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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

YUPIIT PICIRYARAIT CULTURAL CENTER
Bethel, Alaska
March 4, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jacqueline Cleveland, Chair
Alissa Nadine Rogers, Acting Chair
Henry Parks
Norma Evan
John Andrew
Walter Morgan
Francis Prince
Phillip Peter
Wassily Alexie
Tiffany Agayar
Frederick Beans

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 3/04/2025)

(On record)

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much, Henry. All right, since we don't have a Chair with us in the room today, I'm going to call this meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Subsistence Advisory Council meeting. My name is Brooke McDavid, and I am the Council coordinator. And to get us started, I'm gonna [sic] do a roll call for us. When I call your name, please say here or present. Henry Parks.

MR. PARKS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: And just a reminder to press the button on your microphone. Norma Evan.

MS. EVAN: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Walter Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm here. I just couldn't find the mute button.

MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Jackie. Francis Prince.

MR. PRINCE: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

MR. PETER: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

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MR. ALEXIE: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Myron Naneng is absent and excused. Member Naneng's wife had an emergency surgery yesterday, so if everyone could keep their family in your thoughts. Thank you. Tiffany Agayar.

MS. AGAYAR: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: And Frederick Beans, are you online?

MR. BEANS: Here. Yes, I'm here.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And we have a quorum this morning. I did want to check in with our current Vice Chair Alissa Nadine Rogers. Alissa, are you okay with me continuing to go through the agenda this morning, or would you like to step in on the phone?

MS. ROGERS: It's up to you, I don't mind. But it's completely up to you if you want to or not, I'm good either way.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, well, we have meeting announcements which will be me. And then if you wanna [sic] do a welcome and ask for introductions after that, we could do that.

MS. ROGERS: Sounds good.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you very much. So again, good morning, everyone. Welcome to our meeting. Thank you all for joining us here in the room and online this morning. So, before we get started with the meeting, I do have a few housekeeping announcements and reminders, if you could -- if you're here in the -- joining us in the room, be sure to sign in to the meeting each day when you come. And we have some green cards on the back table if you're interested in providing a public comment to the Council. You could fill one of those out with your name and information. And please write on there if your comment is for an agenda item or if it's for a non-agenda item. And the Council will take comments each day of the meeting on non-agenda items. And that's -- this morning, that'll be after the Council members give their reports. But tomorrow it'll be first thing in the morning, and you can comment on anything to the Council as long as it's related to subsistence. And if you're

1 joining us online the same comment opportunity applies.
2 If you are on Microsoft Teams, you can use the raise
3 hand feature to put you in line to comment. And if you're
4 on the phone, you can press star five, and that'll show
5 up on our end and we'll call on you when the time is
6 correct. You can also submit written comments if you
7 prefer. You can hand those in to me throughout the
8 meeting, or you can email those to
9 subsistence@ios.doi.gov.

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We do have copies of the agenda on --
in pink on the back table. And for those joining us
online or via teleconference, you can find the agenda
and meeting materials on the Federal Subsistence
Management Program website. And that address is
doi.gov/subsistence. And then under the regions tab
you'll choose Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and then meeting
materials. For folks online if you could remember to
please try to keep your phone muted, that'll help
minimize feedback in the room. And you can press star
six or use the mute button on your phone. We do have our
interpreter with us today, Mr. Patrick Sampson. He'll
be providing Yup'ik to English and English to Yup'ik
translation throughout the meeting. There are headsets
on the back table in the corner for folks in the room.
Those should be turned to channel one and then turned
on, and you'll be able to hear the translation.

I did want to let everyone know that
this evening we'll be having a special evening session.
We'll break at five o'clock and go to -- for dinner, and
then we'll come back at 6:30 p.m. because some folks
from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council are
flying in and going to join us tonight. It's an
opportunity for the Council members and the public to
learn more about the chum salmon bycatch alternatives
that are being considered by the North Pacific Fishery
Management Council. And that's for the fisheries out in
the Bering Sea. So, it'll be a chance to ask questions
and get to know them; some of those Council members a
little bit more. So, we hope that everyone will be able
to join us for that evening session, and it will be --
the audio will be available online as well, as their
presentation this evening. Lastly, I did want to welcome
our new Council members today. We have three new Council
members. We have Francis from Kotlik, we have Mr.
Frederick Beans, who's online and hopefully will be able
to catch a flight this evening from Mountain Village to
join us, and then we have Tiffany from Alakanuk.

1 So, welcome to our new Council members
2 and congratulations to Mr. Naneng for being reappointed,
3 even though he's not here. And also, a big
4 congratulations to our previous Chair, Mr. Raymond Oney,
5 for being appointed to the Federal Subsistence Board.
6 So, we do have one vacant seat on the Council currently
7 because of Mr. Oney's appointment to the Federal
8 Subsistence Board, but we hope that will be filled for
9 next year cause [sic] we did get some applicants. Just
10 a reminder about conduct and ethics during the meeting.
11 If you feel you have any conflicts of interest on
12 anything, you can excuse yourself from a vote or
13 discussion and we just ask that everyone remain
14 respectful throughout the meeting in the words you use,
15 and we will have a great meeting. Thank you. And Alissa,
16 I'll turn it to you for welcome and introductions.

17
18 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Brooke. I wanted
19 to welcome you all to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
20 Subsistence Regional Advisor Council meeting being held
21 at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center here in
22 Bethel, Alaska. I do want to apologize that I'm unable
23 to attend in person; I did get approved. And then I
24 heard that we weren't going to have a meeting. So, I
25 told my supervisor I'm not able to go (distortion I
26 didn't need my days off and then last minute I heard we
27 were having another meeting (indiscernible) going on.
28 So, I did want to apologize that I'm not able to be
29 there. I wanted to welcome you all and acknowledge the
30 Yupiit land that we're on and quyana to (In Native) for
31 allowing us to have our meeting here. And with that, I
32 wanted to give a thanks to everyone that made this
33 meeting possible. I know you would be having to jump
34 over hurdles and go through hoops with this new
35 administration, and I'm so happy to have everyone here
36 and present and thank you all for being here to make
37 quorum. It's really great to have everyone here. And
38 welcome to our new members. I'm very excited to have you
39 aboard. I really wish I could meet you in person and
40 shake your hand and congratulations to you. And
41 congratulations to our Chair Ray Oney for being
42 appointed to the Federal Subsistence Board. It's been a
43 long time coming. All right. Let's go ahead and get
44 introductions. Let's go around the room. Let's start
45 with the folks in the room. Brooke, I can't see the
46 room, if you don't mind.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: No worries, Alissa. I can
49 help out from here. Let's start by going around the
50 table. You can just say your name and where you're from,

1 and you can give a -- you'll give your report later. So,
2 just introductions for now. We'll start with Francis.
3 Thanks.

4

5 MR. PRINCE: Hello, my name is Francis
6 Prince Jr. I'm from Kotlik, and this is my first time
7 running for Subsistence Council member.

8

9 MR. ALEXIE: Good morning, everybody. My
10 name is (indiscernible), I'm from Russian Mission. I've
11 been with the Council for a couple of years, and I'd
12 like to congratulate our new Board members. Thank you.

13

14 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. My name is John
15 (indiscernible) Andrew from Kwethluk. I've been a
16 Council member for (indiscernible) better than 15 years
17 over here. Thank you.

18

19 MS. AGAYAR: Good morning. My name is
20 Tiffany Agayar. I'm from Alakanuk. I'm usually sitting
21 in the public member seats. Thank you.

22

23 MR. PARKS: Good morning, Council members
24 and all the people here who are present. My name is
25 Henry Parks. I'm from the native village of Nunapitchuk
26 and I've been in the Board for maybe five years now.
27 Thank you.

28

29 MR. PETER: Good morning. My name is
30 Phillip K. Peter. (In Native), name after my
31 grandfather. (In Native) quyana. I've been in the
32 Council for five years. Quyana.

33

34 MR. MORGAN: Good morning. My name is
35 Walter Morgan. I'm from Lower Kalskag. I've been in the
36 Council for two years and still learning. So, there's a
37 lot of good people here, though, so. Especially Phillip
38 Peter, my real good friend. Pleasure meeting the new
39 Council members, too. Thank you.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And we'll go to
42 the audience now. If folks could line up to maybe
43 expedite-- we'll ask you to come up to the mic and
44 introduce yourselves. Thank you.

45

46 MS. KENNER: Hello. I'm Pippa Kenner and
47 I'm with the Office of Subsistence Management and
48 Anchorage, and I'm an anthropologist. Thank you. Great
49 being here.

50

1 MR. VICKERS: Good morning. This is Brent
2 Vickers; I'm also with the Office of Subsistence
3 Management. I'll be representing the leadership team
4 today, so let me know if you guys have questions
5 concerning OSM. Thank you.

6
7 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning. (In Native)
8 Bethel, (In Native).

9
10 MS. LAPP: Good morning. I'm Krystal Lapp
11 with Tanana Chiefs Conference, natural resource policy
12 analyst. Congratulations to the new members.

13
14 MR. HOFFMAN: Good morning. My name is
15 Greg Hoffman, I'm with ONC.

16
17 MR. HOFFMAN: Good morning, folks. My
18 name is Robert Hoffman. ONC Subsistence Board member.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. JIM: Good morning. My name is Walter
21 Jim. I'm the ONC Tribal Council president. Thank you for
22 being here.

23
24 MS. MASTERMAN: Good morning. My name is
25 Robin Masterman. (In Native) I just started recently
26 working for YKHC and shortly I'll be joined by Michelle
27 DeWitt of BCSF, quyana.

28
29 MS. HERRERA-MATTHIAS: Good morning. My
30 name is Mary Herrera-Matthias. I'm the Natural Resources
31 Director for Orutsararmiut Native Council.

32
33 MS. HOFFMAN: Good morning. I'm Beverly
34 Hoffman, and I need to make it clear I represent Mother
35 Kuskokwim Tribal Coalition and not any Board I sit on.
36 Just that, and quyana for being here, all of you.

37
38 MR. WADE: My name is Jacob Wade. I am
39 the ONC's fisheries biologist.

40
41 MS. VICENTE: Good morning, everybody.
42 I'm Terese Vicente, Policy Programs Director with
43 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, quyana.

44
45 MS. FITZGERALD: Hello, everyone. My name
46 is Kate Fitzgerald, and I'm a graduate researcher from
47 Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego. I'm
48 doing a project on chum salmon bycatch.

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1 MR. O'CONNOR: Good morning. I'm Daniel
2 O'Connor with the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
3 as a fisheries technician.

4
5 MR. FITZGERALD: I'm Nick Fitzgerald. I'm
6 Kate's dad, and I'm visiting you here. Thank you for
7 having me.

8
9 MS. BOECK: Good morning. I'm Laurie
10 Boeck. I'm with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
11 deputy refuge manager here in Bethel.

12
13 MR. MOSES: Hello. Aaron Moses. I'm the
14 subsistence coordinator for Yukon Delta.

15
16 MR. NICORI: Hi, good afternoon. My name
17 is Emmitt Nicori. I'm a refuge information technician
18 with the Yukon Delta. It's morning.

19
20 MR. TULIK: Good morning. Christopher
21 Tulik with Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

22
23 MR. SAMPSON: Good morning. Patrick
24 Sampson. I've been a translator for the Subsistence
25 Council for a number of years now. Thank you.

26
27 MR. PLANK: Good morning. Tom Plank,
28 wildlife biologist, Office of Subsistence Management.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And we did hear
31 we have three Council member or four Council members
32 online this morning. Alissa, Jackie, Norma and Fred. And
33 now we'll go to any members of the public that are
34 joining us online or any tribal representatives.

35
36 MR. NICK: Good morning, my name is Alex
37 Nick. I'm from Bethel, Alaska, originally from Russian
38 Mission. I'm participating and I would like to provide
39 comment later on in the meeting. Good morning. It looks
40 like I know just about half of the Council members.
41 Congratulations to Raymond Oney for being appointed to
42 subsistence Board. Good morning.

43
44 MR. CHEN: Good morning, my name is Glenn
45 Chen. I'm the Subsistence Branch Chief for the Bureau
46 of Indian Affairs.

47
48 MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Good morning. Curtis
49 Chamberlain, Deputy General Counsel from Calista
50 Corporation, also from Aniak.

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2 MS. EVAN: Good morning. Norma Evan,
3 Marshall. I'm on this chair -- it's my fifth year. Good
4 morning, all.

5

6

(Pause)

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Any other members of the
9 public?

10

11

MR. BEANS: Good morning.

12

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(Pause)

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MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead.

16

17

18 MR. BEANS: Good morning. Frederick
19 Beans, Mountain Village on Yukon, and this is my first
20 time being on Board.

21

22

23 MS. HOOPER: Hi, good morning. This is
24 Jennifer Hooper with AVCP's Natural Resources
25 Department. I will see you all there in person this
26 afternoon. Thanks.

27

28

29 MS. HERZNER: Hi, my name is Katie
30 Herzner. I'm a tribally enrolled member of the Nome
31 Eskimo Community, but I work for the Intertribal
32 Agriculture Council, and I'm based out of Fairbanks.

33

34

35 MS. JOHNSON: Good morning. Ashley
36 Johnson.

37

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MR. SHEPPARD: Good morning.

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43 MS. JOHNSON: Also AVCP Natural
44 Resources. Thank you.

45

46

47 MR. SHEPPARD: Good morning, this is
48 Stanislaus Sheppard. (Distortion).

49

50

(Pause)

51

52

53 MR. KELLY: Hello, good morning. This is
54 Martin Kelly, calling in from Pilot Station Traditional
55 Village. Good morning.

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MR. SHEPPARD: Brooke, can you hear me?

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MS. MCDAVID: Yes. I can hear you, yeah.

MR. SHEPPARD: Yes. This is Stanislaus Sheppard with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife as Refuge Information Technician, Lower Yukon, Mountain Village.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Stan. We'll go ahead and move on to agency folks. Any other people joining us online from Fish and Wildlife?

UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.....

MR. ALEXIE: Good morning, this is Christian Alexie Jr., Refuge Information Technician with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

MS. KLEIN: This is Jill Klein, the regional subsistence coordinator for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm based in Anchorage, and I'll be listening in today and tomorrow. Good morning, everyone.

MR. ADERMAN: Andy Anderman.

(Simultaneous speech)

UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.

MR. ADERMAN: Oh, go ahead.

UNIDENTIFIED: No.

MR. ADERMAN: Good morning.

UNIDENTIFIED: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. ADERMAN: Okay. Yeah, Andy Aderman, wildlife biologist with the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge based out of Dillingham. Good morning.

MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Madam Chair Brooke and Council. This is Greg Risdahl. I'm the Subsistence Program, lead for the USDA Forest Service and Interagency Staff Committee member. I'm glad to be back with you today here out of Anchorage. Thank you.

MR. HARRIS: Good morning. Frank Harris, fish biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field office located in Soldotna.

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(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you. We'll move on to.....

MS. CLEVELAND: Hey, Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID:OSM staff.

MS. CLEVELAND: Oh, sorry.

MS. MCDAVID: Oh, go ahead. Go ahead.

MS. CLEVELAND: Oh, this is Jacqueline Cleveland. I'm calling in as a RAC member. I think it's my fourth year. I'm from Quinhagak and I'm currently trying to find a flight there. So hopefully, see you all soon.

MS. LEONETTI: Good morning. (In Native) My Yup'ik name is Ciisquq. I also go by Crystal Leonetti. I'm the director for Office of Subsistence Management based out of Anchorage and happy to be hearing lots of old friends' voices there today. And I'll be joining this morning listening in. Thank you, Brooke.

MR. ORVILLE: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, Brooke. This is Orville Lind, native liaison for the Office of Subsistence Management. So, I can't be with you guys this morning. I will miss you, but I'm online, quyana. Thank you. Bye-bye.

UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. WESSELS: Good morning, Madam Chair.....

UNIDENTIFIED:everyone.

MS. WESSELS:and Council members. This is Katya Wessels, Council Coordination Division supervisor with OSM. I wish I could be there with you in person, but I'm glad to be here online. And welcome to the new Council members and welcome to the old Council members. I hope you have a productive meeting today. Thank you.

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1 MS. LA VINE: Good morning, everyone.
2 This is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator
3 for OSM and it's good to be listening online and-- not
4 half as wonderful as when we're all in person. But I
5 hope you have a productive meeting too, thanks.

6
7 MR. ROBERTS: Good morning, everyone.
8 This is Jason Roberts, anthropologist at OSM. I'm happy
9 to be listening in.

10
11 (Pause)

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: All right, thank you. Do
14 we have anyone from National Park Service joining us?

15
16 (No response)

17
18 What about anyone else from BIA or BLM?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Do we have anyone online from Alaska
23 Department of Fish and Game?

24
25 MS. JALLEN: Hi, Brooke. Yeah, thanks.
26 This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish
27 and Game, the Yukon River summer season manager. I'm
28 here in the Fairbanks office. Also with Dave Runfola,
29 the summer season assistant manager and Matt Olson, the
30 acting fall season manager.

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all for joining
33 us. Any other agency folks or members of the public or
34 tribal representatives that haven't been able to
35 introduce themselves yet, please do so now.

36
37 MS. HOLMAN: Good morning, this is Amy
38 Holman with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
39 Administration listening in today. Thank you for the
40 opportunity.

41
42 MR. NANOK: Gabriel Nanok, Chevak second
43 chief. Listen in and relay, good morning.

44
45 MS. BENNETT: Rose Bennett with Calista
46 Corporation here in Anchorage, listening in. Thank you.

47
48 (Pause)

49
50 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all for
introducing yourselves, we'll do one last call. Anyone

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1 else online that hasn't introduced themselves?

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3 MR. SIMON: Hi, good morning. This is
4 Andre Simon with Native Village of Paimiut, based in
5 Hooper Bay.

6

(Pause)

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much. Okay,
9 I believe that concludes our introductions this morning.
10 The next item on the agenda is the election of officers.
11 Typically, we do election of officers by a ballot for
12 folks that are here in the room. I did want to check
13 with our Council members who are online, if you are able
14 to perhaps text me your votes. Would that work, Alissa
15 and Jackie?

16

17 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Brooke. I believe
18 that would work great. What does the Councils on the
19 telephone say?

20

21 MS. CLEVELAND: I also don't mind texting
22 my vote. This is Jackie.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Okay.

25

26 MR. BEANS: I too. This is Frederick
27 Peter Beans. I will text my vote.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you, Fred. And
30 Norma, is that something you'd be able to do as well?

31

32 (No response)

33

34 Norma, are you still with us?

35

36 (No response)

37

38 Okay, we might've lost Norma
39 temporarily. But I'll move ahead and give a little more
40 information about the elections, especially for our new
41 Council members. Every winter meeting, it's our first
42 meeting of the year, we do an election for our officers.
43 So we do for Chair, Vice Chair and secretary. And the
44 officers serve for a one-year term, and then we do
45 elections again the following winter. The Chair works
46 really closely with the coordinator during the meeting
47 and after the meeting, planning for the meeting,
48 reviewing drafts of Council reports and correspondence.
49 The Chair attends the Federal Subsistence Board meeting
50 and presents the recommendations of the Council to the

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1 Board and the Vice Chair is responsible for doing that
2 when the Chair is unavailable. So, they need to be
3 prepared to stand in for the Chair if the Chair is
4 absent. And then the secretary is responsible for doing
5 the roll call at the beginning of the meeting. And then
6 any time we do like a roll call vote on proposals you
7 would call on people as the secretary to record their
8 vote.

9
10 So, to nominate someone, anyone can
11 nominate anyone else for any of the elections officer
12 positions, and we'll go through them one by one, starting
13 with the Chair. And you do not need to make a motion to
14 -- you can just -- when I open the floor for nominations,
15 you can just say that -- who you'd like to nominate and
16 then if you're nominated and it's something that you
17 don't want to do, you can turn down the nomination. And
18 so, we'll start by opening the floor for nominations for
19 Council Chair.

20
21 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, I nominate
22 Jackie Cleveland.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Henry. We have
25 one nomination for member Cleveland for Chair. Any other
26 nominations for Chair?

27
28 MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily. I nominate
29 Alissa.

30
31 MS. EVAN: Madam Chair. Norma Evan. I
32 nominate Alissa Nadine Rogers.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Norma.

35
36 MS. EVAN: Thank you, Brooke.

37
38 UNIDENTIFIED: Madam Chair, I make a
39 motion to close the nominations.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Do we have a second?

42
43 UNIDENTIFIED: I'll second that.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. All right; we'll
46 close the nominations for Chair. So, Council members who
47 are in the room, please take out your Post-it sticky
48 pad, and you can write the name for Chair that's gonna
49 to be Alissa or Jacqueline. And if folks joining online
50 could text me the name of the person that you would like

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1 to vote for.

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(Pause)

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MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair.

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MS. MCDAVID: Yes, could you please identify yourself?

9

10

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MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, this is Alexie. I just wanted to know -- I know it's to -- rather I know we can unmute, rather mute our phone by pressing star six, do we unmute it the same way.

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MS. MCDAVID: Yes, sir, that's correct. Star six will mute you.

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MR. ALEXIE: Okay.

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MS. MCDAVID: And it will also unmute you.

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MR. ALEXIE: Okay, thank you.

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(Pause)

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MS. MCDAVID: Okay. I'm still waiting for a text from Jacqueline and from Alissa, for who you vote for.

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MS. ROGERS: Mine should have gone through, Ms. Brooke. I texted it earlier. Let me know if you don't get it yet.

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MS. EVAN: Hi, Brooke. This is Norma Evan, Marshall. Hi, Brooke. This is Norma Evan, Marshall. I just sent in my text vote for you, or to you, sorry, for Alissa Nadine Rogers. Also, speaks for our region, like our whole Kusko Y-K Delta. And I know my five years with the Council Jacqueline only speaks about the region but also speaks about the whole region. Yukon. I know she's from Kuskokwim, but I really appreciate that. But I vote for Alissa Nadine Rogers. Norma Evan, Marshall.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Norma. I've recorded your vote.

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UNIDENTIFIED: Hi Brooke, I also texted you earlier.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, guys. For some reason I'm not getting -- okay, there they go. All right. One moment while I tabulate the votes.

(Pause)

Okay, Council. The count is, two, three, four, five, six. We have six votes for Jacqueline Cleveland and five votes for member Rogers. It was very close. Congratulations to member Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Quyana, everyone.

MS. MCDAVID: And now we'll open the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

MS. EVAN: Norma Evan. I nominate Jacqueline or Alissa Nadine Rogers for Vice Chair.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Norma. We have one nomination for Alissa. Any other nominations?

UNIDENTIFIED: I nominate Mary, Mary. This lady right there.

MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany.

UNIDENTIFIED: Tiffany, oh. Turn your.....

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. We have another nomination for Tiffany, not Mary.

UNIDENTIFIED: Madam Chair.

(Simultaneous speech)

UNIDENTIFIED: I move to close.

MS. MCDAVID: I'm sorry, we have one more nomination coming in, and then we have.....

UNIDENTIFIED: I just -- I -- Madam Chair, I just want to move to close the nominations.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And was that Fred online, were you moving to close as well?

MR. BEANS: Yes, yes. This is Fred.

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MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you. All right; the nominations are now closed. If Council members could please record your vote for Vice Chair. The choices are Alissa and Tiffany.

(Pause)

All right. One moment while I tabulate the ballots.

(Pause)

And Norma, I didn't get a text from you, but since you nominated Alissa, is that your vote?

MS. EVAN: Yes, ma'am.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Okay.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. EVAN: I nominated Alissa.

MS. MCDAVID: Yep. I got your vote, Norma, thank you. All right. After counting the ballots and the messages we have Tiffany with seven votes and Alissa with four votes. Congratulations, Tiffany, for Vice Chair. I will now open the floor for nominations for Secretary.

(Pause)

MS. EVAN: Norma Evan. Can I nominate Alissa Nadine Rogers?

MS. MCDAVID: Yes, you may. I have your nomination. Thank you, Norma.

MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily. I nominate Alissa.

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Do we have any other nominations for Secretary?

MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here. I move to close the nominations.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Is everyone okay with that?

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3 MR. PARKS: I second, Madam Chair. Henry.

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Henry seconds.
6 Okay, we have one nomination for secretary member
7 Rogers. I'll ask for unanimous consent. If anyone is
8 opposed, please state so. Hearing none. Congratulations,
9 member Rogers for Secretary.

10

11 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Chair Cleveland, I
14 know you're online right now. We just finished the
15 election of officers, which was number six on the agenda,
16 and the next item is to review and adopt the agenda.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh yeah, no,
19 Brooke. I was going to ask if you can lead the agenda
20 as I'm getting information about my trip, but I'll still
21 stay on.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Sure, no problem. I'm happy
24 to help. So, I will ask Council members to review the
25 agenda and if you have any changes you would like to see
26 you could let us know. I would point out that we did
27 have one presentation that had to cancel due to some
28 field work conflicts and other meetings, and that was
29 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence
30 Division project updates. We will try to reschedule
31 their update for the fall. And we do have one more time
32 certain item to add, the AVCP Natural Resources update.
33 If we don't get to them this afternoon, then they need
34 to go first thing tomorrow morning because they'll be
35 traveling to Anchorage and won't be available for the
36 rest of the meeting. So, if there's no changes, I will
37 open the floor for a motion to adopt the agenda.

38

39 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

40

41 MS. ROGERS: Motion on the floor by
42 Rogers. Oh, go ahead.

43

44 MR. PARKS: Sorry. I'm sorry. Madam
45 Chair. Anyways, I have a question. What if we wanted to
46 add an item on our agenda? Do we -- can we do that? Is
47 it (indiscernible)?

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49 MS. MCDAVID: What is the item you're
50 interested in adding?

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MR. PARKS: I would like to add subsistence forecast for 2025, this coming summer.

MS. MCDAVID: For salmon?

MR. PARKS: Yeah, for salmon.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, on the Yukon and the Kuskokwim?

MR. PARKS: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I believe that Fish and Wildlife Service will be -- for -- the refuge will be giving an update. Is that correct, Christopher Tulik? Later will they be speaking to the fisheries forecast?

MR. TULIK: I believe -- I know Aaron and I will be bringing -- giving updates, and I'm not sure what Aaron has in mind, but he stepped out. He'll -- we'll find out. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. I think, Henry, we could put in that request to get those updates. And if they're able to do it, we.....

MR. PARKS: Okay.

MS. MCDAVID:.....could make a motion to adopt the agenda with the amendment to add the fisheries forecasts. But I can't make that motion. We'll need someone else to make the motion.

UNIDENTIFIED: (In Native).

(Pause)

MS. MCDAVID: Do I hear a motion?

MR. ALEXIE: This is Wassily, I'll make a motion.

MS. ROGERS: Second.

MS. MCDAVID: And is your motion [sic] include Mr. Park's recommendation?

MR. ALEXIE: Yes.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And I heard a second
2 from Alissa online. Any discussion -- other discussion
3 about the agenda?

4
5 UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, question's [sic] been
8 called. I'll ask for unanimous consent to approve the
9 agenda. Anyone in opposition? Hearing none, the agenda
10 is adopted.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Our next item on the
13 agenda is to review and approve the previous meeting
14 minutes. So, you can find those in your small meeting
15 book starting on page number seven. So, these are the
16 minutes from our fall meeting that was here in Bethel.
17 And at that meeting you voted on -- you made
18 recommendations on the Federal fisheries proposals. So,
19 I'll give you a few moments to look over those minutes.

20
21 (Pause)

22
23 MS. EVAN: Good morning, Brooke. This is
24 Norma to take time off this morning for travel. Our
25 tribal administrator quit so, the standard administrator
26 for the Native Village of Marshall (indiscernible) from
27 work. I have some things that need to be addressed.
28 Thank you, and good morning.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Norma. We
31 understand and you'll be excused for the time being. If
32 you could just let me know when you're able to rejoin
33 us. We will be doing our Council member reports later
34 and we'd love to hear from you.

35
36 MS. EVAN: All right. Thank you, Brooke
37 I have a really good report and good morning everyone.
38 Qu yana (In Native).

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Right, if everyone's had a
41 chance to start -- to look over the minutes the floor
42 would be open for a motion to approve the minutes from
43 the fall meeting.

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45 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

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47 UNIDENTIFIED: Madam Chair, I'd like to
48 move to accept the minutes.

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50 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

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MS. MCDAVID: Alissa.....

MS. ROGERS: Hello?

MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead.

MS. ROGERS: Hi, thank you. Madam Chair, through the Chair. On page 13 of your book, I would like to add an insert under FP25-17, under the Delta River in rod real limits matching states, maybe an asterisk notifying that our Council met before Eastern Interior and did not have as much information in regards [sic] to the way we voted. So that it can be noted that -- just be reflective that we didn't have that information, cause it did come up at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting, and I wanted it to be put in underneath FP25-17 and also under FPR25-02. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Alissa. I've made those notes. Those are good points and I will be sure to update those. Any other changes that Council members would like to see?

MR. BEANS: Brooke, this is Frederick. Frederick.

MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead, Fred.

MR. BEANS: Just a question, were these corrections on the meeting, in the minutes, you know what they -- the lady just said.

MS. MCDAVID: There are no -- those are corrections or additions that she would like to see added. Just a note about how the Council voted in the fall. The Council had some -- what we call crossover proposals. So, this Council, has this region has customary and traditional use determination for the entire Yukon Drainage. But these two proposals were particular to tributaries that are in the Upper Yukon Drainage only in the Eastern Interior region. So, this Council gets to weigh in on those, but the Y-K Delta Council met before the Eastern Interior Council in the fall. And so, they voted on these proposals without yet hearing how the home region was in support or not of those proposals. And so, member Rogers just wanted to make a little note with an asterisk in the meeting minutes as an addition to note that. And so, at this meeting, what we do is we look over the draft minutes

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1 from the fall, and then you all can suggest edits or
2 additions such as the one just provided by member Rogers,
3 and then you vote to approve the final minutes with any
4 amendments. Is that.....

5
6 MR. BEANS: Oh, okay. Alright, thank you.
7 Yes, thank you.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: You're welcome, thanks.
10 Okay, if there's no other amendments or additions, does
11 someone wanna call question?

12
13 MS. ROGERS: Question.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Question's been
16 called online. So, does -- I'll ask for unanimous consent
17 for the Council to approve the minutes from the fall
18 meeting with the amendment added by member Rogers.
19 Anyone in opposition? Hearing none, motion passes.
20 Minutes are approved.

21
22 (Pause)

23
24 All right, thank you all. So, now we'll
25 move on to our Council member reports. And I think we'll
26 start over with some of our seasoned members so the new
27 folks can hear a little bit about how those go. But this
28 is just an opportunity for our Council members to -- if
29 they're new, tell us a little bit about who they are and
30 where they come from. It's a chance to talk about what
31 sorts of subsistence activities have been going on in
32 your community this past season. Any observations you've
33 made about anything you've noticed related to the
34 environment or our resources. It's a chance to share any
35 concerns that you might be hearing that are coming up
36 in your area; it's a chance to share anything else that
37 you might like to share with your other Council members.
38 So, I'll turn it over to Mr. Walter Morgan to get us
39 started. Thank you.

40
41 MR. MORGAN: Hi, my name is Walter
42 Morgan. I'm from Lower Kalskag. The summer was pretty
43 good. We didn't get a lot of fish, but we got enough.
44 You know, the closures seem to be working with our Inter-
45 Tribal Fish Commission so, the front-end closures. But
46 the run was good, the fish were good shape, the whitefish
47 also were really plentiful. And I noticed the berries
48 were really good this year. We had really good picking
49 all summer. But one thing I was kinda [sic] concerned
50 about is all this erosion, I noticed -- I was do -- I

1 do a lot of traveling on the river, and I mark the trails
2 from Kalskag down to Tuluksak and up to Aniak. Anyway,
3 there's -- I noticed there's a lot of erosion now. I
4 mean, that's just totally taken off the banks, and
5 there's nowhere for the sand to go; it's shallow all the
6 way across above Tuluksak. It's like three feet of water.
7 Never see that all my life so, you know, all the times
8 that we did trail marking. It was kind of funny, we were
9 walking on sandbars. And I was just wondering, you know,
10 would it affect our salmon, too? I mean, you know,
11 there's so much erosion, it is crazy. It's all the way
12 across the river, about four places we run into that.
13 And even when we cut down the ice with our chainsaws,
14 we'd hit sand. So, that's a concern for me. I -- you
15 know, I noticed that river's changing. So, then the
16 storms are really strong.

17
18 I mean, it flipped my cabin over in
19 Whitefish Lake. So, like, we tied it down now, and I
20 noticed the wind's coming up really hard. I mean, it
21 just totally take all the water and bring it on one side
22 on the lake. Never see that all my life, you know, it
23 is stronger storms. And I noticed when I go out hunting,
24 we go out just north of Kalskag and also Whitefish Lake.
25 All the creeks are open. Never used to be like that,
26 it's changing. You know it's not -- I see a lot of big
27 changes, you know, in the last 20 years. But that's my
28 report. Thank you.

29
30 MR. PETER: Good morning, my name is
31 Phillip K. Peter, (In Native). What Walter said that --
32 about fishing in the Kuskokwim. I remember my uncle
33 (indiscernible) tell me long time ago when the chumps are
34 crashing and also, the kings were low. And the prediction
35 I heard from my uncle. We had a record-breaking chum
36 salmon catch in 80s, 90s..... record commercial fishing
37 on chums. And my uncle told me, that's your last laugh.
38 And catching a lot of chums record breaking for
39 commercial fishing; that's your last laugh. But I'm
40 gonna [sic] tell you the truth, but I'm gonna tell you
41 the truth, the chums will decline, they will disappear.
42 For a few years Kuskokwim will not see a chum, only few.
43 And I believe him. They talk to me straight, man,
44 straight talk about the prediction.

45
46 When the chums coming back, there will
47 be brand new skin; really big and fat. This summer the
48 temps are really high on the Kuskokwim. I catch over 60,
49 60 chums for consumption for my family. The other
50 prediction they told me when the chums were disappear

1 for a few years, wait patiently, don't worry about it.
2 But they told me the replacement of the chum you will
3 be seeing swimming from swimming. You will see red
4 salmon, sockeye coming from Bristol Bay entering to our
5 river system, Kuskokwim, a lot. A lot of sockeye will
6 be swimming. Those are not from Kuskokwim, they come
7 from Bristol Bay. Those are Bristol Bay sockeye
8 swimming. Plentiful. They're really plentiful this year.
9 Over almost a million entering to our system, Kuskokwim.
10 That's what the elders told me; my uncle told me. And I
11 asked my uncle about the cohos, how come the cohos are
12 not swimming in our river? Only few. I asked him and he
13 told me again, like chums, they'll disappear for a long
14 time. Don't worry about it, they'll come back. Wait
15 patiently. Don't worry about the cohos. Wait patiently.
16 You know, we had the coho salmon swimming, and the
17 biologist and Fish and Wildlife were worrying about the
18 coho are few swimming in the Kuskokwim. I wasn't worried.
19 I always -- I already heard, but I wait patiently. And
20 then, they close it for us. Got to fish for silvers.

21
22 But I remind them and tell them, open
23 it next year. Open it for fish test on the cohos. (In
24 Native) They open at -- then my two grandsons, I always
25 teach them about the Kuskokwim River, about the fish,
26 what they do. I heard it from your grandpa. And then I
27 drift with 25 fathoms and the cohos. And I catch over
28 60, 15-minute drift on the cohos when I pulled my net.
29 I recognized what my uncle told me, they'll be really
30 fat, big, shiny, fat, everything. I recognize them. Now
31 they're swimming in Kuskokwim plentiful, but they're
32 really coming back slowly. The way I got the news, a
33 letter from Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, I
34 read it, the data. And when I read it, I look at the
35 chums. There are 250,000 plus swimming in the Kuskokwim
36 last year, 250,000 plus. That's what my uncle told me.
37 They told me truth, not lie. He told me truth. And the
38 cohos, over 350,000 plus swimming last year in the
39 Kuskokwim entering to the tributaries. In my first time
40 in my lifetime, last year when I fishing [sic] king
41 salmon (In Native). We catch big ones, all big ones,
42 like three feet, four feet king salmon. You see it on
43 the discovery newspaper last year. Those two Akiachak
44 girls catching king salmon. That's what we used to catch
45 with king salmon net long time ago. And the last word
46 he said to me, my uncle, fish when the fish arrive.

47
48 Don't worry about the fish. The maker
49 of the fish watching us. But we know -- but I know he
50 gave us authority. The maker give us authority to watch

1 on the land and the ocean, to watch those animals. The
2 last word my uncle told me, fish, hunt, so that it will
3 be plentiful. We had a -- we knew we had a crush on
4 moose at the Kuskokwim there. Right now, there over
5 4,000. Those moose are walking in my village too because
6 we hunt them. That's what -- our elders are really smart,
7 they talk, when they talk to us, they talk to us truth
8 from the heart, from the mind. They look like scolding
9 us, hard words, the hard words. They look like mad.
10 That's what he used -- that's what they talk to us, the
11 predictions. We know. Learn. I test my uncle, the
12 prediction with my whole body and I see them. What they
13 telling me, recognize them. But we know that I don't
14 know about the future. 2025 the weather is weird,
15 changing really quickly. The world is changing,
16 including the technology, really quick. Couldn't keep
17 up. Last year when I go -- I always go down coast for a
18 salmonberry picking with my family. There not used to
19 be a lot of salmonberries, but my mom tell me that they
20 don't grow. Where are you -- I go to (indiscernible)
21 last year, and I recognized my mom told me that
22 salmonberry and (indiscernible) are few. But they move
23 someplace where there are many and I recognize them.

24
25 We had a bad winter this year. Nobody
26 can go to Yukon with snow machine because of the rain.
27 No snow, nothing; we couldn't go up there, Yukon River,
28 to moose hunting. And we didn't hunt the opener last
29 year because the lack of weather. Even though the moose
30 is open on Kuskokwim, we couldn't go. I wanna make sure
31 that the fight, those commercial fishermen in Area M,
32 they're stealing our fish because nobody's doing his
33 job. Nobody. What we're trying to fix. How come they
34 close commercial fishing boats, Yukon and Kuskokwim?
35 That's not our problem. That's the problem of Federal
36 government and State government. That's not our problem.
37 That's the work of the Federal government. The President
38 of the United States, I see it on the television that
39 Obama went to the Bristol Bay and Kotzebue. Track what
40 we do. When they had the big meeting AVCP, big meeting
41 when them elders were alive, they said, about the Area
42 M, not to touch Area M. Because those fish are going to
43 the Norton Sound, Yukon and Kuskokwim, and Bristol Bay.
44 Nobody listened to them, nobody even they -- mentioned
45 to them. Why? Because they think we're nothing to them.
46 Look like they're gambling our lives, for our
47 grandchildren, trying to starve us because the money's
48 moving quickly to those big companies. They don't care
49 about the -- sometimes I think I wanna be a billionaire
50 dreaming so that I could control the whole system. Look

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1 at those Trump and Musk. Thank you.

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3 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, all. I've had a
4 request by the Council for a ten-minute break. Does that
5 sound okay with everyone?

6

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. Yeah.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, we're gonna stand
10 down for ten minutes and we'll be right back.

11

12 (Off record)

13

14 (On record)

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: All right, we'll give a
17 one-minute warning.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 All right, folks, we're gonna get
22 started again here. We're gonna continue with our
23 Council member reports. And we'd like to go online to
24 make sure we don't miss our online folks before they
25 might have to leave. Member Rogers, would you like to
26 give your report?

27

28 MS. ROGERS: To the Chair. Thank you,
29 Madam Chair. Thank you, Brooke. I would -- let me go
30 ahead and give me a couple minutes. (Pause) Okay, thank
31 you for your patience. Good morning (In Native). I am
32 the granddaughter of Alice (In Native) Hanson and John,
33 John (in Native) Hanson of Alakanuk; the daughter of
34 Mariqa Hanson and the granddaughter of Ala Bridget Joe
35 Hill Joseph. (Indiscernible) Joseph of Hooper Bay,
36 Toksook Bay, and the daughter of Alan Joseph. Now, the
37 Madam Secretary of the Federal Yukon-Kuskokwim
38 Subsistence Regional Advisor Council. Madame Co-Chair
39 of the Kuskokwim Region River Salmon Management Working
40 Group. Madame Secretary of the Alaska State Fish and
41 Game Advisory Committee and the First Nation's Future
42 Leader Fellowship for Stanford University, co-founder
43 of the (indiscernible) Working Group, co-founder of the
44 Yukon Kuskokwim River Alliance, co-founder of the
45 Calista Women's Group, current ambassador for NOAA and
46 the Alaska Youth Congressional Delegates and current
47 member of the Alaska Community Action on Toxics. Member
48 of the Alaska Derelict Vessel Task Force, a member of
49 the ASM Subsistence Committee and a member of the LEO
50 Networking. I also run the Rogers Limited liability

1 contracts in regards to education and outreach
2 development on environmental, fisheries and wildlife
3 proposals and the regulatory process.

4
5 This year our weather had really no snow
6 until late February, mostly ice since October. Lots of
7 rain, freeze, ice fogs, freezing rain. Very dangerous
8 to travel or go subsistencing [sic]. I wanted to bow my
9 head or bow our heads for a slight moment, for prayers
10 to those families who lost loved ones traveling in this
11 winter, and prayers to the search and rescue teams who
12 had to go out in this dangerous traveling weather.
13 (Pause) Thank you. I didn't go moose hunting this year,
14 I wanted to wait for the winter hunt. Time and work,
15 everything didn't work out for me to go moose hunting
16 to solve. Silvers ran good this year, lots of people
17 this year were very generous giving fish away; asking
18 if we needed fish or dropping some fish off, that was
19 already processed. In regards to the blackfish this
20 fall, they seemed few this year in our normal trapping
21 (In Native) area. We caught way more pike, a lot bigger
22 than last year's pike in our bait traps. I did get
23 notification that ewe hunting on the coast was very good;
24 it was very plentiful. There was also some concerns on
25 the coast in regards for halibut, subsistence halibut
26 fishing. They're getting smaller and smaller each year,
27 and they haven't caught any big ones over four feet in
28 the past two, three years, which is very concerning.

29
30 We are hearing that bycatch and trawlers
31 are definitely on the increased rise of halibut bycatch,
32 and we need to put a stop to it or do something about
33 it in regards to our halibut. Halibut take quite a while
34 to get large and big, and the size and weight is cause
35 for biological concern. So, I'm hoping that at some point
36 today we can put together a letter or a recommendation,
37 in regards to conserving the by -- sorry, conserving the
38 halibut population and size, and if we can hopefully
39 have someone in regards to talking about halibut that'd
40 be greatly appreciated. Just so I can relay information
41 back to those folks who are concerned about the halibut.
42 Lush fishing started picking up in October, they were
43 fairly small and thin, over at the seawall. You couldn't
44 go on the river. Ducks were still flying into the late
45 November because of the warm weather. That's when also
46 ptarmigan started flying in large flocks towards the
47 mountains. And late October we didn't get -- we got
48 blackberry picking in our normal spots, but we had to
49 really hunt for blackberries cause they were kind of
50 scarce. They weren't as big and as clumped together,

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1 they were really spread out even in the like, sandpit
2 areas where we usually get a lot of black (distortion).

3

4 (Pause)

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa, we might've lost
7 you. Okay, if you're still on Alissa, we can't hear you
8 at the moment. Okay, it looks like she dropped. We'll
9 give her a chance to call back in.

10

11 (Pause)

12

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Check.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I'm not seeing her.
16 Perhaps we can move on to our next Council member, and
17 then we'll circle back and let Alissa finish her report.
18 Member Parks, would you like to go ahead?

19

20 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm
21 gonna quickly do my short report, and I'll do it in
22 Yup'ik. Robert, you hear me? There you go. Okay. Anyways,
23 my name is (In Native). I'm from Native village of
24 Nunapitchuk. (In Native) chum salmon, whitefish (In
25 Native).

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Quyana, Henry. We'll check
28 again online. Alissa, were you able to get back on?

29

30 (No response)

31

32 Okay. I'm not seeing her yet. Tiffany,
33 if you'd like to give your report. Thank you.

34

35 MS. AGAYAR: Hi, my name is Tiffany
36 Agayar. For -- starting since last summer there -- with
37 the fishing openers that we were allowed, we were able
38 to put away some dry fish and they were -- not from what
39 I could remember when I was a little girl. And there has
40 been more sockeye (distortion) Phillip Peter was saying.
41 And for the berries, like when he was telling his story
42 about the berries, I couldn't help but to smile because
43 the places that we used to pick a lot of salmonberries
44 when I was younger, started to have fewer berries, and
45 then the places that I didn't see very much, we were
46 able to pick a lot from recent -- this past summer. It
47 was pretty cold, just like it was all over the area. And
48 for the moose, there's been quite a bit, and it's been
49 weird just traveling from -- by air from Alakanuk to
50 Emmonak we're able to count. Maybe the most I counted

1 was 30 to 40 moose from the air, and that's only an
2 eight-mile stretch. And also, the other hunting stuff
3 like the seals and -- they're coming -- they're -- they
4 seem to be a lot more healthier [sic] than they were
5 five years ago, including the whales and others that we
6 would catch off the ocean. And a lot more men are
7 starting to go off the coast of Alakanuk to catch their
8 different fish than what I grew up with, which are cod
9 and halibut.

10

11 And some guys have started setting out
12 crab traps, which has been very good for replacing the
13 loss of salmon fishing that we haven't been able to do
14 in the past, I want to say three years, but then we all
15 know it's been longer than that. And so, Tom caught two,
16 when they were (indiscernible) for them last fall, were
17 the people that went out for them, said that they were
18 able to catch a lot more in a shorter amount of time and
19 spend less time out (In Native). And the moose just
20 recently started coming back into the villages in the
21 towns, and it's about the time they usually come back
22 in. And with that, it means that the wolves are coming
23 in closer, and there has been a few sightings in the
24 past few weeks, and some people have started going out
25 (In Native) for (In Native) there.

26

27 It seems a little bit early, but then
28 the -- a lot of the people are saying that they're doing
29 okay for this time of the year. Pretty soon there will
30 be a lot more people going out for more of them. And
31 I've been seeing more pictures of people hunting
32 ptarmigan and putting some away for this time of the
33 year. And there's -- also from a little bit more south
34 than me the people from Scammon Bay have been going out
35 by boat and catching seals and (In Native). During the
36 tournament last week, a lot of them were saying it was
37 unusual for the open water to be very close and for it
38 to have been open all winter long, and that it's not
39 normal. And just like everywhere, the weather's been
40 unusual and unpredictable, creating a lot of unsafe
41 traveling conditions. Thank you.

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Tiffany. That
44 was very good first report to the Council. Mr. Andrew.

45

46 MR. ANDREW: Thank you. My name is John
47 Andrew, and I'm from Kwethluk. Last fall, I made the --
48 most of my fish reports and moose hunting reports are
49 already back in my home area. Ways up -- 11 miles upriver
50 from here. Starting latter part of the summer and right

1 after the subsistence moose hunt, we're net setting for
2 whitefish up in a place called (In Native). And I had a
3 4.5 inch setnet out there try to target the
4 (indiscernible) whitefish, and I was catching like
5 something like four or five a day, along with a few
6 incidental good size pikes, coho and late run reds
7 (indiscernible). Then I -- then people started checking
8 my setnet I had to pull it out to try to move it to the
9 (indiscernible) for the same species of fish. And I was
10 catching a lot of good-sized pikes and a lot of small
11 sheefish was getting those, mostly most of them to the
12 through the dog mushers and people that want (In Native).
13 And we had a very, very late freeze up and the ice never
14 got thick enough for us to safely set out whitefish nets
15 for a long while, only in (indiscernible). Almost pretty
16 close to Thanksgiving, few people were setting out
17 whitefish. That's up by our area up in Kwigillingok.
18 Kwigillingok nearby to the big Y. I went down to set the
19 forage net for whitefish only. And I've had my
20 grandnephew checking that's the one for me but they were
21 -- he was using to give it out to our other relatives
22 and to a friend of mine's dockyard.

23
24 And first time in a long while, we've
25 been seeing a lot of rapid tracks all around and people
26 that go riding out there. They said they catch quite a
27 few of them. Few of them still snare, snare them, trap
28 them. A few of them shoot them early in the morning or
29 late in the evening when they were down by the willows
30 feeding. And then, the late winter, they didn't do well
31 in the late winter hunts cause we had no snow for a
32 long, long time. Every time it snowed, it rained down
33 as it was gushing water everywhere. This what's little
34 snow -- what you see out there is a just a -- we've been
35 getting a little bit of snow ever since last month. But
36 early fall all the way to the middle of January, we had
37 no snow, which was rough on our snow machines. People
38 had trouble going out there, people that used to trap
39 there's no snow, and they'll [sic] beating up the snow
40 machines and even their four wheelers cause it was a
41 pretty rough area where we could go hunting trap. And
42 never got cold enough in the Portage Creeks up towards
43 the hills; they stayed open the whole winter, unsafe
44 traveling.

45
46 Even my relatives, that some of the
47 friends I know in Bethel or Napaskiak, or nearby
48 villages, they say they couldn't afford to go to their
49 usual hunting and trapping areas. Too dangerous to
50 travel out there. It's like Phillip said, they can't

1 even go to the Yukon site because there's no snow or (In
2 Native) anywhere. The snow is too late arriving. But
3 it's good for the ptarmigan and the rabbits that depend
4 on the snow for shelter. And the wolves are getting --
5 every time we have a few caribou migrating near the
6 village, that we -- wolves follow them and the coyotes
7 scavengers. It's been a pretty wet winter for us, which
8 is never good for people that rely on snow machines to
9 travel to hunt, to hunt fish or trap out there. And
10 hopefully, I'm just saying hopefully as it'll get colder
11 next year, it'll be cold enough to freeze earlier. Cause
12 when you have a real mild winter, our old people used
13 to say, if you got an old woman in winter where they say
14 ice never got thick enough to travel long ways to many
15 open waters where the water is swift or what they called
16 backfish creeks or you can, if you don't know the area,
17 you can easily fall into them. (In Native) Maybe make
18 it just a short. Thank you.

19
20 MR. ALEXIE: Good morning, my name is
21 Wassily Alexie, I'm from Russian Mission. I've been on
22 the RAC Board for maybe three years, a little more. I
23 also serve on the Western Bering Sea Tribal Commission
24 for about maybe four or five years now. And I'm the
25 tribal president of our community, Russian Mission. We
26 had pretty early spring this year, and by the time the
27 birds got here, it was too late for -- or dangerous for
28 people to go out bird hunting. And we had a limited
29 amount of fishing for chums this summer, this last
30 summer. It made few people happy, not everybody was able
31 to go out and fish cause we're using -- allowed to use
32 only dip nets, and we had certain hours of fishing time
33 to go out and get them and it's pretty hard. But my mom,
34 my mother-in-law, my mom's 81, my-mother-in law's 85,
35 they were really happy to finally cut fish. They stayed
36 up 'till [sic] one in the morning to try to finish
37 cutting what we had, it was something else to see. For
38 fall, we had pretty warm fall season. It's been --
39 there's been raining. We finally caught few eels,
40 November, I think to -- safe enough to just to go out
41 on the ice. But we know there's something different about
42 the eels this year. They're catching them down in
43 Mountain to Saint Mary's and then after that, few in
44 Pilot, they seen few, and from there, we haven't heard
45 anything all the way up the Yukon.

46
47 It's probably cause there's a lot of
48 channels that's been changed, a lot of sandbars that
49 came up where there's never sandbar before. And, well,
50 the fish don't swim same way every year. They follow the

1 channel wherever the channel goes. And it's getting
2 pretty hard for us to try to go out and find where they
3 are. And she had -- for blackfish, were catching a lot
4 of blackfish this year, and we noticed they're big size
5 blackfish compared to their small ones, in the past
6 years, we've been catching. And I'm kinda wondering if
7 something's gonna change cause the blackfish are getting
8 bigger. Maybe they'll disappear. It's like stories I
9 hear, the smaller they are, the more they are, and the
10 bigger they are, the less they are. So, something might
11 be changing. Anyway, pretty much every year I bring this
12 up to about our four-inch net. You know, we're stuck
13 fishing with four-inch nets even in the sloughs, that
14 the salmon don't go, where we have to use four-inch
15 nets. And it's kinda hard to try to get the little fish
16 that we catch to cut them up cause you're probably
17 plucking more bones than you are eating the fish. The
18 pike, and the smaller fish. Anyway, hopefully that can
19 change for us to allow using bigger nets in the sloughs
20 where the salmon don't go spawn. So, that's pretty much
21 my report. Thank you.

22
23 MR. PRINCE: Good morning. My name is
24 Francis Prince Jr., and I'm from Kotlik. This is my
25 first time running as a Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
26 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council member, and it's
27 a honor to be here, to serve my community and my people
28 and trying to help protect our subsistence way of life
29 for our future kids and your grandkids as well. And for
30 Kotlik, I grew up subsistence way of life. Use to always
31 helped my dad go check his fish net all the time, ever
32 since I was a young boy. And we'd fish for whitefish,
33 and he used to be a commercial fisherman back then. And
34 for Kotlik this year -- last year, during the breakup
35 2024 spring season, we had a pretty good whitefish run.
36 I think that was due to the lack of the late snow coming
37 in, in the springtime. And I also do set ice net
38 underneath the ice year around. And I've been noticing
39 that we have a lot of pike runs beginning of December
40 to March; a lot, a lot of pike. There was one year a
41 person went out subsistence (indiscernible) for pike,
42 and he caught about 88 pike in one day, and that was
43 within a three-hour span. And that -- these are -- pikes
44 are my concern, you know, for the lower area beginning
45 of the drainage of the Yukon.

46
47 I wonder if there could be, like, some
48 kind of proposal, like, to get rid of these invasive
49 species cause I noticed that a lot of these communities,
50 they don't fish for them or commercial fish for them at

1 all. And I was wondering if, well, it's basically a
2 question like, are these pike fish are also eating our
3 salmon as well once they, they're hatched and returned
4 to the ocean. Because a lot of these sloughs are -- the
5 Yukon area breaks up into many sloughs and that's one
6 of my concerns about the pike species. And for the moose
7 we have plenty of moose in our area, and back then, we
8 didn't have moose at all. When I was a young kid, I
9 didn't like going moose hunting at all because you'd
10 barely see any moose on the Yukon. All our Kotlik members
11 used to travel further up the river to Holy Cross to go
12 hunt moose. Now, nowadays there's plenty of moose
13 because we follow the regulations of not catching cows
14 or calves during moose season time. In fall time I
15 noticed these moose, they like to gather up along the
16 coastline, and I'm guessing they might be eating from
17 the ocean as well.

18
19 They're probably eating the floating
20 grass that floats around in the sloughs. And it's been
21 harder for Kotlik to go out subsistence hunting because
22 the price of gas and a lot of hunters are going together
23 camping longer. We had a good migration of birds. Snow
24 geese is what our Kotlik residents love to hunt a lot
25 and there's no limit, no tag limit for snow geese. And
26 (pause) I believe that maybe it's for me here. Oh, yeah.
27 Sorry to mention that, for Kotlik as well, we do deal
28 with a lot of flooding every year, yearly floods. We
29 flood every year, fall time is our scariest times. It
30 makes the community really worried when fall time comes
31 around before the ice freezes. Makes the whole community
32 worried cause we always deal with flooding every year.
33 And we're starting to notice that flooding happens also
34 during the summer times, summertime and early spring,
35 right when it breaks up as well. And for our berries,
36 we've been having a lack of berries, especially the blue
37 and black blackberries. For how many years in a row now?
38 It's been very difficult for Kotlik residents to find
39 berries. Salmon berries is okay, but the rest of the
40 berries is very hard to find. Thank you.

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much,
43 Francis. Very good first report to the Council, and we're
44 glad you're here. We'll move back online. Frederick
45 Beans, are you available to give your Council member
46 report?

47
48 MR. BEANS: Good morning. Yes, this is
49 Frederick Beans. Most people call me Fred, and I'm from
50 Mountain Village. I'm son of Ignatius and Marie Beans.

1 And Beans, you know, are primarily on the Lower Yukon.
2 So, anyway yeah, I'm from Mountain Village. I've have
3 been subsistence and comm -- subsistence user since
4 early 1960s until now, and then a commercial fisherman
5 from 1979 'till -- they closed commercial fisherman --
6 commercial fishing. In all these years I've been seeing
7 the king salmon get smaller and smaller and smaller, you
8 know that -- I don't know why, but I think maybe we
9 should -- maybe target the (indiscernible) that swim by
10 because they will go up there and they'll spawn, and
11 they'll make smaller king salmon. So yeah, that's my big
12 -- my concern. Another concern is the big game hunters.
13 We got big game hunters coming down for antlers or
14 whatever they, you know, hunt for the big game and just
15 leave me -- I've been -- I've had reports of -- or report
16 -- people tell me that they come across a headless moose
17 out there in -- not on the Yukon, basically, but out
18 there where they're able to fly in and get their moose
19 and get their antlers and go.

20
21 That's basically our refrigerator out
22 there. So, we need to maybe somehow curb this big game
23 issue. So, you know, cause, you know, like I said --
24 like my dad said it. He said he -- it is our refrigerator
25 out there that we need to keep eye on it. So yeah, that's
26 that. And I been [sic] in politics, right now I am on
27 the RSB, a Regional School Board, YST, ASP, Mountain
28 Village ASP. And then I am also a Board of Directors on
29 the AVAK.

30
31 So, and I've been involved in politics
32 since the early 60s, when I was in my 20s. So, and I've
33 also been on the Corporation Board, City Council, the
34 YDFDA Board. And one concern, you know, with our
35 dwindling supply of fish, I think we need to target our
36 fish when they're, you know before the flies set in and
37 then take care of them, you know, all at once. So, we
38 don't have to worry about the next, you know, later on.
39 So, I think that's one of the concerns that one of the
40 people you know was wondering about. Why can we take
41 care of our fish right away? You know, when we start
42 fishing, you know, we don't go out and take as much as
43 we want. You know, we just take as much as we need. You
44 know, that's all. You know, we don't go out and decimate
45 the fish what-- you know, people think, though. Anyway,
46 that's what I told the lady that comes around to check
47 the fish calendar. You know, I told him, you know, we
48 don't -- we just go out there and we just take what we
49 need, and that's it. And I'm sure -- I don't know if it
50 would ever work, but I was thinking maybe, why don't we

1 just have some systems all summer and that just take
2 what we need and that's it. But no, I think they need
3 though, they won't. But anyway, yeah. That's my report
4 I got. I'll probably have more later on. But anyway,
5 yeah, that's my report. Frederick Beans, Mountain
6 Village.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much for
9 your report, Fred, and thanks for joining the Council.
10 We'll circle back to Alissa Rogers, if you're available
11 to finish your report.

12
13 MS. ROGERS: Hi, can you hear me?

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we got you. Go ahead.

16
17 MS. ROGERS: Okay, hold on. I'm gonna
18 move to a different part of the building cause I think
19 that part of the building that I was in has no cell
20 service. (In Native). I am the granddaughter of Alice
21 Hanson and John Hanson of Alakanuk; daughter of Marita
22 Hanson, granddaughter of Ala Bridget Hill Joseph of
23 Hooper Bay and (indiscernible) Joseph of Hooper Bay and
24 Toksook Bay; daughter of Alan Joseph was raised here in
25 Bethel and raised out in the villages on the weekends.
26 I'm the Madame Secretary of the Federal (indiscernible)
27 Advisory Council. Madame co-Chair of the Kuskokwim River
28 Salmon Management Working Group, Madame Secretary of
29 Alaska State Board of Fish and Game, First Nation future
30 fellowships with the University of Stanford University.
31 Co-founder of the Donlin Gold working Group, co-founder
32 of the Yukon Kuskokwim River Alliance, co-founder of the
33 Calista Women's Group, Ambassador for NOAA and
34 Ambassador for the Alaska Youth Congressional Delegate.
35 Member of the Alaska Action on Toxic, member of the
36 Alaska Derelict Vessel Task Force and member of the AFN
37 Subsistence Committee and member of the LEO Networking.
38 Also, I'm the owner of Rogers LLC, in regards to
39 contracts of education and outreach development on
40 environmental, fisheries and wildlife proposals and
41 regulatory process law. We'll start off with the
42 weather. There was no real snow until late February,
43 mostly ice in October. It's been lots of rain, freeze,
44 ice fog, freezing rain, dangerous travel, or go
45 subsisting. And all this is taking place since our
46 last meeting (distortion) August.

47
48 We've been having very unusual weather
49 patterns, as you heard from other Council members. I did
50 wanna take a moment of silence for a couple minutes for

1 prayers to those families who lost loved ones traveling
2 in this winter, and also more prayers to protect the
3 search and rescue in their efforts and ability to go out
4 there in these dangerous conditions. (Pause) Thank you.
5 I didn't go moose hunting this year, I waited for --
6 wanted to wait for a winter hunt. My time and ability
7 to go out moose hunting this fall was -- didn't match
8 up. Silvers ran good this year. Lots of people this year
9 were very generous, giving fish away and asking people
10 if they needed fish. Blackfish this year seem to be very
11 few in our area. We have way more pike in our bait trap,
12 and it was bigger, the pike are getting bigger than last
13 year's pike. But still, a lot of little, tiny pike, but
14 more plentiful than any blackfish we caught in our trap,
15 and we would check it daily. I did get reports of black
16 duck hunting, end of September through October; it was
17 very successful. There was quite a bit of black ducks
18 out there. I also got reports from the coast in regards
19 to seal hunting, was very good, they were very plentiful.
20 And there was some concern for the halibut, subsistence
21 halibut fishing, small -- they're getting smaller each
22 year. They haven't had any big ones over the four feet
23 in the last two to three years.

24
25 They're concerned in regards to the
26 bycatch in trawlers over harvesting halibut. Halibut
27 have a slow growth rate and ability to catch, larger
28 halibut will provide more pounds of fish meat for the
29 freezer. It takes more effort to harvest more smaller
30 [sic] halibut and also more time consuming. Lush fishing
31 in October started picking up. They started off very
32 small and thin, and they started to get bigger and bigger
33 as the time in October got closer to November. In
34 October, ducks were still flying into late November
35 because of our warmer weather. I kind of figured that
36 they were just to (indiscernible) to fly, but they
37 definitely were hanging around a lot longer than normal.
38 Ptarmigan started flying in October. There were large
39 flocks of ptarmigan, I would say anywhere from 50 to 100
40 in each flock that I saw this fall. They were hitting
41 power lines on the Tundra Road, Tundra Ridge Road, and
42 there was [sic] multiple days where there was a huge
43 number of ptarmigan that would hit the wires and were
44 on the road, a couple times in October, and then there
45 was barely any in November. So, that means that our
46 ptarmigan population has increased from last year.

47
48 Blackberries were really scarce this
49 year. A lot of the places that we go check; every other
50 day is a different location that we go check. I thought

1 it was more that someone probably already harvested
2 blackberries in that area, but it's really hard to get
3 to and it's fairly far to walk. But it was very scarce
4 for blackberries this year. I did not go for cranberries
5 this year just because my schedule didn't work out with
6 being able to go out. November was a sit and wait month,
7 couldn't do very much. Got cabin fever; really itchy to
8 go out. But because of weather and temperature and the
9 way our season went for winter was not good to go out.
10 Definitely saw more foxes in November around town than
11 normal. Almost every other day I've seen a fox on my way
12 to work. I did get reports of coho (indiscernible) near
13 Tuntutuliak. Getting caught in the (indiscernible) near
14 Tuntutuliak. They said they were pretty good eating,
15 they tasted just like salmon, but they were like small
16 baby salmon. They said they cooked them up just like you
17 would blackfish or dry them, just like blackfish, and
18 they turned out pretty good. Into -- we were lucky to
19 get snow on Christmas. Smelt on the coast were running
20 big this year. I -- typically we'd go out two to three
21 hours to get a -- to get all we need, but it ended up
22 having to be a couple days, and fishing five hours
23 instead of just a couple. Just to get a few gallons.
24 It's very slow for smelts this year, but they're very,
25 very big. Almost big as whitefish on the coast.

26
27 That also includes tomcods are very slow
28 and small this year. It was also reported to me that the
29 sea ice grows very slow this year because of our weather.
30 It was dangerous to go out when, normally December,
31 people would go out seal hunting and being further out
32 on the ice than normal. It was also reported to me that
33 the Yukon nets were catching chinook salmon, coho salmon
34 and chum salmon. The chum salmon was spawned out, the
35 coho was still silver bright and the chinook was still
36 silver and bright. They didn't know -- let me know that
37 when they pulled him out of the net, their noses were
38 white. They had -- all three of them had white noses,
39 on the Yukon River and that was in December. It was an
40 icy, rainy January; again another month, no good to go
41 snow machining in the train. Another cabin fever month.
42 It was hard to set blackfish traps in January because
43 it thawed and freezed. There was a lot more rabbits in
44 January this year than last year, they might be on the
45 upscale of the seventh-year cycle. There is more mice
46 this year, not so many weasels. There are more owls
47 showing up in this area and different types of species.
48 Typically, the way traditional folklore says that owls
49 aren't really good omens. So, that's kinda concerning.
50

1 I did want to notate that it was
2 reported to me by multiple Bethel resident or not Bethel,
3 Hooper Bay residents that have been seen in orange red
4 orb that rises from the ocean horizon stay stationary
5 in the sky for a few minutes, and sometimes an hour, or
6 sometimes three hours, and then it descends back into
7 the horizon. There are recorded videos and pictures of
8 this phenomenon, and people of the Hooper Bay residence
9 area are wanting answers to find out what's going on
10 near the oceans of Alaska. The reports from the coast
11 for seal hunts in January and walrus hunts were
12 successful and plentiful this year. There was zero
13 reports or complaints of sick seals so far.

14
15 There was concern about worries of sea
16 ducks. There was observation of sea ducks hanging around
17 the bay area a lot longer than normal, and it would
18 contribute to the warmer weather. But there are concerns
19 for the murrens and egg harvesting for murrens. For last
20 month ptarmigan started showing up, flocking hundreds
21 to thousands and migrating back to the coast. We finally
22 got snow in February. Lots of pike everywhere we go when
23 we try go fishing. Pretty much everywhere we go, we try
24 different areas for lush fish, whitefish, sheefish. But
25 we're pulling up more pike than we are any other species.
26 For instance, when we went white fishing for every one
27 whitefish, we caught five pike. There's just way too
28 much pike in our river and tributaries. There's a lot
29 of moose in the Bethel area. There has been -- the
30 surrounding villages have been complaining and reporting
31 to me of nuisance moose in their front yards or trying
32 to -- when they're trying to leave their homes or they're
33 on a trail.

34
35 There's a couple of people that reported
36 being charged by moose, leaving their homes or on the
37 snowmachine trails in those really tight snowmachine
38 trails where you can't go right or left, just forward
39 or backward. No one was injured, though. And there was
40 -- just be cautious that there's wolves that were
41 reported close to Bethel. And then two days later, after
42 it was reported to me that they were seen in town. So,
43 just be careful for all of you hunters and fishers that
44 are near the Bethel area. When I went out snow machining,
45 just for joyriding, I noticed that there's more beavers
46 this year in the area and I'm sure this is happening
47 everywhere else because it's becoming a nuisance of
48 beavers more than usual. There is more houses in
49 landlocked lakes in the Tundra area, in landlocked lakes
50 that they're creating homes in the Tundra that's

1 creating erosion and cave-ins, which is creating a
2 washout of the tundra. And they're also creating streams
3 or migration paths between a lake to another lake, or a
4 lake to a stream, which is reducing -- which is lowering
5 the water level in the lakes, which is causing ecological
6 succession, which is concern for the habitat in the area.
7 We need to figure out how to get a handle on these
8 beavers sooner than later.

9
10 If it's through the corporation offering
11 to buy out furs from trappers for beavers. Or we can do
12 like, possibly brainstorming, like what they did with
13 the salmon and who can catch the biggest or heaviest
14 beaver gets Crowley cards or some type of system we need
15 to figure out and brainstorm to reduce the amount of
16 beaver population before they overtake our lands and
17 destroy more of our habitats for other species. I did
18 wanna talk about the protection on caribou. We need to
19 continue the predator control program and push to
20 support the predator control program 'till it's
21 succession, so we can see the actual data of how
22 successful the predator control program is in the ratio
23 of increasing the population of the caribou. And if it
24 is successful to continue the predator control program
25 in order to increase the population of the caribou. We
26 also need to continue to push to keep it closed in all
27 units, all refuges and all parks. The population of the
28 Mulchatna Caribou range is one unit, one population
29 range and regardless of where -- what location or what
30 areas are stationary for caribou, they're still included
31 in the Mulchatna Caribou population range. So, every
32 caribou counts just like every salmon counts. We do need
33 to rebound the population and to use that as an example
34 of the moose moratorium in which we did -- we were
35 successful in being able to put a moose moratorium on
36 the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

37
38 And hopefully we'll start to see the
39 efforts of that start to take place here in the next
40 couple of years. There I did get reports of illegal
41 poaching on the caribou. It was reported to me by
42 residents of Kwethluk and Napaskiak. And there was
43 efforts sent -- to be sent out information about caribou
44 -- the caribou population, and wanted to try to get a
45 meeting with the communities to talk about the
46 protection of caribou and why are we doing it, and what's
47 going on and update them so they know, they get educated.
48 But that meeting hasn't taken place yet. I did want to
49 also bring in concerns of the snowy owls. I haven't
50 observed any snowy owls, usually it's one to two a year.

1 I have not seen any yet, and that's very concerning. I
2 know we don't currently have anything in place for snowy
3 owls, but we need to get a protection in place or
4 emergency order, or proposal, or put in the regulations
5 for snowy owls before we overharvest them. Or we also
6 need financial research into the population of the snowy
7 owls and see if there's a biological concern to put in
8 a protective placement so we can keep our snowy owls'
9 population up. I haven't seen any signs of jackrabbits
10 this year, which is concerning to me.

11
12 I checked in with folks on the Yukon
13 River who also harvest jackrabbits, and they haven't
14 seen any jackrabbits either so that's another concern
15 that I'm concerned about. I know we have some studies
16 on jackrabbits, and we have it in the regulation, but
17 if we could get an update on the population, or at least
18 what -- if there's any biological concern that we need
19 to take action on, be able to get those set in place
20 sooner than later to protect that population between
21 Kuskokwim and Yukon River. I did want to also talk about
22 the subsistence regime shift. Subsistence is not
23 quantified by numbers anymore. It's quantified by pounds
24 of meat, pounds of poultry or pounds of fish. Because
25 we lost our shift in our subsistence regime harvest from
26 salmon, and then we moved to caribou, then to ptarmigan
27 and rabbits, those other resources that we have are not
28 being able to sustain the amount of subsistence harvest
29 needed to quantify the pounds of meat, poultry and fish
30 that is required to sustain ANS amounts, which is amounts
31 necessary for subsistence needs.

32
33 This is kinda concerning because we're
34 getting down to the nitty gritty of the resource of the
35 food chain, and we're running out of big animals. And
36 it's affecting all the other smaller resources, which
37 is gonna cause a -- could cause a natural effect in the
38 food chain. I did also wanna touch base on the moose in
39 the Yukon River. They're currently eating themselves out
40 of home and location.

41
42 I did put in a proposal to remove the
43 monetary value in the Subsistence Regulations Proposal
44 to the State of Alaska Board of Game. By removing the
45 term monetary value, this will allow tribes
46 corporations, village IRAs organizations to use monetary
47 value, which is any form of money or currency, in
48 exchange for harvesting subsistence foods. Example, for
49 harvesting moose. This was -- this will allow harvest
50 on moose to reduce the population in the Yukon River and

1 bring pounds of meat to families in need; remove illegal
2 language from the regulation and allow this activity to
3 no longer be illegal activity, to be legal activity,
4 cause that's the current norm these days. It wasn't back
5 when we had salmon and we had caribou, but now that we
6 are hurting for resources and there's an abundance of
7 moose on the Yukon River. The ideal thought would be to
8 have the moose on the Yukon River be harvested by local
9 tribes or hunters, be given monetary value to butcher
10 and get a contract with the airlines on inbound flights
11 from the villages to be -- have the cargo be like standby
12 or free on flights coming inbound to Bethel and then
13 distributed from Bethel to other villages if subsistence
14 needs are in need, or to Bethel residents. Also, it
15 would be -- oh, I already -- subcontract airlines on
16 transporting meat, returning planes to Bethel and other
17 villages. And that's all I have, Madam Chair, through
18 the Chair. Thank you, Brooke, and thank you to my fellow
19 Council members. That's my report.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you so much, Alissa.
22 Very thorough report, as always. I did just receive a
23 message from member Cleveland that -- or Chair Cleveland
24 now, that she will be joining us this afternoon and
25 would prefer to wait to give her Chairs report when
26 she's here in person. So, if it's okay with the Council,
27 we'll move on and do just a -- we have time for just a
28 couple of public comments on non-agenda items before we
29 break for lunch. We'll break for lunch at 12:00 p.m. So,
30 we have about 13 minutes. And first off, I did want to
31 say that we will need to put a little bit of a time
32 limit on public comments. If you could try to keep them
33 to within five minutes. We do have a number of people
34 that wanna talk today, and we'll circle back to folks
35 we don't get to right after (distortion) lunch. So,
36 there's another opportunity after lunch to continue your
37 public comments and then again tomorrow morning. And
38 first off, we have Beverly Hoffman.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 MS. HOFFMAN: Turn this on. Oh, that
43 sounds close. So, yeah, thank you for allowing public
44 comment. My name is Beverly Hoffman. I was born and
45 raised here on the Kuskokwim in Bethel, and I've gathered
46 food off this land, like so many of us, for all of my
47 73 years. I come to you as a co-founder of Mother
48 Kuskokwim Tribal Coalition, and I do not -- my opinions
49 do not represent any Board that I sit on. So, I'm here
50 today because, once again, the Trump administration in

1 Washington is threatening to rescind Secretary Haaland
2 and President Biden's decision to keep our D-1 lands
3 protected. We all are worried about food security as we
4 watch the executive orders on our food sources, Snap,
5 Medicaid and so much else. For 50 years since ANCSA, our
6 28 million acres of (distortion) land was protected
7 under ANCSA. And when Trump was president before, he
8 tried to open up those lands. There was so much public
9 testimony in 2024, protect these lands. The truth is,
10 Trump and his administration, I don't feel they -- they
11 want to open up the lands for mineral exploration. We
12 need those lands to stay protected for our food security.
13 This is where we hunt, we fish, we pick berries. I don't
14 think they really care much about our people out here,
15 that we need these greens, we need the berries, we smoke
16 and freeze our fish.

17
18 They don't think about the birds that
19 migrate over our lands; 241 species going over these
20 lands. They don't think about the moose and the caribou.
21 They want to open up the land under the pretense of need
22 for critical minerals and promise of jobs. There's
23 plenty of jobs, gold is not a critical mineral. Our
24 subsistence gathering is more important to us,
25 especially in the years to come. They're important, we
26 need to protect it. I want to encourage Fish and Wildlife
27 and each and every one of this Council to write your
28 delegation, write the Secretary of Interior. Let them
29 know that these D-1 lands need to continue to be
30 protected. Trump administration wants to rescind that
31 protection that's been that way for 50 years. It needs
32 to continue, and it's up to each and every one of us.
33 There's so much threat with potential mine risks;
34 there's so much threat out on the Bering Sea. And we
35 already see on the Yukon and the Kuskokwim the decline
36 of salmon, that it was heartbreaking to watch our fellow
37 people on the Yukon not be able to catch the fish that
38 we were able to here on the Kuskokwim. In the 90s, I sat
39 where you sit; I've sat on the Kuskokwim working group
40 on the Pacific Marine Fishery Advisories, and we need
41 to use our loud voices. So please, these D-1 lands are
42 very important to our future, to our children, to our
43 grandchildren. Qu yana (In Native) for allowing me to
44 address this Council.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Beverly. Any
47 questions, Council members? I did want to let Beverly
48 and the Council members know that at the Federal
49 Subsistence Board meeting at the beginning of February,
50 the D-1 lands issue was brought up several times. And

1 this Council, including other Councils wrote to the
2 Board last year in support of that and -- in support of
3 retaining those protections and forwarded letters to the
4 previous administration. Well, last month at the Board
5 meeting there was a request to forward on those letters
6 to keep those protections to the new administration. So,
7 that's in the works, but that doesn't preclude you from
8 sending another letter if you want to. So, we have a
9 correspondence item on the agenda at the end of this
10 meeting, and I've made a note to bring that up. So, if
11 you guys want to send another letter, we can talk about
12 it at that time.

13

14 MS. HOFFMAN: Yes, I hope we -- I hope
15 you do. We need your voice on this matter, and quyana.

16

17 MS. EVAN: Hi, Brooke. This is Norma Evan
18 coming back in, Marshall.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Norma. Thank you for
21 joining us. I wanted to -- since you're back on, make
22 sure that you knew that they were able to get you on the
23 Yute flight that's leaving this afternoon. I.....

24

25 MS. EVAN: Copy that.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, great.

28

29 MS. EVAN: (In Native), but thank you.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thanks a bunch. All
32 right. We probably have time for just one more comment
33 before lunch. Is there anyone else that won't be
34 available to be here after lunch or in the morning?
35 Okay, I believe that's Mr. Waska. Okay, if you'd like
36 to come up, sir. Go ahead.

37

38 MR. WASKA: Quyana for letting me speak.
39 And I welcome the new members and good to see young
40 people taking over. I'm disappointed. I feel angry or
41 not, for the Northern Pacific fisheries not being here.
42 We all made (distortion) an effort to be here. They
43 should've made an effort to be here too, like us. Or
44 just like Mr. Peterson, we're Natives; discriminatory.
45 I could reflect back on AFN two years ago. Look at how
46 many original, ten of them. Our comments and public
47 comments, they fall on deaf ears, the Board of Fisheries.
48 This has to stop. Why? Every time we fill out
49 (indiscernible) applications or anything else, there's
50 a question. Are you a citizen? And we checked the box,

1 yes. Where are you a citizens? (Indiscernible) Our
2 fathers, they went to war. Our native people went to
3 war. We're native, we're are United States American
4 Native citizens. And up there they should put the
5 restrictions red in red on the Arctic and Yukon and
6 Kuskokwim rivers. And the biggest one is the trawlers.
7 They should be in red. When Fish and Game, hey, wake up,
8 the trawlers are depleting all marine life and seafood,
9 they're the problem. Me and my people, automatic we go
10 on restrictions. Stupid foreigners. Yukon, that's for
11 whitefish 60 feet, undue hardship, undue stress. It
12 falls on head of household, us providers. When are we
13 gonna have enough food or not? The salmon, all four
14 species, kings, chums, reds, silvers. That's what you
15 say is all through the winter months. Why I say that?
16 (Indiscernible) the hub of 56 villages.

17
18 You see the prices here of groceries,
19 what is it now \$20 a gallon of milk, \$10 for butter.
20 This is the hub. Remember I said that. And it has to be
21 thrown in barge through the villages. It triples. What
22 my people are going to eat, they're gonna go for
23 subsistence. And that should be priority over commercial
24 fishing. Look at that. They should be in red trawlers
25 and there should be a slash because they're depleting
26 all the marine life, all the fisheries. It's happening.
27 You can't deny that. King Cove canneries are fishing,
28 canneries are closing, all the species, salmon, crabs,
29 halibut, herring. That's what's happening. Red flag
30 should be up in red, the trawlers. Why I say that? I
31 watched National Geographic, Mariana Zeller's segment
32 on trawlers. She labeled them pirates.

33
34 It's happening all over the world.
35 They're depleting the oceans. We lose our commercial
36 fishing, me and my people (In Native) on the Yukon they
37 closed it, on the Kuskokwim they closed it. Us first,
38 us natives first, restriction automatic. When we're
39 gonna see restrictions in on the trawlers? That's why
40 I came in the first place. And it should be in red. They
41 can no longer deny that. Depletion should be written all
42 over the trawlers on the right, equals depletion. It's
43 happening. Before it's too late, I suggest Fish and Game,
44 we need your help before the extinction, like whales,
45 the buffalo, that's gonna happen to all marine life if
46 nothing is done on these trawlers. And I'm sick and
47 tired of being on restrictions. Us first. We're the first
48 people of Alaska. Discriminatory action, violating the
49 (indiscernible) 1945 Anti-Discrimination Act. That's not
50 right.

1

2

3 Suffer, stress to get food, subsistence.
4 Commercial fishing over subsistence 16 fleet four inch
5 on the Yukon, or share on the Kuskokwim above Johnson,
6 half shackle. Below Johnson, 50 fathom out there
7 (indiscernible) False Pass three. That's thousand foot
8 a net they're using out there. And you know what's
9 happening? They're starting to notice everything's
10 depleting. Anchorage are starting to complain. And they
11 say the Fish and Game, we need your help. That's what
12 you're there for. Time to put a stop on putting, my
13 Native brother from Kasigluk said. Is it too late for
14 proposals now? Put a seven-year moratorium and off
15 limits to trawlers and commercial fishing. Back then,
16 our native elders, I was a teenager, they used to go
17 Anchorage every winter and finally dawn on me, they tell
18 me we're gonna go fight for some escapement. Fish
19 escapement for the Yukon and Kuskokwim Arctic Rivers.
20 Enough. We're U.S. citizens, start treating us like
21 that. We need your help on trawlers to stop it. I'm
22 sorry the way I raise my voice, but that's how I feel.
23 And I hate to be back again tonight and, but keep it up,
24 and I'm glad there's still a Yukon Subsistence Board.
25 Pretty soon if nothing being done, they're gonna learn
26 the hard way, like the buffalo and the whales.
27 Everything's gonna become extinct, period. We need your
28 help, our food source. We're on restriction laws on all
29 four fish here in the Kuskokwim, king salmon, reds, now
30 silvers. Undue struggle while they're there having
31 heyday, commercial fishing, interception. That's not
32 right. (In Native) time to take steps and go another
33 direction; another other civil rights people who help
34 us. Quyana.

34

35

36

MS. MCDAVID: Quyana, for your comments.
Does anyone have any questions or comments for Mr. Waska?

37

38

(No response)

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

Thank you very much, sir. We appreciate
you being here. Okay, the time is 12:05 p.m. and the
Council is gonna break for lunch. What time do you guys
think, one? Okay, we'll be back at 1:30 p.m. and we'll
resume public comments when we get back from lunch. Thank
you.

46

47

(Off record)

48

49

(On record)

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native) Good
2 afternoon. I'm calling this meeting back to order at
3 1:35 p.m. And hi, everyone. I'm happy to be here in
4 person. I'll give a report after the public comments are
5 done, quyana.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair, and
8 we're glad you were able to join us. We have a couple
9 more folks signed up for public comment today. And then
10 if you haven't signed up yet, there'll be another
11 opportunity tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Our next
12 commenter is Robin Masterman.

13
14 MS. MASTERMAN: Hi, good afternoon. My
15 name is Robin Masterman. And I am here on behalf of the
16 (In Native) Food Security Grant through YKHC. We have
17 recently gotten into some policy work around moose
18 hunting. And so, today I would like to talk a little bit
19 about changing some regulations, hopefully. So, I would
20 just like to say that though I'm new to the region, it
21 is apparent that a lot of communities here face immense
22 challenges with food insecurity. And quite a few people
23 this morning kinda touched on this, that healthy food
24 at the store is prohibitively expensive, and subsisting
25 requires a great deal of financial resources to purchase
26 the right equipment that you need to be able to subsist.
27 But at the same time there is an overabundant moose
28 population on the lower Yukon, and many organizations
29 working to help alleviate hunger for residents here in
30 the region.

31
32 So, we were hoping to work towards
33 addressing both of these issues, both food insecurity
34 and the overabundant moose population by connecting them
35 through allowing community safety net organizations to
36 be able to receive moose hunting tags and by community
37 safety net organizations, we mean food banks, shelters,
38 schools, hospitals and tribes. So, rather than going to
39 an individual, the organization itself would receive the
40 tag to be able to provide a traditionally relevant source
41 of food to those who utilize their services. And in
42 addition to ease in -- to assist in the ease of uptake,
43 we also hope that employees of these community safety
44 net organizations will be able to fill tags on paid
45 company time, and for all hunters to be able to receive
46 some sort of modest reimbursement for any expenses that
47 they incur while going out and filling these proxy tags.
48 Quyana (In Native).

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, and I
2 wanted to say that Yup'ik name again. Is it (In Native)?

3
4 MS. MASTERMAN: (In Native) and we also
5 go by Compass as well, quyana.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In
8 Native). Do we have anyone else for public comments on
9 non-agenda items?

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we do. Is Mr. Walter
12 Jim present?

13
14 MR. JIM: Good afternoon. Thanks for
15 being here. Thanks for giving people that opportunity
16 to speak. I'm Walter Jim. I'm the tribal Council
17 President for our tribe here in Bethel. That's
18 Orutsararmiut Native Council. Listening to all these
19 reports this morning from members of your Council,
20 they're all very correct. Because I, too, am a hunter
21 and fisherman, and I travel, and I see all these changes
22 because of global warming and climate change; villages
23 sinking, banks eroding. All that has negative effects
24 to our way of life and to the game and the fish that we
25 target. You know, although our fishing is highly
26 regulated and restricted, when we have that opportunity
27 to try to fill our freezers, we're grateful for that.
28 But I still feel for our friends and relatives that
29 live, you know, along the banks of the Yukon River that
30 haven't been able to fish. And part of that problem
31 there is the high seas fishing, trawling in Area M.
32 There needs to be a bycatch cap out there in the Bering
33 Sea, namely for trawling. And there needs to be a
34 restriction of the number of days and hours that they're
35 able to fish at Area M.

36
37 You know I've heard that question from
38 other panels where they ask members, would another
39 species of food or other foods be able to replace what
40 you're dependent on, like salmon? And I'll tell you the
41 truth, you know, there's those -- there's no other food
42 that'll replace that salmon, that king salmon that I
43 eat, the chum salmon that I eat, the sockeye salmon that
44 I eat, the coho that I eat. It can't be replaced by
45 another food source. You know, whether it's food from
46 being distributed by different agencies that have food
47 banks, none of that food can replace that food that we
48 were raised on. And that -- there's a lot of thousands
49 of native families out there that are being impacted,
50 impacted. And they shouldn't be, they're not the

1 problem. The problem -- part of the problem we know is
2 out there in in the Bering Sea, whether it's high seas,
3 or trawling or Area M. The way I look at it, we're asked
4 to sacrifice our way of life, so the industry can get
5 money. That's their survival. Our survival is the foods
6 that we were raised on.

7
8 You know, we're asking Phillip Peter
9 from Akiachak to sacrifice his way of life, so somebody
10 else sitting at another table can fill their pocket and
11 line their banks with money. There needs to be a bycatch
12 cap. I got one more minute. But bycatch cap that I --
13 that should be reasonable. I seen those numbers from the
14 bycatch that they provided last year for chinook salmon
15 and chum salmon, and they were in the thousands. They
16 were in the thousands. If you added all that king salmon
17 and the chum that were caught as bycatch out there in
18 the Bering Sea, that's basically around the same number
19 of salmon that the numbers that they provide for the
20 subsistence users of this river, of this river. You know,
21 I read stories where there are other areas, like Bristol
22 Bay, will be sending up, sending salmon to residents
23 that live along the Yukon River. But that's not what
24 they want. That's not what they want. They want their
25 own salmon that were born in their tributaries. I'll
26 provide more comment when the North Pacific folks are
27 here later on this evening or tomorrow. But I wanna
28 thank you for this opportunity. Welcome to Bethel,
29 quyana.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Brooke,
32 do you have anyone else, for public comments?

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
35 Yes, let's go online now. Martin Kelly, if you'd like
36 to provide a comment to the Council.

37
38 MR. KELLY: Hello. Can you hear me?

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we can.....

41
42 MR. KELLY: Hi. Hello. Good afternoon, I
43 just have a few comments. This is Martin Kelly, I'm the
44 administrator here at Pilot Station. Our office is --
45 got a lot of traffic, so bear with me. I just wanted
46 challenge the RAC, the Regional Advisory Committee. I
47 don't know if we should, you know, I'm focusing on
48 subsistence and our way of life. Since the early 2000,
49 we've been like, what -- whatever one has been echoing
50 is our food security. We've been -- we haven't been able

1 to fish since the early 2000. And it's looking pretty
2 bleak with this new administration with, we don't have
3 an economy. You know, salmon was our economy. Our
4 villages were established based on the natural
5 resources. And our village was basically a seasonal
6 encampment, eventually becoming our village providing
7 us and sustaining us for thousands of years here just
8 because of salmon alone. I want to challenge the RAC.
9 You have a heavy presence and influence with the North
10 Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Tonight I want to
11 make sure that we echo what our concerns are. It's based
12 on our living. It doesn't look good at all. So, I mean,
13 I talk about salmon; I've been talking salmon for well
14 over 20 years, so.

15
16 Again, you know, we heavily rely on
17 salmon, and it doesn't look good at all. I mean, we're
18 hurting. So, I appreciate all the comments. I heard, Mr.
19 Waska and, you know, he pretty much said everything for
20 us earlier before lunch and appreciate everything.
21 Appreciate your effort. Thank you very much. Good
22 afternoon.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, good
25 afternoon. Thanks for your comments. Brooke.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
28 Next, we'll move on to Stanislaus Sheppard.

29
30 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
31 Thank you, Brooke. I'll be speaking just a little bit
32 representing myself, no organization or my job position.
33 I am Stanislaus Sheppard, born and raised in Mountain
34 Village, Lower Yukon. Been a subsistence user all my
35 life. Over the years, as I grow up, the elders always
36 tell stories and in telling stories, they tell how we're
37 supposed to be conducting as men, as providers. Now we
38 all know we got this big reduction in our salmon return.
39 And in all the different organizations I sit on there's
40 starting to be more focused on restoration. I tell them
41 the good Lord is already fixing the spawning areas by
42 these high waters washing out the spawn fish already.
43 There need to be focused on the bycatch corridor and
44 wanton waste out in pollock fishery and beach
45 (indiscernible) down there in False Pass and
46 (indiscernible). We -- were gonna run out of ideas what
47 to do on the big Yukon River. Maybe this tree falling
48 down right there, I need to cut it off so the fish could
49 pass without strain, getting tired out or
50 (indiscernible). Also, on the subject of being

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1 restricted to 4-inch 60 feet down here on the lower
2 Yukon, it's hit hard.

3
4 People have to spend extra gas, extra
5 hours checking that little 4-inch mesh 60 feet just to
6 make up maybe four or five big whitefish. I brought it
7 up more than once during our -- the meetings I attend.
8 That -- and their answer is we need to get a proposal
9 or recommendation to your department, Fish and Game. I
10 had suggested that three rivers, the main traditional
11 rivers down below Mountain Village, have the
12 restrictions lifted up to 6-inch or smaller. Because
13 every scientist and biologist know, along with our
14 elders, with the traditional knowledge, all salmon
15 species (In Native), they spawned in gravel beds up the
16 river. All these rivers down below Mountain Village,
17 they're all whitefish, pike fish and sheefish spawning
18 areas. I tried my best, I'm trying my best to get them
19 to lift the 4-inch restrictions. Mainly on three
20 traditional areas that are being used to harvest
21 whitefish, sheefish is Hamilton, (In Native) Lake, River
22 and Alakanuk River, and the North Bank above (In Native)
23 Kavik. Younger generation right now changing our Eskimo
24 traditional names instead of calling it (In Native)
25 Kavik, they call it High Banks. And inside 30-mile
26 Alakanuk River, those three. I wanted to lift the
27 restrictions from 4-inch to 6-inch or smaller.

28
29 Now the scientists, they said, we need
30 scientists and biologists to tell us that these are
31 actual whitefish, sheefish and pike spawning. No salmon
32 going there to spawn. Our elders are the ones that hold
33 the traditional knowledge. Tell them. They say we need
34 that documentation. So, that's one of the barriers
35 that's stopping. When we use 4-inch 60 feet in those
36 rivers to get -- to harvest our whitefish, sheefish.
37 It's like everybody is used to having a full cup of
38 coffee with them on their hand right now. This is the
39 same example, if I was to use a tablespoon to have my
40 cup of coffee. Imagine how many tablespoons I'll have
41 to have before I finish that cup of coffee. That's the
42 same thing with the four-inch compared to the five and
43 a half or six-inch. So, I would be very happy if the RAC
44 address this issue and somehow come up with a proposal
45 or recommendation to the Fed, the State to lift the
46 restrictions on those three streams that I mentioned.
47 It would lighten up the hardship on the Lower Yukon
48 these people. Quyana (In Native) for letting me speak.
49 Thank you.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana,
2 Stanislaus.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Next, we have
5 Michelle DeWitt.

6
7 MS. DEWITT: Good afternoon. Is this
8 good?

9
10 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible) towards
11 your mouth.

12
13 MS. DEWITT: Towards here?

14
15 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. Thank you.

16
17 MS. DEWITT: Okay, all right. Good
18 afternoon. My name is Michelle DeWitt, and I work for
19 Bethel Community Services Foundation. And in that role,
20 we have become a partner on a project that Robin
21 Masterman, who talked before me, mentioned the (In
22 Native) Program, where we're looking at food insecurity
23 issues around the region. And in doing so, we would like
24 to make it easier for folks who are experiencing some
25 of the hardships others have discussed today. To access
26 traditional foods. And specifically, it can be difficult
27 to match people who are in need of additional food
28 resources with another resource, such as moose meat or
29 salmon. And I have a lot of experience with this in the
30 last few years because we also have been, in recent
31 years, helping to deliver the local food bank and food
32 pantry emergency food. One thing that might make it
33 easier for the emergency assistance programs would be
34 finding a way, or finding some sort of way, to make it
35 clearly allowable for organizations who employ people
36 who know how to hunt, for example, to be able to conduct
37 those activities for the benefit of folks who are needing
38 that food resource. So, for example, last night a
39 household that lives elsewhere in the region was being
40 enrolled in this program because they have need for more
41 food than they can currently provide for themselves. And
42 in their case, it's really -- the preferred food is
43 subsistence food resources. But it's very difficult for
44 us to access that. Because while there might be a
45 resource available, it's hard for us to match harvesting
46 that resource with then providing it over to this family
47 that lives in another part of the Y-K Delta region.

48
49 I'd -- be very helpful for us to provide
50 these traditional, nutritious sorts of foods for folks.

1 If it was clearly allowable that somebody as part of
2 their job could go, you know, conduct those harvests and
3 even include some of those families in those harvests.
4 That has become clear to me, it's a bit of a gray area,
5 and it would be very beneficial to many households if
6 we could maybe clarify that and allow that to happen.
7 Right now, for example, some of my coworkers have been
8 working on moose that was donated that will be given
9 away, which is wonderful. It's just hard, difficult to
10 plan around that because those donations come from folks
11 who have extra and we don't know, you know, who might
12 go out, who might catch, when it might arrive. Is it the
13 weekend, is it at nighttime that kind of thing. And so,
14 we would love to increase the ability of organizations
15 to ensure that we're providing the relevant food to
16 people who are experiencing those emergencies. Which
17 have been caused, as people have been talking, by some
18 of the, you know, policy issues, I recognize that. The
19 ability to reimburse for gas or provide the very small
20 stipend is also something that would be helpful. I do
21 think we would have far more people who would be willing
22 to go out and help families in need if we could clearly
23 cover some of those very expensive costs that folks face
24 when they travel those long distances to conduct those
25 harvests. So, thank you so much for hearing my testimony
26 this afternoon. I really appreciate all of you. Thank
27 you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
30 Michelle.

31
32 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Right. I think
35 there's a question, if that's okay. Alissa, is that you
36 with a question?

37
38 MS. ROGERS: Yes.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, you have
41 the floor, but maybe talk a little louder, please.

42
43 MS. ROGERS: Can you hear me?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That's better,
46 thanks.

47
48 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Thank you,
49 through the Chair. Thank you for your testimony. So
50 currently, right now, the way it works is due to the

1 regulations that was put in by ONC in the early 2000.
2 We were -- at that time, we weren't as abundant in the
3 moose population as we are now and where -- we were
4 trying to put protection on subsistence rights. That way
5 it doesn't become a commercial industry or an
6 enterprise. Especially with guiding services trying to
7 monopolize the subsistence and reduce the ability for
8 hunting ground -- fighting for hunting ground for local
9 hunters versus out of State or guided hunters. With that
10 being said, things have changed over the decade, two
11 decades, and we are in a situation where we no longer
12 need that clause in the regulations. It is a good clause,
13 and it does protect subsistence rights. But the
14 modification to that proposal regulation would need to
15 be ideally directed specific to moose, and we could put
16 in a justification record comment.

17
18 You could write a letter to the Alaska
19 Board of Game in support of the proposal with the
20 following recommendation amendments, which would be
21 directly to Unit 18. So, the amended recommendation
22 would be to amend only the allowance of Unit 18 to remove
23 the clause of monetary value for Unit 18, specifically
24 for moose. That's one thing that can be passed easily,
25 rather than having it a Statewide clause, cause
26 currently right now the proposal is for a Statewide
27 removal of that language that affects all of the state
28 of Alaska. So, if we put in a amendment clause just for
29 Unit 18 or Unit 18 remainder, then that will more likely
30 be passed at the at the Board of Game level than having
31 it a whole Statewide. If you go to the Alaska State
32 Board of Game website and pull up the Statewide meeting
33 that's happening this month, you would be able to put
34 in your comments and recommendations.

35
36 And also, if you show up to the meeting,
37 there's time for public testimony at the beginning of
38 the meeting. And then you also have the ability to give
39 public testimony during the actual discussion of the
40 proposal. I really encourage both you and YKHC to get
41 together. The more organizations that we have in support
42 of the proposal and how it's gonna affect the community
43 and how it affects subsistence could make a really strong
44 letter and recommendation to the Alaska State of Board
45 to pass this, to allow for us in Unit 18 to have the
46 ability to organize and coordinate the ability to get
47 pounds of meat to families in need. And that's the main
48 thing about our sitting on this Board, is that we are
49 pro-subsistence and also helping to keep a, I don't like
50 using this word, but sustainable yield and a good

1 population amount in regards to being able to be stewards
2 of these resources. So, thank you very much. And I just
3 wanted to give you a little bit history into what we're
4 doing now. And by removing the clause it will definitely
5 uplift more opportunity for organizations in the region
6 and the villages as well, to harvest as needed, the
7 moose. To provide local communities and organizations
8 that distribute food to resources. The ability to do
9 what's needed, as you are clearly saying. And thank you
10 to both of you so much for bringing that out because
11 it's something that is long overdue, since 2010, and I'm
12 very thankful for your comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Alissa.
15 So, we're going to take three more public comments. And
16 if anyone else happens to sign on after these three,
17 then we'll take it up in the morning for public comments.
18 Quyana.
19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Chair Cleveland.
21 Next on our list is Martin Nicolai.
22

23 MR. NICOLAI: Yeah, quyana for allowing
24 me to speak. My name is Father Martin Nicolai. I'm from
25 Kwethluk. I came on behalf of the -- our corporation,
26 but also for the people of Kwethluk. Last week, there
27 was an opinion offered by our ADF&G commissioner, Doug
28 Vincent-Lang, on the -- one of the Anchorage newspapers.
29 Concerning the decline of the king salmon. We know by
30 now, most of us here know, that he sides with the
31 trawling activities done within Alaska waters and out
32 in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. In his remarks,
33 he implied -- he implies that the bycatch situation is
34 not bad. But on the kings, he says that the ADF&G is
35 investing, quote, substantial resources to investigate
36 the decline of king salmon to understand the root causes
37 for the change in those populations, unquote. And he's
38 asking for additional funds for further research.
39

40 I want to give him a message even though
41 (indiscernible) this Federal organization, that for the
42 past 10, 15 years, there's been a lot of research, both
43 on the Federal level and on the State level. A lot of
44 studies, a lot of examinations done not only for the
45 decline of the kings, but also for the decline of chums,
46 halibut and crab. I would ask how many more years of
47 research is this going to take when we recognize already
48 that the climate is part of the problem, and bycatch is
49 a problem too. The way I see it, the way that this is
50 going, our resources that we have depended on for many

1 generations are going to be studied to death, to
2 extinction, all for the sake of money. (In Native) On
3 the upcoming restrictions on salmon fishing in parts of
4 Alaska and those already placed on the Yukon River and
5 the Kuskokwim River, he says, we are taking restrictions
6 today to ensure that salmon fishing continues to be a
7 cornerstone of Alaska's culture and economy.

8
9 And I see that this is a lot of bull (In
10 Native). I want to say to Mr. Doug Vincent-Lang, maybe
11 telepathically, he'll hear me. If you are for
12 restrictions on salmon fishing for Alaska's residents
13 throughout the state, why do you persist in saying that
14 the bycatch problem is not a problem? And why never ask
15 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to
16 implement caps on the chum salmon caught in the Bering
17 Sea? I would ask him that and I would say to him, right
18 now our fishing is severely restricted already. And you
19 say the bycatch is okay with you. Alaskan residents who
20 want to keep their culture around salmon fishing. And
21 those of us who want our salmon to be part of our economy
22 are not happy with your words, and we feel betrayed that
23 you would think that bycatch and destruction of Alaskan
24 resources is okay. Qu yana.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Martin
27 (In Native).

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: All right, next we have Mr.
30 Robert Hoffman. Just a reminder, try to keep your
31 comments to five minutes, please. Thank you.

32
33 MR. HOFFMAN: (Indiscernible) I can.
34 Maybe you can stretch it out to six. Okay, I'm here
35 today to get more information, more ideas on what we
36 call subsistence. The fight for subsistence.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Robert. Sorry, you -- can
39 you please address the Council? Thank you.

40
41 UNIDENTIFIED: We need to hear you in a
42 recording.

43
44 MR. HOFFMAN: Oh, yeah?

45
46 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

47
48 MR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Well, I think they
49 all know what I'm gonna say anyway. Well, anyway, we're
50 here to discuss subsistence and that our subsistence

1 passed down by the Federal government to the state of
2 Alaska to ensure that the Fish and Game be abundant for
3 years and years and years to come. And that within their
4 job and their duty, they have regulated so hard that we
5 on the Alaska Western Hemisphere are the highest
6 regulated people on this Earth. And we, on the Western
7 Hemisphere, you heard this morning the highest cost of
8 living in the region \$20 a gallon of milk. He's wrong.
9 It's \$19 for elders; we get a discount, thank the Lord.
10 Well, anyway, on subsistence, they regulate us by what
11 their job is to do by escapement, fish escapement. I've
12 been a fisherman for over 60 years, and I have hunted
13 every single year where they put their weirs up right
14 below McGrath all the way to Stony River. I've been
15 there and I watched them. I used to go up there with a
16 big motor, 120 horse straight right through. Now I can't
17 even get 300 or 400 yards from the weir. The reason why
18 is when you build the weir, you obstruct the main flow
19 of water, and it creates a sandbar down below. And the
20 fish come up from the Kuskokwim, go into the tributaries,
21 and they come across shallow water, and they know they
22 still got 100 miles to go. And if it's shallow here, I
23 wonder if we can ever get up to the end where we want
24 to go. That's why they -- I was called by Stony River
25 people two years ago.

26
27 Hey, the fish are all congregating. Most
28 of that (In Native). Which tells me why the fish
29 congregating in the mouth of these tributaries. Because
30 of the weirs in the state of Alaska has emplaced are
31 creating the fish to go lay their eggs elsewhere. We
32 have proof of this up to Gweek River one mile, I got my
33 fish camp. I've had it for 30 years. We used to only
34 fish whitefish and pike in that river. Another river,
35 the Johnson River, only whitefish from this village and
36 pike go up that river. Today, we fish salmon in them
37 rivers. In front of my fish camp, they're drifting nets
38 with nets in front of my -- a mile and a half up the
39 river. They're drifting with their nets in front of my
40 fish camp. And do you know what's the scary part? The
41 state of Alaska's duty, and job and responsibility is
42 to assure escapement. But there is no ways up these
43 other (distortion) tributaries. (Distortion) there's no
44 counting systems. You guys got nothing to count up there.
45 So therefore, they give Alaska 80 (indiscernible) to
46 assure a statement. (Indiscernible) Johnson River
47 (indiscernible). Therefore, the state of Alaska, it's
48 duties and responsibilities, are wrong already begin.
49 And yet 2024 statement count, we can utilize that
50 statement account to fish whether we get to fish or not

1 in 2025. And you know what the scary part about it is
2 that the Federal government won't give us any money.
3 Verify (indiscernible) statement to come.
4 (Indiscernible) from the Federal government
5 (indiscernible) some people have connections with Donald
6 Trump.

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Hoffman, we can't hear
9 you. Please, return to the mic.

10

11 MR. HOFFMAN: Tell him I want him to give
12 me a call.

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: If you could kindly finish,
15 there's one min [sic] -- you can have one more minute,
16 thank you.

17

18 MR. HOFFMAN: One minute and 10 seconds.
19 Okay. So you guys should tell that guy that wanna talk
20 to him. If they -- if the state of Alaska's duties and
21 responsibilities to assure escapement is wrong, then
22 they're hurting the Kuskokwim fisherman's region. When
23 I was a little boy, we had 60 to 70 fish camps, and the
24 big ships used to come to Bethel and take away our salmon
25 and float them down and sell them wherever. Today they
26 found a shortcut, get them at the high seas. And they
27 say we got no fish now. Why? They're getting them in the
28 high seas. And we got 14 fish camps last year. I counted
29 14 from 60 to 70. Hope somebody got Donald Trump's phone
30 number. I wanna give that guy a call. At least come up
31 here and witness what is happening to the tribal members
32 of the region. They need help with the highest cost of
33 living in the whole Western Hemisphere and the United
34 States. \$20 a gallon of milk, holy cow. Over in
35 Anchorage, it's less than half that price. I always go
36 over there. I don't drink milk, though. So, we need help
37 bad. We need help really, really bad. And if we're not
38 gonna get any help. We're gonna suffer. If he ever takes
39 away what he said, he's going to do Social Security.

40

41 That's the majority of our people live
42 on that little check. Social Security. And this lady
43 here that's helping us give out fish. I found a better
44 way, man. Let people act like people. They wanna be
45 human beings like us instead of being given, beggars on
46 the street, given, they wanna catch their own. Better
47 way to help them is buy them a motor and boat. Give them
48 gas, give them the equipment. Let them feel like human
49 beings walking on the face of the earth. Give them that
50 chance, rather than create some kind of a corporation

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1 or whatever to feed them. We don't know how many times
2 you handle that Fish and Game before it finally gets to
3 them. I was asked if I wanted fish two years ago, if I
4 wanted fish in my home, I said, yeah. He comes up with
5 one little fish, that big. And by the way, they say the
6 fish are getting smaller. The regulators have changed,
7 no wonder we're getting small fish. They changed this
8 from eight inch down to six inch and they asked today,
9 the fish are getting smaller. Mathematics will say one
10 and one is two. You give them six inch, they'll catch
11 six inch. Oh, that's a funky way to say tell somebody
12 the fish are getting smaller.....

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Robert.

15

16 MR. HOFFMAN: (Indiscernible).

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

19

20 MR. HOFFMAN: Okay. She said that's
21 enough. So, if you know Donald Trump's number, give me
22 a call. 0418, thank you.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Robert.
25 We have one more public testimony.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: And it looks like Timothy.
28 Vaughn.

29

30 MR. VAUGHN: Hi, my name is Timmy Vaughn.
31 I come by myself. What Robert was saying was true. I
32 would like to see a longer net cause I use 60ft, and
33 that's, you know, these pairs that we get last year, I
34 didn't catch enough fish at all. I used to catch, like,
35 300 fish for my family. These pairs just start having
36 is getting shorter and shorter. And we're still
37 struggling for fish. And those trawlers that are killing
38 all the fish from us. They passed out regulations like
39 is it to us, not them. They should be getting regulated,
40 not us. We're struggling out there. It's hard. That's
41 all I gotta say. Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Timothy.
44 Next on the agenda, we have Council member training
45 Federal proposals.

46

47 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And it'll be by
50 OSM.....

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MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, Phillip.

MR. PETER: I like to make a short comment concerning about the mesh size. There are three people mentioned from Yukon. Our elders used to prepare for fish nets, the mesh size. First in May, middle part May, they prepared the (In Native) net. That's how I used to watch, especially my dad. When he prepare a net for king salmon, he used the king salmon net. Eight and a quarter, eight and a half, 20 fathoms in 30 (indiscernible), I mean, 30 deep. And then the second one, he waited for chums. Waited for chums. Those chum nets are five and a half, all the way to six inches. Those are chum nets, sockeye net, and coho. That's how he repaired -- prepare for those fish. And then I watched my grandma. We used to have -- I used to -- he raised me. I used to watch her in fish camp. She prepare whitefish net, hung himself. (In Native) he speak to me. (In Native) This is whitefish net only.

When I testify before the Federal Boards and the State Boards in Fairbanks. I call that net a killer, a killer net. That's really sensitive net. It's really sensitive. A trigger, just like a trigger, trigger net. Once he catch a king salmon; when the king salmon splashes around, move around, pull off from the -- pull off from the whitefish and fall off and dead. I used to see a -- I'm a commercial fisherman Kuskokwim for long, long time. Are you -- when we -- when the Federal and the State governments changed the mesh size to six inches for the king salmon, I used to see a lot of floating, floating big king salmon. And also, on the beach where the gulls and crows were eating on the beach. These systems were -- these systems are followed (distortion), but our elders use them. To me it's a false regulations. We're getting -- we're crying right now. How come the fish are getting smaller and smaller? I always worry about them. Someday they'll deplete, no more king salmon. Who's gonna fight for us to make them come back? Us going to do it.

(Distortion) whitefish (distortion) king salmon, chum, sockeye and coho. How come on the Yukon, they tried to change the mesh size. Nobody listened to them. Nobody. Looked like they playing around with the people in Yukon. The Federal and the State government were paying you guys. Even though they

1 cried, they -- I guess they don't believe us, they don't
2 believe our elders. But when they're gone nobody's gonna
3 talk about it, only us who are staying in our village.
4 Right now it (distortion) seriously work together
5 (distortion) for the nation. (Distortion) power, power.
6 Yeah. I got the power to do this. Proud of themselves
7 not humbly. We need to get together as one Alaska. Follow
8 our traditional knowledge and culture, but with
9 (distortion)elders. Elders tell us what they take with
10 their own body and instruct us to do this correctly. But
11 those who didn't use it or take it, they just talk.
12 Blah, blah, blah. That's what my elders used to tell me,
13 you better take it with your body and tell it to other
14 people. What you learn using your own body, take it. Our
15 traditional knowledge getting [sic] disappeared slowly.
16 When I went to the big meetings when I was young, my
17 uncle paid (distortion).
18

19 One old man, I never forget, from
20 Utqiagvik, the Barrow, Alaska. Old man, he went on
21 telling with his tale. He was telling the truth. They
22 had the restrictions on all the seabirds in the Birch.
23 (indiscernible) Tell 'em [sic] one day get worse. Two
24 words the man said, hunger has no law; hunger has no
25 law. Never forget that one. That's why we're trying to
26 work with the State and the Federal government. I don't
27 -- maybe (indiscernible), but Pacific, for me, is
28 independently working for himself to restrict us. We
29 need to stand up now before it's too late. Hunger has
30 no law. But then my uncle brought me to the big meeting
31 in Anchorage. Hunger has no law. If we're hungry, we
32 sad; can't do nothing. But the one who is really strong,
33 even though he's hungry, try to do something to eat. We
34 need to work together to solve this problem, seriously.
35

36 (Indiscernible) When we hungry? Nobody.
37 That's why I'm telling you guys the truth. We've been
38 trying to fix this. Just talk, talk, talk. Sometimes I
39 think of my elders were -- who are gone now. If they're
40 alive, nobody's gonna (indiscernible). They've been
41 trying to fight this Area M and the trawlers. Nobody.
42 We need to start action. These regulations are false for
43 the mesh sizes.
44

45 I've been crying about the mesh size for
46 long time. I tell them on my testimony, let's try king
47 salmon not for set netting. Only for set netting, not
48 for drifting. I bet those king salmon would be -- I bet
49 the king salmon will be -- come back. I want to instruct
50 the Yukon River people, write a proposal. Six inches for

1 set netting, we're using six inches for set netting in
2 our river system in Kuskokwim. I do it every year. I set
3 my net after the breakup for the first run, for the
4 consumption. They're heavily restricted. (Distortion)
5 our generations. This whitefish net five, four-inch and
6 four and a half, it's not a strong net. But they're
7 really sensitive for those salmons. It's on
8 the(Indiscernible) all the comments I wanna make --
9 sorry about my voice. That's what -- our elders, when
10 they talk, they talk real loud to us, and we're thinking,
11 hey, this guy's scolding me. No. After hard talk, the
12 voices, after they done with talking, our elders used
13 to tell us because I love you. That's why I talk to you
14 hard voice to you; I'm not scolding you. That's what our
15 elders used to tell us. Because they love us. Quyana,
16 thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Phillip.
19 (In Native) Brooke. Oh, and we'll go back to OSM. You
20 have the floor, thanks.

21
22 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair,
23 members of the Council. For the record, my name is Tom
24 Plank, wildlife biologist with Office of Subsistence
25 (distortion) Management. And I'm joined here by my
26 colleague Pippa Kenner, which is an anthropologist with
27 OSM, and good afternoon. So, we are currently in the
28 wildlife open call for proposals, which ends April 4th.
29 So, for the 2025 Winter Council Training, I'm gonna very
30 briefly cover proposing changes to Federal subsistence
31 hunting and trapping regulations. And you can find this
32 under tab one in your books. Next slide. So, there are
33 two main ways to change Federal subsistence regulations,
34 via special action requests or proposals. The key
35 difference between the two is special actions are for
36 temporary short-term changes and can be submitted at any
37 point, whereas proposals changes codified regulations
38 and can only be submitted during the open periods. And
39 since we are currently in the open period, I'm gonna
40 walk through the proposal submittal process. Next slide.
41 If the Council would like to submit a proposal, all we
42 need is for one of you to make a motion and have a vote
43 to submit the proposal on record, and OSM staff will
44 draft it up to submit, and this can be done at any time
45 during this meeting.

46
47 Any member of the public can also submit
48 a proposal via mail or to our office. Hand it to me or
49 any OSM staff during this meeting or submit it through
50 the regulations.gov website. Next slide. When submitted

1 by the public, please make sure to include who is
2 submitting the proposal, including contact information,
3 what regulations you want change, in which unit, what
4 you want the regulation to say and why you want to change
5 it, and any support and information to help the Board
6 evaluate it. Next slide. Now sometimes proposals are
7 invalid, but it will be because they pertain to things
8 that are outside the Board's jurisdiction. Examples are
9 proposals pertaining to halibut, marine mammals,
10 migratory birds or non-Federal lands. Next slide.

11
12 For reference, the subsistence
13 regulations that can be changed through regulatory
14 proposals are found in the Code of Federal Regulations,
15 subpart C and D. Next slide. Which (distortion) covers
16 a wide variety of regulations (distortion) such as seal
17 requirements and definitions to more specific
18 regulations like harvest limits, seasons, permit
19 requirements, and customary traditional use
20 determinations. Next slide. It broke. Here we go. And
21 like I said it was gonna be very brief. Thank you. Please
22 remember that we are currently in the open period for
23 proposals, and they need to be submitted by April 4th.
24 And does anyone have any questions or would like -- any
25 of you all like to see example of past proposals or
26 regulation changes?

27
28 MS. KENNER: Hi, Brooke. Through the
29 Chair. Do we have a handout that has all this information
30 about the deadline and how to submit a proposal?

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, when we do the call
33 for proposals, we'll go over that information. There is
34 information in their tab three in their binders.

35
36 MS. KENNER: Thank you. This is Pippa
37 Kenner with OSM, for the record. I just noticed people
38 madly scribbling and I thought no you have it in your
39 materials. Thank you.

40
41 MR. PRINCE: Could we see an example?

42
43 MR. PLANK: Of course. Brooke, would you
44 go to slide 11, please? Figured this would be a really
45 great example since -- up one. Because this one was
46 proposed by your Chair. Back down. There we go. So, this
47 one was one that was done last year. And in this
48 proposal, the Native Village of Quinhagak requested that
49 the fall moose season in Unit 18 be extended an
50 additional 15 days. And as you see what's up there on

1 the slide, that was the information that Chair Cleveland
2 provided in her proposal. And then below that is the --
3 where she wrote out the proposed regulations of how she
4 wanted it to see. And then that was, I think that was
5 submitted through the Council. And that proposal
6 actually did get adopted.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: And I'll just add, Francis,
9 since Chair Cleveland isn't here. If you have an idea
10 for a proposal, we're here to help you formulate that,
11 our OSM staff, into an actual proposal to submit. So, I
12 know sometimes gathering the regulations and things can
13 be confusing. And so, that's -- we're here to help. So
14 later in the meeting the Council will be talking about
15 ideas for proposals, and you'll be able to vote to submit
16 any as a Council. You can also as a member of the public
17 or if you go back to your community, your tribe could
18 discuss proposals that you could submit also. Thanks.

19
20 MR. PLANK: And just to add to that, any
21 time that you just want to talk to one of us and ask us
22 more about it, that's what we're here for. We actually
23 enjoy this stuff. So, feel free to reach out to us.

24
25 MR. PRINCE: I just wanna say thank you.

26
27 MR. MORGAN: This is Walter. I got a
28 question. Okay, for like, a proposal for the Yukon side,
29 can we as a group here write a proposal to increase the
30 mesh size on there from 4-inch to 6-inch in whatever the
31 Yukon district is? Can we do that? I mean.

32
33 MR. PLANK: So, through the Chair.
34 Unfortunately, this is a wildlife cycle. So, but next
35 year-round will be the fish cycle, and that would be
36 when you can.....

37
38 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible) we
39 changed ours.

40
41 UNIDENTIFIED: We went through that, and
42 we changed ours to six inches, you know, and we found
43 better results. I know they -- much like he says, you
44 know, they killed them, but at least it kill less with
45 the six inch gear. So, it's something for the Yukon
46 people to think about, you know, next year, maybe. Thank
47 you.

48
49 UNIDENTIFIED: Question. Thank you. I --
50 it also sounds like he kinda wants to submit a special

1 action request because it's out of cycle.

2

3 MR. PLANK: Of course. That one there, I
4 will have to get with our fish biologist, and then we'll
5 work through that, and we can get with you on that.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke, for the
8 record. Just to add, perhaps one of our fish staff could
9 help us. I think Kevin is online, but it might be that
10 the Federal fisheries managers have the delegated
11 authority to set the mesh size limit. That might not be
12 something that has to be submitted via a proposal, but
13 I'd want someone else to help weigh in on. Make sure I'm
14 correct in saying that.

15

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Hey, Brooke.....

17

18 MR. ALEXIE: I got a question, Madam
19 Chair. Would I be able to meet with the Yukon members
20 to see if we can get a quick proposal together for moose
21 hunt? You think it's okay?

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, and we will be doing
24 the call for propo [sic] -- it's not quite yet. This was
25 just a training about how to do it, but at a break, we
26 could take a break later and you guys could chat about
27 that. And I do have -- Cory Graham had his hand raised
28 from our fisheries team, and I think he was going to
29 help weigh in about the mesh size. Thank you, Cory.

30

31 MR. ALEXIE: Okay, thank you.

32

33 MR. GRAHAM: Hi, Brooke. Through the
34 Chair. So, yeah. (Distortion) Holly Carroll, the federal
35 in-season manager, has the authority to set the mesh
36 size, so it would be good to work through her cause she
37 could make those changes with, you know, without having
38 to submit a special action request or submit a proposal
39 next cycle. And I also see that the ADF&G manager, Deena,
40 has her hand up, so I would defer to her. She might be
41 able to provide more information. Thank you.

42

43 MS. DEENA: Hi. Yeah, thanks. This is
44 Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
45 I would typically defer to Sam or to Shane Ransbury, or
46 Keith. I'm not sure if they're on right now. But I'll
47 just add that the mesh size in the Yukon is a maximum
48 of 7.5 inches. And so, right now it's open 7.5-inch mesh
49 24 hours a day. However, our salmon runs have been so
50 low that we have been closing fishing for salmon. And

1 so, that's when those mesh sizes are closed. But we have
2 been maintaining and keeping open fishing opportunity
3 for non-salmon species with four inch or smaller mesh.
4 So unfortunately, as long as our runs on the Yukon are
5 so low, and we have concerns about conservation and
6 escapement, you'll likely see those restrictions to help
7 protect salmon on the Yukon. And we'll be discussing
8 those a lot pre-season with both the Fish and Game team
9 and the Fish and Wildlife Service team.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. One more
12 thing. Member Alexie, I did just wanna clarify about
13 proposal discussion. It's fine to talk about ideas
14 amongst yourselves, but we should also bring those ideas
15 to the Council and share it on the record. So, it's part
16 of the meeting record. Thank you.

17
18 MR. PETER: Madam Chair, got question.
19 When they make a proposal for set netting and also for
20 drifting using six inches, just like Kuskokwim.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Pippa. Oh, go
23 ahead?

24
25 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair.
26 Through the Chair, member Peter. So, Mr. Peter, so I
27 think we're talking about kind of different things. What
28 they're talking about up on the Yukon is they have had
29 very little, like, virtually no opportunities to harvest
30 salmon. And then, while they are restricted from
31 harvesting salmon, they may use up to four-inch mesh to
32 catch non-salmon fish. So, I know what you're talking
33 about is that those -- or tell me, is this what you're
34 saying, that those four inch mesh nets are killing fish
35 who are hitting them, bouncing off, but they're harmed.
36 Yeah. So, what happens here on the Kuskokwim is that you
37 have openings. You have opportunities to fish, and
38 that's when you can use the larger mesh sizes. The
39 problem on the Yukon is they don't even have those
40 opportunities to fish. So, most the time it's stuck at
41 that four-inch mesh size.

42
43 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip.

46
47 MR. PETER: When they're using the 4-inch
48 and 4.5-inch (indiscernible) whitefish net when they
49 drift, they catch a salmon, incident catch salmon.

1 MS. KENNER: Thanks for the question.
2 This is Pippa Kenner, for the record, and Deena might
3 want to jump in here. So, it's -- the purpose of allowing
4 the four-inch mesh is to allow people to harvest fish,
5 non-salmon fish. And they strongly urge people not to
6 be fishing (distortion) in an area where they're going
7 to, incidentally, catch a bunch of salmon. You're not -
8 - the idea is that you're not targeting salmon and that
9 you move out of those areas in order to protect those
10 salmon going upriver.

11
12 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, if I may
13 comment, this [sic] Wassily Alexie. I'm from the Yukon.
14 Have you guys seen what the four-inch nets do to the
15 salmon? And we don't drift with the four-inch nets, it's
16 only a set net and 60 feet out from the beach, we can't
17 go any further. And also, they have us restricted in the
18 sloughs. You know, I've been living in Russian Mission
19 all my life, and we know what sloughs the salmon go in
20 and spawn. We have four sloughs that are south side of
21 the village. I never did caught no salmon in any of
22 those sloughs, and yet we're still restricted to four-
23 inch in those sloughs to get the bigger whitefish or
24 sheefish. And another thing is too, the four-inch, if
25 you get a salmon that get caught on this four-inch, they
26 maybe they'll be on the net for a couple hours. And, you
27 know, four-inch, it's closing their mouth, and they
28 can't breathe. They breathe on by their gills, but they
29 go and later on they suffocate. So, that's one reason
30 why we're trying to get that changed.

31
32 MR. PETER: Wassily, I got question. You
33 mentioned about four sloughs and there are non-spawning
34 sloughs. Those are non-spawning sloughs or a tributary
35 for spawning?

36
37 MR. ALEXIE: Those are non-spawning
38 salmon sloughs. There are only pike, lush, sheefish,
39 whitefish, the ones that go in those sloughs. And they're
40 not -- let's say they're freshwater, but they're colored
41 brown water. I never did catch no salmon in those.

42
43 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman [sic], here
44 Kuskokwim we set our net any mesh sizes and non-spawning
45 sloughs, like a quick river. It's about 10 miles above
46 Bethel, the one on below is Johnson River. The one on
47 (In Native) and the one on Togiak. The one in.....

48
49 UNIDENTIFIED: (Indiscernible).

50

1 MR. PETER: Yeah.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: If I may. So,
4 that was -- this is Jackie Cleveland. I was about to ask
5 the same thing. If everything is still current with those
6 Kusko rules. I do remember when I was on the Inter-
7 Tribal Fish Commission that the non-spawning salmon
8 streams did not have that mesh size specification.
9 Right, Terese? Yes, okay. So, yeah. So, I guess
10 personally, I wish that on the Yukon it was the same.
11 If I can say.

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
14 Brooke. I did want to let the Council know that the
15 Yukon Fisheries Management team will be doing a update
16 tomorrow, and they are interested in talking with you
17 and hearing your recommendations about salmon
18 management. So, that would be a good time to revisit
19 some of these points. If that sounds good to you. Okay,
20 thanks.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana,
23 everyone. Tom, do you have any more or Pippa?

24
25 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. This
26 is Pippa Kenner, for the record. I am going to wait
27 because I think you will be calling on me in a minute.

28
29 (Pause)

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We're on number
32 12 on the agenda, under action items, and under A there's
33 a deferred wildlife proposal and OSM anthropology
34 wildlife will present. Pippa.

35
36 MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. For
37 the record this is Pippa Kenner with OSM, and the
38 analysis for the proposal WP24-01 is in your
39 supplemental materials and I'll just hang on and give
40 you guys a chance to find those materials. Boy, got me
41 all flustered talking about fish. I'm glad we're moving
42 on to wildlife. (Pause) Yeah. So, this is Pippa Kenner
43 again. So, that's proposal WP24-01, and it's about brown
44 bear in your supplemental materials.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 So, hello, Madam Chair and members of
49 the Council. Again, my name is Pippa Kenner and I'm an
50 anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management,

1 or OSM in Anchorage. And this proposal was submitted by
2 a resident of McCarthy, Alaska, that's Unit 11. Who
3 requests that the Federal Subsistence Board allow the
4 sale of brown bear hides under Federal subsistence
5 regulations. And the proponent states that users in many
6 areas of Alaska must salvage the hide of brown bears.
7 However, the hides must not be sold. The proponent
8 continues that the hides of many other legally harvested
9 big game species may be sold, and brown bears should be
10 added to this regulation.

11
12 So, this is one of those proposals
13 that's been deferred. It's like a boomerang; it's coming
14 back to you. The Board deferred this proposal at its
15 April 2024 meeting, and since then, OSM has added an
16 addendum which adds new information and a new revised
17 OSM conclusion to the end of this analysis. The addendum
18 addresses the Board's reasons for deferring the
19 proposal. And then the purpose of an addendum is to
20 identify information that the Regional Advisory Councils
21 had not seen when they made their recommendation in fall
22 2023. The Federal Subsistence Board again deferred
23 action on this proposal at its recent February 2025
24 meeting, and at that time the Board requested that all
25 ten Regional Advisory Councils provide recommendations
26 at their winter meetings, this meeting, on the revised
27 OSM conclusion in the addendum. So, this is a Statewide
28 proposal that will be reviewed by all ten Regional
29 Advisory Councils, and each Council may inform the Board
30 whether the regulation is culturally appropriate for
31 their area. So, even though it's a statewide proposal,
32 focus on the needs and desires of the Y-K Delta region.

33
34 So, this addendum begins on page 18, and
35 I'm going to take a little bit of time to summarize it
36 right now. So, the Federal Subsistence Board deferred
37 action on the proposal because adopting it as submitted
38 might conflict with the Convention on International
39 Trade in Endangered Species, also known as CITES, which
40 is an international treaty. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
41 Service has delegated to the State of Alaska Department
42 of Fish and Game the authority to provide for the
43 international trade of brown bear hides, only if ADF&G
44 issues permits, reporting that the trade will not be
45 detrimental to the survival of brown bears in the wild.
46 So therefore, in order to sell a brown bear hide, you
47 must have a permit from the Alaska Department of Fish
48 and Game. Now, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
49 issues a permit to sell the hide of a brown bear, but
50 only if it's taken in an area with a two brown bear

1 harvest limit.

2

3 So, if you're in an area with a one brown
4 bear harvest limit, you may not sell those hides. So,
5 I'm gonna give us a little bit of background to this.
6 Brown bears outside of Alaska exist in much smaller
7 populations than in Alaska. The state of Alaska limits
8 sales of hides because unlimited sales might incentivize
9 illegal and legal harvesting in Alaska and elsewhere in
10 North America, that more brown bears might get
11 harvested. For this reason, the state of Alaska's
12 purpose is to prevent hides from entering commercial
13 markets. They wanna keep it in an area of customary
14 trade. While limiting the sale of brown bear hides is
15 necessary for the hundreds of brown bears harvested in
16 sport in general, hence each year in Alaska, in which
17 the edible meat need not be salvaged, the much lower
18 number of brown bears harvested for subsistence, and for
19 which the edible meat must be salvaged, does not need
20 the same level of restrictions on the sales of hides.
21 So, under Federal regulations you may take a brown bear,
22 but you must salvage the edible meat.

23

24 So, OSM went ahead and revised this --
25 our original conclusion, and the revised OSM conclusion
26 begins on page 22. The revised conclusion is to support
27 proposal WP24-01 with modification, that the hides of
28 brown bears, with or without claws attached, may be
29 purchased within the United States for personal use and
30 not to be resold. The hunter must request an OSM
31 customary trade permit and must return the permit.
32 Additionally, the modified regulation will align Federal
33 sealing regulations with state of Alaska sealing
34 regulations. So, as justification for this revised
35 conclusion, the Federal Subsistence Board deferred the
36 proposal in April because adopting it as submitted might
37 conflict with the Convention on International Trade in
38 Endangered Species, or CITES, which is an international
39 treaty that the United States has signed on to. In
40 response, the Office of Subsistence Management
41 modification allows the sale of a hide of a brown bear
42 under Federal subsistence regulations, and the bear may
43 be taken in area with one or two brown bear harvest
44 limit. So, the focus of the OSM modification is to limit
45 sales to purchases within the United States. CITES
46 limits only international purchases of brown bear hides.

47

48 So, this modification allowing only
49 domestic purchases is in line with CITES. The following
50 two elements of the OSM modification will align Federal

1 regulations with state of Alaska regulations and permit
2 requirements. One, purchase of a hide must be for
3 personal use and not to be resold, intended to prevent
4 a customary traded hide from entering a commercial
5 market, and two, the seal number must be included in any
6 advertisement of sale, which allows law enforcement to
7 identify that a brown bear hide advertised for sale on
8 the internet, for example, is from a legally harvested
9 brown bear. Then the OSM modification then goes on to
10 allow a high to be sold with or without the claws
11 attached and will allow a federally qualified
12 subsistence user who removes a claw to incorporate it
13 into a handicraft to then sell the hide.

14
15 So, current Federal edible meat salvage
16 requirements will likely protect brown bears from
17 overharvest under this new regulation. So, in
18 conclusion, the OSM modification complies with the
19 provisions of CITES, the treaty, and allows federally
20 qualified users to legally sell the hides of brown bears
21 while balancing customary trade and conservation. Again,
22 we're asking all ten Councils to provide recommendations
23 on this revised OSM conclusion, and each Council may
24 inform the Board whether the regulation is appropriate
25 for their area. So, I'm gonna backtrack a little bit.
26 I'm not sure if everybody knows what customary trade is.
27 Customary trade is exchange -- in our regulations, it's
28 the exchange of a subsistence resource for cash. And
29 that's allowed as long as it doesn't rise to the level
30 of a commercial enterprise. Customary trade is in the
31 definition of subsistence uses. So, it's just like
32 harvesting, sharing, bartering, customary trade, all
33 those things are legal. And so, in fall 2023, this
34 Council opposed the proposal. We are bringing it back
35 to you at the request of the Board for you to revise
36 your recommendation based on the new information
37 presented in this addendum, in the revised OSM
38 conclusion, if you want to. Would you like me to read
39 the Council's justification for opposing the proposal
40 in fall 2023?

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, please.

43
44 MS. KENNER: Well, now that I've said
45 that, lets find that (indiscernible). Okay. Where are
46 we..... here we go. I had my microphone off, didn't I?
47 Okay. So, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional
48 Advisor Council in fall 2023 opposed the proposal. The
49 Council opposed the sale of brown bear hides because of
50 a concern for an increase in harvest rates to an

1 unsustainable level, if the sale of hides was allowed.
2 The Council noted that it is difficult to obtain accurate
3 population estimates of brown bears, and that the brown
4 -- and brown bears have a slow reproductive rate. The
5 Council thought this issue might best be dealt with on
6 a region-by-region basis, rather than a Statewide basis,
7 because different areas have different brown bear
8 populations, sizes, and cultural values related to their
9 harvest and use. So, that was the justification for
10 opposing the proposal. And thank you for your attention.
11 This is the end of my presentation and I'm available to
12 answer your questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
15 Pippa. I have a question. I come from a place where we
16 have a large population of brown bear, and I guess if
17 that was our concern. Maybe it's written somewhere, but
18 can you remind me or maybe say why our concern for maybe
19 increase of maybe sport hunters, for instance. I guess
20 what would be your response if we were concerned for an
21 increase of sport hunters?

22
23 MS. KENNER: Great question. Thank you,
24 Madam Chair. For the record, this is Pippa Kenner with
25 OSM. So, these regulations would only apply to local
26 residents, federally qualified subsistence users who
27 have a customary and traditional use determination from
28 brown bear, which is basically all your communities in
29 the region. Sport hunting occurs under State
30 regulations, and this would have no impact on that. Thank
31 you.

32
33 MR. MORGAN: This is Walter. I got a
34 question. You know, they've been shooting a lot of brown
35 bear over here in the hills. I wonder what they do with
36 the -- I wonder if they follow these regulations too,
37 cause they killed quite a few brown bear to try to
38 increase that caribou herd. Do you know anything about
39 all their hides and meat that they got? The reason I'm
40 saying that is, you know, you put regulations on us, but
41 when they have -- I, you know, I'm fully for them hunting
42 those brown bears to increase our caribou population.
43 But what guidelines does the Fish and Game follow when
44 they get all them -- you know, they got, like, 30 bears,
45 if I can remember. What guidelines they follow? I mean,
46 if we're gonna follow guidelines, the only right is they
47 follow guidelines too. I mean we have -- you know, we're
48 always regulated and yet they do other things. You know,
49 I don't really know what they did with all their fur and
50 the meat that they caught. Thank you.

1

2

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair, member Morgan. So, I'm not familiar with what you're talking about, so I don't know anything about that. One of the things I wanna tell you is that this proposal is trying to increase opportunity, subsistence opportunity by allowing you to sell the hide if you wish to. Now, brown bear is taken in defense of life and property, the hide of a brown bear taken in defense of life, of life or property is the property of the state of Alaska and not -- and cannot be sold. So, under our regulations, wildlife taken in defense of life or property is not a subsistence use. And they are subject to the state of Alaska regulations, and the state of Alaska regulations say game taken in defense of life or property is the property of the State. A person taking game under this subsection shall immediately salvage and surrender to the department, the hide and skull of the bear completely removed from the carcass and including all attached claws.

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1 MR. MORGAN: That was my question, cause
2 we follow guidelines. You know what they follow? Thank
3 you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Walter
6 Morgan. I wanted to ask if there's anyone online from
7 ADF&G who might be able to chime in. And the question
8 was during predation of a predator control of brown bears
9 and wolves, what is done with the, I guess, the carcasses
10 and the -- what is shot. (Indiscernible) Thanks.

11
12 UNIDENTIFIED: Madam Chair.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

15
16 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
17 have a question, Pippa. What about, there's -- on this
18 proposal, it's just a brown bear. What about grizzly
19 bear? Thank you.

20
21 MS. KENNER: Another great question,
22 thank you. For the purpose of management, brown bears
23 and grizzly bears are put under the species name of
24 Ursus arctos. We know there's a difference between bears
25 in these two different habitats, interior bears and
26 coastal bears, but for the purpose of management, we
27 call them brown bears or brown bear/grizzly bears. We
28 see them as being the same. Thank you.

29
30 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, I -- can I say
31 something, Madam Chair? You know, the brown bears is
32 different than the grizzly bear (indiscernible). You
33 can't eat it after three days. So, I don't know why you
34 salvage the meat because they get strong, and we all
35 know that. I mean, you know, where the law would apply
36 on that? I mean, we can't eat -- the meat even the dogs
37 won't eat it after three days. So, it's something for
38 you to know. And you know, we know that because brown
39 bear -- the grizzly's different; his meat, you can't eat
40 it after three days.

41
42 MS. KENNER: Madam Chair.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Pippa.

45
46 MS. KENNER: Thank you. This is Pippa
47 Kenner, for the record. Through the Chair. Yes, we have
48 heard this before, and we do have a wildlife cycle that
49 we're in right now. And you will all be developing
50 proposals or submitting your own proposals before April

1 4th in order to change some of these regulations. With
2 the Board we -- the Board can't act without a proposal;
3 it doesn't do things independently. So, this is a great
4 time for this to have come up. I'm not sure it's gonna
5 satisfy the concerns that some people had, that they
6 don't wish it to be legal to sell the hide at all. So,
7 that's something to think about when you're developing
8 your recommendation, after you've heard further
9 testimony.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
12 I did -- we had a note from our -- someone else in our
13 Wildlife division that wanted to point out that right
14 now, in Unit 18, under State regulations, there's a two
15 brown bear bag limit. So, under State regulations, those
16 hides can be sold. But under the Federal regulations
17 right now, not. So, this proposal if you voted to support
18 it, might help align those regulations, but it's up to
19 you, if you want to support it or oppose it for Federal
20 subsistence users hunting under the Federal permit to
21 be able to sell the hide. Thanks. And if I misspoke,
22 feel free to correct me.

23

24 MR. PETER: I got question. Only the
25 hide, without the head?

26

27 MS. KENNER: Another (distortion).
28 Another good question. I am going to quickly make sure
29 -- I'm going to go to some information, to make sure I'm
30 giving you the correct information. So, you live in an
31 area where you may get a State subsistence registration
32 permit to take a bear, to take a brown bear. And you
33 also have to have that permit, in Federal regulations,
34 you're required to get that permit. If you live in an
35 area using this permit, you do not have to get the bear
36 sealed until it's removed from the area or presented for
37 professional commercial tanning. So, the reason why I'm
38 bringing that up is if you want to sell a hide under
39 this regulation, this OSM revised conclusion. If you
40 wanted to sell that hide, you would have to get it sealed
41 and to get it sealed, you would -- I wanna make sure I
42 get everything -- sealing means taking the skull and
43 hide with claws and evidence of sex attached of the bear
44 you killed to an officially designated sealing officer.
45 All right. So the hide does not have to include the skin
46 of the head. That's what you asked? Yeah.

47

48 MR. PETER: (Distortion) You mentioned
49 about how do we know the male or female about the brown
50 bear?

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MS. KENNER: Well, thank you for that question. It's a good one. I think when it said -- most of these hunting regulations that I've ever seen are for one brown bear, and it is legal to take, I think, a sow with cubs. So, if it has cubs then it's illegal to take it.

(Pause)

So, Madam Chair, this is Pippa Kenner again with OSM. There may be more questions. I'll be available to answer your questions throughout your deliberations on this, but we may have other people in the room who want to testify. So that might be the next step is to just go down the card, maybe.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Pippa, and good suggestion. Is there anyone not on the Council, in the audience who would like to testify on this.

MR. NICK: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, online.

MR. NICK: Yeah. This is Alex, online.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Alex.

MR. NICK: Hi, yeah. Before your deliberation on the rationale for the proposal or whatever you call it, I would like to try to bring up some points that might help the Council to come up with a good rationale of whether you oppose it or adopt the proposal. And one of the bullets I would use, if I was a Council member, is the defense of life and property kill of a brown bear. In cases there are no immediate response to the Alaska Troopers or wildlife troopers to bring the hide from the kill site or from the fish camp. You know, there are a lot of considerations in most cases in fish camp, there are no freezers. In most cases during the subsistence season, there are no extra freezer space. And it gets pretty hard, you know, if you want to keep, like, skin of any animal from spoiling in a very hot and windy weather.

And it's also very hard to keep any kind of hide from spoiling in severe weather. Like, if there's a storm and rainy, you know, it could spoil within just

1 a day. So, these are the type of bullets, you know, I
2 would be using as a rationale if I was a Council member
3 to support or oppose this. And one of the things that
4 you know, I would personally suggest is try to figure
5 out what would be acceptable, you know, should the
6 troopers or wildlife troopers cannot pick up the skin,
7 because it belongs to the State. What would be agreement
8 between the person who harvested the brown bear in
9 defense of life or property, and what would be the
10 State's answer on that if you can't get it to them
11 without watching it spoil first. The only, only way I
12 personally know this, the only way we can save a hide
13 is by drying it. That's the only way it won't spoil. I
14 think other people might not agree with me, but that's
15 what I would use for rationale. Thank you, Madam Chair
16 and Pippa.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Alex.
19 (Indiscernible) have questions or comments?

20
21 UNIDENTIFIED: (In Native).

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

24
25 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair. (In Native)
26 Qu yana. (In Native) Madame Chair.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana (In
29 Native), John. Tiffany.

30
31 MS. AGAYAR: Through the Chair. During
32 translation, it was lost with, what you would -- you
33 guys, what would traditionally be done when you stick
34 the hand into the mouth and then wiping the saliva.

35
36 UNIDENTIFIED: That's their Native wave
37 initiation. So, the child could know the animal and teach
38 him about respecting the animal too. Cause when I went
39 through that ritual, I was seven years old. I was scared
40 when my father opened the mouth and one of my uncles
41 grabbed to grab my (In Native) pulled up my sleeve and
42 pulled it -- stuffed it all the way to here. It was just
43 slime and blood. I had to wipe it and wash my face with
44 it. Maybe within an hour, I asked my mom what's wrong
45 with me? She looked at me and said, no, there's nothing
46 wrong with you. I said my skin is getting tight. Then
47 starting about nine years old, I used to go along with
48 the hunting parties. My first little bear was a orphaned
49 couple, I was forced to kill it. By the time I was 11,
50 I had my full first, full grown one. The first one I

1 caught, we gave it all away to an old man's family, all
2 of it. I kept wishing I wish could have it for my family.
3 That was just one -- some of the rituals we grew up with
4 cause my family were the last of the people that moved
5 down from the hills. That was the orientation and the
6 sharing with the families, and that's just one part of
7 our customary practice towards the bear. Thank you.

8
9 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you too. And I'm not
10 from this area, just one more question. When you're
11 talking about the hills, where are you talking about?
12

13 MR. ANDREW: The Kilbuck Mountains from
14 the south side, southeast from here, those
15 (indiscernible) mountains back there. It's Bristol Bay
16 site and the Kuskokwim site. Those are the places where
17 I used to go spring camp and fall camp. Mainly to go for
18 parka squirrels, (indiscernible) wolverine, bears if we
19 can catch them, try, we try to catch brown bear cause
20 their skins are tougher along with the moose to make
21 skin boats out of them. (In Native).
22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, John and
24 Tiffany. I think Pippa has a question or comment. Oh
25 well, she's available to answer here if anyone has any
26 more questions. We have a comment online. Go ahead, Stan
27 Sheppard.
28

29 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
30 I'm speaking on behalf again -- this is Stanislaus
31 Sheppard from Mountain Village, Lower Yukon. Back in the
32 late 80s and early 90s, I served on the Western Alaska
33 Brown Bear Association. And there were some regulations
34 and proposals that we passed and approved. I think they
35 might be going above and beyond what the Western Alaska
36 Brown Bear Association approved and passed. Pippa, if
37 you could remember or have copies of those proposals,
38 regulations. I think maybe if you bring up some of the
39 proposals and regulations that the Western Alaska Brown
40 Bear Association passed, it might help the Board to
41 understand this better. Thank you.
42

43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (Indiscernible)
44 comment.
45

46 MS. MCDAVID: I did want to say something
47 (distortion) on the back of your card that there's
48 (distortion), several steps. This (distortion) like
49 going (distortion) every single step. The exact same
50 (distortion) as an opportunity for public comment and

1 agency comment on this. And then so, the next step on a
2 proposal would be to make a motion to support the
3 proposal. And that just gets it on the floor for
4 discussion. In Robert's Rules of Order, you always try
5 to make the motion in the positive. So, even if you want
6 to vote to oppose it later the motion would be to support
7 it to get it on the floor for discussion. And then once
8 it's on the floor and seconded, then you guys can have
9 your Council discussion about how each of you feel about
10 it. And when your discussion is finished, then someone
11 can call the question, and then you can do a vote on the
12 proposal. On proposals in the past, this Council has
13 always liked to do a roll call vote because people might
14 have differing views, and maybe they'll be shy to speak
15 up if you just do the unanimous vote. So, if Alissa
16 isn't online for the roll call, vote later, I can help
17 record that. So, I just wanted to give you that
18 information about how we typically go through the steps.
19 And so, I'll turn it back to Madam Chair. Thanks.

20

21 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Brooke.
24 Alissa.

25

26 MS. ROGERS: Hi. I've been on the phone.
27 I just wanted to just let you guys know that I've been
28 here this whole time. I'll go ahead and make the motion
29 to approve proposal WP24-01 to open up for discussion.
30 Thank you, Madam Chair.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Alissa. There's been a motion to support WP24-01. Is
34 there a second?

35

36 MR. PETER: Second the motion.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip Peter
39 seconds.

40

41 MR. KENNER: Yeah. Madam Chair, this is
42 Pippa Kenner with, who do I work? It's.....

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: OSM.

45

46 MR. KENNER: OSM. Yeah, I just wanted to
47 make sure that the maker of the motion clarifies. Do
48 they mean the proposal as written or do they mean the
49 revised OSM conclusion in the addendum? So, if you vote
50 the proposal up or down, if you voted for it up, it

1 would be illegal. And we couldn't institute that
2 regulation because of our treaty requirements with other
3 countries. However, the revised OSM conclusion is the
4 one that if you do vote it up, if you do approve it, it
5 will then be legal for you to do it under Federal
6 regulations. Thanks. So, I'm talking to Alissa, I guess.

7

8 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

11

12 MS. ROGERS: I just want to clarify. My
13 motion was to support WP24-01 in regards to the OSM
14 conclusion of February 2025, with the modification that
15 the hides of the brown bear, with or without claws
16 attached, may be purchased within the United States for
17 personal use and not be resold. The hunter must request
18 an OSM customary trade permit and must return the permit
19 to OSM. Additionally, the modified regulation will align
20 with Federal sealing regulations with ADF&G sealing
21 regulations as it would be written, subsistence taking
22 of fish and wildlife and shellfish under General
23 Regulation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. So,
26 the motion has been clarified to support OSMS version
27 and there was a second from Phillip Peter. We're open
28 for discussion now, if anyone wants to say anything.

29

30 UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: We do need some discussion.
33 For the record, please. If you guys want to maybe talk
34 about how you feel about it. Thank you.

35

36 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, this is Walter.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Walter.

39

40 MR. MORGAN: You know, I like these
41 regulations, but during the summer, it don't [sic] work
42 for us because, you know, like Nick said, you know, the
43 meat will spoil. We don't have ways to unless we're, you
44 know, gonna bring it to a freezer and put the hide in
45 there. You know, we have no means of -- a lot of times
46 you catch these bears, their fur is really bad. That's
47 the thing. You know, summertime, (indiscernible) you get
48 them early spring, they're good, late fall they're good.
49 But there in the summer, their fur, you know not very
50 good. But that's why we use them for our (In Native).

1 So, you know, for blankets for underneath when we camp.
2 So, we dry them. And I think, you know, they should be
3 some changes in this and not only go, you know, you have
4 to do this. I'd like to see it, you know, to where it
5 works for us. Where we can dry it, we can salt it. You
6 know, like I say, during the summer, they're not worth
7 much. You -- a buyer wouldn't get them. They want to get
8 them in April, or in end of March, or October or
9 September. That's when their fur is good. So, I don't
10 know. I don't know how to word this, but you know, we -
11 - it needs to work with us too. So, and plus we don't
12 have freezers and stuff to salvage the meat. Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
15 Walter. Good points. Anyone else? Brooke.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: I just had a -- thank you,
18 Madam Chair, this is Brooke. Our wildlife staff did wanna
19 say, Walter, that the current Federal season is
20 September 1st through May 1st. So, under this -- 31st,
21 sorry. End of May. And so, it wouldn't be hunting during
22 the summer. Just so you're aware. Thanks.

23
24 MR. MORGAN: Well, during the summer,
25 they can attack you in your fish camp. That's why, you
26 know, we know they come around when they're hungry, so.
27 And their fur and their meat is not very good. When
28 they're, you know, starving. So, I wish there was a way
29 we can work it out to where, you know, we wouldn't get
30 in trouble, not salvaging the meat or the skin. You know,
31 we'd dry them but, you know, I would like to see that.
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again,
35 Walter. For myself, this is Jackie Cleveland. I will add
36 that, you know, I am all for alignment of regulations
37 to make it simpler for the user in the end. Because I
38 know in Quinhagak we go through different regs under
39 different jurisdiction for water and land, and it can
40 get confusing. So, alignment usually helps with that
41 because we are subsisting on both State and Federal land
42 sometimes. And then at the same time, you know, the
43 quality control issue that Walter has been pointing out.
44 So, for myself, I'm torn, but I just thought I'd add
45 that.

46
47 MS. ROGERS: Madame Chair.

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49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is that Alissa?
50 Alissa.

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MS. ROGERS: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair, Alissa Nadine Rogers. Brooke, did we have any other RAC members or RAC Councils take action on this proposal yet. And if we could get that report of those Council's actions, that'd be greatly appreciated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Alissa. And Pippa is up.

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MS. KENNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. So, we've had, let's see three Councils take it up. The Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council, Western Interior, Eastern Interior, oh, and North Slope and all of them recommended the Board to adopt the revised OSM conclusion in the addendum which we've been talking about. Thanks.

21

22

23

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I did just wanna remind you guys that last time this came before you, you were the only Council that opposed it. And that's okay. You get to decide for your region what you wanna recommend. So, just keep that in mind. Thanks.

32

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Maybe one last call for discussion and John Andrew.

35

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MR. ANDREW: (In Native) Quyana, Madam Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In Native) Any other discussion? I know I said last call, but. And hearing none is -- does anyone wanna call a question to vote?

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MS. ROGERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question has been called by Alissa, I think. Is there a second? So, I guess we don't need a second.

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Secretary, would you like me to assist with the roll call vote, or would you

1 like to proceed? This is Brooke. Thanks.

2

3 MS. ROGERS: Hi, Brooke. It'd be -- If
4 you can do it, that'd be great. That way, everything's
5 there, and we don't have to, like, email back and forth,
6 please.

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Happy to help, no worries.
9 All right, Council members. So, the motion on the floor
10 is to support WP24-01 with the February 2025 OSM
11 modification. So, when I call your name, you can say if
12 you support or oppose this proposal. Member Rogers.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Support with the
15 modification of OSM conclusion. Thank you.

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: Member Morgan.

18

19 MR. MORGAN: Yes, I support.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

22

23 MR. PRINCE: Yes, I support.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

26

27 MR. PETER: Oppose.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

30

31 MR. PARKS: I oppose.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

34

35 MS. EVAN: I support.

36

37 MS. MCDAVID: Fred Beans, are you online?

38

39 MR. BEANS: Yes, I do support it.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. John Andrew.

42

43 MR. ANDREW: Oppose.

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

46

47 MR. ALEXIE: Support.

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: And Tiffany Agayar.

50

1 MS. AGAYAR: I support.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: And member Cleveland, Chair
4 Cleveland.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I'm going to
7 abstain to this one.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Can you please state your
10 reason.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Well, I kind of
13 did before, that I'm torn. I like the alignment part,
14 but I get -- I guess I get how it's also disrespectful
15 to our way of life. Is any more needed. Thanks.

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. The
18 motion passes 7 to 3, with one abstention.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We haven't had a
21 break yet, so let's take a ten-minute break. Is that
22 enough, you guys? Yeah.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: And when we come back,
25 we'll.....

26

27 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID:a presentation from
30 the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and
31 Tanana Chiefs Conference. It's a time certain agenda.

32

33 (Simultaneous speech)

34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, we'll start
36 at 4:15 p.m.

37

38 (Off record)

39

40 (On record)

41

42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi again,
43 everybody. It's past 4:15 p.m. so, I'll call the meeting
44 back to order at 4:17 p.m. and we're going to jump to,
45 on the agenda number 14 under reports, A chum salmon
46 bycatch EIS. So, that's with the Kuskokwim River Inter-
47 Tribal Fish Commission and Tanana Chiefs Conference. So,
48 you got the floor, guys.

49

50

1 MS. VICENTE: (In Native) everyone, good
2 afternoon. I'm Terese Vicente. I work with the Kuskokwim
3 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as their policy and
4 programs director. I live here in Bethel. And I'll have
5 Krystal introduce herself.

6
7 MS. LAPP: Good afternoon. I'm Krystal
8 Lapp. I'm with Tanana Chiefs Conference, and I am their
9 natural resource policy analyst. I wanna say that I'm
10 very honored to be in Bethel and not only invited by the
11 RAC but invited by the Kusko Fish Commission and ONC.
12 So, I haven't been here in over ten years, and I'm quite
13 impressed to see how Bethel has grown up. So again, I
14 live in Fairbanks and I kinda come from all over the
15 area. I come from the Pacific Northwest and so I am
16 Athabaskan Diné and my husband, I met him in the
17 southeast in Klukwan; met this cool Tlingit guy and moved
18 up to the interior of Alaska. So, I've been there for
19 24 years now. And so again, I'm just very honored and
20 excited to be in Bethel this week. (In Native).

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Welcome to you
23 both.

24
25 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Madam Chair. And
26 we -- so Krystal and I have been helping Tanana Chiefs
27 Conference and Kusko Fish Commission fulfill their role
28 as cooperating agencies to the ongoing chum salmon
29 bycatch environmental impact statement process. The
30 (distortion) process that's ongoing at the North Pacific
31 Fishery Management Council. And you'll hear more from
32 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council staff and
33 NOAA fisheries, the Federal agency staff, as well as
34 members of the Council this evening. But we wanted to
35 give you guys an update on what Kusko Fish Commission
36 and TCC have been doing to contribute to this process,
37 as cooperating agencies, share a little bit about what
38 that means. And then share a little bit about what
39 happened at the February special chum bycatch meeting.
40 Though there's gonna be more conversation about that
41 this evening, too. So, I'll kick it over to Krystal. Oh,
42 and real quick, I guess. Krystal gave this presentation
43 update to the Eastern Interior and Western Interior RAC
44 as well. So, we're going through all the Yukon and
45 Kuskokwim region RACs and giving this update.

46
47 MS. LAPP: And I do want to apologize, I
48 think I've been on the go since the beginning of the
49 year, and I completely spaced printing out our
50 presentations. It is behind you. However, I will ensure

1 that I get some printed presentations by either this
2 evening or tomorrow. Some days I don't even know what
3 city or village I'm in. And I realized about a half hour
4 before that I forgot to print them. So again, apologies
5 for that oversight. I'm gonna kinda read from my script
6 cause I am a bit tired. And then towards the end, this
7 should be short and sweet, but I do encourage questions.
8 So, good afternoon everyone. Today I'll be discussing
9 the ongoing environmental impact statement process for
10 the chum salmon bycatch management, highlighting the
11 role of the tribal cooperating agencies who is Tanana
12 Chiefs Conference and the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal
13 Fish Commission. They'll also be referred to as TCC and
14 KRITFC. Our presentation is intended as an overview of
15 the contributions made by the cooperating agencies to
16 the chum salmon bycatch EIS. Unfortunately, it's not
17 meant to provide detailed technical explanations or
18 advocate for specific policy alternatives within the
19 EIS. That will be an opportunity this evening during the
20 special engagement. So, our role as cooperating agencies
21 is to ensure that traditional knowledge, scientific data
22 and the lived experiences of our communities are
23 accurately represented in the EIS process. I want to
24 make it clear that the final policy decisions will be
25 made through formal regulatory process at a later date.

26
27 And then, like Terese said, I did do
28 this presentation to the Eastern and Western Interior
29 RAC. Well, yeah, February 19th and the 25th. I can't
30 believe we're in March already. All right, so we'll go
31 to the next slide. We often get asked, you know, what a
32 cooperating agency role means. And so, this one -- I
33 think we're gonna turn down the lights so you guys can
34 see a little bit better. There we go. So, as cooperating
35 agencies in the EIS process, TCC and KRITFC have provided
36 traditional knowledge, scientific data and the lived
37 experiences to ensure that the voices of our
38 communities, our villages and our tribes are heard on
39 the Federal decision-making level. So, with that said,
40 going over this slide right here, is just a quick little
41 blip of the process that we're in right now. The
42 cooperating agencies are Federal, State, local and
43 tribal entities. When it comes to TCC and KRITFC, we
44 were listed as special expertise in specific subject
45 matter. And then I want to just highlight that the EIS
46 process did begin in July 2023 and is currently ongoing.
47 It can take on average one to three years for an EIS.
48 But it can take a little bit longer if it's complex.
49
50

1 I often get asked and so I just wanted
2 to list this for people what our special expertise is.
3 So, TCC and KRITFC have entered into Memorandum of
4 Agreements with NOAA NMFS. And so, our TCC and KRITFC
5 have been identified in special expertise to include
6 local knowledge, traditional knowledge and Western
7 scientific data on chum stock statuses within the Yukon
8 and Kuskokwim River systems, subsistence harvests among
9 communities in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River systems,
10 social, economic, environmental, and health impacts
11 related to salmon, chum salmon harvest restrictions
12 posed specifically on the TCC tribes of the Yukon. We
13 also hold special expertise on salmon life cycles,
14 management and research, and community and ecosystem
15 dependence on chum Salmon.

16
17 While there are slight variations
18 between the MOU signed by KRITFC and TCC, the common
19 theme is that we provide the traditional and local
20 knowledge of our people within this process. And so,
21 we'll go on to the next slide. So, slides three and
22 four, and this is slide three right now. These highlight
23 kinda the direct contributions made by TCC and KRITFC
24 as cooperating agencies. Those little squares up there
25 just highlight the main points and topics that we were
26 identified as special expertise and provided information
27 within the main document of the EIS, as well as
28 appendices. There are QR codes up there. And both TCC
29 and KRITFC provided presentations to the advisory panel
30 and to the Council at the February special meeting. And
31 so, we encourage everyone to take a look at those. They
32 are posted. And it is quite a bit of reading, but I want
33 to say that I am very proud of our regions to have
34 provided so much traditional knowledge and information
35 to make sure that their voices are heard in this process.

36
37 MS. VICENTE: And I just -- this is
38 Terese with the Kusko Fish Commission. I just wanna add
39 that, like what this all means. So that action that's
40 ongoing at the Council is specific to the pollock trawl
41 fishery in the Bering Sea. But the action taken also
42 affects Western Alaska chum salmon and communities that
43 rely on chum salmon like all of your communities. So
44 that's how we came in, and that's why we have been
45 working with NOAA fisheries as the Federal agency and
46 the Council staff. Because the tribes we work for are
47 the ones that have special knowledge, traditional
48 knowledge, expertise about how important chum salmon
49 are. How chum salmon show up on the rivers, how they
50 factor into your day-to-day subsistence ways of life and

1 economies, how it impacts your health, like mentally,
2 physically, everything. So, that's how we came in cause
3 we were able to provide that information more easily
4 than the Council's analysts and the Federal agencies
5 analysts. So, that's kinda how we're fitting into the
6 picture. Yeah, thanks.

7
8 MS. LAPP: Good explanation. She's got a
9 bit more brain power than I do right now. I'm a bit
10 tired. So, if we go on to the next slide. So, these are
11 sections within the draft environmental impact statement
12 that we've contributed to. As we move forward in this
13 process, that the special meeting we are going into our
14 final draft. So basically, in a nutshell, we are taking
15 all of our information and just kind of making it a bit
16 more concise as we get ready to have it published in the
17 next step. So, for those who -- I provided this page
18 here just because I had a lot of people asking where
19 they could find our contributions. So, this is a good
20 reference, if you decide to pull up those documents,
21 they are available online. And then TCC has extended
22 that any person that requests a printed copy of these
23 we will provide them to you at no cost. So, we'll go on
24 to the next slide. And so, this is a quick overview of
25 kind of what happened at the North Pacific, in early
26 February. And so that was an eight-day meeting. And I
27 don't know, Terese, if you wanna take over and explain
28 for me.

29
30 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, I'm happy to. So, I
31 think some of you even were there at the Egan Center the
32 beginning of February attending this meeting and
33 testifying at it. But just some key outcomes from our
34 organization's point of views, where we heard
35 presentations from the preliminary draft Environmental
36 Impact Statement about chum salmon bycatch and there
37 were five alternatives in those. Since the meeting
38 occurred, the Council, after hearing from I think it was
39 close to 180 people testify, they revised those
40 alternatives slightly and you'll hear a little bit more
41 about those tonight. But in addition to the Council staff
42 giving their presentations, Krystal here on behalf of
43 TCC and me, on behalf of the Kusko Fish Commission,
44 shared some presentations about the appendix sections
45 that we contributed to the preliminary draft EIS to give
46 more information for the Council's decision making. The
47 Council has a scientific and statistical committee
48 advisory body that gives advice on the science and the
49 data, and the methods used. And we heard them really
50 support the inclusion of local and traditional knowledge

1 in these sorts of analyses, which we thought was really
2 encouraging. So, I know Krystal's been working with some
3 of the SSC members since then. And it's something that
4 we've heard the Council say they want more local and
5 traditional knowledge in their decision making. So,
6 we're excited to see some -- yeah, just some support
7 from this, from the different bodies.

8
9 And just kind of a synopsis of the
10 testimony. I mean, there were a lot of people that spoke,
11 but most of the testimony we heard from tribal
12 representatives in the Kusko Region, Yukon, Bristol Bay
13 Norton Sound, Southeast, talked about how important
14 salmon and chum salmon are for people, for the ways of
15 life. The impacts of chum salmon declines in recent years
16 and how -- there's some really heartfelt testimony
17 shared. And there was a lot of consensus about supporting
18 a migratory corridor for Western Alaska chum salmon as
19 their swimming through the Alaska Peninsula. And so,
20 there are some alternatives on the table that would do
21 something like that. So, that's something we can share
22 more with you about and definitely we'll -- you'll hear
23 more about this evening. So, that QR code on the screen
24 there -- and I'll print some copies, like Krystal said,
25 and bring you guys these so you can take them back and
26 learn more or talk with your tribes about them. But
27 that'll bring you to the landing page for the Council
28 meeting. It has all the documents and the presentations,
29 and you can find recordings to all the meetings on
30 YouTube and things like that. And we're happy to help
31 you with those too. So, that's a little synopsis of the
32 meeting. I don't know, Krystal, if you wanted to add
33 anything.

34
35 MS. LAPP: Yeah. No, you did definitely
36 better than me. Like I said, my brain kinda hit a wall.
37 I do wanna highlight that last bullet point where it
38 says we had testimony from Yukon, Kuskokwim, Bristol
39 Bay, Norton Sound and Southeast Alaska tribal
40 representatives. We had a collective effort of unity.
41 We had a tribal unity room during this special meeting,
42 and it was extremely empowering. After being in this
43 space for a long time, it can be quite daunting on us.
44 And to see Tlingit and Haida (indiscernible) Bristol Bay
45 Native, it was -- I'm probably gonna try to not cry
46 right now, but it was refreshing that they stood in
47 unity with us, and they were there to be by our side.
48 And they've basically said, hey, you know, we're heading
49 down this path too. And so, we wanna learn from you, and
50 in the meantime, we're gonna stand with you. And that

1 unity is gonna continue on throughout this process. But
2 that taught me that even though I'm sitting up in the
3 Yukon and that's all I can think about, that we're all
4 salmon people and this affects everybody. And we had
5 literally almost everybody show up. So, I just wanted
6 to give a quick little shout out to that. It's a type
7 of unity I haven't seen in a long time. And the TCC
8 leadership, that was one of the first things they told
9 me when I came back home. They were really happy to see
10 that. So, I'm gonna try not to cry, and then we'll go
11 on to the next slide. So, this is the slide that
12 everybody is very, very interested in. And Terese is
13 really good about making things look good. I couldn't
14 do this.

15
16 So, we listed out the alternatives as
17 they are now since the special meeting. And this is a
18 very, very basic overview. There are documents that both
19 Kusko Fish Commission and TCC have, and other entities,
20 such as the Yukon Intertribal Fish Commission, that
21 definitely have more of those nitty gritty bits of
22 information. That's also something that this evening at
23 the special session, you'll get a lot more of that
24 technical information. However, we just wanted to
25 provide a quick little overview. And then on the bottom
26 there, it just kinda talks about the summary of the next
27 steps of this action, which is another question that we
28 get quite a bit. So, I just wanna highlight, even though
29 we don't have dates on there, I do have tentative dates
30 and that will most likely be presented again this
31 evening. So, when we do get some printed copies, I'll
32 be sure to print the anticipated timeline. But going
33 forward, the next big step that we're looking at is
34 getting this preliminary draft EIS published into final,
35 which we anticipate to happen in August of 2025. That'll
36 be the next point that we will need tribal input.
37 There'll be a 60-day comment period that opens and so
38 that's the next time that we can really engage and have
39 our voices heard in this process. Until then, the Kusko
40 Fish Commission, TCC, and many other entities will most
41 likely be providing webinars, one on ones, we're open
42 to tribal consultations to help your tribe make the best
43 decision for your region. And with that, I'll see if
44 Terese has anything to add.

45
46 MS. VICENTE: I think I'd just say, so
47 just reiterating kinda next steps. The Federal agency,
48 NOAA fisheries will publish a draft EIS and there will
49 be a 60-day comment period, like Krystal said. And by
50 that point, like Krystal and I are teams, other entities

1 will be able to help analyze what's going on and provide
2 some recommendations on specific these alternatives, or
3 I think of them as like the pathways for the options on
4 the table that can be chosen from. And then the Council
5 has said they want to move this forward as quickly as
6 possible to get something in place as quickly as
7 possible, so that hopefully what happens in the Bering
8 Sea trawl fishery, it'll reduce Western Alaska chum
9 salmon bycatch. So, their next meeting, and I think Doug
10 Shaftel will speak more to this, this evening, but
11 they're thinking the next chum bycatch meeting at the
12 North Pacific Council could be as soon as December 2025.
13 Potentially next February. But I think there might be
14 questions, given everything that's going on in the
15 Federal government and things.

16
17 So, we'll just have to stay tuned. But
18 just so you guys kinda know a little bit of the timeline
19 there, and they'll speak more to it this evening. But
20 like Krystal said, we're very happy to meet with you
21 all, meet with the RACs again, meet with your tribes or
22 communities to talk more about this and make sure you
23 have the best information at your fingertips, and happy
24 to help write comments or get in touch with the Federal
25 agency about consultations and things like that too. So,
26 and our contact information is listed there, and I'll
27 make sure it's printed out so you have it to take home
28 too. I think that's the end.

29
30 MS. LAPP: We made it short and sweet.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Terese and Krystal. What a great presentation. And I'm
34 proud of you guys, too. I was surprised to hear that
35 when you showed the event that it wasn't just a Y-K, it
36 was, like almost Statewide so that's nice to see; the
37 unity there. There is a question from back here. Robert,
38 come up to the mic, please. (In Native).

39
40 MR. HOFFMAN: Okay. Yeah, I got a
41 question.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Please introduce yourself.

44
45 MR. HOFFMAN: Well, my name is Robert
46 Hoffman. I'm with (In Native) Council. And I'd like to
47 get some things clarified in my mind before I lose what
48 at one time, we called our precious fish. Okay. We're
49 talking about chum salmon bycatch. Chum salmon bycatch.
50 You know, (In Native) before the chum salmon, long time

1 ago, the real word that we used for chum salmon was
2 dogfish. Just for the reason being that chum salmon we
3 used to feed our dogs before the snow go came. We used
4 to feed them to our dogs and now we're talking about
5 chum salmon bycatch. You know, I would prefer a different
6 species of fish. And then the question, I'm really
7 wondering how come we don't talk about the other kind
8 of fish that we would like to see and that the time of
9 the year that these fish swim, we don't talk about that.
10 We're talking about chum salmon and the value that it
11 got pretty precious in his last few years, when we used
12 to call it dogfish, cause my mother used to cut them up
13 and we dry them and feed them to our dogs before the dog
14 salmon. We even buy them from upriver Aniak and Kalskag
15 buy the bundle to feed our dogs. My question is, if
16 they're bycatch, what about the other species of fish
17 that we treasure, such as king salmon? How come we're
18 not talking about bycatch on king salmon? They don't
19 catch them, I guess. They must catch them, if they can
20 catch chums, they can catch king salmon and that's our
21 valued fish. And if we let someone get away with it
22 without asking that question, they are eating what we
23 once called our treasure fish.

24
25 Long time ago, when I [sic] small, the
26 big ships used to come up to Kuskokwim and take our king
27 salmon, whether they'd be commercial or whatever. They
28 took them and they went [sic] took them down with their
29 big ships up the Kuskokwim, where they parked across the
30 river at first. Then they dredged out the front, made a
31 seawall, and they parked them on their side. They took
32 our king salmon away, what we treasured. How come we
33 don't talk about them kind of -- there must be no bycatch
34 on them. Bycatch, in my version of bycatch. Why is it
35 that we don't get to fish in our rivers? Are big
36 tributaries, but yet they're allowed to catch bycatch.

37
38 Is bycatch an escape word? So, a small
39 word so that we let them continue to fish. To be honest
40 and fair to all fishermen on this earth, the ocean and
41 the Kuskokwim and the Yukon, if one stops, they should
42 all stop. That's why I wanna to talk to Donald Trump.
43 But that's the way it is and that's the way -- that's a
44 question that I have. We don't hear of any king salmon
45 bycatch. I'm sure there is. Our treasured fish, what we
46 treasured, and they don't talk about it, you know. Chum
47 salmon even in the commercial industry \$0.25 a pound.
48 Is that what we're eating today? \$0.25 a pound. When the
49 kings were \$1.50 a pound. \$1.50 I sold commercial; I got
50 a license there. But we never used it for 20 years, so

1 I don't know. Now that they found a shortcut out in the
2 ocean, they don't have to come up all the way up to
3 Kuskokwim.

4
5 Take our fish and go down. They found a
6 cheaper way to get it. Fishermen in the ocean bring it
7 to shore and sell them. That's the only thing I can
8 speak of because it's the same thing as talking about
9 bycatch. That only tells me they continue to fish and
10 we don't because of last year's escapement account,
11 which in my knowledge, elder knowledge, they don't have
12 a weir up the tributaries that they're fishing today.
13 Therefore, they're wrong already to begin with. And yet
14 we're using 19 -- 2024 escapement count. And now they're
15 even fishing in Johnson River, drifting nets where they
16 never drifted all my life. Drifting in front of my fish
17 camp in (In Native) where they never drifted before in
18 their life. And they're packing up there now.

19
20 That's what I told you about the
21 problem, that the accountable people, which in my mind
22 is one sided because we're the only people on earth that
23 don't get to verify nothing. I want to verify the State's
24 count. I wanna make sure that they're telling the truth.
25 That's why they call it verify, to find out if it's
26 really truthful and if they deny us that privilege, guess
27 what? The only thing I can think of is they're trying
28 to get away with stuff because they have the power and
29 all that good stuff from the Federal government. That's
30 why I wanna talk to Donald Trump.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Robert.

33
34 MR. HOFFMAN: Yeah, I'm almost done here.
35 Just one more little quick one. So, if somebody could,
36 in the future, include other fish besides bycatch, the
37 lower fish. I would really, really appreciate it,
38 quyana.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Robert.
41 And Terese, you want to respond.

42
43 MS. VICENTE: I can just respond quickly,
44 so the RAC is aware. They -- there is king salmon bycatch
45 every year. And so far, this year, the pollock trawl
46 fishery has caught about 8,500 king salmon. Usually in
47 typical years, about half of all the fish they catch is
48 bycatch. The king salmon fish are from Western and
49 Interior Alaska. For chum salmon, it's usually between
50 like 10% and 20%. So, they do catch king salmon. It's

1 something that TCC and Kusko Fish Commission track
2 pretty closely. We've submitted some emergency petitions
3 to the Secretary of Commerce in the past several years
4 to reduce chinook salmon bycatch. We've asked for caps
5 of zero; that's been denied. So, we're continuing to
6 work on that and talk with our tribes about it. They
7 don't catch very much other species like sockeye,
8 silvers, humpies, they're not catching too many of those
9 out in the Bering Sea that they're reporting. I was
10 gonna say -- oh, the reason why we're talking about chum
11 bycatch here is because that's what the action is right
12 now. It's very specific to just chum bycatch. So, there
13 are some caps in place for chinook bycatch and some
14 limits there, but there aren't any for chum bycatch right
15 now, which is why this is taking center stage to try to
16 get some management of chum bycatch and maybe some limits
17 in place. So, if that's helpful.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
20 Terese. That was helpful. Was that helpful, Robert?

21
22 MS. MCDAVID: Point of order, please. The
23 Chair has the floor. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Brooke.
26 I did -- before we go to the next question online, I did
27 want to mention or respond to Robert's comment about the
28 chum salmon just being, that we just feed them to the
29 dogs, but it really depends on where you're from. And
30 it's all perspective, you know? Yes, we feed chum salmon
31 or when I was growing up, we fed chum salmon to our dogs
32 too, and humpie, but also, those dogs are precious
33 themselves. And they had a precious job, and they hauled
34 our things and helped us go hunting and gather things.
35 But also, many elders prefer chum salmon when they get
36 to a certain age, I noticed in my nearby communities
37 older people like more chum salmon than the oilier salmon
38 species. And yeah, just to reiterate, you know, some
39 areas only have chum as their species or their main
40 species. And for them, it's just as, probably just as
41 sacred as, you know, kings are to us. So, I just wanted
42 to add that. Can we go to the next question now?

43
44 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, can I say
45 something here on the chum salmon?

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Walter.

48
49 MR. MORGAN: Okay. I used to fish with
50 my dad, my mom and my auntie. My auntie had blue eyes,

1 blond hair, and she was more native than anybody. And,
2 you know, she could speak Yup'ik and everything. People
3 were shocked that she could talk Yup'ik. But anyway,
4 back then we put a lot of dog salmon up. We put lots,
5 that was our main stable food was dog salmon. I don't
6 know, I don't like the word dog salmon because, you
7 know, not only dogs ate them. We ate lots of them. And
8 those old people say not to eat too much kings when you
9 have cuts and stuff like that; they'll get more infected
10 or their stomachs will get bummed when your tolerance
11 goes down, you know, you're -- as you get older. And
12 stable food was chum salmon. I mean, it's just, nowadays
13 I put away more chums than kings because they -- I don't
14 get after effects, you know, after you eat a big king
15 salmon, some people, you know, tend to get a little sick
16 because they're so rich. And plus, your cuts won't heal,
17 even with silvers. But, you know, I think just
18 downgrading, calling them dog salmon, I don't know where
19 that word came from. That wasn't from the native people,
20 because chum salmon were our best food. My auntie Mary
21 would, you know, get mad at us if we catch too many
22 kings, she said I want dog salmon. You know, they -- I
23 mean, chum salmon, so I just don't like them downgrading
24 chum salmon. They were our best stable food, and it
25 still is today. Thank you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Walter.
28 I know Phillip, and then somebody online. Oh, no. No
29 one's online. Phillip.

30
31 MR. PETER: (In Native) I'm gonna speak
32 in my own language, so that everybody could understand
33 what I'm saying, to explain. (In Native) Quyana (In
34 Native).

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, (In
37 Native) Phillip. So, there's been a request to maybe
38 take a recess for the day because we'll have to come
39 back at 6:30 p.m. But before we do that, Tiffany, do you
40 have a comment or question?

41
42 MS. AGAYAR: I have a comment, thank you.
43 Through the Chair, this is Tiffany speaking. I was
44 listening to the translation, and I just want the public
45 and everybody else that was listening and to under --
46 to realize that everything that he said in (In Native)
47 was not fully translated, but that our translator did
48 the best that he could. And thank you for all of that.
49 As there are some Yup'ik words that do not have a full
50 explanation, or a short enough one for how much he has

1 spoken, and if it was translated to English, he would
2 have spoken twice as long. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Quyana,
5 (In Native). Brooke, do you have anything?

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, before we break and
8 come back later for our evening session. I did just want
9 to let folks know kinda what to expect for this evening.
10 So, we have some members of the North Pacific Fishery
11 Management Council and some supporting staff from NOAA
12 that are here tonight. And their primary purpose for
13 being here is to engage in discussion with the RAC
14 members about the chum salmon bycatch alternatives that
15 are being considered. It's a chance for you all and
16 members of the public to listen and learn and ask
17 questions so that you can understand the actions that
18 they're considering regarding chum salmon bycatch. And
19 so, this session tonight, it's not a chance to provide
20 testimony to North Pacific Fishery Management Council;
21 they are not having a meeting.

22

23 This is the RAC meeting, and the RAC
24 members would be happy to accept public testimony in the
25 morning, like we do every day of the RAC meeting about
26 this issue. But we may be able to take some questions
27 from the public this evening. Cause we also wanna make
28 sure that folks are understanding the actions that are
29 being considered. So, it's really a time for discussion
30 and understanding. And we're really happy that they've
31 made the time to make the trip all the way out to Bethel.
32 And some of them will be here tomorrow too, to hear some
33 of that testimony so, just wanted to let folks know. And
34 we do have a hard stop tonight at 8:30 p.m. Just because
35 we wanna be respectful of our Council members,
36 especially our elders, because we have a full day of RAC
37 meetings tomorrow. So, we'll see everyone back here at
38 6:30 p.m. and online as well. Thank you.

39

40 (Off record)

41

42 (On record)

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (Distortion)
45 dinner time. So, I just wanted to welcome everybody to
46 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
47 presentation on Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch. So, I
48 was gonna hand it over to Brooke to go over the short
49 agenda items. Brooke, please.

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
2 thanks, everyone, for joining us tonight for this
3 special session. Just a little brief outline of the
4 evening. We'll start out with introductions of our RAC
5 members and our guests this evening, so folks can get
6 to know each other a little bit, and then we're gonna
7 have a presentation. That's up here on the screen. And
8 following the presentation, it'll be time for discussion
9 between Council members and the North Pacific Fishery
10 Management Council members and the staff that have
11 joined this evening. And that's the primary focus of
12 this evening. Depending on how long it takes, we might
13 have a chance to take a couple comments from the
14 audience. The main purpose, like I said, is to go over
15 and learn about the chum salmon bycatch alternatives.

16
17 Tomorrow morning, there'll be another
18 opportunity to provide public testimony to the RAC about
19 anything related to subsistence. But also, if you wanna
20 comment on anything related to the chum salmon bycatch
21 alternatives at that time. If we do have a chance for
22 questions from the audience later tonight, there's some
23 pink pieces of paper on the back table. And if you could
24 write down your question and pass those either to
25 Krystal, she's in the purple (indiscernible) vest, or to
26 me. If you need help writing down your question or
27 formulating your question, Krystal is happy to step out
28 in the hallway with you. But we do have a hard stop
29 tonight at 8:30 p.m., cause the Council has to reconvene
30 early in the morning for a full day. So, we'll just have
31 to kinda play it by ear and see how far we get. And I
32 guess we have a question, Madam Chair.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Tomorrow we -- they can be
37 comments, yeah. This evening, if we have time, it'll be
38 questions to help make sure everyone understands the
39 alternatives being considered. And the question from the
40 audience, since it didn't make it into the mic, was
41 whether or not members of North Pacific Fishery
42 Management Council will be here in the morning or
43 listening in to hear any public testimony. And the answer
44 was yes. So, with that Madam Chair, I'll turn it back
45 to you to get introductions started.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I guess I can
48 start since I have the mic. I'm a RAC member. As many
49 of you know, it's my fourth year with the RAC and I
50 believe the first time being an officer, as of today.

1 And I'm from Quinhagak, Alaska. My Yup'ik name is
2 Nalikutaar. I'm a subsistence advocate by heart and
3 documentary filmmaker and photographer by trade. I'll
4 keep it short for now and tell you more tomorrow. So,
5 should I go left or right? Tiffany.

6
7 MS. AGAYAR: Good evening, my name is
8 Tiffany Agayar. I'm from Alakanuk, my Yup'ik name is (In
9 Native) and I'm employed by Yukon Delta Fisheries
10 Development Association. Thank you.

11
12 MR. PARKS: Good evening, my name is
13 Henry Parks and I've been in this RAC for five years.
14 Still learning and I'm really kinda excited for you guys
15 to present your presentation. Thank you.

16
17 MR. PETER: Good evening, my name is
18 Phillip K. Peter. I -- my Yup'ik name is (In Native).
19 I'm from Akiachak, Alaska. I've been in the RAC for five
20 years. Thank you.

21
22 MS. ROGERS: Hi, good afternoon. Welcome,
23 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. I'm happy
24 to have you guys here for the final time. I know we've
25 been requesting and requesting and so, finally for
26 (indiscernible). Thank you, guys, for answering our
27 letters after so many years of trying to get you here.
28 (In Native) I am Alissa Nadine Rogers from Bethel. My
29 mom's side of the family comes from Alakanuk my dad's
30 side of the family comes from Hooper Bay. I was raised
31 here in Bethel, and on the weekends, I was shipped out
32 to different villages to meet my family members
33 (distortion). And it is my eighth year on this Board.
34 I'm also co-Chair of the Kuskokwim River Sound
35 Management working Group, secretary of the ADF&G
36 Subsistence Advisory Committee, and the Future Nation
37 Future Leadership Fellowship with the Stanford
38 University. I'll keep it short too, cause it's a long
39 list. Thank you.

40
41 MS. KIMBALL: Thank you. Thank you so
42 much for having us here in Bethel and taking time out
43 of your meeting. My name is Nicole Kimball, and I was
44 born in Ketchikan. I live in Anchorage. I work with
45 shoreside processors that process all commercial
46 fisheries across Alaska, from Ketchikan to Saint Paul,
47 to Kodiak to Unalaska, State and Federal waters. And I
48 serve on the Council as one of the Alaska public members,
49 so not as an agency or organization.

50

1 MR. TSUKADA: Yes, thank you very much
2 for the invitation. My name is Rudy Tsukada. I was born
3 in Japan, but I did go K through 12 in Kenai, Alaska.
4 So, I kinda grew up as a salmon and halibut expert, I
5 guess, if you wanna call it that. But now I work for
6 Coastal Villages Region Fund, one of the community
7 development quota groups. I'm the chief operating
8 officer; this is my second time with Coastal Villages.
9 I worked there in 2002 through 5 and then currently 2020
10 'til [sic] now. So, thank you very much for the invite.

11
12 MR. SHAFTEL: Good evening, Madam Chair,
13 members of the Regional Advisory Council. My name is
14 Doug Shaftel, and I was -- I'm with NOAA, National Marine
15 Fisheries Service. I was born and raised in Anchorage,
16 Alaska and joined National Marine Fisheries Service
17 about two years ago. I'm working on regulations related
18 to the chum salmon bycatch (distortion). My
19 responsibilities include supporting Council staff,
20 including Kate Haapala and Sarah Marrinan, who are the
21 lead analysts on the chum salmon bycatch. Of course,
22 Sarah is here today with us, and I'll be here today
23 presenting on the alternatives that are before the
24 Council. Thank you so much for having us.

25
26 MS. MARRINAN: Hi, I'm Sarah Marrinan.
27 I'm an analyst with the North Pacific Fishery Management
28 Council. I was one of the analysts that worked on this
29 preliminary DEIS, along with others. I'm based out of
30 Anchorage, and I just really appreciate you guys having
31 us and being able to be here tonight.

32
33 MS. BAKER: Madam Chair, members of the
34 RAC. My name is Rachel Baker, and I work for the Alaska
35 Department of Fish and Game. And I'm -- my role on the
36 North Pacific Fishery Management Council is to serve as
37 a commissioner or Vincent-Lang's alternate on the
38 Council. And so, I've worked for The Alaska Department
39 of Fish and Game for about the last six years. But prior
40 to that I worked for NOAA fisheries and within the North
41 Pacific Fishery Management Council process. So, thank
42 you for meeting with us this evening. I look forward to
43 talking with you.

44
45 MR. PRINCE: Good evening, Madam Chair.
46 I'm Francis Prince, Jr. and I'm from Kotlik. This is my
47 first time running as a RAC member and it's good to be
48 here.

49
50

1 MR. ALEXIE: Good evening. My name is
2 Wassily Alexie. I've been on the Board for about five
3 years, I'm from Russian Mission. I'm also the tribal
4 Council president for over ten years about. And I also
5 serve on the Western Bering Sea Tribal Commission. Thank
6 you guys for being here.

7
8 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, my name is John W.
9 Andrew from Kwethluk, my Yup'ik name is (In Native). And
10 all my life when I was growing up, I was fishing, hunting
11 and trapping. I did a little bit of fishing,
12 (indiscernible) a little bit of fishing, but I always
13 end up fishing all summer for my relative's subsistence.
14 Then back in the 60s/70s all the way to early 80s, we
15 had a little commercial fishery out here, and I fished
16 all those years. But in other years I crewed over in
17 Togiak, Bristol Bay. I tried one summer down in Kodiak,
18 north side of Kodiak Place called (indiscernible) Bay,
19 (indiscernible) Bay at Cape Ugat. I was working with a
20 guy from Ouzinkie, late (indiscernible) and he was a set
21 netter. And I was working on his nets every day. Day
22 after day, when they used to allow us to fish all week,
23 all the weeklong.

24
25 You see humpies every day by the
26 thousands, and you get sick of seeing them
27 (indiscernible) and there some years, stinky and slimy.
28 But I enjoyed fishing in those other places like Bristol
29 Bay and Togiak, and all along the shore. People in this
30 region have been fishing for well over 10,000 years
31 (indiscernible). Before pre-contact all the fish camps
32 along this river, including ko[sic] -- over in Yukon
33 River. They set their smoke houses to be full all the
34 time, starting from the early years on, a few centuries
35 back, all the way up to they -- starting in the 80s we
36 had -- starting around 1980, we started seeing
37 significant reduction of our catches and that was the
38 start of our problems.

39
40 And then we found out false -- South
41 Nunivak, False Pass area (indiscernible) interception
42 fishery down there. Then again, they say they are hit
43 harder than on the north side of the peninsula. The
44 other big factor that I was complain about is that we
45 care about the bottom trawl fisheries within the Bering
46 Sea, where they [sic] fisheries, intercept immature
47 salmon by the millions. In those years that we start
48 seeing drastically that our commercial fisheries ended
49 over here in 2016. Then from then on, they start
50 restricting us from year after year, starting about that

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1 time, we could -- even nowadays it's really bad on the
2 Yukon, out on the Yukon River, in our River restrict us
3 down to a few hours a week, even (indiscernible) with
4 the care which we don't usually use. Sometimes they use
5 us (indiscernible) by the Johnson River, to upriver, to
6 forest Kalskag a little bit above the allowance with
7 (indiscernible) a half a shackle or 150 feet. If the
8 allow was that much, and it's from the time we used to
9 use one shackle, it was nice.

10

11 And when it used to be very full of fish,
12 we just make one drift, you got a fi[sic] -- a whole
13 load of, boat load of 2 or 300 -- around here our boats
14 are tiny. You can load it up with 2 or 300, you're done
15 for the day. It takes another 10 to 14 hours to process
16 the whole boatload; cutting, drying, hanging them. And
17 in the early years, we -- best times for us to fish and
18 process them before the rainy season comes. That it was
19 our best practices after -- sometime in the latter part
20 of July, rainy season starts, then it's not -- half the
21 time they lose a certain percentage of their -- drying,
22 slow, smoke-drying fish. It's not very good practice in
23 this and they allow us to go out in the rainy season,
24 which is not good for people that try to do -- to dry
25 the traditional way, but you can freeze them and jar
26 them. That's the other options. And now these years, we
27 get more and more regulated and restricted from the
28 catching our own fish that come back to the river of
29 origins to spawn in their tributaries and the spawning
30 rivers. I could go on, but I need to give them other
31 folks a chance to speak too. Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John. I
34 wanna go to Walter, since you came in later.

35

36 MR. MORGAN: Hello, my name is Walter
37 Morgan. I'm from the mid Kuskokwim, Lower Kalskag. So,
38 this is my second year in the subsistence Board. I --
39 still learning lots, but man, it open your eyes. Just,
40 you know, wondering, where's our fish? And, you know,
41 back when I was growing up, we used to go up there. It's
42 a big tributary, one of the biggest tributaries between
43 here and McGrath, Aniak River. They [sic] used to be so
44 much fish, you couldn't step twice without stepping on
45 a fish. That's how much fish they [sic] was. And we
46 didn't use -- my dad would bring us out with poles, long
47 poles, you know, about two inches wide to tie a hook on
48 it. And we'd catch all our fish, and we'd fill up two
49 tubs and finish. You know, I don't see that anymore. And
50 the fish used to be so thick up there. Not even two

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1 bends in the tributary, you'd see bears, brown bears,
2 black bears, everything. And, you know, in the last --
3 after the 70s, I started seeing it dropping down to, you
4 know, 80s, there was hardly anything of the big chains,
5 and now there's hardly anything up there. That's all I
6 have. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
9 Walter. We have also Frederick Beans online from
10 Mountain Village. If he can introduce himself.

11
12 MR. BEANS: Yeah, Frederick Beans. Most
13 people call me Fred, my friends call me Fred. I've been
14 -- this is my first time on the substance Board here,
15 and it's quite interesting so far. And yes, I'm -- I've
16 always been curious about why our fish are declining and
17 all that stuff, so I see where people are coming from.
18 So yeah, and it's pretty dismal so any salmon, you know,
19 that's where, that we rely on each year. So, I think
20 there's something going on out there. Maybe not only the
21 trawlers, I bet you anything could be something to do
22 with the mining industry up in Canada, too. But you know
23 where the spawning grounds are. And yes, this is my
24 first year, and I'm learning something. Okay. Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
27 Frederick, or Fred. Alissa, were you gonna say
28 something?

29
30 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes,
31 I forgot to declare that I currently work for the Alaska
32 State Troopers, and I am not here representing them as
33 a State employee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
36 that note. And Brooke, you wanna make an announcement,
37 you said.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, please. Before we move
40 into the presentation. I did want folks to know that we
41 have Mr. Patrick Sampson here tonight interpreting for
42 us. During the presentation, he's gonna be providing an
43 English to Yup'ik translation of some of the highlights
44 of the presentation. If you would like to listen, you
45 can grab one of these headsets there on the back table.
46 If we need more, we can get them. They should be on
47 channel number one, and then you can turn them on and
48 you'll -- if you put them on, you'll hear the Yup'ik
49 version of the presentation. Unfortunately, that's not
50 available with our current technology online. But also

1 later, if any of our Council members want to speak in
2 Yup'ik, he'll also provide the English translation. And
3 that's why we passed out headsets to all of you guys.
4 So, we do have a lot of bilingual Council members, and
5 we like to support whichever language they feel most
6 comfortable speaking in. So, with that, I'll turn it
7 back to you, Madam Chair. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
10 Brooke. So, I believe we're now at the presentation, if
11 there's not any more introductions left. Unless we
12 introduce the public, or no? Okay. So feel free to start
13 your presentation when you're ready. Thank you; looking
14 forward to it.

15
16 MR. SHAFTEL: Thank you, Madam Chair. For
17 the record again, Doug Shaftel with NOAA National Marine
18 Fisheries Service, here to present on the chum salmon
19 bycatch action. I wanted to preface this by noting that
20 we do have, of course, several Council members already
21 here, but we had two who got waylaid due to a delay in
22 their flight coming out of Juneau and that is John
23 Mueller as well as John Kurland. John Kurland is the
24 regional administrator for National Marine Fisheries
25 Service, Alaska region. Okay. So, I'm gonna start with
26 the next slide. And I think we're gonna have to wait for
27 Brooke.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. One second.

30
31 MR. SHAFTEL: That's alright. Okay. So,
32 the primary purpose of this presentation is going to be
33 an update to the RAC on the pending action before the
34 North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding chum
35 salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. You
36 can accept this information as informational, you can
37 certainly use it to craft a letter to the North Pacific
38 Fishery Management Council or to the National Marine
39 Fisheries Service, either when the document is published
40 in the Federal Register or at final action. And I'm
41 gonna get into what those two things mean later in the
42 presentation. You -- when devising your statement that
43 you would like to make, should you want to make one. You
44 don't need to focus on feedback just around the
45 alternatives that we'll be discussing, but you could
46 certainly talk about any information or perspective that
47 you'd like to convey to the Council or NMFS.

48
49 During this presentation, I may use the
50 term Council frequently. That's because the North

1 Pacific Fishery Management Council is often referred to
2 as the Council, and it has become my way of speaking to
3 refer it as the Council. That's not to be confused with,
4 of course, this Regional Advisory Council. So, the
5 information surrounding this issue is complicated, and
6 the amount of analysis done to evaluate the options has
7 been extensive. This presentation will be a very
8 condensed overview. There are a lot of extra slides at
9 the back of the printouts of the presentation that we've
10 circulated, which I'm not planning to present today. But
11 if you have questions about certain topics, I can refer
12 to those slides at the end of the presentation. And they
13 include background material on chinook and chum salmon.
14

15 Now this is part of the North Pacific
16 Fishery Management Council's outreach work. And as
17 Brooke has noted, on all outreach trips, including this
18 one, we do not have a quorum of Council members. In
19 other words, we do not have enough Council members to
20 constitute a formal meeting of the Council. So, these
21 Council members are not here as representatives of the
22 Council. I wanna quickly -- I'm sorry, next slide. I'm
23 going to quickly walk through the outline for this
24 presentation. I'm going to start with an overview of
25 what is the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and
26 talk about its decision-making process. The main content
27 is going to focus on the current chum salmon bycatch
28 management action pending before the Council, as well
29 as the proposed management alternatives that the Council
30 is considering.
31

32 I'll also cover the more substantial
33 changes that have been made to the alternatives, in the
34 last meeting that the Council held in February. And the
35 final part of this presentation will be a walkthrough
36 of the next phases of the action timeline and what you
37 can expect and how to become involved. Next slide,
38 please. So, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
39 and the National Marine Fisheries Service, also referred
40 to as NMFS by short, jointly manage U.S. fisheries in
41 Federal waters off of Alaska and Federal waters are those
42 that are 3 miles to 200 nautical miles from shore. In
43 terms of process and relationship, the Council is not a
44 Federal agency. However, it makes management
45 recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service
46 and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, which governs the
47 National Marine Fisheries Service. And it is NMFS or the
48 National Marine Fisheries Service responsibility to
49 write, approve, implement and enforce fishing management
50 regulations in Federal waters. Next slide, please. The

1 national marine -- I'm sorry the governing law over
2 fishing management in Federal waters is the Magnuson-
3 Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. That
4 Act established eight regional fishery management
5 Councils, including the North Pacific. It established
6 the 200 nautical mile zone that is the Federal waters.
7 It also established the national standards, which are
8 the principles that the Council and NMFS, or the National
9 Marine Fisheries Service, must follow in any fishery
10 management plan.

11
12 There are ten national standards and the
13 Council and NMFS must consider all of them. Next slide,
14 please. The Council's jurisdiction covers four regions
15 the Arctic, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and the Gulf
16 of Alaska. The Council primarily manages groundfish,
17 shellfish, and halibut allocations, but it also manages
18 the bycatch in the groundfish fisheries. Next slide,
19 please. In terms of composition, the Council has 15
20 members, 11 of which have voting rights. Of the voting
21 -- of the 11 voting seats, seven are appointed by the
22 governors of either Alaska or Washington. And the other
23 four voting seats are held by various agency officials,
24 including a representative of the Alaska Department of
25 Fish and Game and the regional administrator for the
26 National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region. Next
27 slide, please.

28
29 So, the Council has five meetings each
30 year that typically run eight days in length. These
31 meetings are held in Anchorage, one in an Alaska fishing
32 community, and then one held in either Portland or
33 Seattle. All Council meetings and Council Advisory
34 meetings are open to the public. Written comments at
35 these meetings can be provided in advance of each
36 meeting, and the Council meetings are held in hybrid
37 format, which means that testimony can be provided
38 either in person or virtually on agenda items of
39 interest. You can also observe the meetings over
40 YouTube. Because the meetings are streamed on that
41 platform. Next slide, please. So, at these meetings, the
42 Council considers potential fishing management measures
43 and most recently at the February 2025 meeting in
44 Anchorage, the Council considered an analysis of the
45 chum salmon bycatch action. And for this action, the
46 Council is considering ways to minimize chum salmon
47 bycatch, in particular bycatch of salmon in the Bering
48 Sea pollock fishery that originate from Western and
49 Interior Alaska river systems.

1 This action is focused on the pollock
2 fishery because these -- this fishery encounters the
3 majority of salmon caught as bycatch in Federal
4 groundfish fisheries. So, the purpose of the action is
5 to reduce chum salmon bycatch to the extent practicable,
6 particularly Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch. And
7 this action is being considered in light of the recent
8 and ongoing declines in chum salmon abundance in Western
9 and Interior Alaska River systems. Next slide, please.
10 So, now I'm gonna talk about the timeline about what is
11 [sic] happened so far on this action. And later in the
12 presentation I'll talk about what's happening next. So,
13 this timeline shows the milestones of the current action
14 that have already occurred. The impetus for this action
15 really started with tribal representatives and
16 subsistence fishers in October 2021. And at that time,
17 the Council received public testimony on chum and
18 chinook run crashes, which for chum salmon coincided
19 with a high bycatch year as well. Following that meeting
20 in June 2022, the Council received the requested
21 information from the Bycatch Committee and Bycatch
22 Reports. It then requested that industry take immediate
23 action for the upcoming B season and established the
24 Salmon Bycatch Committee. That committee, the Salmon
25 Bycatch Committee, which included tribal
26 representatives, subsequently made recommendations to
27 the Council on a purpose and need statement for the
28 action.

29
30 And since then, the Council has reviewed
31 three different versions of the analysis, with the most
32 recent review of the analysis occurring last month. And
33 when I use the term analysis, I'm using it as a shorthand
34 for a document, which is referred to as an Environmental
35 Impact Statement. It's also sometimes referred to as an
36 EIS. So, you may see that in the presentation. Next
37 slide, please. So, as has been mentioned before, the
38 Council makes recommendations to the National Marine
39 Fisheries Service, or NMFS, and NMFS is the lead agency
40 on the Chum Salmon Bycatch Action Analysis. There are
41 three cooperating agencies, however, and you -- who are
42 providing special expertise, and they include the Alaska
43 Department of Fish and Game, as well as the Kuskokwim
44 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the Tanana Chiefs
45 Conference who presented to you earlier today. Next
46 slide, please.

47
48 So, I'm gonna spend the next three
49 slides talking about the composition of chum salmon
50 bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. And what

1 you're looking at on this slide are figures that are
2 pulled from the National Marine Fisheries Service annual
3 genetic reports. Not all chum salmon caught as bycatch
4 in the pollock fishery originate from Western Alaska.
5 They originate from countries all across the North
6 Pacific Rim. In the annual genetic reports, there are
7 six reporting groups of chum salmon populations. And the
8 circles that you see on this slide in different colors
9 represent individual salmon popula[sic] -- chum salmon
10 populations. Draw your attention to panel C on this
11 slide. Thank you for that, pointing it out with the
12 laser pointer. When we say Western Alaska chum salmon
13 bycatch, the figure -- I'm sorry the panel C is what
14 we're referring to. So, those are the populations shown
15 in yellow and light blue.

16
17 And in my next slide I'm gonna zoom in
18 and talk a little bit more about that panel. Next slide,
19 please. So, as you can see on the left, there are two
20 regional genetic stock composition reporting groups. And
21 the first one is referred to as Coastal Western Alaska,
22 and it's shown in yellow. And the second is referred to
23 as Upper Middle Yukon, and it's shown in light blue. Now
24 each year the genetic composition of the bycatch is a
25 little different. And on the right is a pie chart that
26 shows the composition of the 2024 bycatch. In 2024,
27 32,081 chum salmon were caught as bycatch, and of that,
28 4,205, or 13%, were estimated to be of Western Alaska
29 origin. Next slide, please. So, this slide, which is a
30 rather detailed table, is really for your reference. I'm
31 gonna walk you through it, but I'm not gonna get into
32 the numbers too heavily. On the left, are chum salmon
33 bycatch estimates that are broke out by -- broken out by
34 by genetic grouping. And the Council receives genetic
35 reports on bycatch annually, as I already mentioned.

36
37 So, the two genetic reporting groups
38 that make up what we're referring to as Western Alaska
39 chum salmon, again, are the Coastal Western Alaska,
40 which is shown on the left, far left column. The Upper
41 Middle Yukon, which is in the middle just adjacent to
42 the Coastal Western Alaska Reporting Group. And if you
43 combine the numbers in those two columns, you get Western
44 Alaska combined, which is the second column on the right.
45 And the column on the far right is total chum salmon
46 bycatch in the pollock B season. That includes chum
47 salmon from all genetic reporting groups, including
48 those that originate from Asia, as hatchery fish. These
49 numbers are sourced from observer data that's maintained
50 in the National Marine Fisheries Service catch

1 accounting system. Okay. I'm now going to switch and
2 start talking about the proposed alternatives that the
3 Council is considering. Next slide, please. So, when I
4 use the term alternatives, I am referring to different
5 regulatory tools that are being considered for
6 addressing chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock
7 fishery. And the Council is considering four action
8 alternatives, which are really different ways to modify
9 existing bycatch regulations to reduce chum salmon
10 bycatch. These action alternatives largely include
11 bycatch caps that would close all or part of the Bering
12 Sea to pollock fishing if met. All regulatory changes
13 only apply to the B season, or summer fishery, because
14 the pollock fishery encounters greater than 99% of the
15 chum bycatch during the B season.

16
17 So, alternative one, which I'm gonna go
18 over here in a moment, is what's referred to as a no
19 action alternative. The Council is required by law to
20 consider a no action alternative, which essentially
21 means that it would result in retaining the existing
22 chum salmon bycatch regulations for the Bering Sea
23 pollock fishery. Alternative two is an overall chum
24 salmon hard cap. Alternative three is an overall chum
25 salmon hard cap with abundance indices, or essentially
26 different measurements of abundance. Alternative four
27 are changes to regulations that govern and incentive
28 plan agreements. And alternative five is an in-season
29 corridor closure that is triggered by an area specific
30 chum salmon bycatch cap. I'm now going to talk about
31 each of the alternatives in a little bit more detail.
32 But again, we encourage you to ask questions at the end
33 of the presentation, if you have any, about any of these
34 alternatives. Next slide, please.

35
36 Yeah, okay. This slide is really hard
37 to see the coloring on. I'm [sic] apologize for that;
38 it did not show up well. But what we're trying to show
39 you here are -- is the program that industry uses under
40 existing bycatch regulations to avoid chum salmon. And
41 the program, or the primary tool that it uses, is what's
42 called a rolling hotspot program. And the rolling
43 hotspot program identifies areas on the pollock fishing
44 grounds where chum salmon encounters are high. These
45 areas are then closed (distortion) to seven days
46 typically, and vessels are required to move elsewhere
47 during that closure period to fish. This program is
48 managed by a third-party entity. And what we're trying
49 to show on this slide, and hopefully you can see better
50 in your handout, is all the hotspot closures that

1 occurred from 2017 to 2023. And the reason why there are
2 two panels is because the way it's managed is that there
3 are separate closures for the larger catcher processor
4 vessels than for the smaller catcher vessels that
5 deliver to inshore processors. The inshore processor
6 closures are shown on the right, and the catcher
7 processor closures are shown on the left. Next slide,
8 please.

9
10 So, I'm -- this next slide is also about
11 the no action alternative. And what we do in the analysis
12 is we analyze the impacts of taking no action on Western
13 Alaska chum salmon users. As I mentioned, the impetus
14 for considering regulatory actions here is the declines
15 in chum salmon abundance throughout Western and Interior
16 Alaska, and the critical significance of chum salmon to
17 your communities. I'm not gonna go into detail here
18 because you are all intimately aware of this context.
19 But just to inform you, the analysis captures data and
20 information on stock status from Kotzebue Sound down to
21 crystal -- down to Bristol Bay on subsistence and
22 commercial chum salmon harvest trends. And on the
23 importance of chum salmon across many dimensions of
24 human-salmon ecosystem existence. As you've heard from
25 our cooperating agencies, contributions from the
26 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Tanana
27 Chiefs Conference, and the Alaska Department of Fish and
28 Game inform these sections. And you can also find
29 information that the Fish Commission and Tanana Chiefs
30 Conference prepared for the analysis in appendices seven
31 and eight of that document.

32
33 Their information, or this information,
34 provides highlights on the importance of chum salmon for
35 food security as well as holistic well-being. And the
36 highlighted quote here is as stated by the Tanana Chiefs
37 Conference to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in
38 2023. The analysis also recognizes that in many regions,
39 impacts of chum salmon declines are being felt
40 cumulatively, with declines in other species and other
41 ecological changes, which results in compounding
42 effects. And this information provides context again for
43 the current conditions or the dynamic baseline under
44 which the action is being considered. Next slide,
45 please. Alternative two would modify the existing
46 bycatch regulations by including an overall hard cap
47 during the B season summer fishery. There are four
48 options being considered to divide this bycatch limit
49 among the four sectors that fish for pollock. The
50 approaches are based on bycatch history, your chum

1 salmon bycatch history, or each sector's pollock
2 allocation. If the cap is met, fishing must immediately
3 stop and all bycatch chum salmon count towards the limit.
4 The range of cap amounts being considered is 100,000 to
5 550,000. Next slide, please. Alternative three is
6 similar to alternative two in that it includes a hard
7 cap, but the hard cap is associated with abundance
8 indices. Again, indices just -- what I mean by that is
9 just different measurements of abundance. The hard cap
10 under alternative three, can turn on or off based on
11 returns to the area.

12
13 Here, the policy choice for the Council
14 is really whether the cap would be in effect at times
15 of higher abundance. There are two options for the
16 indices, or abundance measurements, being considered but
17 only one would ultimately be selected for use. The first
18 option is a three-area index and the second is a Yukon
19 Area index. Next slide, please. Alternative four would
20 add six provisions to existing regulations for the sum
21 [sic] -- for the Salmon Bycatch Incentive Plan
22 agreements or IPAs. And incentive plan agreements are
23 civil legal contracts among certain members of the
24 pollock industry. Federal regulations require that these
25 contracts include specific types of measures for salmon
26 avoidance. The incentive plans are approved by NMFS, and
27 the Council receives annual reports on the performance
28 of the fleet under these incentive plans. The proposed
29 changes would require that these incentive plans use
30 historical genetic data more regula [sic] -- would use
31 more historical genetic data. That they would evaluate
32 catch and bycatch data to inform closures more
33 frequently. And that they be used to close larger areas
34 when encounters are high.

35
36 In recent years, industry voluntarily
37 amended these incentive plan agreements to include
38 measures that largely reflect the six provisions that
39 would be added to regulation, under alternative four.
40 Next slide, please. So, I'm now going to talk about
41 alternative five, and this alternative is a little bit
42 more complicated. I'm gonna walk through it in two slides
43 because I'm gonna talk about what it originally looked
44 like and how it changed at the last Council meeting. But
45 I know that this one has generated a lot of interest by
46 many tribes because it involves a corridor closure in
47 season, temporarily, for the general purpose of allowing
48 chum salmon to move through a migration area.

49
50

1 So, alternative five, as was written and
2 analyzed prior to the February Council meeting, is shown
3 in these three graphics on this slide. And there are
4 three different in-season corridors or time area
5 closures shown in the gray gridded areas. The corridor
6 would close when a bycatch cap was met that is specific
7 to each of the areas and the caps for each of the areas,
8 the cap ranges for each of the areas are specific to
9 each corridor and are shown above each figure. The
10 location and timing of the closure window are based on
11 historical genetic information indicating Western Alaska
12 chum make up a higher percentage of the total bycatch
13 closer to the Alaska Peninsula, and from June to mid-
14 August. This alternative was developed based on and
15 response to input from tribes throughout the development
16 of the alternatives. Next slide, please. So, this slide
17 shows attempts to show you how alternative five has been
18 modified, and it was modified at the most recent February
19 Council meeting. This version of alternative five still
20 includes the concept of in-season corridors, and three
21 different options are being considered. The table on the
22 left of this slide shows the closure window, which is
23 the same period as it was before, June 10th through
24 August 31st, and the cap range that triggers the closure.
25 And a description of how the closure would work.

26
27 But the main things I wanna call your
28 attention to here is that compared to what was considered
29 previously, are as follows. First of all, the corridor
30 area is now larger, so the cap range that would trigger
31 a corridor has been correspondingly increased. And
32 depending on the option, the actual area that would close
33 if the cap was met now varies. On the left graphic you
34 see option one, and if the corridor cap is met under
35 option one, the entire corridor closes from the date
36 that the cap is met until September 1st. On the right
37 is called option 1.1, it has the same area as option
38 one, shown in blue and gray. However, if the cap is met,
39 then approximately 75% of the area would close from the
40 date the cap is met until September 1. The gray squares
41 represent areas that would continue to remain open to
42 fishing, even during the closure window. Option two,
43 which is really the third option that's being considered
44 under alternative five, is not depicted because this
45 option would be managed under the incentive plan
46 agreements and is intended to afford greater flexibility
47 by permitting the portion of the area that would be
48 closed to change each year. However, the area that would
49 be closed would have to be designed and approved by the
50 National Marine Fisheries Service prior to the season,

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1 and if the cap is met during June 10th to August 31st,
2 the pre-approved corridor would close to fishing. Next
3 slide, please.

4
5 So, this slide provides an overview of
6 some of the other changes that the Council made to the
7 proposed alternatives in February. For the sake of time,
8 I'm not planning to walk through these bullets in detail.
9 The full Council motion that describes these changes is
10 available on the E-agenda that you see at the bottom of
11 this slide, and we provide a link to it there. Of course,
12 Council members and staff are happy to answer additional
13 questions about these changes as well here today. Next
14 slide, please. Now I don't know if I mentioned this
15 earlier, but the Council can also combine any of the --
16 most of these options together if it chooses. There may
17 be benefits to adopting more than one alternative as
18 they could complement each other. The only two
19 alternatives that cannot be combined together are two
20 and three. And that's because the Council either would
21 have to choose an overall cap with abundance indices or
22 without, it can't choose both. Next slide, please. I'm
23 gonna go through these last slides a little bit more
24 quickly cause I'm realizing I'm going a little long.
25 I've tried to go slowly for the sake of the translation,
26 but I wanna allow time for questions. There are several
27 considerations that the Council needs to keep in mind
28 when selecting an alternative.

29
30 And one is the fact that because there
31 are chum salmon that are not from Western Alaska that
32 are caught in the pollock fishery, putting an overall
33 hard cap on the amount of chum salmon that can be caught
34 can have unintended -- does not necessarily mean that
35 the number of chum salmon from Western Alaska will be
36 reduced in a way that you would expect if all chum salmon
37 were to decline. I'm sorry, if all chum salmon bycatch
38 would decline. And so, what this slide shows you is that
39 from year to year, both the total amount of chum salmon
40 bycatch, as well as the amount of Western Alaska chum
41 salmon bycatch, which are shown in blue, vary. And by
42 incentivizing the fleet to just reduce overall chum
43 salmon bycatch, the fleet is going to go to areas that
44 have lower rates of chum salmon bycatch. But that does
45 not necessarily mean that they will end up going to
46 areas that have lower compositions of Western Alaska
47 chum salmon bycatch.

48
49 And that's the takeaway from this slide,
50 and I'm happy to come back and revisit it if you have

1 questions about it later. The next consideration that
2 the Council has to consider is a risk of increased
3 chinook bycatch. And the takeaway here is that because
4 chum salmon are on the fishing grounds earlier in the B
5 season, usually in July and August, and chinook salmon
6 are in the grounds later in the B season, usually in
7 September and October. If any of these alternatives have
8 the effect of slowing down fishing such that the fleet
9 ends up taking longer to catch the pollock, they may end
10 up fishing more, later in the season into September-
11 October, and this could have the unintended effect of
12 increasing chinook salmon bycatch. Again, happy to
13 return to this slide later. Next slide.

14
15 This slide just outlines that one of the
16 things the Council has to consider in selecting
17 alternatives is a balance of costs and benefits. And
18 this slide represents some of the costs that the analysis
19 addresses in quite a bit of detail, that could result
20 from the selection of any of these alternatives,
21 certainly any alternatives that would result in
22 decreased revenue or increased cost to the pollock
23 fishery. Next slide, please. This slide talks -- shows
24 that, of course, the Council also considers the
25 potential benefits, but also the associated
26 uncertainties with realizing the benefits of reduced
27 chum salmon bycatch. So, if there are reductions in
28 Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch that occur as a result
29 of any of the alternatives, and those changes increase
30 the number of Western Alaska chum salmon returning to
31 their natal streams, then there could be much broader
32 benefits. And again, you've -- we worked with the
33 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the
34 Tanana Chiefs Conference to characterize those benefits.
35 But the analysis also notes and captures some of the
36 intervening variables that add another layer of
37 uncertainty in whether these benefits would be realized.
38 Next slide, please.

39
40 Okay. So, I'm just wrapping up here. I'm
41 gonna talk about the timeline. Your opportunities for
42 input. What you see here is a tentative timeline for
43 moving forward. However, the Council in the February
44 meeting, did recommend that the analysts revise the
45 document based on the changes requested to the
46 alternatives and input provided in February, and that
47 NMFS should then publish the revised document as the
48 draft Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal
49 Register, which would then trigger a public comment
50 period. That public comment period must be no less than

1 45 days and may well be 60. And that would be your next
2 opportunity to provide written input on the draft
3 Environmental Impact Statement is by submitting a
4 written public -- written document comment to the
5 National Marine Fisheries Service during that comment
6 period. The August publication date of a draft
7 Environmental Impact Statement reflects the time needed
8 to accommodate a final recommendation being made by the
9 Council in December of 2025. Said another way the Council
10 is hoping to take final action in December of 2025, if
11 at all possible. Pending the Council's action at that
12 time, NMFS would then begin the rulemaking process or
13 regulating process. So, you can also provide written
14 comments prior to the Council meeting at which the
15 Council takes final action. Next slide, please. Okay.
16 So that's the end of the presentation. If you wanna
17 learn more about this issue, you can always reach out
18 to again, the lead analyst Kate Haapala, Sarah and
19 myself. We have our email addresses on the cover slide.
20 Thanks for your patience.

21

(Pause)

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Welcome, guys.
I'm glad your flight made it. Sorry for all the delays.
We've done the introductions so far, and then the -- we
just -- he just got done with the presentation. So, do
you mind introducing yourselves to the room?

MR. MUELLER: I'm happy to, thanks for
having me. My name is John Mueller. I'm one of the newer
Council members. I've been on there since last summer,
and I'm originally from Unalaska. And I recognize a lot
of faces around here; have been up here a number of
times, so thanks for having me. It's good to be here.

MR. KURLAND: I'm John Kurland. I'm also
a voting member of the Council, and I'm the regional
administrator for NOAA fisheries. I'm based in Juneau.
I'm in that role responsible for ensuring that the
Council's actions comply with all applicable laws,
including developing the Environmental Impact Statement,
that's the, kinda the center of discussion for this
issue. Glad to be with you all.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Welcome. Brooke,
do you have anything besides.....

MR. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

2

3 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, sorry for the
4 interruption. Are those your name cards? If they are,
5 can you please turn them around so that we can see them.
6 Thank you, I greatly appreciate. Thank you for the
7 interruption, Madam Chair. You may proceed.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, as I was
10 saying we're finished with the presentation and now
11 we're on to the Council discussion with questions and
12 answers. So, we can start. So, first we're gonna take
13 questions or comments from the RAC members themselves.
14 And then depending on the time, we'll move on to
15 questions from the public. So, does anyone from our RAC
16 have questions or comments?

17

18 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

21

22 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 Through the Chair. I guess I can start. I did have quite
24 a bit of questions. On the slide where you were showing
25 the population in the pie chart with Northeast and
26 Southeast Asian chum, does the DNA genetics allow for -
27 - to tell the difference between what is farm salmon and
28 what is natural salmon?

29

30 MS. MARRINAN: Madam Chair. For the
31 record, this is Sarah Marrinan, Council staff. I do --
32 I don't believe that the genetics report allows it to
33 break it out to that level, but I do believe that -- and
34 we have some copies of the genetic reports that we can
35 make available, but it does highlight with some of the
36 baseline populations, and I believe that's what those
37 dots represent. So, if you see the slide before that,
38 where it shows all the different panels -- there you go.
39 So, I believe those dots represent different samples
40 that were -- genetic samples that were taken from
41 different river systems. So, originally the baseline
42 bassline does pull from those different populations. But
43 within the bycatch that's caught and analyzed, the
44 genetic groupings are just to the higher level so, the
45 colors that are there. I think there are some additional
46 types of breakouts that can happen. Kotzebue Sound can
47 be broken out within the yellow dots there, but I don't
48 think it can get down to the specific. And the annual
49 reports, they don't get down to the specific, an ability

1 to identify how many for each dot there, just the larger
2 groupings.

3

4 MS. ROGERS: Follow up.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

7

8 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
9 Through the Chair. So, I guess to get down to my
10 question, the reason why I'm asking cause we definitely
11 have more Asian fish in the pie chart than we do U.S.
12 fish or Alaskan fish. And my question to that is the
13 population of more Asian than Alaskan in affects to fight
14 or survival of the fittest, you would say, or the Hunger
15 Games of the ocean for food resources for natural salmon.
16 And if -- do we have a set international agreement with
17 Asia regarding caps of released farm fish into the ocean
18 and we should, if we don't. We should have a regulation
19 or an agreement with Asia that there not to overpopulate
20 our ocean with farmed fish more than the natural fish.
21 In regards to the reduction of the survival for fight
22 for food resources in the ocean. So, there should be
23 some type of cap amount of farm fish being released, so
24 that the natural fish have more survival and opportunity
25 to survive to their full growth, and the ability to
26 return back stronger and bigger and better like they
27 used to be. Thank you, Madame Chair.

28

29 MS. MARRINAN: Madam Chair. Sarah
30 Marrinan, Council staff. There -- as far as I know,
31 there isn't a cap amount, an international agreement on
32 a cap amount, but your point is noted. There is some
33 information in the document as to estimates of hatchery
34 releases from different countries. But as far as I know,
35 don't know of an international agreement on a cap amount.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is there perhaps
38 another question or a comment from our RAC group? (In
39 Native) I'll say it in Yup'ik too. (In Native).

40

41 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

44

45 MR. PARKS: Thank you. My name is Henry
46 Parks. I -- my question may not be applied to your
47 presentation here, but who is the primary owner of this
48 pollock fisheries, may I ask first? That's my first
49 question. Who owns this pollock fishing company? That's
50 my first question.

1

2 MS. MARRINAN: Madam Chair. Sarah
3 Marrinan Council staff, again, for the record. Yeah, so
4 this is the American Fisheries Act fishery, the pollock
5 fishery in the Bering Sea. And then there's four
6 different what we call sectors to that. So, one of that
7 10% of that quota also goes to the Community Development
8 Quota, and you may have heard of those groups. So, they
9 have access to 10% of the Bering Sea pollock. Those
10 groups also have additional direct investments into AFA,
11 into the other sectors. So, there's catcher processors,
12 companies that catch and process on board, catcher
13 vessels that deliver to shore side processors or deliver
14 to mother ships at sea. And these are different --
15 different companies own these vessels. And some of the
16 CDQ groups have invested in those companies. Some of
17 them are private companies. I don't know if anyone else
18 wants to speak to that question, but.

19

20 MS. KIMBALL: Nicole Kimball. I think
21 just simply the boats are owned by Alaska own companies,
22 Seattle companies, Oregon companies, and about a third
23 of the fishery is owned by the Western Alaska CDQ groups
24 as a whole. So, if that's helpful.

25

26 MR. PARKS: Thank you. Another question.
27 When did this pollock fishery started? May I ask. When?
28 What year?

29

30 MS. KIMBALL: I'll try out. Nicole
31 Kimball, again. I'll caveat this by it was 50 years ago
32 when they were foreign owned pollock fisheries. And then
33 the Act that Sarah Marrinan mentioned, the Magnuson-
34 Stevens Act, made those then U.S. fisheries. And they
35 were kinda U.S. and foreign owned, and then they were
36 fully U.S. owned fisheries where the Federal government
37 is managing under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, for the last
38 -- I don't -- I can't even say right now, 30 years, 40
39 years, 40 years.

40

41 MR. PARKS: Okay, thank you. So, in --
42 on other words, I'm trying to point out down there at
43 the Bering Sea. So, it started a long time ago? Okay,
44 thank you. And then I have another question. How many,
45 you know, approximately how many fishing vessels do they
46 fish down there at the Bering Sea?

47

48 MR. SHAFTEL: Doug Shaftel, National
49 Marine Fisheries Service. The number of vessels that are
50 active vary year by year, but it's about 70 vessels that

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1 are the smaller catcher vessels. And then there's
2 another approximately 30 vessels that make up the
3 catcher processor and mothership. No, no. Sorry, lower
4 than that, sorry, 15. 13 vessels that make up the catcher
5 processors.

6

7 MR. PARKS: And how many motherships,
8 one, two?

9

10 MR. SHAFTEL: There's only two
11 motherships. Yeah, I must've been confusing my numbers
12 with catcher vessels that serve the motherships.

13

14 MR. PARKS: Okay, another question. I
15 have a few questions to ask, Madam Chair. We know we've
16 heard this bycatch issue for a number of years now. So,
17 my question is, what other sea mammals are being bycatch
18 down there besides salmons? Cause you know the reason
19 why I ask is because us Natives, we rely on seals, you
20 know, and other (indiscernible) like (indiscernible) and
21 other sea mammals that we, you know, try and get for
22 subsistence reasons.

23

24 MR. KURLAND: So, I can try that one.
25 John Kurland. So, the pollock fishery itself is -- it's
26 about 99% pollock that it catches and a very small
27 percentage of salmon. Other fisheries in the Bering Sea
28 do have more diverse bycatch. Other species of
29 incidental catch and occasionally marine mammals. But
30 the numbers are pretty small and they're all fully
31 observed, so all of that information ends up being
32 documented and recorded.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

35

36 MR. PARKS: No. (In Native) Thank you,
37 Madame Chair.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thank you,
40 Henry. Well, I came up with one while Henry was asking,
41 when he brought up the marine mammals, and maybe some
42 of their food sources and if that stock is affected, and
43 if so, by how much. And I guess, particularly asking
44 about the herring. I know we're talking about chum, but
45 do you happen to know off the top of your head what the
46 bycatch for herring would be in this pollock fishery.

47

48 MR. SHAFTEL: Doug Shaftel, for NMFS. I
49 don't know off the top of my head. However, the draft
50 Environmental Impact Statement, I believe, does include

1 information on herring bycatch. I can look that up for
2 you while we're taking questions, and I can get you
3 those numbers if I can find them.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sounds good,
6 thank you. Anyone else? Oh, yes. Please.

7

8 MS. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. But
9 just to follow up on that question. Herring bycatch is
10 taken in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. And the Council
11 does have management measures established for herring
12 bycatch. And essentially, there is a limit for the
13 pollock fishery on herring bycatch. And we'll get you
14 the numbers and the specific, but essentially reaching
15 that limit triggers closure of particular areas to the
16 pollock fishery. So, I just wanted to provide that
17 general answer to the question. Apologies, Rachel Baker.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
20 Rachel. Nicole, do you have something to add?

21

22 MS. KIMBALL: Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 Nicole Kimball. If it's helpful that the cap that Ms.
24 Baker was talking about is, it's 1% of the herring
25 biomass that's estimated by Fish and Game. So, the caps
26 in regulation. Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.

29

30 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair. I just got a
31 question. My name is Wassily Alexie. Between all these
32 vessels, do you have a actual count of how much bycatch
33 each vessel has caught? And are these numbers by the
34 year or by the season on the bycatch?

35

36 MS. MARRINAN: Madam Chair. Yes, we do
37 have catch associated with vessel. That's something
38 that's produced publicly in IPA reports that they
39 provide to the Council each year. And that's information
40 provided through the IPAs, through the cooperatives. We
41 also have through the catch accounting system, observer
42 data on overall catch in the pollock fishery, but those
43 reports are -- provide vessel level information from the
44 cooperatives. And so, that's usually associated with the
45 B season, cause that's where the vast majority of chum
46 salmon bycatch occurs. And Madam Chair, just to let you
47 know, we do have a table and a figure in the document
48 that demonstrates herring bycatch from 2011 to 2023. It
49 really -- as Ms. Kimball mentioned, there's a cap
50 associated with it, and the amount taken relative to

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1 that cap is highly variable year to year. So, in 2023,
2 which is the most recent year, we have data there. It
3 was about 3,000 metric tons, which is very close to the
4 cap. In other years, it's been down to 8.5% of the cap.
5 But -- so it's highly variable year to year. And I can
6 provide you that time series data if you'd like, as
7 well. For the record, Sarah Marrinan.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
10 Sarah. Alissa.

11
12 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
13 Through the Chair. If -- I'm gonna revert back to
14 alternative number two in regards to your four division
15 sectors. I heard you say that you guys are gonna open
16 different sectors at different times. My question to
17 that was, is it gonna be limited to the number of permits
18 allowed in each sector so that you don't have the whole
19 entire square, as a full chasing after one sector and
20 then chasing after the other sector, then chasing after
21 the other sector. But my question is, if you're gonna
22 have those sectors provide a limited amount of permits
23 per sector in each area, so you can reduce the amount
24 of fishing harvest. Cause if you're just gonna put them
25 in sectors and have them open up, that's what's gonna
26 happen. You're not really saving; you're just adding
27 three more fisheries into that large sector (distortion)
28 or that large square area. How are you guys planning on
29 handling that type of fishing? It's -- in other words,
30 instead of, like, rolling hotspots, it's gonna be pretty
31 much a rolling fishery. If you have sectors and you're
32 opening them up at different times, how are you guys
33 gonna process with that?

34
35 MR. SHAFTTEL: Through the Chair. Ms.
36 Robert -- Ms. Rogers, thank you for the question. Doug
37 Shaftel with NMFS. So, I -- perhaps I'm not tracking
38 your question, but I'll try to explain a little bit more
39 about the division of the cap under alternative two
40 amongst the four sectors. So, if they were -- Council
41 were to establish a hard cap, on alternative two. That
42 hard cap would then be allocated amongst each of the
43 sectors, so each sector would have a portion of the cap.
44 That allocation, or a portion, that actually is the term
45 that we're using. Apportionment of that cap to the sector
46 then gets sub-apportioned to cooperatives that work with
47 groups of vessels. And whether it's the catcher vessels
48 or the catcher processors it also gets sub-apportioned
49 to the CDQ groups. And then when they fish and they
50 catch chum salmon throughout the season from wherever

1 they may be under alternative two, it's all chum salmon
2 are caught are counted towards the cap. NMFS and the
3 managers who are managing these fleets will be tracking
4 those fish and counting them throughout the season. And
5 if they get close to the total amount that they have
6 been apportioned of that overall cap then that sector
7 or that, if it's a subgroup like a cooperative is
8 reaching their sub apportionment, then they will be
9 prohibited from fishing for the rest of the B season.
10 So, it's not -- does that get to your question? I'm not
11 sure I was tracking it, but I didn't give a very thorough
12 explanation earlier about the way it gets sub-
13 apportioned amongst the sectors.

14
15 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
16 Through the Chair. I'm trying to think about how to word
17 this. So, you have four sectors, right. So, and you're
18 gonna have four different openings?

19
20 MR. SHAFTEL No. The B season starts for
21 all sectors on June 10th and it runs through November
22 1st. So, they can fish they -- or there -- there's all
23 pollock total allowable catch. There's a total amount
24 of pollock that is allocated amongst these sectors prior
25 to the beginning of the season. And they can fish all
26 the way up to the point that they either catch all of
27 their pollock, that has been allocated to them, or they
28 reach their cap of the chum salmon that they're allowed
29 to catch under alternative two. Does that make sense?

30
31 MS. ROGERS: (In Native)

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, thanks for
34 answering those questions. Anyone else? If not, I will
35 go, but I'll -- okay, Phillip.

36
37 MR. PETER: Madam Chair, my name is
38 Phillip Peter. This is the first time I spoke to you
39 guys on behalf of Alaska Natives. You know, I got a
40 common, short commons. In I used to be a commercial
41 fisherman in my river and Kuskokwim. But I never been
42 fish [sic] for over 20 years. The fishermen in Kuskokwim
43 built the economy, especially Bethel, the hub. Fishing.
44 In 1984, or 80s, Harroll Spark was the fishing
45 coordinator for (In Native) Harroll Spark went to the--
46 They sent it to the Washington DC to testify on behalf
47 of AVCP, now is the organization before he became a AVCP
48 Yu'pik (In Native). Worrying about fish in Bering Sea
49 and they warned them concerning about fish for trawling
50 and commercial fishing down in Bering Sea. And nobody

1 listened to him, it just ignored. Why he ignored? [sic]
2 Because he's a -- he was a representative from the
3 government (In Native) Since closure of commercial
4 fishing in Kuskokwim, all of us are collapse on the
5 economy. We grew up our corporations. ANCSA corporation
6 make a profit in our community through fishing. In 60s
7 I used to fish, starting off chinooks, when the price
8 were \$3.50 a pound for chinook, king salmon. And the
9 chums were \$1.50 a pound or \$1.75, and all of a sudden,
10 the fish prices are going down really fast.

11
12 And when they drop, the chinooks were
13 \$0.75 a pound and sockeye and coho was \$0.50 a pound,
14 and \$0.25 to \$0.10 a pound for the chums. In the
15 regulation on the commercial fishing in Kuskokwim. The
16 regulation the State of Alaska control when he
17 controlling [sic] the Kuskokwim River through commercial
18 fishing. (Pause) They used to let us fish when there --
19 when the fish are high, Monday, Wednesday, Saturday in
20 July. Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, 12 hours a day. 12
21 hours, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday and close on
22 Sunday. Except for after 12 hours. The subsistence open
23 again in Kuskokwim. And then they established a working
24 group, when the chums were getting the -- decrease. And
25 I was really surprised when I fished for commercial
26 fishing. The buyer won't buy my king salmon, only chums
27 and sockeye and silver. And I asked that buyer, why? We
28 used to sell this king salmon; how come I can't sell it?
29 That's the restriction. Can't sell it. And the fish buyer
30 told me it's yours for consumption. And then Magnuson-
31 Stevens Act, it's 200-mile zone (indiscernible). I got
32 question, is it that 200-mile zone jurisdiction down in
33 the Bering Sea, Aleutians and the -- what you call the
34 other one?

35
36 I forgot the Aleutian and Eastern Bering
37 Sea, Gulf of Alaska and Arctic and Beaufort
38 (indiscernible) Sea Beaufort. How far is from the
39 Aleutian, the jurisdiction 200-mile. You cannot fish
40 inside, but outside, if I'm correct. We can't
41 (indiscernible) they can't fish or trawl the 200-mile
42 zone, the jurisdiction. I wanna find out the
43 jurisdiction 200-mile. Which powerful Stevens, big 200-
44 mile. It's our jurisdiction, all of us. It's not
45 enforceable. How come you guys, how come the Federal and
46 State government without asking us to place a
47 restriction. Even the subsistence has no restriction in
48 those days. Only the commercial fishing had the
49 restrictions. When the fish -- we use to let us fish
50 when the fish are plentiful. And then when it get low,

1 they used to fish, tell us to fish six hours Monday
2 opening five hours, opening on Friday, six hours opening
3 on Friday. Two times a week. When we reach a quarter of
4 chums, the quarter used to be a set by state of Alaska.
5 It's already been set 600,000 and close the season. No
6 more fishing. But we waited for cohos. The first opening
7 August 1, not the whole river, but bellow Bethel.

8
9 The line they set up the (In Native) few
10 miles downriver. All the way to the mouth of the
11 Kuskokwim, including the Bering Sea. Quinhagak, Platinum
12 Goodnews Bay. We used to fish; we followed the
13 regulation. My boat is only 22 feet, the Yukon Raider
14 with 90 horse. And right now, we've got hardships,
15 especially my sons, my grandkids. I've got seven-year-
16 old great grand grandson. When he see a game warden
17 patrolling the river. He stopped by and my grandson asked
18 him. Why are you guys are patrolling this river? We are
19 fishing for ourselves for consumption. Stop by and
20 illegally checking my net, lifted and check them. These
21 regulations done by the Federal government and the State
22 government, there should be something put in action.
23 We've been yakking about this one for a long, long time.
24 They are -- the Federal government already sent the 200-
25 mile zone jurisdiction. Nobody enforced that 200-mile
26 jurisdiction, nobody. Only us subsistence fishing
27 fisherman and Kuskokwim and Yukon and Norton Sound. This
28 summer there are only five openers. Five openers. We
29 used to be -- it used to be four openers. Now it's five
30 opening for subsistence, and my driftnet Upper Kuskokwim
31 starting from Napaskiak all the way to Aniak 25 fathoms,
32 25 fathoms.

33
34 Look at them Area M commercial
35 fisherman. They got three or four circles. Set
36 driftnets. I used to see on TV, the National Geographic.
37 They put the net in their small boat and drag that net
38 all the way. Circle. They already prepare - they had a
39 big meeting in AVCP when them elders were alive. AVCP,
40 they were discussing about the commercial fishing in 84.
41 And then they said to us, you cannot use king salmon net
42 because the king salmon are low. (Indiscernible) I never
43 used my net -- king salmon net for since 1984 to this
44 day. I got couple [sic] of them, eight and a quarter and
45 seven and a half. It's still hanging in my fish camp
46 since 1984. We have the right to control, working with
47 the Federal employees and the State employees. When are
48 the Federal government going to enforce the trawling?
49 When are they gonna force Area M and commercial
50 fishermen? The State were dealing with two governments.

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1 We're dealing with two governments, from Napakiak all
2 the way to the mouth of the Kuskokwim to the Bering Sea.
3 We could use 50 fathoms, from the upriver all the way
4 to Aniak, 25 fathoms. (Indiscernible) They should
5 control, we need to control the -- our jurisdiction.....
6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip.

8
9 MR. PETER: in the ocean. Only the
10 (indiscernible) when observer. I watched the
11 observer.....
12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip.

14
15 MR. PETER: long time ago. Take
16 that fish and take that scale and then (distortion) I
17 bet he was checking, maybe this fish from Kuskokwim or
18 from other -- who's the owner? We need to work together
19 to solve this problem before depleting our fish. We need
20 to sit down and work together, make good regulation.
21 Don't ignore us. Don't ever ignore us. If you ignore,
22 we'll starve. We'll starve, I know we'll starve. Right
23 now, in my village Akiachak, which is about 32 miles
24 upriver and 18 miles on the tundra by snowmachine. When
25 the first restriction and the first restriction was the
26 whitefish net, four and a half, four inch. When it opened
27 in June, I was really surprised, and I got pissed off.
28 From the bend all the way to the -- when I counted those
29 set nets, there were 32 whitefish net.
30

31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

32
33 MR. PETER: Quyana.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

36
37 MR. PETER: My last comments will be, if
38 we work together, using one mind we'll accomplish
39 something. But if we divided and doubt and fearful, will
40 -- it will not work. I hope it's time for us to work
41 together and make action. Maybe foreigners will be --
42 will not get into our sea. Quyana.
43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. I think
45 there's others who had questions online, I believe. And
46 if not, I can ask a question. And I know we're getting
47 short on time. But if there were people, not from the
48 RAC in the audience here who planned on asking questions,
49 and if people don't mind staying an extra 5 or 10
50 minutes, we could also allow for that. But for now,

1 Brooke, do we have someone online with a question?

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Fred, would you like to ask
4 any questions?

5

6 MR. BEANS: No. Not at this time, thank
7 you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Fred.
10 I'll go ahead and ask mine. I'm Jacqueline Cleveland
11 from Quinhagak. And to North Pacific, which alternative
12 or alternative combos do you think would be the most
13 effective method to help reduce chum bycatch in our area?
14 And for example, can there be combinations within these
15 alternatives like two, four and five, for instance? Or
16 is it just a hard like one, two, three or four.

17

18 MR. SHAFTEL: Doug Shaftel, with National
19 Marine Fisheries Service. I can certainly answer the
20 second part of your question, and maybe I'll defer to
21 the Council members on the first. So, there was a slide,
22 and I'm not sure which one it is at the moment, but that
23 does show that you can -- the Council could combine any
24 of the alternatives. As I mentioned, it couldn't combine
25 the two different hard caps that are overall hard caps,
26 one of which does not have an abundance indices, and the
27 other one which does. But the other ones can be combined
28 so they can combine a hard cap with alternative four,
29 which are those provisions that would change the IPA,
30 Incentive Plan Agreements. They could combine a hard cap
31 with an alternative five, which is the area specific
32 hard cap. They could combine alternative four and
33 alternative five as well.

34

35 MR. KURLAND: Madam Chair, on your first
36 question, if I may. The Council has not made a
37 determination about what alternative would best meet the
38 purpose and need for this action. That's part of the
39 process that the Council is going through now. And the
40 Council needs to consider not only what will be most
41 effective for bycatch reduction, but under the Magnuson-
42 Stevens Act, has to consider a variety of factors that
43 we refer to as the National Standards. So, balancing
44 things like trying to achieve the optimum yield from the
45 fishery, things like safety, effects on communities. A
46 variety of factors, in addition to minimizing bycatch
47 to the extent practicable.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
50 that.

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MR. MUELLER: John Mueller.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sorry, what? Oh.

MR. MUELLER: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, yes. Sorry, I didn't see your light. It blended in with your -- the red part of your shirt.

MR. MUELLER: For the record, John Mueller, with the Council here. Just to add to Mr. Kurland's response there to the first part of the question there. There's also some trying to avoid some unintended consequences depending on what alternative we choose in December. So, that's on the minds of many of us Council members in terms of not having, you know, consequences that may be unforeseen at the moment. There's another -- there'll be another analysis coming out with some of the tweaks that the Council made at this last Council meeting, so I can speak for myself and others -- other Council members probably feel the same way as to not take an action that has some unforeseen consequences, maybe on chinook or other. So, that's at the top of my mind as well as a Council member.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And I know it's almost 8:30 p.m. but I wanted to see if anyone from the -- yes -- and if you have a question, I would say -- should we have them come up to the -- this mic? With a mic. So, somewhere with a mic, (indiscernible) for now. (In Native). So, far there's one, two, three, four, five.

MS. MCDAVID: Sorry, guys, we're gonna have to limit it to questions tonight. We'll just take three questions and then there'll be more time for testimony in the morning.

MR. NICOLAI: I'll be -- I'll try to be fast, okay. Well, we heard that B season of the trawling catches most of the chums that are destined for Western Alaska. That's from June to November, right? Okay. And as Peter said, we're severely restricted here on the Kuskokwim and even more on the Yukon River. And we (distortion) are the alternatives one to five, and that's the only one. I mean, there could be another alternative two, I don't know if the Council will be able to work on it or not. It could be put place a hard

1 cap on the chums for all sections of the trawling done
2 in the Bering Sea, no bottom scraping, and that will
3 prevent less bycatch of all species. Not only salmon,
4 but also the crab and the halibut. And if that cap is
5 met, then close the rest of the B season. Whether you
6 stop fishing in June, I mean, in July or August or
7 September. Just stop for the rest of the season. And my
8 reasoning is that we do that here in the Kuskokwim. As
9 you said, we only have a few openings during the summer
10 for our subsistence needs. No money involved, no
11 monetary value for us, except food for the stomach and
12 food for the culture.

13
14 That's who we are. You know, trawling
15 is a business and if trawling is hurting even to a small
16 extent, the people of Alaska, then it should be
17 restricted. I know it's a way of doing things right.
18 It's a way of human bond being united, being of one
19 mind, as you said. It's a brotherhood of mankind way.
20 It's okay if you -- if trawling business makes less
21 money, you still make money. It's okay if you make less
22 money, it's not the solve [sic] -- it doesn't solve all
23 the problems in the world. You still make money, just
24 as -- not as much. So, you'll survive. Just as we
25 survived without commercial fishing here in the
26 Kuskokwim. Thank you.

27
28 (Simultaneous speech)

29
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Can you say your
31 name real quick, sorry.

32
33 MR. NICOLAI: Martin Nicolai, Kwethluk.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: And could you clarify your
36 question to the Council, please?

37
38 MR. NICOLAI: Pardon me.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Did you have a question?

41
42 MR. NICOLAI: No, it was more of a
43 comment than a question.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, for the next folks.
46 Thank you so much for -- we do wanna focus on questions
47 this evening. Testimony will be -- and comments will be
48 for tomorrow for the RAC, to consider. So, just keep
49 that in mind. If anyone has a question about the bycatch
50 alternatives, we could take those. And we did have one

1 written question from Tim Vaughn. Yeah, and Tim's
2 question was, if you could just give like, some
3 highlights about what's being done to not catch as many
4 of the salmon in the bycatch.

5
6 MR. TSUKADA: Yes, thank you very much
7 for that question. And through the Chair. There's a --
8 Rudy Tsukada for the record, thank you. There's actually
9 quite a bit of effort that goes on. Every pollock vessel
10 in the Bering Sea has -- is observed, whether it's
11 electronic or actual observers on Board, they ensure
12 that everything is counted. Other types of things, all
13 vessels must use a salmon excluder. These are just net
14 designs that allow salmon to escape the net while the
15 pollock, which are weaker swimmers, get caught. Another
16 piece of equipment that the larger vessels use and many
17 of the catcher, smaller catcher vessels are now using,
18 are live-feed cameras. These are fairly expensive
19 cameras, 300-\$400,000 cameras that are attached to the
20 third wire. That allows us to see the fish entering the
21 net. And while oftentimes it's difficult to pick out
22 single individual salmon that are coming through,
23 oftentimes, especially with chum salmon, we do intend
24 to run into them in batches.

25
26 We can go 000, and then all of a sudden
27 you may have 50 or 100 fish in a net in those
28 circumstances a live-feed camera is very helpful. And
29 as we -- as soon as we can detect a school of chums at
30 the very front of the net, the boat can start taking
31 action, such as slowing down, pulling the net up,
32 etcetera, for the chum salmon avoidance. Also, if you
33 go on to the ships, the deck of these vessels, the
34 captain's area, you'll notice that unlike many depth
35 finders and things, you'll see an array of different
36 sonars and depth finders that operate on different
37 frequencies. And those are often very useful and while
38 not perfect, useful in determining things like, is that
39 a herring school versus a pollock school.

40
41 And so, these are all the types of
42 things that are currently being involved now, but
43 furthermore, there are other gear innovations. Things
44 such as active excluders. These would use either AI or
45 live cameras and would've -- like salmon is detected
46 coming into the net. The net structure may actually
47 change where the salmon is now funneled outside of the
48 net. Now this is a work in progress, there are some
49 prototypes being developed, but we hope that that is
50 another very useful tool that will be coming in the near

1 future. Another exciting development, and not so much
2 helping us avoid salmon, but avoid Western Alaska
3 salmon. Oftentimes in the past, genetic studies on the
4 fish that we catch have often taken up to two years to
5 get.

6
7 We are now, I think, down to about a
8 week in developing that. And so, being able to have that
9 type of genetic data available while we are fishing will
10 help us not only avoid other species, but specifically
11 the Western Alaska chums we'll be able to avoid. And
12 that's critically important because, for example, if
13 your wish was for us to cut our bycatch in half, for
14 example, that actually happened in 21, was it? Where we
15 actually reduced the bycatch in half. But it ended up
16 that we actually increased the catch of Western Alaska
17 salmon by a thousand or something, but it actually went
18 up. And so, one of the things, the unintended
19 consequences with through this gear genetic innovation,
20 is to really try to avoid the Western Alaska chum. So,
21 there's a lot of exciting research on the horizon. And
22 there's a lot more, we're releasing AI pollock into the
23 digital world to see how they act, for example, but
24 that's probably a little further off.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Nicole. Thank
27 you for that, by the way.

28
29 MS. KIMBALL: Thank you. Nicole Kimball.
30 I just wanted to add that what we've -- what we have in
31 the analysis, too, is what's currently being done is
32 that hotspot program so that every vessel, it's bycatch
33 information is shared. And then on a weekly basis, they
34 close different areas where they've seen higher
35 encounter rates. And then vessels have to stay out of
36 that area for three to seven days and they can keep
37 happening in the same areas. But it's a continuous look
38 throughout the season. So, having that explained in the
39 analysis is kind of what happens under status quo. That
40 would continue no matter what new alternatives the
41 Council decided. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And we
44 had someone else from back here with a question. (In
45 Native).

46
47 MR. WASKA: Quyana, Madam Chair. Evon
48 Waska. I lived here in Bethel all my life. Subsistence
49 hunter and fisherman, gatherer, ex commercial fisherman.
50 Question number one, on your pamphlet here on the bottom,

1 purpose of this presentation. This is an outreach, what
2 does that mean? Giving our testimony and being here
3 doesn't matter? Has it always been deaf ears on all of
4 my Alaska Natives? Hurry up and talk. Here my food source
5 and all my people are food (indiscernible).
6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Waska, I'm sorry. Do
8 you have a question for the council? Could you -- we'll
9 take testimony in the morning to the RAC. I understand
10 it's a really important issue.

11 MR. WASKA: Yeah, I do have questions.

12 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you.

13 MR. WASKA: The first question is this,
14 you should outreach. Does that mean what the purpose of
15 this meeting right now? You mean our comment and our
16 input don't matter? You mentioned here it's not an NPFMG
17 meeting. I made an effort to be here, my food sources
18 are at risk. All my Native people you see back there.
19 And I'm calling you all liars. This is a big lie.
20
21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Excuse me, point of order.
23 We need to be respectful, please. Thank you.

24 MR. WASKA: On this -- most chum salmon
25 bycatch are not from Western Alaska. It's not mean my
26 people, we're on restrictions, Yukon Island Kuskokwim
27 rivers. Beginning June 1st, we're on restrictions. What
28 does that mean? Our nets in the water -- all salmon and
29 come from the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. It's not
30 mean, my people are nets are (indiscernible) in water.
31 And I got this -- our local newspaper. I clipped them
32 out, and Mr. Alexie ask. You never listed the other
33 species, you never list them all. And this is from Salmon
34 State Program coordinator Jackie Boyer, she list all of
35 them. And I'm trying to help Mr. Alexie's question. You
36 mentioned king salmon, chum salmon, you never mentioned
37 halibut, herring, squid, crab, whales and more. Those
38 are absent. And my question is, why aren't you telling
39 the truth? Of what's really happening in that bycatch.
40 It's affecting us all. Period. Our food source for the
41 winter months and when the king salmon opens. Through
42 this, I'm gonna keep it out, (indiscernible) tear it up.
43 But I'm gonna keep it as evidence. Thank you.
44
45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Maybe the Council could,
47 yeah -- respond or explain again about the purpose of
48 the evening. Thank you.
49
50

1

2 MR. MUELLER: So, Mr. Waska,
3 respectfully, John Mueller with the Council. So, the
4 Council action in front of us right now is on chum
5 bycatch, and but I can't respond to your question without
6 mentioning that the Council has taken previous action
7 on other species. For example, the abundance-based
8 management you know, the program just went through the
9 Council to address halibut bycatch in the trawl fishery.
10 And we've also had some chinook salmon action in front
11 of the North Pacific Council as well as herring actions,
12 so and crab for that matter. So, this document here,
13 although you may not think it's inclusive, there's other
14 actions that the Council has taken that actually
15 addressed the other species that you mentioned.

16

17 MS. MARRINAN: Madam Chair. Sarah
18 Marrinan, Council staff, for the record. And I just
19 wanted to also, speak to the format again, and I
20 apologize. I do understand the frustration and the
21 interest in wanting to make sure you're heard and
22 communicate to Council members while you're here. I do
23 hope people testify in the morning, and I believe that
24 many Council members, hopefully Council members, will
25 be able to make it in the morning. I will as well, be
26 able to make it in the morning. And I think one thing
27 we didn't mention is from these outreach sessions, we
28 are planning to write up a report from some of the key
29 themes that we heard, some of the (distortion). So, we're
30 trying to do with information (distortion) opportunities
31 to get your message to the full NPFMC as well. So,
32 members are here to engage here and, you know, there --
33 hopefully we'll -- we can hear opportunity for public
34 testimony to the RAC tomorrow. But also, we're
35 encouraging you to comment to the full NPFMC with your
36 thoughts either through letters or calling in when that
37 meeting happens, and right now it's scheduled for
38 December. So, I understand the frustration and I can
39 appreciate that, but I also really appreciate the RAC
40 and Brooke working within this format. Given that we
41 don't have a quorum of Council members here, these are
42 members traveling on their own. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
45 Sarah. And I think there was one more from the audience,
46 if I'm not mistaken. And then I'm also being told we
47 should wrap up because we're 15 minutes over. And like
48 we mentioned, our meeting will start tomorrow morning
49 at nine. For those of you who didn't get to comment or
50 ask questions can come back for the public comments on

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1 a non-agenda item section of the agenda tomorrow.
2 Thanks.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: And I don't wanna speak for
5 you all, but if you all wanna hang around for a few
6 minutes and people wanna approach you with questions or
7 comments, perhaps that's another way. While we kinda
8 tidy up a little bit and get ready for the morning,
9 maybe folks could do that, so. Thank you all so much for
10 being here. We really appreciate you taking the time to
11 travel out here and speak with the Council and answer
12 questions and help them understand this issue more.
13 Quyana.

14
15 (Off record)

16
17 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 131 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIN DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 4th day of March 2025;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 19th day of March 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager - Transcriptions