



## Federal Subsistence Board

Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 – 6199



In Reply Refer To:  
OSM.A25016

Louis Green, Chair  
Seward Peninsula Subsistence  
Regional Advisory Council  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1101 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chair Green:

This letter responds to the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report. The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report. Annual Reports allow the Board to become aware of issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users in your region. We value this opportunity to review the issues concerning your region.

### **1. Youth Engagement in Subsistence Practices and the Federal Subsistence Management Program in the Seward Peninsula Region**

*Our Council is fortunate to have many dedicated members with decades of experience advocating for subsistence needs and a wealth of Traditional Knowledge. We recognize; however, that our Council's future depends on the involvement of younger generations in subsistence management and their understanding of ANILCA and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). As such, the Council seeks opportunities to engage younger generations in the Federal Subsistence Management Program (FSMP), to develop and prepare them as future leaders and to reconnect them to practices that may bring each of them a sense of identity.*

#### **Request to the Board**

*The Council requests the support of the Board to engage youth in subsistence practices and FSMP in the Seward Peninsula Region. Our Council seeks to replicate the University of Alaska Southeast's "Policy and Procedures Practicum: Understanding the Federal Subsistence Process" in the Seward Peninsula region. This dual enrollment program is conducted in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Sitka Conservation Society, and Mount Edgecumbe High School. The USFS has allocated funding in a multi-year partnership*

*agreement, allowing high school students to earn school credit while learning about the regulatory process behind fish and wildlife management on Federal public lands. This program also prepares students to provide public testimony and builds their skills for future participation in public processes. The Council has received the approval of the Sitka Conservation Society to replicate this effort in our region. However, it requires a sponsoring Federal partner and seed funding of \$50,000 to pilot this program for two years. The Council asks the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to consider participating in such efforts. Additionally, the Council understands that this effort requires the support of other organizations in order to be successful and will advocate to receive the support of the Bering Strait School District, the Alaska Conservation Fund, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and other regional organizations. The Council is eager to discuss this opportunity further with NPS, BLM, and FWS.*

**Response:**

We encourage you to work with your Coordinator to reach out to the organizations and entities you have identified. Finding an organization that can champion this effort would be essential to its success. With new and motivated partners, you may discover different ways to bring a youth engagement program to fruition than those the Southeast program developed. We encourage your Council to explore various ways that a program like this may get off the ground. We shared your report topic with the NPS, BLM, BIA, and FWS for them to consider partnering in such efforts based on their staffing and funding availability; we suggest inviting their local and regional staff to join in your efforts as well.

**2. Request to Host Interagency Workshops to Address Long-Standing Issues Negatively Impacting Subsistence Users in the Seward Peninsula Region**

*We, the Council members, have spent many years advocating for the protection of subsistence resources through our involvement on multiple councils, boards, or committees across the state and have grown frustrated by the fact that despite our efforts, subsistence users must bear the burden of conservation. We committed our time and energy to our Council with the expectation that our efforts would be meaningful contributions to the management of the renewable resources, on which we depend. Twice a year, our Council meets to learn about trends in resources and provide recommendations on regulatory proposals. However, we feel this process does not affect the critical issues that are impacting federally qualified subsistence users in our region. Salmon populations have plummeted over the past twenty years, but commercial fisheries are still allowed to harvest indiscriminately. Caribou populations continue to decline. It is discouraging to feel that the only legacy that we may leave our grandchildren will be to continue bearing the burden of conservation. The Council believes we are at a point that requires inter-agency dialogue, planning, and collaboration to ensure the sustainability of subsistence resources in Alaska.*

**Request to the Board**

*The Federal Subsistence Management Program revolves around building consensus and cooperation among Federal agencies, the State, Tribal governments, and the public. As such, the Board is uniquely positioned to promote increased collaboration and a greater understanding of subsistence issues across the state. The Council requests that the Board agencies provide funding and staff to host workshops and other opportunities for dialogue that bring people together to establish goals, objectives, and strategies to keep these issues from becoming more severe.*

**Response:**

The Federal Subsistence Management Program is primarily responsible for promulgating regulations for the take of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands and waters and facilitating Council meetings for the purpose of involving public and information sharing and developing recommendations to the Board on regulatory proposals. However, we agree in principle that more coordination is necessary to manage through multiple jurisdictions for current and future resource sustainability.

We would like to continue to engage with the Council to identify multi-jurisdictional priorities, as well as key players in the Seward Peninsula Region vital to these efforts. We also encourage the Council to establish a working group to help provide direction and recommendations to organizing a workshop that addresses multi-jurisdictional priorities. We will direct OSM to assist you with establishing connections and involving other partners in your efforts. Other jurisdictional entities such as Federal agencies with management authority, the State of Alaska, and Tribes should be invited to attend and participate.

**Other Annual Report Topics for Information Purposes Only**

The Board thanks the Council for sharing information in your FY-2024 Annual Report on other issues significant to your region and subsistence users, (3) continued concerns over the impacts of trawling and commercial fisheries on Bering Sea Salmon; (4) concerns about the impacts of microplastics and pollution on the Arctic marine environment.

We appreciate and value the traditional knowledge, observations, and expertise you share. With this information, we are better prepared to make informed decisions.

In closing, we want to thank you and your Council for your continued involvement in the Federal Subsistence Management Program and the work you do on behalf of federally qualified subsistence users. We appreciate your efforts and are confident that federally qualified subsistence users of the Southcentral Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,

Anthony Christianson  
Chair

cc: Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Federal Subsistence Board  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Mark Burch, Assistant Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of  
Fish and Game  
Administrative Record