

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
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In Reply Refer To:
SPRAC.B25010

MARCH 12 2025

Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
1011 E. Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chair Christianson,

I write on behalf of the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) to elevate our continued concerns over the negative impacts of the trawl fleet fishery and other commercial fishing on Bering Sea salmon and the marine environment to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture.

At our recent meeting on October 24 – 25, 2024, in Nome, the Council discussed the following issues at length:

1. The Council is concerned about the long-term impacts of the trawl fleet fishery on the health of the marine environment in the Bering Sea. The Council believes the repeated contact of trawl gear with the sea floor over the last 40 years has led to significant habitat loss and plays a critical role in the collapse of species necessary for subsistence. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council needs to assess the long-term damage caused by habitat loss in the Bering Sea to ensure the ecological function of habitats sensitive to human impacts.
2. Similarly, the Council is concerned over the amount of carbon dioxide released into the water column and the atmosphere due to the trawl fleet fishery's disruption of the ocean floor. Climate change has played a significant role in the health of salmon populations and the food security of the people of the Seward Peninsula region and believes that understanding the long-term impacts of climate change on the marine environment should be a priority for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries.
3. Trawling removes many non-target species from the environment as bycatch, and we are concerned about the cumulative impacts bycatch has on the overall health of the marine ecosystem.

The Council recognizes that the management of these fisheries is outside of the scope of the Board's authority but believes this issue is of utmost importance to the subsistence users of our region. As such, the Council feels compelled to express our concerns to the Board and the

Secretaries through our Annual Report and this letter, respectively. Furthermore, the Council considers it essential for the Secretaries to be engaged in the matter. The Council kindly requests that the Secretaries or their Under Secretaries share our concerns with the Department of Commerce and discuss cross-jurisdictional fisheries management issues with it. We believe that the Secretaries will be able to reach meaningful solutions to address the trawl fleet fishery's ecological, economic, and social impacts on subsistence.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter. If you have questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact Gisela Chapa, Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 310-6129 or gisela_chapa@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "G".

Louis Green, Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record