how is that
18 going to impact us and we have some things with the
19 State of Alaska that might be coming forth with the
20 Governor's goals of what he wants to do for a statewide
21 management system. And so collaborating and working, I
22 did learn a lot yesterday through some conversations of
23 how things work and what level of engagement the
24 Federal Subsistence Board could do, but a lot of that's
25 going to rely on all of us Alaskans here through our
26 tribes, through our ANCSA Corporations, and through the
27 public to testify on these issues to protect our
28 subsistence way of life.

29

30 So with that, I just wanted to say
31 thank you and what changes we have and what changes we
32 see coming and hope for the future that as we may have
33 declines in some resources, we're rich in other things
34 that we can really get into the bartering throughout
35 our state.

36

37 So thank you, Mr. Chair.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
40 Gayla. Any questions from the Board, comments.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I
45 do have one. I know the barter system, I know the last
46 couple of years the program I work for with Tlingit-
47 Haida has done elders and youth training here, I think
48 it's at the front end of AFN and bringing in fish and
49 other resources to just let them get their hands dirty

50

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1 and just share it. A lot of it was maybe urban folks
2 or people on the river who hadn't touched a salmon in
3 several years. I think this year we brought 120 salmon
4 from Southeast, a deer and a sea otter and just did
5 presentation so that there was hands on and then just
6 gave it to them as a taste and talk about some really
7 happy people to just get that little interaction. So
8 you hear a lot of that here today about a loss of a
9 lifestyle and losing that connection to your hand to
10 mouth food relationship which is spiritual in its
11 aspects. So thank you for that and I see that as where
12 I've been trying to push it and it's gotten bigger the
13 last two years and I keep saying, well, I think this is
14 where it's at is to bring what we have in richness and
15 somebody else has in richness together and exchange.
16 That's always been there so thank you for that Gayla.

17
18 MS. HOSETH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
19 if I could just give a little follow up on that.
20 Before that was, you know, we were your neighbors
21 during the pickling fish, I was doing the pickling
22 fish, you were doing the pickled herring and you did
23 share -- or the pickling herring eggs so you did share
24 with me and I really did enjoy those pickled herring
25 eggs. That was actually really, really nice. But
26 that's actually really, really fun and we've been doing
27 that. I know Millie and I have been doing that for
28 about eight years with the pickled salmon and then when
29 we have those workshops we have that whole downstairs
30 and we're doing that education and things are different
31 and -- but things are so good that we're able to share
32 even just that piece along with that knowledge so it's
33 really fun to work with you in that space.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Frank.

38
39 MR. WOODS: Yeah, thank you, Gayla.
40 I'd just like to say that I appreciate your praising
41 testimony here. Hopefully we keep the Forestry Service
42 [sic], is it Hazel, or Heather's lead on bringing
43 students here, you know, from our region engagement is
44 everything. And it really is nice to meet in person,
45 you know, we have online and Zoom meetings and to meet
46 in person is a whole lot different than, you know,
47 watching it on a screen.

48
49 One thing I'd like to appreciate, that
50

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1 we live in a real diverse area and each one of our
2 areas of state I'm learning from but your charge and
3 your AFN appointment in subsistence is a huge impact
4 statewide, not for this Board and community, but for
5 the people that we represent so I appreciate it. And
6 I'm liking our friends up in the Arctic Slope RAC
7 meeting, you know, he's saying the same stuff we are
8 and every RAC member and every testimony that we get
9 from Norton Sound and I appreciate those because as I
10 -- as it resonates to me, that not only this Board is
11 well represented but our RACs are just as important so
12 thank you.

13
14 I'm hoping this won't be the last time
15 you'll testify.

16
17 MS. HOSETH: I'll probably be up here
18 again, thank you.

19
20 (Laughter)

21
22 MS. HOSETH: Thank you. Thank you
23 guys.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
26 Gayla.

27
28 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I have a
29 question.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have a
32 question, the floor is yours.

33
34 MR. GREEN: Gayla, where are we going
35 to dinner tonight.

36
37 (Laughter)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: He's making it
40 public, woooo.

41
42 (Laughter)

43
44 MR. GREEN: I figured as much.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hey.....

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48 MR. GREEN: You were the one that was
49 surprised the most.

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON:I seen arms going around people and I was like heeeyyyy. Things happen at Federal Board meetings.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So for the record, Karen Linnell has the floor next.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call her Auntie Karen for this one.

(Laughter)

MS. LINNELL: For the record, I met my husband on the Pipeline not at an FSB meeting so there we go.

(Laughter)

MS. LINNELL: Good afternoon, and thank you. For the record my name is Karen Linnell, Executive Director of Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission, which is comprised of eight tribes and two ANCSA Corporations. The Ahtna people have been stewards of the Copper River Basin for over 9,000 years or 360-plus generations. My elders hold us accountable for following traditional laws. Laws that are designed to respect and care for our fish, wildlife, land and waters. The Copper River Basin or the Ahtna Traditional Territory experiences a high influx of hunters and fishers with up to six to 8,000 personal use fishermen and six to 8,000 permits for caribou. We've seen a strain on the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.

Maximum sustained yield is based on past scientific research and understandings that do not account for the environmental and ecological changes taking place on the land. Precautionary management necessitates more conservative management to ensure sustained yield in light of these uncertainties to ensure we do not sacrifice our grandchildren's future for making money this year.

This year, for the first time we experienced -- in awhile -- first time in awhile we've

0092

1 experienced chinook restrictions and we're not able to
2 meet escapement goals in all likelihood. This year I
3 had three kings that were smaller than a trout. We are
4 seeing smaller salmon return to the river with smaller
5 roe sacs. Smaller roe sacs equals fewer eggs and less
6 chance of survivability. With the smaller salmon
7 returning we should be raising the escapement goals to
8 get the same returns. I've heard that from some of the
9 RAC members today as they were giving their RAC
10 reports, they have the same concerns for those smaller
11 fish returns and the fecundity that goes with those
12 smaller fish. At the recent Board of Fish meeting held
13 in Cordova for the Prince William Sound, Copper River
14 Region, Proposal 51 was passed as amended to delay
15 commercial fishing by a week and to delay of the
16 personal use fishery by a minimum of three days or
17 until they meet the in-river goals at Miles Lake Sonar
18 and no retention of kings until after June 30th. This
19 is in hopes that they will improve salmon escapement
20 and subsistence opportunities in the Gakonato Slana
21 section of the river. That's where my fish camp is at,
22 near the headwaters at Katie John's camp. This was
23 proposed by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
24 Preserve after the concerns of subsistence users and a
25 formal consultation with Cheesh'na Tribe about the
26 subsistence needs in the upper reaches of the Copper
27 River continuing to go unmet back in 2018. Wrangell-
28 St. Elias Staff went to great lengths to address our
29 tribes concerns by establishing an ecologist's position
30 and developing a detailed Board of Fish proposal to
31 address the recent disproportionate commercial harvest
32 of Copper River salmon bound for the upper most reaches
33 of the river. While ultimately the Board of Fish
34 amended the proposal significantly from what the Park
35 Service had proposed, the management actions taken
36 would likely not have happened without the dedication
37 and hard work conducted by the ecologist Mark Miller
38 and Superintendent Ben Bobowski. I want to thank you,
39 Director Creachbaum, for supporting Wrangell-St. Elias
40 in their efforts to respond to those issues raised by
41 our tribes and the consultation that was done
42 throughout this. The government to government tribal
43 consultation to better conserve and protect the Copper
44 River chinook salmon and attempt to mitigate unmet
45 subsistence needs up river and to ensure a meaningful
46 Federal subsistence priority. There's a lot going on
47 in the Copper River and just watching and going from
48 getting maybe a 100 fish a day down to getting 66 in a
49 month is so huge of a drop. And people are combining
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1 wheels, three fishwheels running this summer in
2 Chistochina and the most we got in one day was 37 fish.
3 Unheard of. Watching our people work together and have
4 to go to other tribes to get some of their needs met is
5 uncalled for. Sharing the burden and being able to
6 make sure that we get salmon to the spawning grounds
7 and knowing and understanding what we're seeing on the
8 ground is so important. As Uncle Nick says, Nick
9 Jackson, he says, you have to walk this land to know
10 it. When he worked for the Department of Fish and Game
11 in the '60s he was walking every stream showing them
12 where the salmon are, showing where, and following
13 moose and wolf packs to get to know what they're eating
14 and where they're at, walking the boundaries of Lake
15 Eyak after the earthquake when that was an inlet and it
16 became a map and mapping that. That's the kind of
17 history that we have on the land. The archaeologists
18 say that we've been there for 9,000 years and looking
19 at the artifacts that they're finding on the edges of
20 Lake Ahtna and the changes that we've seen when the
21 Copper River basin flows -- the Ahtna Territory flows
22 into the Yukon Territory, Yukon River, it flows into
23 the Matanuska River, Susitna, and it flows into the
24 Copper River. We are the center of all of that. And
25 the Copper River Basin cannot feed the entire state of
26 Alaska with that high influx of people coming in and
27 out of our region because we're highway accessible.
28 When we see strains on the rivers from the Kenai River
29 and that personal use fishery, or the strains on the
30 Yukon River and people unable to fish there we see a
31 higher influx of folks coming to the Copper River to
32 fish. This is even more -- why it's more important to
33 be conservative at this time. To look at what can we
34 do to ensure that we have the salmon for generations to
35 come. Not just my grandchildren, but my
36 grandchildren's great-great-grandchildren need to be
37 able to eat from that river and need to be able to eat
38 from that land.

39
40 So I just want to thank you so much for
41 your time and welcome to the new Board members and
42 Sarah, we never -- didn't always agree but we came to
43 find common ground and were able to work together and I
44 so appreciate the work that you put forward on this
45 Board and the changes and hate to see you go but wish
46 you well on your retirement. And, again, thank you so
47 much to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Superintendent
48 Bobowski and to Mark Miller. That man deserves a
49 raise.
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1 (Laughter)

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MS. LINNELL: Or a bonus or something. Because when I first met him was the first couple months of his tenure at Wrangell-St. Elias and it was at a pre-season meeting and then the tribal consultation and we were balling them out and saying you're supposed to have joint jurisdiction over the salmon, what are you doing and he heard us and he moved forward in working to build background and gather the information so that this proposal would go through and we do appreciate that.

Thank you, so much.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen. Any questions from the Board for Karen.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen, for always giving us good testimony.

Ben, but I don't see him in the room.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Right here.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Who?

MS. ROGERS: Alissa.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh.

MS. ROGERS: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Sorry for the late delay. Thank you, Karen, so much for everything that you've done and thank you so much for everything that you've -- you're an inspiration.

I did want to back up what she was talking about in regards to the amount of harvest of salmon over the past years. I know Hiroko (Indiscernible) had done a huge phenomenal job of the amount of harvest of salmon that was done over the past 20 years, in 2010, I was a baby, but I saw her research and she presented it at a RAC meeting before I even got

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1 on the RAC meeting because I said I'm going to wait
2 until I'm 30 years old before I step on the RAC, but I
3 was only maybe about 21, 22 when she did a complete
4 harvest survey over the past 20 years and we
5 significantly dropped from having roughly about I want
6 to say maybe 16,000 pounds of fish to having only a
7 freezer full or less over the years. And that's
8 incredible. I mean just to back her up, that's
9 incredible. And I really encourage everyone to lock up
10 Hiroko's research based on subsistence needs being met
11 because it is phenomenal eye-opening of how much we've
12 gone through going to harvest as much as we need to
13 keep us through the winter versus how much we need to
14 just put on the table for showcase. It is no longer a
15 necessary food, like my grandpa used to ask me why do
16 you always eat backwards and I couldn't figure it out
17 because we would eat our food and we'd be out on the
18 boat and we'd be like Black River and I would always
19 eat my salmon first and then my cup of noodles, it was
20 like, baby, why are you eating backwards, I was like
21 what do you mean, he was like your meal should be your
22 fish, not a cup of noodles. So just to back her up. I
23 mean we're losing our resources here. We need to have
24 something done sooner than later. I mean we can talk
25 around the table all we want but we need action and we
26 need action now.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. All
31 right, I'm looking at the list here and I was calling
32 on Ben but it looks like we got Jeff Toy.

33

34 MR. TOY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
35 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board.
36 My name's Jeff Toy, I work for AFN. I'm not Ben Mallot
37 but I'm appearing on behalf of Ben joined by Gayla
38 Hoseth, Chair of AFN's Subsistence Committee. AFN is
39 thrilled to welcome Crystal to her new role with the
40 Board and perhaps even more thrilled to welcome Ray,
41 Frank and Ben to the new seats on the Board. It's
42 really impossible to overstate how important
43 subsistence rights and the preservation of subsistence
44 rights are to AFN's membership. And as the largest
45 statewide Native Organization, AFN is really, really
46 happy to see the FSB expanded with these three new
47 seats to better reflect the different diversity of uses
48 among Native people across the state and to incorporate
49 their incredible wealth of knowledge about these

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1 species and how they're used and how they should be
2 regulated.

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5 AFN fully supports the Federal
6 Subsistence Board, both for what the Board does and for
7 the model of the Board as collaborative co-management
8 between the government and Native peoples and we'd
9 really like to thank everyone on the Board and on the
10 RACs and the OMB Staff that make this possible for
11 their service.

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Anything you'd like to add, Gayla.

MS. HOSETH: Sure. Hi again. So I'm sitting here as AFN Subsistence Co-Chair and I just want to echo thank you Jeff for coming up here with me and then also Ben Mallot was here this morning, he was able to listen for the beginning of our meeting up until right at lunch, and then also as we're here at AFN also listening to the regional RAC report outs is really important to us. I think that this is where a lot of the information is gathered. I try to attend as many RAC meetings as we can, I know Jeff does too, we do follow Federal Subsistence Board and Board of Game and Board of Fish issues as we move forward in this time to protect our subsistence way of life.

We have a couple of AFN subsistence members, we have Angela Totemoff and Jennifer Hooper also who sits on our committee just to recognize them, just to show you that AFN leadership is here and present at these meetings. Last year we put on some subsistence workshops which are really beneficial right before AFN Convention and then the previous year we had our whole half a day I would say focused on specifically subsistence with testimony from the different -- from all across the state of Alaska and people want to have that space to come and speak and talk about these issues. And our AFN Subsistence Committee is very active. We are establishing at least monthly meetings but the way that things are going we are probably going to be meeting at least weekly or every two weeks as we navigate through this rapid time of things coming our way that we're having to respond to rather than react to.

So thank you, Mr. Chair and the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'd just like

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1 to echo and return the thank you too. I know the work
2 AFN does, put a lot of the subsistence on the map and
3 the listening sessions that did happen were a good
4 reason why there's additional Board seats here
5 listening to a different venue where there's a little
6 more freedom, you know, and you guys catch probably the
7 real emotional part of it over there. Thank you for
8 recognizing me while I was there for a little as well
9 and continue that good work. It's going to take all of
10 us here and you hear a big part of AFN is the corporate
11 land owner aspect and I think as we move forward in the
12 subsistence, looking at those lands and how we get
13 subsistence recognized on them is probably our next can
14 of worms. So thank you guys for your work.

15

16 MS. HOSETH: Thank you.

17

18 MR. TOY: Thank you.

19

20 MS. PITKA: Thank you for that
21 testimony. I really appreciate AFN being so involved
22 in this arena. It's not all the time that we have AFN
23 Subsistence Committee Chairs here or, you know, members
24 so I really appreciate that involvement.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm
27 looking at a whole list here and Heather wanted to go
28 ahead of her students so I got like -- I might have
29 like about 10 of them here that I think are the
30 students. So we'll go ahead and call on Heather to
31 come on up. Heather Bauscher, you have the floor.

32

33 MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Members of the Board. My name is Heather Bauscher. I
35 am an adjunct Professor at the University of Alaska-
36 Southeast in biology and fisheries technology and have
37 been lucky to have the opportunity to help teach these
38 classes now for at least seven or eight years with
39 support from the Sitka Conservation Society, which is
40 my other role, and with a lot of support from the U.S.
41 Forest Service, particularly Tongass Subsistence
42 Program folks. I really appreciate the acknowledgement
43 of how much this program has grown and I really wanted
44 to start there, that this is like the most amazing
45 group of students we've ever had and this is the
46 biggest group we've ever tried to bring so super
47 grateful to all of them and that would not have been
48 possible without the increase in support from the
49 Forest Service over the last couple of years so thank

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1 you, Chad, and your predecessors, Dave, and Beth before
2 that, and big thanks to Rob Cross and Justin and I
3 certainly wouldn't be able to be doing this at all
4 without Ashley Bolwerk so thank you for letting her
5 help support this work as well.

6
7 In addition to the classes I also
8 wanted to mention that over the last couple years with
9 thanks from support from the Southeast RAC and
10 acknowledge Don and the Council for continuing to
11 support this program, they asked for similar offerings
12 to communities so over the last three years Ashley and
13 I have taken the course curriculum, that's a four week
14 practicum course and turned it into a 4 hour community
15 workshop and with support from the Forest Service we've
16 been taking that all over Southeast Alaska for the last
17 three years. We've now been to more than 12
18 communities and there's at least 100 more people in
19 Southeast that have now gotten to hear more about this
20 information and have some more tools to navigate the
21 space. I find a lot of the materials designed for the
22 high school kids work just as well for the adults and
23 have also utilized that in some other settings, like
24 the Young Fishermen Summit and the Marine Resource
25 Education Program.

26
27 But, anyway, back to the class and the
28 amazing group of young people I have here, also want to
29 acknowledge all the people across the different
30 communities that I've helped, this would not be
31 possible without cohort coordinators and support in the
32 communities so Julian in Hoonah with support from Ian
33 and Jackson, they've been amazing. They were the first
34 remote cohorts years ago. We now have Winston Davies
35 from Wrangell helping out. We have Avery Sakamoto out
36 of Petersburg. Kenyatta Bradley came from Mt.
37 Edgecumbe to help support the Sitka students. And we
38 also have Gloria Wolfe helping to provide support. And
39 Ryan Morris with the Sitka Conservation Society. So
40 thank you for helping make this all possible.

41
42 Part of their assignments, all of this
43 is really rooted in experiential learning so it's all
44 about building the skills you need to navigate the
45 space and anything you learn to navigate in this space
46 can then also be applied to the other spaces so I'm
47 throwing this out there because the students have work
48 that they need to do and part of that includes
49 interacting with all of you so please feel free to talk
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1 to them, they need to interview you, they need to get
2 some contacts and then everybody's required to talk in
3 the mic. Not everybody's ready to talk today but I had
4 a bunch that were ready to talk today. So without
5 further adieu I'm going to let it go to them and thank
6 you so much for allowing us to present to you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
9 Heather, and thank you for the work you do.

10

11 (Applause)

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13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
14 for Heather.

15

16 (No comments)

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18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I guess we see
19 the future of Southeast isn't going to change all the
20 letters that come to the Board. Keep it up. Southeast
21 is known for inundating the Board with a lot of letters
22 and education materials but, you know, that's the
23 importance, right, they keep us to task and you can see
24 that there's a sidebar that happens, our communities
25 become educated and our kids see the value of that
26 relationship to the land and the sea that we carry dear
27 in Southeast as well as the rest of the state. So I
28 will go ahead and call on Thomas Smith; is that one of
29 your students -- right on.

30

31 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
32 Waqaa (In Native) Hi everyone. My name is Thomas
33 Smith. My Athabascan name is Kidikii given to me by my
34 grandma, meaning too much.

35

36 I am currently a senior at Mt.
37 Edgecumbe High School. I came here because since I was
38 a kid I've been reliant on subsistence resources. I
39 caught my first sockeye salmon when I was four and I
40 started processing sockeye when I was six. I would
41 like to take a moment to thank the Board for all of the
42 work you have done. I have always lived a sort of
43 double life between Kenai and Iliamna. My grandparents
44 have always taught me to respect my land and this Board
45 is taking those lessons to a Federal level.

46

47 Qu yana. Chin'an.

48

49 We all appreciate you very much and I

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1 personally am excited to see what this meeting entails
2 and what the future of subsistence holds. I would also
3 like to sympathize with the people who came before me.
4 Iliamna has been losing their sockeye around our lake
5 and I would hate to see our traditions lost because of
6 irresponsible actions taken by us. We've been stewards
7 of this land since time immemorial and it's truly
8 horrible to see our salmon leaving. I would like to
9 ask the Board to help us regain our ways of life.

10

11 Qu yana. Chin'an.

12

13 Thank you so much.

14

15 (Applause)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
18 Thomas. Appreciate that. My first pen pal was from
19 Lake Iliamna. I don't know how that bears weight but,
20 yeah.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: One time I came
25 up here and they sent me a letter. Next we'll call on
26 Jack Carney.

27

28 MR. CARNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
29 member of the Board. My name is Jack -- my name is
30 Jackson Carney and I am a sophomore from Wrangell,
31 Alaska. I am representing myself.

32

33 I'm an outdoorsman and I take advantage
34 of many of Wrangell's hunting, fishing and trapping
35 opportunities, both subsistence and sport. As a matter
36 of fact while we're all here and sharing continued use
37 of these subsistence resources we're missing out on
38 trapping and ice fishing. Whatever the case, today I
39 would like to celebrate Wrangell subsistence salmon
40 fishery. When Wrangell was founded it was
41 strategically located on an island near the delta of
42 the Stikine River. This river was used as a source of
43 trade, transportation and a place to gather food.
44 Although Wrangell has changed over the years, the
45 ability to hunt and fish on the Stikine River has not.
46 Today people can set their own gillnets in the river
47 during the sockeye salmon run. This ability to catch a
48 solid supply of sockeye salmon allows Wrangell-ians to
49 make smoked and canned salmon. Being able to make
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1 smoked salmon allows us to pass down a method of
2 preserving food that has been passed down for many,
3 many years. On top of that, learning how to gillnet is
4 something that can't be done in most places.
5 Gillnetting is really an art that can only be taught
6 through experience. Without the ability to hunt and
7 fish who knows if any of these traditions would be
8 passed down. Passing down the ability to gillnet and
9 make smoked salmon is very important to me and my
10 family for many reasons including family time and
11 passing on knowledge of how to process food. One of my
12 favorite things to do in the summer is process salmon
13 with my family. Last year I got to help teach my
14 little sisters how to filet salmon and it was a lot of
15 work because there's four of them. At first they were
16 kind of reluctant but after an hour or so of basking in
17 the hot sun, telling stories and, of course, processing
18 salmon they were more than happy to help. It truly is
19 a moment in time I hope to never forget. As we move
20 forward I hope that we can continue to ensure that
21 other people can have experiences like this moment. I
22 hope that what we do here today helps to ensure that
23 one day when I have kids I can teach them, and more
24 importantly they can teach each other. I hope that my
25 children and future generations get to experience those
26 same warm story-filled fish processing days.

27
28 I appreciate the Board has done and I
29 am hopeful that they will continue to take care of the
30 Stikine River, it's amazing gillnetting opportunities
31 and the people around it.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 (Applause)

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37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
38 questions for Jack. I think that's the fishery we just
39 put in at the last meeting? The Stikine fishery,
40 didn't it have to go through some International Treaty
41 stuff -- Transboundary -- yeah, that was a cool one, we
42 had to kind of talk to a lot of people about that one
43 -- Scott, was that the one?

44
45 MR. AYERS: (Shakes head negatively)

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47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm off
48 here, sorry guys.

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1 (Laughter)

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3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Wrong river.

4

5 MR. AYERS: Taikuu.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Taikuu, oh,
8 yeah, we reinstated one there so I was just thinking
9 Transboundaries. But definitely what Jack just said
10 is, I think, is a reason why we all sit on this Board,
11 I think he summed up the reason we find passion for
12 this position. That was pretty key there. So if you
13 want to put that into an essay, you know, I can borrow
14 it.

15

16 (Laughter)

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call on
19 Oliver Peterson.

20

21 MR. PETERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
22 members of the Board. My name is Oliver Peterson. I'd
23 like to be here to represent myself, my family and my
24 community in Petersburg. I'm a Senior in Petersburg
25 and I've lived there all my life. I get my name from
26 my great-grandfather Oliver Hofstad, he was one of the
27 founders of Petersburg Fisheries, Incorporated, and a
28 lifelong fisherman. I am currently a seine tender for
29 OBI on the OceanMaid.

30

31 As a youth in Alaska I care deeply
32 about our resources. In Southeast Alaska fishing is a
33 large part of our culture. It is a way of life for
34 everyone, as a source of income and a source of food.
35 I would like to see our resources being conserved as
36 best as they can so that they can be enjoyed for
37 generations beyond mine. I want the people who need
38 subsistence to have as much as they need. The people
39 living in villages and communities without direct
40 access to alternative resources who rely heavily on
41 fish and wildlife to feed their families. Subsistence
42 should be take what you need, not what you want. Other
43 people who rely on these resources and due to the
44 threat of global warming and oil drilling, warming
45 ocean temperatures, we need to do our best to conserve
46 our resources and build them back up. It is a hard
47 thing for one Board to do but Alaska is a big place
48 with many different climates. Policies and ideas that
49 could benefit one area can have the opposite effect in
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1 other areas. It's important to do our best to save our
2 resources now more than ever.

3
4 I also want to bring attention to the
5 importance of the subsistence priority and the problem
6 that undocument -- or unguided lodge fishing poses to
7 Alaska. I recognize this might not be something the
8 Board can act on but I would like to get it out so
9 something can be done to solve this issue. Unguided
10 lodge fishing does not just threaten the fish
11 populations but also people. This last salmon season
12 in Petersburg we had a collision in the Wrangell
13 Narrows where a seiner hit a skiff killing one and
14 injuring another. The boat I work on has also had some
15 close calls with reckless skiff operators running
16 across our bow consistently in both the Narrows and the
17 open water. Because people operating the skiffs don't
18 have guides who know the rules of navigating water,
19 unguided skiffs will routinely run over nets of our
20 commercial fishermen endangering their own lives and
21 causing our commercial fishermen thousands of dollars
22 in repairs. Earlier in 2023 a lodge in Petersburg had
23 55 charges brought against the lodge owner and its son
24 for the undocumented harvest of halibut by their
25 clients. And that is just in Petersburg alone, not
26 accounting for Sitka, Ketchikan, Wrangell, Juneau and
27 other communities that these lodges operate out of. It
28 poses a serious threat to our subsistence halibut, our
29 salmon, our way of life and our people.

30
31 Thank you for your time.

32
33 (Applause)

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Oliver. Any questions for Oliver from the Board.

37
38 (No comments)

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think Oliver
41 brought up a big point there -- I'll go to Alissa here
42 in a second -- about the sport industry in Southeast
43 and I think, you know, if I was to sit on that side I'd
44 have a conversation about the impacts it has on our
45 rural communities socially, right, and I would just say
46 on the record here, every other industry pays a social
47 impact tax, logging, mining, you think of all the
48 extractive resource activities that we have here and I
49 think it would behoove us if we looked at the sport
50

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1 industry to try to pay some social tax to those of us
2 like this young fellow over there who constantly have
3 that interaction because it's a monster out there on
4 the ocean. Being from Hydaburg and living on the
5 Prince of Wales area and watching the expansion of
6 fishing lodges, and it's a big -- it's a big deal, and
7 the competition. Not so much a resource conservation
8 concern but as he stated, after the pandemic Prince of
9 Wales became the go to fishing area for king salmon and
10 coho and in-river fly fishing and we see that influx
11 now and it's becoming on a grand scale. And so -- and
12 I can imagine Petersburg being on an airlines flight
13 path it probably sees the influx of outsiders coming in
14 and so we just got to be mindful and balance the
15 resource out to all users. But, you know, that's
16 something you can bring up with these other boards as
17 well, I think, in how that looks, you know, the
18 unguided ones I could see other problems.

19

20 Thank you.

21

22 Next we have Naomi Jones.

23

24 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry,
27 Alissa. Yeah, sorry.

28

29 MS. ROGERS: No worries, Mr. Chair.
30 Thank you so much for that. And I greatly appreciate
31 you bringing up the idea of running over nets. So on
32 the Yukon and Kuskokwim we have barges that come
33 through, mainly fuel barges or two annual barges that
34 come up on the Kuskokwim and the Yukon River -- I think
35 there's three on the Yukon River, but we have fuel
36 barges and just belonging barges, I guess you could
37 say, Lynden, they run over nets all the time regardless
38 if you're trying to pull your net out or put it
39 wherever, they'll just run over your net and not
40 compensate for it. With Donlin Gold coming in to the
41 Kuskokwim area we're expecting a high influx of barges
42 and they're not going to be compensated for running
43 over nets. And so one of the biggest things that --
44 thanks for the reminder, is that we're going to see a
45 huge decrease in fishermen being able to fish their
46 subsistence needs because our traffic on our river is
47 going to be so large that it's going to conflict with
48 our subsistence hours and so I just want to put that on
49 your radar, that if Donlin Gold goes through, we're
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1 going to lose our subsistence opportunities and they're
2 not going to repay us for running over nets.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 We're going to take a five minute recess and then we'll
8 get back to Naomi when we come back on public
9 testimony. So a five minute recess.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (On record)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. It
16 looks like we're good here. We'll go ahead and get
17 started. We'll resume with the non-agenda testimony
18 this afternoon and we'll go ahead and call on Naomi
19 Jones.

20

21 MS. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. (In
22 Native) My name is Naomi Jones and I am from Tyonek.
23 Subsistence is something I have done since I was born.
24 I was always right there at the fish cutting table and
25 right there helping put the moose in the freezer. No
26 matter what age I was I was right there helping. To me
27 it wasn't just helping my parents, siblings or
28 grandparents, I saw it as a bonding experience. These
29 experiences with my family has taught me a lot and it
30 has taught me respect, patience, importance of family
31 and the love of continuing our traditions and the love
32 of passing it to the younger family members along the
33 way. This is our way of life. It's important for the
34 past generations, the current generation and the next
35 generation. It is important to me to continue to
36 partake in this process and to continue to teach it to
37 my younger cousins. Although I may not have as much
38 experience as my elders or my parents, I will learn
39 through them.

40

41 I learned to know what is going on in
42 our environment. I've noticed in my life a change in
43 our salmon and in our moose. Our king salmon and our
44 silver salmon at home, they are declining. These two
45 species are the main salmon my family harvests. In the
46 past couple years we have subsistence harvested king
47 salmon. I am grateful for being able to do that but I
48 have noticed that they aren't as abundant. I've
49 noticed that they are getting smaller and smaller each
50

0106

1 year which means we need more and more fish to fill our
2 smokehouse. For silvers, we haven't fished for them in
3 years. I don't even remember the last time I put
4 silvers up in our smokehouse. I don't even remember
5 the last time we jarred or kippered them. I don't even
6 remember putting the net out to fish for them.

7

8 I go to school over 640 miles away from
9 home. Having these foods available to me is amazing.
10 It means when I get belek (ph) smoked strips, kippered
11 salmon or even moose jerky I get to share with my
12 roommate and my friends and my teachers. Having these
13 at school means I get to share with people who can't
14 fish for salmon or haven't had traditional foods for a
15 very long time and I get to see how much joy it brings
16 them. I love seeing the way we share our laughter, our
17 stories, our food and just be together when we have
18 these foods right in front of us. Having these foods
19 make me not miss home as much. It makes me remember
20 the laughs we shared, the stories we shared, the
21 lessons we learned and taught and it makes me happy.
22 It makes me realize that I go away from home for most
23 of the year and I'm getting a better education so I
24 could go back home and bring something positive back.
25 I get to go back and show younger generations it's okay
26 to go out for education and that home would always be
27 there for you. That are people will welcome you back
28 home with joy. I want that so we have more of our
29 people taking up important spaces. I want the younger
30 generations to know that we can go out and be amazing
31 people who are making a difference. I want them to
32 know that from what we learned at a young age at the
33 cutting table or in the house cutting moose that it
34 will help us in the future when we're older. That it
35 teaches us lessons that others don't learn for a long
36 time. Just being able to do subsistence is a great
37 lesson and it shows hard work and determination.

38

39 In the past year I've learned a lot.
40 I've really learned, and learned new things. I've
41 learned that friendships in this process are important.
42 I learned that we are connected in one way or another
43 constantly learning for each other and from each other.
44 Learning why they lean one way or another, or even just
45 learning about why they voted for whatever. I notice
46 that communication between everyone brings you closer
47 together. I feel that makes this process is easier to
48 learn is just when you communicate and ask questions.
49 This is the second time I've been here at this meeting
50

0107

1 and my first time going to the Southeast RAC meeting
2 back in October.

3

4

5 I want to thank you all for being a
6 part of this process and for being able to answer our
7 questions. I wanted to thank you because I see how
8 much work and how much you have to do to make sure you
9 do the right thing for the rural communities across the
10 state. Thank you for being the people in this process.
11 Thank you for encouraging us young people to take up
12 spaces, to ask those hard questions, or even just ask
13 any questions at all. Thank you. It is you guys that
14 have made me interested in applying for the youth seat
15 on the Southcentral RAC, which I will be submitting my
16 letter here soon.

16

17

Gunalcheesh. Quyana.

18

19

Thank you.

20

21

(Applause)

22

23

24

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Naomi, what
village did you say you were from again?

25

26

27

MS. JONES: Tyonek. It's 30 minutes
from here.

28

29

30

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
Tyonek, cool. Well, good luck this year.

31

32

MS. LAVINE: She's not done.

33

34

35

36

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, she's not
done -- oh, we just gave her a big clap, sorry. You
still have the floor, Naomi, sorry.

37

38

39

MS. JONES: I was done. I was waiting
to see if anybody had any questions.

40

41

(Laughter)

42

43

44

45

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Many
eyes around here. You were speaking so eloquently they
wanted to hear more, so, yeah, that's it.

46

47

(Laughter)

48

49

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Thank

50

0108

1 you for that, appreciate it and good luck and hopefully
2 Tyonek will start to see that fish and I'm glad you
3 share with your friends. That's what I did in college
4 and I got lifetime friends from a jar of smoked fish.
5 Now he comes up and fishes, brought his family up this
6 summer and we were able to catch enough and share and
7 he brought home to his family so then I get pictures of
8 smoked jarred fish from Montana. So it's really
9 important when we share our culture and resource to
10 those people away from home because it brings home to
11 where you're at and so thank you for that, Naomi.

12

13 MS. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: NoiseCat, Zia,
16 I like that, NoiseCat.

17

18 NOISECAT: Can you hear me now, okay,
19 fantastic. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Board.

20

21 (In Native)

22

23 Good afternoon everyone, my name is Zia
24 NoiseCat. I am a student in Heather Bauscher's class,
25 which I think she forgot to mention also has undergrads
26 now so it's part of UAS, which is fantastic. And I am
27 a policy coordinator at the Sitka Conservation Society.
28 I just recently moved to Sitka about four months ago
29 and it has been such a gift to see how in tune Alaskans
30 are with the sustenance of the land and the different
31 seasons of the different season cycles. Subsistence is
32 the lifeway of almost every Alaskan that I've come in
33 contact with and it is both humbling and wondrous to
34 see how much local knowledge is embedded in the culture
35 of this land. I come from lands very far and very
36 vastly different from Sitka. I'm a proud member of the
37 Canim Lake Band of British Columbia and a descendent of
38 the Ucluelet Nation and I grew up in Santa Fe New
39 Mexico, which is very, very different from Alaska.
40 Subsistence has looked different in each of the regions
41 that I'm from and its worlds apart from the type of
42 subsistence that occurs in Southeast, though I've found
43 that the intention is the same. Subsistence is the way
44 you connect to the land and your community. There is
45 knowledge in knowing the region, accumulating how
46 knowledge on how to read the landscape, how to harvest,
47 how to prepare and sharing the wealth of your hard work
48 with others. These cultural traditions are paramount
49 as they reflect the belonging to place. Subsistence

50

0109

1 ingrains a person in their environment and their
2 community, the very act is an amalgamation of, I think,
3 gratitude, grit, knowledge and reciprocity. Without
4 local foods there are no sustainable communities and I
5 think subsistence is integral to that system.

6

7

8 I thank all the subsistence users in
9 the room, the Board and Council members for working
10 hard to honor subsistence priorities and to ensure that
11 rural Alaskan residents are able to continue their
12 lifeways through subsistence. I look forward to
13 learning more during my time here and I hope to
14 continue to see the honoring of local and traditional
15 knowledge and stewardship.

15

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I'd also like to thank all the
indigenous peoples here in the room who are advocating
for themselves and their community.

(In Native)

Thank you all for your time.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions or comments for her.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Appreciate it. Well traveled.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I was just
commenting up here, she looks a lot like my daughter,
like almost really close. You could see Gloria nodding
her head, that's why I was looking at you, I was like,
oh, she looks really close like my youngest, I was
like, what the heck, when she first walked in.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
Gwendolynn Aaberg.

MS. AABERG: (In Native) Mr. Chairman
and Board. My name is Gwendolynn Aaberg and I come

0110

1 from the Bristol Bay region, from Nondalton, a small
2 village on Sixmile Lake.

3

4 I'm Dena'ina from the Talchena Clan,
5 which is known as the People Made in the Water, the
6 Water Clan. Sorry, this is my first testimony I'm kind
7 of nervous.

8

9 (Pause)

10

11 MS. AABERG: I'm an undergrad at the
12 University of Southeast Sitka pursuing my degree in
13 fisheries. In the (I can't even say that)

14

15 (Laughter)

16

17 MS. BAUSCHER: Take a breath, it's
18 okay.

19

20 (Pause)

21

22 MS. ALBERG: In the early summers I
23 worked as a commercial fisherman on Ekok Beach in the
24 Nushagak District providing for myself and my family
25 financially. Later in the summer I returned to Lake
26 Clark and Sixmile for subsistence fishing and hunting
27 at fish camp to ensure we have enough food to sustain
28 us. Over the years I've come to completely understand
29 that subsistence living is far from more than a way to
30 fill our freezers, it's a cornerstone of our identity,
31 it is who we are as individuals, as families, and as a
32 community. Salmon, in particular, plays a vital role
33 in our way of life. They are not just a food source,
34 they are a symbol of our connection to the land, the
35 seasons and the cycles of nature. Our ancestors relied
36 on these cycles and today we continue to honor them
37 through harvesting practices. These foods carry with
38 them stories, traditions, and wisdoms that bind us to
39 the past, present and future. They're cultural pillars
40 grounding us in who we are.

41

42 Usually regulations are often viewed as
43 limitations but to us they are lifelines, seasonal
44 limits, fishing quotas and wildlife management
45 practices are not only rules but they are essential
46 protections to our way of life. That's why these
47 regulations should always be looked at up to date and
48 changed if they are no longer providing or protecting
49 in a positive way for our subsistence users.

50

0111

1 Overharvesting of environmental damage and erosion of
2 our cultural practices all weigh heavily on my mind. I
3 know that true prosperity comes from ensuring our
4 resources remain healthy and abundant for future
5 generations. For me regulations surrounding
6 subsistence resources are deeply personal to ensure
7 that my family can continue to live in harmony with the
8 land like our ancestors did. These regulations are
9 about preserving, not only our food source but our
10 cultural heritage. The thought of losing access to
11 these resources which have sustained us for generations
12 is a fear I don't take lightly. I worry about the
13 future especially when decisions about the resources we
14 rely on are often made by people who don't rely on the
15 land themselves. I'm glad to see now that there are
16 more tribal Board members than there used to be.

17

18 (In Native) to you guys and I
19 appreciate your dedication.

20

21 (In Native)

22

23 (Applause)

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
26 sharing Gwendolynn and don't feel bad, that looks
27 exactly like my first testimony at a public Board
28 meeting.

29

30 (Laughter)

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Identical.

33

34 (Laughter)

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It almost
37 sounded the same too, so, yeah, you're right on the
38 right path there, you know, you got to express yourself
39 and you talked right through that emotional barrier you
40 had there so good job, you got a strong will there so
41 keep up your lifestyle and representing. Thank you.

42

43 Next, we got Thomas Olson Phillips.

44

45 MR. OLSON PHILLIPS: Thank you. And
46 good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Board.
47 My name is Thomas Olson Phillips and I am from
48 Petersburg, Alaska. I am representing myself.

49

50

0112

1 Personally, I wouldn't consider myself
2 an avid user or an avid subsistence user, however, I
3 would like to change that in the future. Although I
4 don't, I know plenty of Petersburg community members
5 and families use subsistence hunting and gathering and
6 for more than just subsisting. Many families use
7 subsistence hunting and gathering to not only have a
8 great family dinner but also to have that time as a
9 bonding experience. For some it's even a tradition
10 that's passed down through generations and I know this
11 doesn't just happen in my own community. So I wanted
12 to take this time to celebrate what this Board, all of
13 you, have done for many, many Alaskans all over the
14 state and how you all continue to make the future of
15 Alaska something to look forward to.

16

17 Thank you all for your service, whether
18 you're just starting or retiring and thank you for your
19 time.

20

21 (Applause)

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
24 Thomas. Look forward to you hunting and fishing. It's
25 very rewarding. The older you get you got to find
26 stuff to do man. After high school, whew, it's on you.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 Clare Jaeger, you have the floor.

31

32 MS. JAEGER: Mr. Chairman. Federal
33 Subsistence Board. I'm representing Tolsona Community
34 and we have a group of four people and our leader has
35 called in. Is it possible for Matt Warnick to speak?

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'll take
38 testimony online as well, yep. So if you want to open
39 up Matt's line as well, Operator. Thank you.

40

41 MS. JAEGER: Thank you.

42

43 MR. WARNICK: Hi, good afternoon, this
44 is Matt, can you hear me?

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Matt, you
47 have the floor.

48

49 MR. WARNICK: Wonderful, thank you. So

50

0113

1 my name is Matt Warnick, I'm a resident of Tolsona,
2 Alaska. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to
3 speak with you today and specifically what we're here
4 asking for is we're asking the Board to remove the
5 Tolsona agenda items from the consensus agenda and to
6 please allow this a chance to be discussed before you
7 make your decision at this meeting.

8
9 The Tolsona community is extremely
10 interested in protecting our subsistence rights. These
11 proposals are strongly supported by the required
12 evidence and testimonials. Tolsona residents have been
13 using these resources in an ongoing basis for
14 generations since subsistence use began long before
15 statehood and continued up until two years ago when
16 permits were denied and that's when I started this
17 proposal process. I started learning about subsistence
18 law. I've spent hours in the Code of Federal
19 regulations and I have learned just what a difficult
20 journey this can be to get to where we are today.

21
22 Tolsona currently has subsistence
23 salmon rights above the Chitina bridge but this was not
24 our primary historical access area. Due to the high
25 cost of accessing salmon above the bridge requires
26 things like boats and fishwheels and complicated and
27 expensive machinery, Tolsona residents traditionally
28 and historically would much more frequently dipnet
29 below the bridge in Chitina. This is documented in
30 direct testimony and in photographic evidence. This is
31 the closest most efficient most effective and easiest
32 area to get the fish that our community people needed.
33 There should be emails that went out today. One of
34 those is from a person named Sharon McLeod, I'd ask
35 that if you do have that email, take a look at the
36 pictures and the testimony provided there. It's very
37 touching and shows the history of the area. The use of
38 these salmon were not sport or individual activity,
39 this is rural subsistence, residents caught and
40 processed these salmon in groups, the groups are their
41 family and friends within Tolsona and within the larger
42 Copper Basin. We are still tied into the larger Copper
43 Basin area. This, in historic times and today,
44 continues to be extremely important nutritional
45 requirements for people living in this rural area.

46
47 The salmon proposal itself, there are
48 two, the salmon proposal does nothing to change quota
49 limits, increase quota limits, increase who can fish,
50

0114

1 all it does is allow us to access our traditional
2 fishing area.

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Subsistence rural lifestyle is part of our cultural identity as Tolsona residents. It defines us as a local community and it's so strongly ties us into the larger Copper Basin community through friends and family.

Support for these proposals also comes from the most local community level to the most senior level of the Federal government. These include the Tolsona community and this was processed through the Tolsona Community Corporation or Council. We had multiple meetings that the entire community was invited to. We got an amazing turnout of residents. And so many ways just going through this subsistence proposal process has brought our community closer together. It's been exciting to see.

We're also supported by community members in the larger Copper Basin area, this includes specifically people in Glennallen and Kenny Lake. There are emails that should have reached your inboxes from those folks also.

I'm just kind of moving up the list here.

We have support approval from the Copper Basin, Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Board, they approved the salmon proposal and gave their support towards it. And I was so naive when I started this process that I thought that first board that was held by people in the Copper Basin and when they gave their support approval I thought I was done. I was so shocked to learn how much more was to come. We also have support by the National Park Service for the salmon proposal. The National Park Service did a phenomenal amount of research and analysis on these proposals. They have spent many, many months conducting interviews, looking at historical data, analyzing testimony, going back and talking to people again making sure everything was done properly. It's kind of overwhelming to think about how much work they put into analyzing this one proposal and ultimately they came out with a support recommendation for the salmon proposal.

0115

1 And more, in tune with this group, we
2 have a support recommendation from the Office of
3 Subsistence Management on the salmon proposal.

4
5 Finally, we have support from Senator
6 Dan Sullivan. The Senator strongly supports Tolsona's
7 subsistence specifically. And I emailed you a letter
8 that you should have, it speaks to a resident zone
9 proposal that we're doing in parallel to these fish
10 proposals. Staff from the Senator's office has clearly
11 stated that his support for the resident zone also
12 includes his support for Tolsona fisheries subsistence.

13
14 We strongly urge the Board to
15 acknowledge our subsistence rights by ultimately
16 approving the proposal. These rights have existed for
17 generations, they meet the criteria. So what I'm
18 asking for today is please remove the Tolsona agenda
19 items from the consensus agenda and please, please,
20 please allow us a chance to be heard. If we're not
21 heard it's going to be another two year process to try
22 to get to this point again. Please let us take
23 advantage of the time we have with you and let's do it
24 this week.

25
26 Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Matt. And just for a point of clarification, this is a
30 non-agenda item time, you were speaking to the agenda
31 and we will have that opportunity to pull that from the
32 consensus, I believe, tomorrow morning if we get to
33 that and so you will have that opportunity to speak to
34 this when that comes up again.

35
36 MR. WARNICK: Okay, thank you. So do
37 you want any more testimony from Tolsona folks this
38 afternoon or does that have to occur tomorrow morning?

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, it will
41 be when we get to that tomorrow and it is on the
42 agenda.

43
44 MR. WARNICK: Okay, thank you.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, so we
47 would have to have a Board member entertain that and
48 then move forward with that. So we'll look to head the
49 words you said today and then an opportunity tomorrow
50

0116

1 to speak to it again. Do you have any other testimony
2 this evening.

3

4 MR. WARNICK: No, that was the topic of
5 my testimony. We also have Dennis on the line who is
6 going to provide also similar related testimony and
7 Clare who is there in person who is going to provide
8 similar. Please also, if you would, look at the emails
9 that have been sent.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, again, if
14 it's going to be the two proposals on the consensus we
15 would ask that that testimony be provided tomorrow when
16 we get to the consensus agenda. Not to derail or speak
17 to it but it would be adequate to get it on the record
18 then. So if there's non-consensus agenda items that
19 you would like to speak to this is your opportunity.

20

21 MR. WARNICK: Thank you. Nothing else
22 from Tolsona.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
25 calling in, I appreciate it. Yeah, so you do have an
26 opportunity.

27

28 MS. JAEGER: Okay. So I'll give my
29 testimony because I'm a lifelong resident of Tolsona.
30 I was born and raised there in a long cabin and, you
31 know, I lived that life and it's very, like everyone
32 else here has spoke to, it's very critical. Not just
33 for me but the people who continue to live in
34 Glennallen and Tolsona full-time. That, really,
35 Tolsona is part of Glennallen, and Glennallen is all
36 included in this access so -- but I will speak to that
37 tomorrow.

38

39 But I would like to say a few other
40 things. Partly the end of my testimony is about -- a
41 bit about trawlers and part of my testimony is a bit
42 about the Copper River Basin and the Copper River as a
43 massive watershed. And part of my history is I went to
44 college in Alaska, I worked for the Corps of Engineers
45 up here for 42 years building boat harbors and working
46 in Western Alaska and for the past year and a half I
47 worked in Western Alaska doing Merbok recoveries and I
48 firsthand saw what everyone was testifying to here, and
49 it's horrendous, the lack of fish is -- it's just

50

0117

1 really shocking. And my background is environmental
2 engineering and I'm very concerned about what goes on
3 in the Gulf of Alaska and in Prince William Sound and
4 its problems with bycatch and that it could be more
5 tightly managed. And for me, unlike you folks who have
6 been here many times, this is a whole new process for
7 me like it was for Matt. I'm surprised at the
8 complexity and how many layers. But one of the things
9 I want to take away is how do we, as communities, from
10 all the way -- you know, from like Chignik to Valdez,
11 Glennallen, all the way up to the very most north and
12 Tanana, help to get some restrictions on what's going
13 on to these fish that are going out into Prince William
14 Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. So it's the situations
15 with bycatch where, you know, there's been -- we have
16 copies of different enforcements and stuff that have
17 occurred and they're all really sad stories of waste.
18 So there's that part of it. And then there's the
19 hatcheries that have popped up and they're in Prince
20 William Sound and they put out too many smolt, they put
21 out too many, they have a lot of scientific
22 information, their timing, they know to put their
23 product out ahead of the natural fish rotations because
24 that information is known. And other folks in here
25 have talked about it, we notice that our fish are
26 getting smaller. They're kind of like starving. The
27 natural -- the Copper River reds and the kings because
28 there's not enough food for them. So there's too many
29 hatcheries, too many smolt, and not enough food for all
30 of them.

31
32 So I just did want to mention that
33 because it's an overall trend here across impacts on
34 subsistence and Copper River is still pretty safe and
35 pretty healthy but it could take a downturn in a
36 heartbeat if these same mechanisms happened.

37
38 So that's the only other thing I kind
39 of wanted to say today.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you very
42 much for that. Appreciate it. You also have more time
43 every morning you'll have an opportunity to do non-
44 agenda items as well as when the consensus agenda comes
45 up so thank you for your testimony today.

46
47 MS. JAEGER: Okay.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yep, thank you.

50

0118

1 MS. PITKA: Ma'am, I just wanted to
2 clarify that the proposals that you're asking to be
3 removed are FP25-03a and FP25-03b?

4
5 MS. JAEGER: Correct.

6
7 MS. PITKA: Okay.

8
9 MS. JAEGER: Yes, correct.

10
11 MS. PITKA: Okay, thank you.

12
13 MS. JAEGER: And I was going to discuss
14 that today but I'll do it tomorrow.

15
16 MS. PITKA: Thank you so much.

17
18 MS. JAEGER: Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And then we
21 have Kenyatta Bradley from Sitka. He has two here, one
22 of them is an agenda item -- oh, he's one of those
23 guys, sorry, yeah, and the other one is to trawling --
24 you've got the floor.

25
26 MR. BRADLEY: Gunalcheesh, Mr. Chair,
27 for running the meeting and the Board for all of your
28 time and everything. Yeah, I'll just -- the herring
29 one is on the agenda, is that?

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, the
32 closing for the herring one is an agenda item and the
33 other issue you put here is not.

34
35 MR. BRADLEY: Cool. I will speak to
36 the herring one at that time, thank you.

37
38 Yeah, my name is Kenyatta Bradley. My
39 Tlingit name is (In Tlingit), I get my name from
40 Wrangell. My grandpa is from Wrangell. I'm (In
41 Tlingit), my grandma is from Atka. I live in Sitka.
42 My grandma and grandpa met at Mt. Edgumbe High School
43 and I work there, I work with these students. I really
44 enjoy my job and I am going to be trying to teach the
45 students the process just like Heather does. But I am
46 here today to speak about the elephant in the room, I
47 like how you guys made the space right here in the
48 center for the elephant to be right here, we can all
49 look at it and we can all talk about it with everything
50

0119

1 we say.

2

3

4 I say that the trawl fleet is winning.
5 I think McDonalds is winning. I think imitation crab
6 is winning. I think frozen fish sticks in the frozen
7 food aisle are winning. Therefore, the lobbyists and
8 the lawyers are winning. I think the Yukon is losing,
9 the Kuskokwim is losing. The salmon, the halibut, the
10 crab, the whales, the cod, and the interdependent
11 ecosystems of the Pacific and the Bering Sea are
12 losing. And, therefore, our youth are losing. I've
13 always kind of known about this but working at
14 Edgcombe and hearing the stories of them not
15 harvesting fish is probably the saddest story that I've
16 heard.

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I don't believe it's a game but when
you're losing this bad it's time to change the game
plan in my opinion. As a freedom minded libertarian, I
consider myself, I think how can we produce change
outside of this process, not only because this process
is failing in relation to the trawl fleet but because we
need to keep up the pressure outside of these meetings.
My recommendations are to start a strong social media
campaign, even as far as to pay \$300 to a company to
manage your website, or there's a lot of different
companies that do that. I'd give a shout out to Stop
Alaskan Trawl Bycatch on Facebook with 41,000 members,
they've expanded, like doubled their membership in the
last year or so, and I've learned a lot from there and
they post just a lot of information. I know it's just
scrolling Facebook but when you're seeing the
information time after time it sets in and it's easy to
share that way.

Protest. Like a real protest outside
of grocery stores or McDonalds or government offices,
grocery stores that sell fish sticks or imitation crab,
we have one in Sitka. I've talked to a few people
about it and I think we might go for it. Try the
McDonalds here, just tell them to stop serving the fish
fillet sandwich and at least that brings up what is
being sold. That's the product and you can fight it on
the other end. In my opinion.

Speak up, tell everyone. I believe
it's a crime against humanity and we shouldn't be
silent and we shouldn't -- it should keep you awake up
at night because it's a big deal and, you know, when

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1 people are starving, you know, it's a -- write letters
2 to Congress, even McDonalds, your State Legislator, I'd
3 say we have to do all of this before we come against
4 civil unrest. I'm not an advocate but we've heard that
5 riots are the language of the unheard and I don't want
6 it to get that far so.

7

8 Thank you guys so much for taking the
9 break on Thursday, I really respect that. I think that
10 is a strong move and I hope you guys are there and I
11 hope we hear and learn and some good stuff there and
12 maybe something will happen.

13

14 That's everything, thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
17 Kenyatta, any questions for Mr. Bradley.

18

19 Yes, you have the floor.

20

21 MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much for your
22 testimony, I greatly appreciate it. My name is Alissa
23 Nadine Rogers. I am with the YK-Delta RAC. And I
24 thank you for saying that. I do love my french fries.
25 I have to admit I love McDonalds french fries. But
26 when I found out that they were doing the cod, like you
27 were saying, I ended up boycotting them for 10 years
28 and I didn't get my french fries for 10 years. So just
29 had to put that out there.

30

31 MR. BRADLEY: Cool. I highly respect
32 that. You vote with your dollars and that's the best
33 way to vote when there's not an open vote on it and I'd
34 say we could go protest outside of McDonalds and eat
35 some french fries and even a burger and just tell them
36 stop with the fish sandwich, figure something else out.

37

38 I say this because I live in Sitka and
39 I watch the herring and I kind of watched as the market
40 adjusted itself. I spoke at the Board of Fish when the
41 Board of Fish was in Sitka about herring and they only
42 get paid \$150 for a ton of herring now as opposed to
43 they used to get \$600 and even though the ADF&G is
44 upping their herring allocation, they're not catching
45 it because the other side, the market is dead, is
46 dying. And I think that's a strong strategy but the
47 weakness in it is if the market innovates, in my
48 opinion and I have the right to be wrong.

49

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0121

1 Thank you.

2

3

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
4 Appreciate that. That's a whole 'nother way to look at
5 it. So we're going to have start doing, right, like
6 we've heard here today, we're in a boat.

7

8 Operator, is there anybody online who
9 would like to be recognized to testify at this time on
10 non-consensus agenda items, this would be their
11 opportunity.

12

13 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 This is Robbin LaVine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator
15 reminding folks online that if you're interested in
16 providing public testimony to the Board on non-agenda
17 items you can raise your hand by pressing star five and
18 you can mute and unmute yourself by pressing star six.
19 So if you're interesting in providing public testimony
20 press star five to raise your hand.

21

22 Thanks.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We are now on
27 the 2025/2027 Fishery Proposal and Closure Reviews.
28 We'll probably get through one or two of the bullet
29 items here. So at this time we'll go ahead and call up
30 the tribal government to government and ANCSA
31 Corporation consultation summary. Orville Lind.

32

33 MR. LIND: You'all have saved the best
34 for the last.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 MR. LIND: Come on.

39

40 (Laughter)

41

42 MR. LIND: I want to give another shout
43 out to our students here.

44

45 (Applause)

46

47 MR. LIND: We got hope. We gots hope.
48 Okay, yesterday we had a tribal and ANCSA consultation
49 conducted yesterday morning -- yesterday afternoon from
50

1 1 to 4 and I was excited because we had a few folks
2 online and here in the audience and, of course, it's
3 always good to have tribal involved in this process,
4 without them we're nothing.

5
6 Starting off with the Ketchikan Indian
7 Community President, stated that they are not [sic] in
8 support to open up the Unuk River eulachon fishery if
9 Ketchikan is not determined as rural. And very
10 passionately stated that if we take care of this place
11 it will take care of us. This is more than food, it is
12 our culture, our land, and this is where we maintain
13 our relations with our non-human relatives, speaking,
14 of course, of the resources.

15
16 We also had Ahtna InterTribal Resource
17 Commission mention that they had a couple of proposals
18 before the Board in regards to the .804 Nelchina
19 Caribou Herd. In Tolsona there are no real full-time
20 residents there with long-term patterns of use, they
21 are seasonal but they can still fish under State
22 permits without C&T. AITRC also manages wildlife on
23 their lands through the tribal and the conservation
24 district. The Staff includes anthropologists, fish and
25 wildlife biologists, ecologists, geologists and working
26 toward tribal historic preservation officer and
27 regulation specialist. The elders also asked why is
28 there bear baiting permits allowed on Ahtna land.
29 Conducting research to fill in the information gaps for
30 better informed management. They want biodiversity.
31 If we take care of it it will take care of us and we
32 will have balance. Testifying at the Board of Fish is
33 a big responsibility with 9,000 years of ancestry
34 behind them. Traditional knowledge includes ability to
35 adapt to climate change. Also mentioned that the fish
36 swim through RAC jurisdiction, they can't be considered
37 the fish of one region. Any Copper fish harvested at
38 the mouth of the river affects the up stream harvest of
39 the Ahtna. And she also stated she is very passionate
40 about everything regarding tribes and subsistence and
41 their pockets aren't deep enough to have a fight for
42 everything, trying to get as far as they can using as
43 much knowledge as the elders have told her and trying
44 to give back and back up with Western Science. Also
45 said that tribal people really have to translate their
46 culture.

47
48 We had a public member reiterate
49 Ahtna's testimony, rechanging language to communicate
50

0123

1 with agencies and discuss also co-management.

2

3

4 We also had the Vice President of
5 Kawerak stated there is equality in how subsistence
6 management system is run. Subsistence users are
7 bearing the burden of conservation. Caribou, moose,
8 fish declines and still commercial fisheries and
9 sporthunters are allowed to harvest in our area. Also
10 described the decline of salmon in the region, Tier II
11 fishing for salmon, State commercial fisheries,
12 bycatch, climate change is an issue but they can't
13 blame everything on that. You have to control what you
14 can and you have to take responsibility for your own
15 actions.

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We had, again, a Ketchikan Tlingit-Haida Council Ketchikan Indian Community member lead in Food Sovereignty Department, Ketchikan Fish and Game Advisory Committee person say the issue of participating in Board of Fish meeting in Ketchikan and he really does not appreciate the fact that the Board of Fish and Federal Subsistence Board meetings are happening at the same time. Also mentioned that it's a problem that Ketchikan has no representation on the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. They oppose opening of the Unuk River eulachon fishery to non-Federally-qualified subsistence users because the closure is working, we take care of that fishery. Management of fish is management of people.

We had a Seward Penn rep say reviewed history of the salmon management 200 mile limit got foreign boats out of Alaska waters then statehood opened up commercial fishing and now there's bycatch. We keep coming to the table and asking for our fish but we still don't have any. In fact the situation is worse.

We also had another Ketchikan Indian Community resident saying the schedule of this meeting at the same time with so many other meetings, Board of Fish, in Ketchikan is frustrating.

We then had a representative from AITRC and also BBNA request the understanding of new Presidential Administration's Executive Orders for Alaska and funding freeze also. How is this going to affect OSM? How is this going to affect State and Federal fish and wildlife management? How did OSM

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1 respond to the proposed State Legislation to regain
2 management authority on Federal lands and how will it
3 respond to future attempts to do so?

4
5 Curyung Limited has closed its land to
6 its shareholders only. When king salmon harvest is
7 closed on the road system people start to travel to
8 Bristol Bay to harvest the king salmon. There will be
9 funds for RACs to meet -- will there be funds for RACs
10 to meet to address State proposals, to resume fish and
11 wildlife management on Federal public lands and who
12 lobbies for the Federal Subsistence Board.

13
14 OSM Staff responded to answer the
15 questions as best as they can.

16
17 And that concludes the consultation we
18 had yesterday, Chairman, Board members and new Board
19 members.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
22 that Orville. Any questions from the Board for Orville
23 on the consultation report from yesterday.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
28 seeing none, thank you, Orville, for your presentation.
29 Next, we'll call on Scott Ayers to do the announcement
30 of the consensus agenda.

31
32 MR. AYERS: All right, thank you, Mr.
33 Chair. I'm excited that we got here today. I wasn't
34 sure if we were going to get into this this afternoon
35 or not. All right, so my name is Scott Ayers and I am
36 the Fisheries Division Supervisor here at the Office of
37 Subsistence Management and I'm happy to be here with
38 you all today.

39
40 The consensus agenda contains all
41 proposals and closure reviews where there is agreement
42 on Board action among the affected Subsistence Regional
43 Advisory Councils, the Alaska Department of Fish and
44 Game and the InterAgency Staff Committee. The
45 consensus agenda can be found in Volume I of your Board
46 books on Page 3 immediately following the meeting
47 agenda. All analysis for items on the consensus agenda
48 are in meeting book, Volume I, they are also on the OSM
49 website on the upcoming Federal Subsistence Board
50

0125

1 meeting's page. Process-wise, anyone may request that
2 the Board remove a proposal or closure review from the
3 consensus agenda and be considered individually by the
4 Board, however, only a Board member may actually remove
5 a proposal or closure review from the consensus agenda.
6 After the Board acts individually on all of the non-
7 consensus agenda items, the proposals and closure
8 reviews, then the Board will take up the consensus
9 agenda as a whole and vote on it collectively. I'll
10 now read through the list of proposals and closures and
11 the recommended actions on each.

12

13 FCR25-03 is a regular review of a
14 closure of herring to non-Federally-qualified
15 subsistence users in the Federal public eaters of
16 Makhnati Island area of Southeast Alaska. The
17 recommendation is retain status quo.

18

19 FP25-03a is a proposal requesting a
20 customary and traditional use determination of salmon
21 in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Copper River for the
22 community of Tolsona. The recommendation is oppose.

23

24 FP25-03b is a proposal requesting a
25 customary and traditional use determination of
26 freshwater fish in the Chitina Subdistrict of the
27 Copper River for the community of Tolsona. The
28 recommendation is oppose.

29

30 FP25-04 is a proposal to adjust the in-
31 river subsistence salmon harvest limits for the Buskin
32 River on Kodiak Island. The recommendation is to
33 oppose.

34

35 FP25-05 is a proposal to limit gear
36 type for salmon to rod and reel in an area of Afognak
37 Bay near Kodiak that was closed to the subsistence
38 until the past regulatory cycle. The recommendation is
39 to support.

40

41 FP25-06 is a proposal that would
42 rescind the subsistence harvest limits for salmon in
43 the Kodiak Road zone. The recommendation is to oppose.

44

45 FP25-07 is a proposal to adjust the
46 area fishing regulations, including permitting, in the
47 Alaska Peninsula area. The recommendation is to
48 support with the OSM modification to implement current
49 State sportfishing limits and oppose requiring a

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1 Federal permit.

2

3

4 FP25-08 is a proposal to adjust the
5 area fishing regulations, including permitting, in the
6 Aleutian Islands area. The recommendation is to
7 support with the OSM modification not to change harvest
8 limits in the Unalaska and Adak districts and to oppose
9 requiring a Federal permit.

10

11 FP25-09 is a proposal to allow for the
12 use of red buoys with subsistence gear in the Bristol
13 Bay area. The recommendation is to support with the
14 OSM modification to allow red color kegs or buoys in
15 the Bristol Bay area and other areas in alignment with
16 State regulations.

17

18 FP25-10 is a proposal to repeal
19 closures to the use of nets within 300 feet of a stream
20 mouth used by salmon in the Bristol Bay area. The
21 recommendation is to support with the OSM modification
22 to allow harvest in this area for non-salmon fish only.

23

24 FP25-11 is a proposal to allow
25 additional methods and gear types in the Bristol Bay
26 area. The recommendation is to support with the OSM
27 modification to allow the use of dipnets and beach
28 seines for salmon and drift gillnets in the Lake Clark
29 area to align with State regulations.

30

31 FP25-12 is a proposal to repeal the
32 Togiak River subsistence salmon marking requirement.
33 The recommendation is to support.

34

35 FP25-13 is a proposal to rescind the
36 Egegik River subsistence set gillnet length
37 restrictions. The recommendation is to oppose.

38

39 FP25-14 is a proposal to add gear types
40 for the harvest of salmon in the waters of the Togiak
41 National Wildlife Refuge. The recommendation is to
42 support.

43

44 FP25-15 is a proposal to decrease the
45 allowable distance between set gillnets for subsistence
46 in tributaries of the Kuskokwim River. The
47 recommendation is to oppose.

48

49 FP25-16 is a proposal to specify
50 subsistence gear types and Arctic grayling harvest and

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1 possession limits in portions of the Bonanza Creek and
2 Kanuti River drainages. The recommendation is to
3 support.

4
5 FCR23-05 is a deferred review of a
6 closure to subsistence fishing in the Delta River. The
7 recommendation is to take no action based on
8 recommendations provided for FP25-17, which is on the
9 non-consensus agenda and deals with the same fishery.

10
11 FCR25-01 is a standard review of a
12 closure to the harvest of chinook salmon in the
13 Unalakleet River up stream of the mouth of the Chiraski
14 River. The recommendation is to retain the status quo.

15
16 And, lastly, WP25-01, because we had to
17 sneak a wildlife proposal or two in here, is a proposal
18 that requests changes to all Nelchina Caribou Herd
19 hunts in Units 11, 12 Remainder and 13 to may be
20 announced seasons delegating authority to the Federal
21 in-season managers to manage those hunts and conducting
22 in Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act,
23 Section .804 prioritization analysis for the Nelchina
24 Caribou Herd. The recommendation is to support
25 modifications by the Eastern Interior and Southcentral
26 Councils to add Gulkona to Unit 13A, Gulkana to Unit
27 13C, and Mentasta Lake and Chistochina to the Unit 12
28 Remainder.

29
30 Thank you, Mr. Chair. That concludes
31 my announcement of the consensus agenda.

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
34 Scott. Any questions for Scott on the consensus agenda
35 from the Board.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
40 thank you, Scott, for the presentation of the consensus
41 agenda. Pretty close unless you guys want to work for
42 a half hour more. I work on consensus, too, so I'm
43 looking down the Board here.

44
45 (Laughter)

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion to
48 adjourn entertained.

49
50

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1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I mean recess

4 sorry.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Recess. Motion

9 recess.

10

11 MR. BROWER: Move, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie made

14 it, can I get a second. 9 a.m. Motion to adjourn,

15 second.

16

17 MR. WOODS: Second.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Got a second.

20 Motion to adjourn until 9 a.m. We're going to pick up

21 right where we left off, an opportunity to speak on

22 non-agenda items first thing at 9 a.m., so this is a

23 public process and I believe tomorrow 10 p.m., 10 a.m.,

24 time determined for -- I see KIC filling up the house

25 here. So we'll see you guys outside.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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