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EASTERN INTERIOR & WESTERN INTERIOR
ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY
COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

EIRAC VOLUME II - WIRAC VOLUME I

WEDGEWOOD RESORT, GAZEBO ROOM
Fairbanks, Alaska
December 17, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eastern Interior:

Robert Wright, Co-Chair
Dorothy Shockley
Linda Evans
Andrew Bassich
Eva Burk
Gerald Alexander
Susan Entsminger
Donald Woodruff

Western Interior:

Jack Reakoff, Co-Chair
Donald Honea
Jenny Pelkola
Timothy Gervais
Tommy Kriska

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid
Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 12/17/25)

(On record)

CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Good morning. We're going to start with the invocation. Jenny is going to help us with that. So, I'll have all your attention please. Thank you.

MS. PELKOLA: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you that we can meet together and just try to solve some problems, which sometimes are very hard, Father God. I ask that you be with each one. And for the ones that are not here, I just ask that Lord that you bring them here safely. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to call the meeting back to order at 9:16 am. Everybody, good morning. Thank you for being here. This will be the joint EIRAC and WIRAC meeting today. And we were going to accommodate Chief Brian Ridley to start off the meeting, because he has a time restraint. So, we're just going to put everything else aside and let him do his testimony right now. So, He doesn't miss his airplane and or whatever he has to get to. Thank you for being here this morning, Brian. We appreciate you. Thanks for your time.

MR. RIDLEY: There we go. Okay. Thank you for giving me the time this morning. I'm Brian Ridley, I'm the Chief Chairman for the Tanana Chiefs Conference. And I'm from the Native Village of Eagle at the Yukon River at the Canadian border. I'm here to comment on two topics: the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Chum Salmon Bycatch EIS, and the Secretarial Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. For the tribal members served by the Tanana Chiefs Conference chum salmon are not optional resources, but rather foundational to food security, cultural survival and are federally protected subsistence rights. Yukon River communities have endured years of subsistence closures, resulting in loss of cultural practices and long-term health impacts. Meanwhile, offshore commercial fisheries continue to intercept Western Alaska bound chum salmon without enforceable limits. That imbalance between who bears the conservation burden and who continues to fish is unacceptable. The purpose of this EIS must be to

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1 correct that inequity. The Bering Sea Pollock Trawl
2 Fishery accounts for about 99% of all chum salmon bycatch
3 in federal waters. Genetic stock identification shows
4 that roughly 17 to 19% of those fish come from Western
5 Alaska and upper and middle Yukon River systems. The
6 stocks our communities depend on, and the same stocks
7 that have triggered repeated subsistence closures. ADF&G
8 sonar data between 2020 to 2025, summer and fall chum
9 are returning at rates of about 30 to 37% respectively,
10 of their historic run sizes at Pilot Station. Fall chum
11 at Eagle are returning at 11% of historic run sizes.
12 These unprecedented record low returns show it's
13 imperative now more than ever, as tribal advocates have
14 long stated, every salmon counts. Despite the salmon
15 crisis on the Yukon and the biological connection of
16 chum bycatch, management continues to rely on voluntary
17 industry measures. These measures are not enforceable
18 in real time, and they have not prevented repeated high
19 bycatch years. Continued reliance on voluntary tools
20 alone is indefensible. TCC participated in this process
21 as a tribal cooperating agency with the expectation of
22 meaningful action. Anything short of enforceable caps
23 and spatial protections would be a failure of this EIS
24 to meet its stated purpose and need. TCC therefore
25 supports the following package as the minimum acceptable
26 outcome. Alternative two, alternative five option one
27 and alternative four. These alternatives must be adopted
28 together. Cap levels must also be meaningful. TCC
29 strongly opposes caps above 100,000 chum for the Bering
30 Sea wide limit and caps above 50,000 chum within the
31 migratory corridor. Higher caps function as symbolic
32 limits, not real conservation tools, especially given
33 recent bycatch levels. River communities are solely
34 bearing the burden of conservation. It's time that the
35 offshore fisheries share that burden.

36
37 I also want to address the Secretarial
38 Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.
39 For TCC, Title VIII of ANILCA is not discretionary. It's
40 a binding federal mandate intended to protect
41 subsistence as a way of life. Any review of the Federal
42 Subsistence Management program should be judged by one
43 question only. Is it meeting the needs of rural and
44 tribal subsistence users in practice? Today Interior and
45 Yukon River communities are experiencing food
46 insecurity, demonstrating the program is not fully
47 meeting its Title VIII obligations regardless of how
48 well procedures function on paper. This review is not
49 new, the Department's Comprehensive Subsistence Review
50 in 2010 concluded that Title VIII requires a bottom up

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1 management approach, meaningful deference to Regional
2 Advisory Council recommendations, a Federal Subsistence
3 Board that is responsive to rural subsistence users not
4 dominated by agency or state interests. Many of those
5 concerns remain unresolved 15 years later. Regional
6 Advisory Councils are the primary mechanism for rural
7 and tribal participation. They must function as
8 meaningful decision-making bodies, not advisory groups
9 where recommendations are overridden. The RAC membership
10 must prioritize active subsistence users and indigenous
11 knowledge holders. The Federal Subsistence Board must
12 also reflect the Federal Trust Responsibility. Agency
13 dominated decision making that consistently subordinates
14 subsistence needs undermines both the intent of Title
15 VIII and the lived realities of our communities.

16
17 And finally, consultation with the state
18 of Alaska is important, but consultation is not
19 deference. Federal authority must be exercised
20 independently, when necessary to uphold the federal
21 subsistence priority. Across both the Chum Salmon
22 Bycatch EIS and the Federal Subsistence Management
23 Program Review, the message from TCC is the same.
24 Subsistence protections must not be weakened, delayed,
25 or treated as secondary. Federal decisions must reflect
26 enforceable conservation measures and meaningful tribal
27 participation. Anything less continues to place the
28 burden of conservation on the communities least able to
29 absorb it. Thank you. Mahsi'choo.

30
31 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you very much,
32 Brian. Any questions for Brian this morning? Anybody?

33
34 (No response)

35
36 Thank you so much for your time, sir.

37
38 MR. RIDLEY: Thank you.

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40 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: You have something. Go
41 ahead, Jack.

42
43 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. I
44 appreciate your comments, Brian. These are very
45 important issues that are of great concern to both
46 Regional Councils and so I'm glad to hear your various
47 comments on the things that we're going to be working
48 on today. Thank you.

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50 MR. RIDLEY: Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much. And
safe travels wherever you're heading.

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MR. RIDLEY: Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Happy holidays. Okay.
Moving down to the agenda here. Well, we're still missing
a couple. What about roll call? Okay, Jack, we'll let
you do your side do roll call first. Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Nissa, would you call
the roll?

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MS. PILCHER: Absolutely, Jack. This is
Nissa Pilcher, OSM Council Coordinator for the record.
Don Honea, Sr.

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MR. HONEA: Here.

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MS. PILCHER: Jr? It's -- Pollock Simon,
Sr., from Allakaket. He has an absence. Jack Reakoff,
Wiseman

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Here.

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MS. PILCHER: Robert Walker had some
plane issues and will be arriving later today. So he is
currently absent. Tim Gervais.

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MR. GERVAIS: Good morning. Tim calling
in on the MS Teams.

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MS. PILCHER: All right. Darrell.....

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim.

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MS. PILCHER: Thanks, Tim. Darrell Vent
had a work conflict and is excused. Jenny Pelkola.

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MS. PELKOLA: Here.

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MS. PILCHER: All right. And then Tommy
Kriska had a weather issue, and he is also in route. So,
with four of eight members, we currently do not have
quorum.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you,

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Nissa. Charlie.

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1 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. Please do,
2 the RAC Eastern Interior side, please now, Brooke.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Sure. I will go down the
5 list here. Sue Entsminger is going to be joining us late
6 this morning. Dorothy Shockley. Please use your mic to
7 say here, okay.

8
9 MS. SHOCKLEY: Here.

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11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Linda Evans.

12
13 MS. EVANS: Here.

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15 MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

16
17 MS. BURK: Here.

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19 MS. MCDAVID: Andy Bassich.

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21 MR. BASSICH: Here. Online.

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23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Chair
24 Charlie Wright.

25
26 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Here.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: Member Galen Gilbert is
29 absent for this meeting. Donald Woodruff will be joining
30 us a little later this morning and Gerald Alexander.

31
32 MR. ALEXANDER: Present.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: With six members present,
35 EIRAC does have quorum. Thank you.

36
37 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. With roll call
38 done, we have a Meeting Announcements now with Council
39 Coordinators. Thank you.

40
41 MS. PILCHER: Good morning, everyone.
42 Again, this is Nissa Pilcher. So welcome to day two of
43 the Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory
44 Council and day one of the Western Interior Alaska
45 Regional Advisory Council. We are delighted to have the
46 unique opportunity for the two Councils to meet together
47 today. My name is Nissa Pilcher and I'm one of the
48 Coordinators and designated federal officers helping
49 facilitate this meeting. Just like we have the two Co-
50 Chairs today, we also have two Coordinators as well. My

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1 colleague, Brooke McDavid is also helping to facilitate
2 today. I do have some housekeeping announcements to make
3 before we get started. And I do apologize for the repeat
4 information for those who were at the Eastern Interior
5 meeting yesterday.

6
7 So, this is a public meeting, and it is
8 being recorded and it will be transcribed. For those
9 attending our meeting in person, please make sure that
10 you sign in at the front table each day of the meeting.
11 For those joining us via distance, you can find the
12 agenda and meeting materials on the Federal Subsistence
13 Management Program website. That internet address is
14 www.doi.gov/subsistence and then under the Regions tab
15 choose either Eastern Interior or Western Interior and
16 then the Meeting Materials tile. The most recent draft
17 of the agenda is on the website. But it may differ
18 slightly than the ones previously sent out by email. And
19 if you're in the room, today's joint meeting agenda is
20 the green document again on the tables when you enter
21 the room. For all participants on the phone and online,
22 please remember to mute yourselves when you are not
23 speaking. If you do not have a mute button on your phone,
24 you can press star six and that will mute your phone.
25 If you'd like to speak, please press star five to raise
26 your hand or use the Raise Hand button on MS Teams. If
27 a line is not muted and creates a distraction, we will
28 have to mute it for you. For folks helping moderate
29 online, please do not click the mute all button as that
30 will mute those of us in the room as well, and the folks
31 online will not be able to hear us.

32
33 So just a friendly reminder about
34 conduct and ethics during the meeting. The meeting will
35 be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order. And the
36 meeting will be led with our Co-Chairs, with assistance
37 from the Coordinators and others as needed. Please do
38 not speak out of turn, wait to be called on by the Chair.
39 Please, no name calling or use of profanity is permitted
40 during the meeting. Point of order can be called by
41 anyone if misconduct happens. We are all here because
42 we care about the resources and subsistence, and we want
43 to maintain an environment where everyone is respected
44 and can work together.

45
46 For this joint meeting today, public
47 comments will be prioritized for agenda items taken up
48 by the Joint Council. If there is time at the end of the
49 day, the Chairs may provide opportunity to comment on
50 non-agenda items during the Joint Council discussion

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1 period. The standard opportunity to comment on non-
2 agenda items will also be provided tomorrow morning
3 during the separate Eastern Interior and Western
4 Interior meetings. We do look forward to hearing all
5 public testimony, but we kindly ask that you be
6 considerate of the full agenda we have today and try to
7 limit your testimony to 3 to 5 minutes. If you are here
8 in the room with us today and would like to provide
9 public comment, please fill out a green comment card
10 with your name and the topic of your comment. The Chairs
11 will call on you to comment when that agenda comes up
12 on the agenda. And also, after you fill it out, please
13 bring it up to either Brooke or I or any of the OSM
14 staff in the room and make sure that that we get it. If
15 you are on the phone or online and would like to comment
16 again, please press star five or use the Raise Hand
17 feature in teams and wait to be called on. You can also
18 say Mr. Chair and wait to be called on if that works
19 better for you. Please identify yourself for the record
20 by stating your first and last name and any affiliation
21 that you are representing when it is your turn to
22 comment. If you'd like to submit written comments
23 instead of or in addition to oral comments, you may turn
24 those into one of us Coordinators or email them to
25 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Please be sure to include your
26 name and affiliation on written comments.

27
28 I'm just about done, hold on. Today's
29 AV support is being provided by Gabe from Talking Circle
30 Media. The audio recording of this meeting will be sent
31 to a separate company to be transcribed. Since they are
32 not present with us during the meeting, it is very
33 important to remember to state your name for the record
34 every time you speak, so they know who is talking when
35 they listen to the recording. If you forget, we may
36 politely interrupt you with a reminder. We are also
37 testing out the use of a webcam in the meeting room to
38 try to make things more engaging for our online
39 participants. We'd appreciate any feedback after the
40 meeting on whether this is helpful. This concludes my
41 housekeeping announcements. Thank you to everyone who
42 has joined us today, and a special thank you to our
43 Council members who contribute so much to the Federal
44 Subsistence Management Program.

45
46 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much for
47 that. I think Brooke has an announcement also. Go ahead,
48 Brooke.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
2 something really brief. I wanted to put this on the
3 record. Yesterday in our meeting, it came up a couple
4 times. There were concerns raised by Council members
5 that some of our Fish and Game colleagues weren't able
6 to be here and I just wanted to let you know that they're
7 having another meeting that overlaps with this one. It's
8 not because they didn't want to be here. As you know,
9 we had to reschedule this meeting and kind of just find
10 the best available dates. We couldn't make it work out
11 perfectly for everyone. We will have some of our area
12 biologists joining us tomorrow because their meeting
13 will end today, so. They're always very generous with
14 their time and information and always try to be here
15 when they can. So, I just wanted to put that on the
16 record and let you know that was the reason. Thank you.

17
18 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. At this time on
19 the agenda, it says introduction from Co-Chairs. So,
20 I'll yield to you, sir. Good morning.

21
22 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We'll go through our
23 Councils who we are, where we're from. Then we'll go --
24 should go around the room and introduce the room guests.
25 Then we'll do the phone also. So, I'm Jack Reakoff, I
26 live in Wiseman and the Brookes Range been on the Western
27 Tier Council since 1993 and the current Chair. And,
28 Jenny.

29
30 MS. PELKOLA: Jenny Pelkola, Galena. I've
31 been on the Council since 19 -- I don't know when. Well,
32 anyway, I've been out here for a while, and I've learned
33 a lot from our elder Pollock Simon and Jack. I learned
34 a lot from them, and I thank you.

35
36 MR. HONEA: Good morning. Don Honea, Jr.,
37 Ruby Advisory Fish and Game Chairperson. And also, I've
38 been on here since Carl Morgan days. Maybe back the 90s
39 or something, but yeah it seems like sometimes that we
40 -- we're kind of piecemealing stuff. I mean, I don't
41 like the idea of, you know, asking for what I think is
42 inherently ours you know, or it should be. And actually,
43 it's good to be here today and look forward to working
44 with Eastern. Thank you.

45
46 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, Charlie's
47 Council. We're going to go through EIRAC. Oh, Tim. Tim's
48 on our Council. Yeah, you're on the phone there, Tim.
49 Go ahead, introduce yourself.

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1 MR. GERVAIS: Good morning. This is Tim
2 Gervais in Ruby. I'd like to express my appreciation for
3 Eastern Interior for meeting with us. I'm the commercial
4 and sport representative for Western Interior. And I've
5 worked with the WIRAC, I think, since approximately
6 around 2008.

7
8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Tim. Now
9 we're going to go through EIRAC. Go ahead.

10
11 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Jack. We'll
12 go with the sun and start with Gerald. Thank you, Gerald.

13
14 MR. ALEXANDER: Good morning. My name is
15 Gerald Alexander. I'm from Fort Yukon. I'm a freshman
16 in this EIRAC and I've been on the Fish Commission for
17 quite some time prior to this, and I figure it's better
18 to -- only way we can serve our people is to step up.
19 Thank you.

20
21 MS. BURK: Good morning. I'm Eva Dawn
22 Burk, I'm from Nenana and Manley Hot Springs.

23
24 MS. EVANS: Good morning. Linda Evans
25 from Rampart. Currently living in North Pole.

26
27 MS. SHOCKLEY: Good morning. Nice to see
28 Western Interior people, and welcome. Dorothy Shockley,
29 Upper Koyukon Dene from the Interior villages. My family
30 from Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village. I grew up in
31 Manley Hot Springs, and I've been involved with
32 fisheries all my life. Thank you.

33
34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Good morning. My name
35 is Charlie Wright. I'm the Chair of the Eastern Interior
36 RAC. I grew up between Rampart and Tanana. It's very
37 good to see you all here. I'm so happy that we're having
38 a joint meeting today, since a lot of our hunting grounds
39 and the way we live overlap. So, I'm really happy to see
40 you all here. Thanks for the opportunity, Jack. I
41 appreciate you being here.

42
43 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you.

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45 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I forgot about our man
46 Andy. Sorry about that. Andy Bassich, you out there?

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48 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
49 Andy Bassich, from Calico Bluff near Eagle, Alaska. Been
50 on the RAC for, I don't know, 20-25 years or so. I also

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1 sit as a representative on the Yukon River Panel, and I
2 Co-Chair the Communications Committee for the Yukon
3 River Panel. It's great to be a part of this. I'm really
4 looking forward to our discussions. Thank you.

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6 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, thank you, Andy.
7 So, we're going to go around the room. We're going to
8 introduce our court reporter, Gabe. Yeah, we want to
9 talk into the mic. When we do our introductions. We're
10 going to go around the room in this direction here. And
11 so we got to get all this on the record transcribed. So
12 go ahead.

13
14 MR. TEGOSEAK: Gabe Tegoseak, from
15 Utqiagvik, Talking Circle media.

16
17 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Gabe.

18
19 MS. GREDIAGIN: Good morning, Lisa
20 Grediagin, Wildlife Division Supervisor with the Office
21 of Subsistence Management.

22
23 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Lisa.

24
25 MR. PLANK: Morning. Tom Plank, Wildlife
26 Biologist, OSM.

27
28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Tom.

29
30 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: We line up, it'll make
31 it go quicker. Thank you.

32
33 MR. LANE: Good morning. I'm Ryan Lane
34 with the Bureau of Land Management, Eastern Interior
35 Field Office.

36
37 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Ryan.

38
39 MS. MONTGOMERIE: Good morning, Councils
40 and Chairs Mr. Reakoff and Mr. Wright. I'm Claire
41 Montgomerie. I work for the BLM as the Ecologist for the
42 Eastern Interior Field Office.

43
44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Claire.

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46 MS. JULIANUS: Good morning, everyone.
47 Erin Julianus also BLM with the Central Yukon Field
48 Office in Fairbanks.

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50 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Erin.

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MR. JOCHUM: Good morning, Councils,
Chairs. Kim Jochum, National Park Service Regional
Office Subsistence Program and Interagency Staff
Committee Member.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Kim.

MR. RANSBURY: Good morning, everybody.
I'm Shane Ransbury I'm a Fisheries Biologist for U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service here in Fairbanks.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Shane.

MR. MERRILL: Good morning, everyone. I'm
Clayton Merrill, Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic Char
and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Clayton.

MR. YAKSA: Good morning, George Yaska.
Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership Coordinator.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, George. Good
to see you.

MR. HERRON: Good morning, Keith Herron,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Assistant Interim Season
Manager, Yukon.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Keith.

MS. LAPP: Krystal Lapp. Tanana Chiefs
Conference.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Krystal.

MS. MORAN: Morning. I'm Tina Moran with
the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm the Acting Refuge
Manager for Kanuti, Koyukuk, Nowitna, Innoko.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Wow. Good morning,
Tina.

MR. GROENKE: Good morning, Jeffrey
Groenke with Yukon River Camp and Northern Alaska
Environmental Center.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning,
Jeffrey.

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MS. IRWIN: Good morning, Mr. Chairs. My name is Olivia Henaayee Irwin. I'm here on behalf of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, and I'm a former EIRAC member.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Olivia.

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MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Liz Williams, Cultural Anthropologist at OSM.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Liz.

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MR. LESLIE: David Leslie with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, David.

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MS. COCHON: Grace Cochon with the Office of Subsistence Management.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Grace.

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DR. VICKERS: Good morning, Brent Vickers Office of Subsistence Management. Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Morning, Brent.

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MS. MORROW: Good morning. This is Kristen Morrow, the Office of Subsistence Management.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Kristen. And we have people on the phone. Oh, go ahead.

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MS. MCDAVID: So first off, if you are calling and representing a tribal government or native organization, if you could please introduce yourself.

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MS. ERICKSON: Good morning. This is Diloolaa Erickson with Tanana Chiefs Conference. Sorry I couldn't be there in person. I'm calling in from Galena today.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Diloolaa.

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MS. VENT: Good morning. This is Jazmyn Vent with.....

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(Distortion)

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Hey, you broke up
there, Say again.

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MS. VENT: Good morning. This is Jazmyn
Vent with the Yukon River Inter Tribal Fish Commission.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay, Jazmyn. Go
ahead, next.

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MS. KOSBRUK: Good morning. My name is
Deanna (distortion). Good morning. My name is Deanna
Kosbruk, and I work for Ahtna Intertribal Resource
Commission and I am from the Ahtna region. I also have
DR. Jim Simon in office.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning,
Deanna.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MS. KOSBRUK: Thank you for having us.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF:and Jim.

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MS. VICENTE: Hi. Good morning. This is
Terese Vicente with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission. Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning. Anybody
else in that category? Nissa.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MS. NEWMAN: Good morning. Janessa...

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead.

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MS. NEWMAN: From the Yukon River Inter
Tribal Fish Commission.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: First name again.

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MS. NEWMAN: Janessa.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Janessa. Anybody
else?

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(No response)

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1 Nissa.

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MS. PILCHER: Well, thank you all for being here. I'll ask for Alaska Department of Fish and Game, although I do reference Brookes earlier comments about them having an overlapping meeting. So, anyone from Alaska Department of Fish and Game on?

MR. POETTER: Yeah. Good morning. This is Aaron Poetter. I'm the Subsistence Liaison for the Department of Fish and Game. Good morning.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Aaron.

MS. JALLEN: And good morning, Mr. Chair, Jack. Good morning, Nissa. This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Yukon River Summer Season Fishery Manager here in the Fairbanks Office. I do hope to stop by sometime later today. Thanks.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks. Good to hear from you, Deena. Anybody else from ADF&G?

(No response)

So, hearing none. Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: How about U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

MR. TULIK: Good morning. My name is Christopher Tulik with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Christopher, good morning.

MS KLEIN: Good morning. This is Jill Klein with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm the Regional Subsistence Coordinator, joining in from Anchorage this morning.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Jill.

MS. KLEIN: Good morning.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Anybody else from U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

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1 MR. NICORI: Good morning. My name is
2 Emmitt Nicori, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

3
4 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Emmitt.
5 Anybody else from U.S. Fish and Wildlife?

6
7 MS. PILCHER: How about National Park
8 Service?

9
10 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva
11 Patton with the National Park Service Subsistence
12 Program, Subsistence Program Manager and ISC member.
13 Good to hear everyone on this morning.

14
15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Eva.
16 Anybody else from National Park Service?

17
18 MS. OKADA: Good morning.....

19
20 (Simultaneous speech)

21
22 MS. CRAVER: Good morning. Amy Craver,
23 from Denali National Park.

24
25 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Amy. And
26 then I heard Marcy?

27
28 MS. OKADA: Hi. Good morning. This is
29 Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the
30 Arctic National Park and Preserve and for Yukon-Charley
31 Rivers National Preserve.

32
33 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning. Anybody
34 else from National Park Service?

35
36 MR. JOLY: Good morning, everyone. This
37 is Kyle Joly. I'm a Wildlife Biologist for Gates in
38 Yukon-Charley.

39
40 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Kyle.
41 Anybody else from National Park Service?

42
43 MS. PILCHER: Okay. How about now, BLM?

44
45 MR. TOWNSEND: Hey good morning,
46 everybody. This is Craig Townsend, Wildlife Biologist
47 with the Anchorage Field Office, BLM. Thank you for
48 having me.

49
50 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning.

00017

1

2

MS. PILCHER: Anyone else for BLM?

3

4

(No response)

5

6

7

All right. How about Office of
Subsistence Management?

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9

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12

MS. LEONETTI: Waqaa, this is Crystal
Leonetti. I'm the Director Office of Subsistence
Management. Good morning.

13

14

15

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning,
Crystal.

16

17

18

MR. STONE: Good morning, Jarred Stone,
Fisheries Biologist with OSM.

19

20

21

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Jerry.

27

28

29

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. You're wobbling
a little bit. You want to say your first name again?

30

31

32

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34

MR. FOLEY: Kevin.

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42

MS. DAY: Good morning, everyone. This
is -- yeah. Hi, Nissa. Good morning. This is Janel,
cartographer for OSM. And that's Janel Day. Sorry.

43

44

45

46

MS. LA VINE: Good morning, everyone.
This is Robbin La Vine, the Subsistence Policy
Coordinator for OSM.

47

48

49

50

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Robbin.
Do you have anybody else from OSM?

(No response)

00018

1 MS. PILCHER: How about the Department
2 of Interior?

3
4 MS. TAYLOR: Good morning, (distortion).
5 This is Sara Taylor from the Office of the Secretary in
6 Anchorage, Alaska.

7
8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning, Sara.

9
10 MS. TAYLOR: Very sorry I can't join you
11 today, Chair. I am -- I was delayed, and I'm not able
12 to make it there in person. And I am very sad for that.
13 I'm very grateful to join you virtually.

14
15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Was looking
16 forward to seeing -- meeting you and seeing you again.
17 All right.

18
19 MS. PILCHER: All right. So, if I missed
20 any agency folks or anyone that's calling in as a member
21 of the public, if you could please introduce yourself
22 now.

23
24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Public members.

25
26 MS. NICHOLAS: Good morning. This is
27 Kimberly Nicholas, TCC TRS Coordinator.

28
29 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Good morning,
30 Kimberly. Any other public members or agency people?

31
32 (No response)

33
34 Hearing no others. That would be the
35 introductions of the participants in the meeting this
36 morning. So, turning this back over to Charlie. Go ahead.

37
38 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Jack. At
39 this time on the agenda, we want to Review and Adopt
40 Joint Meeting Agenda.

41
42 MS. PELKOLA: I'll move. This is Jenny
43 Pelkola. I'll move.

44
45 MS. BURK: This is Eva, I'll second.

46
47 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Any discussion?

48
49 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I have one comment,
50 Mr. Chair. That the Council should be aware that the

00019

1 Secretary Review is time certain for 1 pm. And so, this
2 agenda item 7C has to be right after lunch. So that's
3 basically the only clarification.

4

5 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
6 Jack. So, we're going to make that motion with that
7 change. Just a clarification, okay. Just moving forward
8 then. Is that any more discussion on the agenda?

9

10 (No response)

11

12 All those in favor of adopting the
13 agenda this morning, please signify by saying aye.

14

15 IN UNISON: Aye.

16

17 All against, same sign.

18

19 (No response)

20

21 Hearing none. Agenda is adopted. Moving
22 forward, Action Items. Action Items starting with A -
23 North Pacific Fishery Management Council Chum Salmon
24 Bycatch DEIS, Tab 3 in your book.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke.
27 We do have different reference documents and locations
28 for EIRAC versus WIRAC. So, in your Eastern Interior
29 binder, there was some information about -- it was the
30 executive summary for from the DEIS. But we also passed
31 out a copy -- you all should have a copy of the slides
32 that we're going to show on the screen behind you. It
33 looks like this. It's -- I think it's under your book
34 there, Jack. And there are copies of the presentation
35 that Ms. Krystal Lapp is about to give on the back table.
36 And I will share this online in just a second. I'll just
37 need a minute to get set up.

38

39 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Did you receive the -
40 - Mr. Chair, excuse me. Tim, did you receive this bycatch
41 letter we're looking at?

42

43 MR. GERVAIS: I have a North Pacific
44 Management Council information sheet with Bering Sea
45 chum salmon bycatch actions, and salmon bycatch
46 frequently asked questions. This is out of the fall
47 meeting supplemental material 2025.

48

49 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, this is the Chum
50 Salmon Bycatch Environmental Impact Statement update

00020

1 from tribal cooperating agencies.

2

3 MS. PILCHER: I'll make sure it's on the
4 top of his inbox.

5

6 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, you're going to
7 get that from Nissa. Go ahead, Mr. Chair.

8

9 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to
10 pass the mic over to Krystal now. You got the floor.

11

12 MS. LAPP: Thank you, Co-Chairs. I'm
13 Krystal Lapp, I'm the Natural Resource Policy Analyst
14 for Tanana Chiefs Conference and joining us virtually,
15 I'll let her introduce herself.

16

17 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Krystal. Can you
18 all hear me okay?

19

20 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes, we can.

21

22 MS. VICENTE: Oops. Okay, great. Good
23 morning, my name again is Terese Vicente. I'm the Policy
24 and Programs Director with the Kuskokwim River Inter-
25 Tribal Fish Commission. And just a quick note, the Fish
26 Commission is currently having an Executive Council
27 Meeting, so I've stepped out to be able to share this
28 important information with you all. But I will not be
29 able to stay for questions as I need to get back to our
30 Council. My contact information is at the end of these
31 slides. So, if you do have further questions for me or
32 the Kuskokwim Fish Commission, please feel free to reach
33 out at any time. And thanks for letting us share this
34 with you today. As you see, Krystal and I, on behalf of
35 our organizations, just wanted to share an update on the
36 Chum Bycatch EIS that's going before the North Pacific
37 Fishery Management Council. We've also recorded this
38 presentation and posted it to our website. So, if you
39 want to go back and re-listen to it at any time, I'll
40 share that link in the chat as well, and hopefully the
41 coordinators could share that. But Krystal, I'll pass
42 it back to you to get us started.

43

44 MS. LAPP: Thank you, Terese. All right.
45 So, what is the North Pacific Fishery Management
46 Council? I understand and know that a lot of you guys
47 are already very familiar with the North Pacific Fishery
48 Management Council but, it's important that we continue
49 to go over what it is for members of the public who are
50 not. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is one

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1 of eight Regional Fishery Management Councils across the
2 country that were established in 1976 by the Magnuson-
3 Stevens Act, or MSA. The North Pacific Fishery
4 Management Council debates and develops management
5 measures for federal fisheries in the North Pacific, 3
6 to 200 nautical miles offshore of Alaska. The management
7 recommendations developed by them are reviewed by the
8 Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries
9 Service or NMFS. NMFS is also sometimes called NOAA
10 Fisheries. If NOAA Fisheries approve the
11 recommendations, it is responsible for implementing
12 them. There are 15 seats on the North Pacific Fishery
13 Management Council, 11 of them are voting seats. 5 are
14 held by Alaskan fishery representatives, usually
15 representatives of trawlers or charter fisheries. 2 are
16 held by Washington State Federal Fishery
17 representatives, again usually trawlers or processors.
18 3 are held by representatives of the three states with
19 interest in Alaska marine fisheries, the State of
20 Alaska, the State of Washington, and the State of Oregon.
21 There are also 4 non-voting seats. These are held by
22 different federal bodies, including the U.S. Fish and
23 Wildlife Service. There are currently no designated
24 Alaska Native tribal seats on the North Pacific Fishery
25 Management Council. However, there is one designated
26 tribal seat on the Advisory Panel. The North Pacific
27 Fishery Management Council is very clear that it is not
28 responsible for managing salmon from the Kuskokwim,
29 Yukon, or other rivers in Western Alaska, Interior.
30 However, it is responsible for managing salmon bycatch
31 that happens in federal fisheries in the Bering Sea,
32 Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska.

33
34 MS. VICENTE: Most of you are aware that
35 bycatch in a fishery means that a fish that is not
36 targeted is instead caught. And again, this might be
37 background information but just recapping for you all.
38 So, in federal offshore fisheries managed by the North
39 Pacific Council, fish caught as bycatch cannot legally
40 be kept or sold, though they can sometimes be donated
41 if their quality is good. And the heart of this issue
42 is about chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea. So,
43 here's some background information on this.

44
45 In the Bering Sea, 99% of all chum
46 salmon bycatch is caught by pollock trawl vessels.
47 Trawlers are large boats that drag nets behind them to
48 scoop up fish. And pollock trawl nets are midwater or
49 pelagic nets, but they often touch the seafloor when
50 they're being used. There are three sectors in the Bering

00022

1 Sea pollock industry. There's the catcher vessels known
2 as the CV fleet. These vessels are usually the smallest
3 and inshore or shoreside catcher vessels must deliver
4 their hauls to onshore processing plants. Because of
5 where they fish close to the Alaska Peninsula, catcher
6 vessels catch the majority of chum salmon bycatch. The
7 second sector is catcher processors, which are known as
8 CP. These vessels have processing equipment on board to
9 be able to process their hulls at sea, and the third
10 sector are motherships. These vessels are quite large,
11 and they do not themselves fish, but they have processing
12 equipment on board, so catcher vessels and catcher
13 processors in their cooperatives deliver hauls to
14 motherships to be processed at sea.

15
16 Federal fisheries are split into two
17 seasons. The A season runs from January 20th to June
18 10th, and the B season runs from June 10th to November
19 1st. So currently the pollock fishery is not fishing.
20 They're in a stand down until they start back up January
21 20th of next year. Chum salmon are typically caught as
22 bycatch from June to August or in the early B season.
23 The bottom right graphic, that line graph shows annual
24 chum salmon bycatch split by the A season in orange and
25 the B season in black from 1991 until 2023. As you can
26 see, the majority actually 20 -- or 99% of chum salmon
27 bycatch happens in the B season so after June. And the
28 dashed line is the 1991 to 2023 average of about 186,000
29 chum salmon per year. These numbers come from publicly
30 available data from on board fishery observers. Bering
31 Sea pollock vessels are required to have two on board
32 observers that report every salmon that is caught as
33 bycatch.

34
35 Not every salmon, however, that is
36 caught as bycatch is from Western and Interior Alaska.
37 On average, about 19% of each year's total chum salmon
38 bycatch are from Western Alaska and the Upper Middle
39 Yukon genetic reporting groups. These groups together
40 are known as WAK, W-A-K, WAK chum. And that left hand
41 graphic on the bottom shows the different genetic
42 reporting groups of chum salmon bycatch. WAK chum are
43 the yellow and blue stocks circled in red at the top
44 right of that graphic. So basically, encompassing all
45 of Western and Interior Alaska.

46
47 Current management for chum salmon
48 bycatch entails no caps. Since 2016, chum salmon bycatch
49 has instead been managed through the pollock industries
50 contracts known as incentive plan agreements or IPAs.

00023

1 There is also a rolling hotspot system that issues in-
2 season closures of statistical areas, also known as stat
3 areas, which are small grid like areas of the ocean.
4 When these stat areas have high rates of chum bycatch
5 to pollock harvest, they'll be closed down for a certain
6 period of time. The rolling hot spot system that does
7 this is set in regulation, but it's monitored and managed
8 by the pollock industry. So, what's happening now is
9 that the North Pacific Council is reevaluating this chum
10 salmon bycatch management system by looking at new ways
11 to manage bycatch, particularly to reduce WAK chum. You
12 could go to the next slide, please.

13
14 MS. LAPP: These maps are from a
15 presentation by the pollock industry in 2024. They're
16 helpful in visualizing where most WAK chum are caught,
17 north of the Alaska Peninsula and just west of Bristol
18 Bay. On the left, the four genetic cluster areas are
19 shown. These are the areas used by NOAA Fisheries
20 genetics lab. Most WAK chum are caught in clusters 1 and
21 2. This is the same area that most pollock trawling
22 occurs. The trawl industry knows these areas as the
23 Unimak area, Shelf and Shelf edge shown in the map to
24 the right-hand side. Next slide please.

25
26 MS. VICENTE: So, some numbers for you
27 all. Chum salmon bycatch has increased in recent years.
28 So long-term since 1991, the pollock fishery has caught
29 about 186,000 chum salmon each year. From 2011 to 2023
30 this increase to about 268,000 chum salmon each year.
31 And the all-time high chum salmon bycatch happened in
32 2005 with about 711,000 chum salmon taken as bycatch.
33 The second highest chum salmon bycatch happened just a
34 few years ago in 2021, with nearly 550,000 chum salmon
35 taken. Genetic analysis estimates about 50,800 of these
36 to be WAK chum, which is about 10% of that overall
37 bycatch. However, tribal and public outcry about this
38 really high amount of bycatch spurred the current
39 management revaluation. And on this slide, you see some
40 recent years overall and in parentheses, WAK specific
41 chum bycatch. The figure at the right, shows chum bycatch
42 from 2011 through 2024. Each bar shows the total chum
43 salmon bycatch in a given year, and the dark blue part
44 at the top of the bar shows the WAK chum portion of the
45 overall bycatch just for context. That portion may seem
46 small, but if you add them together, kind of taking in
47 this cumulative over-time picture of chum taken from the
48 ocean through bycatch, we can see that over 615,000 WAK
49 chum salmon have been caught and discarded by the pollock
50 fishery since 2011. So, in the last 15 or so years. Next

00024

1 slide please.

2

3

4 MS. LAPP: So that was just a little
5 background about the North Pacific Fishery Management
6 Council and the chum bycatch from the Bering Sea. Now I
7 want to share some background about the management
8 reevaluation going on. The North Pacific Fishery
9 Management Council and NOAA Fisheries has been
10 conducting an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS.
11 This is a requirement for proposed actions or projects
12 by federal agencies. EISs assessed environmental,
13 economic and social impacts of different pathways for
14 the proposals known as alternatives. Each EIS has a lead
15 agency. In this case it's NOAA Fisheries. However, lead
16 agencies may invite or accept cooperating agencies who
17 have special expertise about the subject matter to help
18 them with the EIS analysis. Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal
19 Fish Commission requested and was accepted to be a
20 cooperating agency on the Chum salmon Bycatch EIS in
21 October 2023. Tanana Chiefs Conference requested and was
22 accepted to be a cooperating agency on the EIS in April
23 2024. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is the
24 other cooperating agency in this process. Next slide
25 please.

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MS. VICENTE: And as cooperating agencies
the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and
Tanana Chiefs Conference have helped write, review and
add to parts of the EIS per our special expertise of our
organizations and tribes on chum salmon. So, this slide
shows just some of the different types of information,
including traditional knowledge and scientific data,
that we've helped provide to enhance this analysis. If
you'd like to, you can use a smartphone to scan the QR
codes at the bottom to see presentations each of our
organizations gave about these contributions at the
North Pacific Council meeting last February 2025. Next
slide please.

MS. LAPP: At its February 2025 meeting,
the North Pacific passed a motion to revise 5
alternatives on the table for chum salmon bycatch
management. The North Pacific also recommended the
publication of the draft EIS by NMFS or NOAA Fisheries,
which happened this past September. The North Pacific
will next talk about chum salmon bycatch in February
2026, and they have indicated that they will take final
action at this meeting, meaning they will choose an
alternative or combination of alternatives for approval
and implementation by NMFS. A summary of each

00025

1 alternative is here, and we will give more details about
2 each of these in the next slides. As you all think about
3 if and how you want to comment to NMFS or the Council,
4 here are some things to keep in mind. The North Pacific
5 can choose a combination of alternatives. However,
6 alternative 1, which is for no action, cannot be selected
7 with alternatives 2 through 5, which are action
8 alternatives, and alternative 2 and 3 cannot be chosen
9 together because they propose different pathways to the
10 same outcome, an overall cap on chum bycatch. Finally,
11 alternative 3, and option 3 of alternative 5 cannot be
12 chosen together, as they both use chum salmon abundance
13 to set caps. We'll provide more information in the next
14 slides.

15
16 MS. VICENTE: So, focusing on alternative
17 1 first. Alternative 1 is status quo or no action. It's
18 required to this alternative in the EIS by law. And if
19 alternative 1 is chosen, it would create no change from
20 the current chum salmon bycatch measures, which are
21 through the industry's incentive plan agreements and the
22 rolling hotspot system that I spoke about earlier. Next
23 slide.

24
25 MS. LAPP: Alternative 2 would put a chum
26 salmon bycatch cap in place on all pollock vessels across
27 the Bering Sea. The cap would be a number between 100,000
28 and 550,000. It would be in place every B season of
29 every year. If the cap is reached, all pollock trawling
30 would close for the rest of the B season, regardless of
31 how much pollock quota they have left. The chosen total
32 cap number would be divided up among different pollock
33 sectors, the catcher vessels, catcher processors, and
34 motherships. There are 4 options for that -- oh, 3.
35 There are 4 options for that that the North Pacific can
36 choose from, the caps would add up to the total cap. The
37 sector managers would split their cap levels among their
38 vessels.

39
40 There is a sub option in here for
41 community development quota or CDQ groups to have a
42 reserve pool of chum salmon they can catch as bycatch,
43 depending on which sector they say will fish with the
44 following year. Most CDQ groups fish with the catcher,
45 processor and mothership sectors, so their chum bycatch
46 allowance under alternative 2 would be in line with those
47 sectors caps. However, this reserve pool sub option
48 would let CDQ groups access extra chum bycatch allowance
49 from other sectors like the catcher vessels. If the CDQ
50 groups let NOAA Fisheries know in November, the year

00026

1 before fishing happens. In other words, the option
2 creates an extra buffer of bycatch above the total cap
3 amount for participating CDQ vessels only. Next slide.

4
5 MS. VICENTE: So alternative 3 is very
6 similar to alternative 2 because it would set up a chum
7 bycatch cap across the Bering Sea. And that cap would
8 be one number between 100,000 chum at the lowest, up to
9 550,000 chum. However, the cap under alternative 3 would
10 only be in place in years after it is determined that
11 there was low chum salmon bycatch in Western and Interior
12 Alaska rivers. So, in other words, under alternative 3,
13 there may not always be a chum salmon bycatch cap in
14 place, whereas an alternative 2 it's in place every year.
15 There's a few options here to determine low or high chum
16 abundance. Option 1 described on this slide, would
17 combine Yukon summer and fall chum run reconstructions,
18 Kuskokwim sonar data, and Norton Sound escapement and
19 harvest data into a three-area index, and there'd be
20 different abundance thresholds for each area. So, if all
21 of these areas had chum returns above the threshold, or
22 at "high abundance", there would be no cap for the
23 pollock industry the following year. If one area was
24 below the threshold or at low abundance and the other
25 two were above their threshold, a cap would be in place
26 the following year and I like to call this the base cap.
27 So that base cap would be one number between 100,000 to
28 550,000. But then if 2 or 3 areas in this three-area
29 index were below the threshold, there would be a cap
30 that is 75% of that base cap.

31
32 This is kind of complicated. So, a
33 hypothetical situation here: let's just say that under
34 alternative 3, option 1, the Council chose a cap of
35 100,000 chum salmon. They decided to move forward with
36 this. So, if in this year, the Yukon, Kuskokwim and
37 Norton Sound all have chum abundance above the threshold
38 limit, there would be no cap in place next year in 2026.
39 But if this year just the Yukon and Kuskokwim had chum
40 abundance above their thresholds, but Norton Sound was
41 below the threshold, there would be a base cap of 100,000
42 chum salmon, a cap at 100,000 next year in 2026. But if
43 it was just the Yukon that had chum abundance above its
44 threshold, or if none of the areas had chum abundance
45 returns above their thresholds there would be a cap of
46 75,000 chum salmon, which is 75% of that 100,000-base
47 cap in place next year. So that's just to help illustrate
48 what this sort of step-down plan means. You could go to
49 the next slide please.

50

00027

1 MS. LAPP: Option 2 of alternative 3 also
2 links a cap chum abundance, but it only looks at the
3 Yukon summer and fall chum run abundances. An earlier
4 analysis showed that chum abundance in the Yukon, while
5 not always following the same trends as the Kusko and
6 Norton Sound Rivers, is similar enough that it can serve
7 as a proxy. So under this option 2, if neither summer
8 nor fall chum are at low abundance, meaning they are
9 above the threshold, there would be no cap the following
10 year. If the summer or fall chum are below the abundance
11 threshold, or if both of them are, there would be a cap
12 in place for the following year. That cap would be one
13 number between 100,000 and 550,000. Alternative 3 also
14 has other options for allocating the cap among the
15 pollock trawl sectors, and for the CDQ reserve pool that
16 were described under alternative 2. Next slide.

17
18 MS. VICENTE: So alternative 4 now. This
19 alternative would require the pollock industry to follow
20 6 additional regulations in their incentive plan
21 agreement contracts. A summary of these requirements is
22 on this slide. Some key ones include number 1, which is
23 to describe and use genetic stock data to avoid WAK chum
24 salmon. Number 3, which would require the industry to
25 use salmon excluder devices on their nets year-round.
26 These are like trap doors that researchers are finding
27 salmon can swim out of but pollock cannot. And then
28 number 5, which would require the industry to provide
29 transparent weekly salmon bycatch reports to Western and
30 Interior salmon users.

31
32 So, you all should note that the pollock
33 industry has largely been following all of these
34 requirements since 2022 when the Council -- the North
35 Pacific Council, asked them to do more to reduce chum
36 bycatch. So that makes this alternative pretty similar
37 to the status quo. However, the difference is that
38 following these additional requirements is currently
39 optional. The industry is choosing to do them, and they
40 could choose to not do them in the future. So, if
41 alternative four is selected by the Council, these
42 requirements would be written into regulation, making
43 them mandatory. And since 2022, we have seen a slight
44 decrease in the number of chum salmon bycatch caught
45 every year. So, these sorts of additional requirements
46 could be helping reduce chum salmon bycatch. Next slide
47 please.

48
49 MS. LAPP: Now for alternative 5. This
50 alternative aims to create an in-season corridor for WAK

00028

1 chum by implementing closures in times and areas of the
2 highest historical chum salmon bycatch. Remember from
3 earlier slides, most WAK chum are caught in genetic
4 clusters 1 and 2, and they are caught between June and
5 August. So, this alternative only applies in those areas
6 for that time. In other words, it does not propose a
7 Bering Sea wide cap, but rather one focused on key
8 migratory corridors of where WAK chum go.

9
10 There are several main options and sub
11 options, and alternative 5. Option 1 is the most
12 restrictive. It would take one number between 50,000 and
13 350,000 chum salmon to be a cap. If that cap is reached
14 between June 10th and August 31st, all of the 40 stat
15 areas in that cluster area, plus cluster 2 would close
16 to pollock trawling until September 1st. Sub-option 1
17 slims that area a little bit. In sub-option 1, if the
18 cap between 50,000 and 350,000 was met before August
19 31st, only 29 of the 40 stat areas, or about 72%, would
20 close to fishing until September 1st. Notably, some of
21 these stat areas with the highest chum bycatch and trawl
22 activity would not be included in this corridor, meaning
23 they would be kept open to trawling even if the cap was
24 reached. These areas would be defined in regulation and
25 not change year to year.

26
27 Option 2 slims that area even further
28 and puts choosing the stat areas in the industry's hands.
29 Under option two, if a cap between 50,000 and 350,000
30 chum salmon was met by August 31st, 19 to 29 of the 40
31 stat areas and genetic clusters 1 and 2, or about 50 to
32 72% would close until September 1st. The industry would
33 choose the stat areas, describe them in their incentive
34 plan agreements, and have them approved before B season.
35 Option 3 links an in-season corridor to Yukon chum
36 abundance. It is similar to alternative 3, option 2, and
37 it cannot be chosen with alternative 3. If summer and
38 fall chum salmon abundance on the Yukon River was below
39 a threshold in one year, there would be a chum bycatch
40 cap for a migratory corridor the next year. If chum --
41 Yukon chum abundance was at or above the thresholds for
42 one year, there would be no cap for the migratory
43 corridor in the next year.

44
45 Option 4 is about herring bycatch.
46 Because there is a potential for herring bycatch as well
47 as king salmon bycatch to increase if migratory corridor
48 closure is in effect until September. Causing the
49 pollock fleet to close later in the fall to meet their
50 quota. This option would shift the start date of herrings

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1 savings area in an area closed with a herring bycatch
2 limit is met from September 1st through September 30th.
3 It is critical to note, in none of these options, is a
4 corridor automatically in effect each year, rather an
5 in-season corridor would only happen if the chum bycatch
6 cap in clusters 1 or -- and 2 are met.

7

8 Sorry, next slide.

9

10 (Pause)

11

12 I don't hear Terese, so I can keep
13 going. So, some take aways. There's a lot of nuances and
14 complexities in these alternatives. Here are some key
15 takeaways from the Draft EIS for you and your tribe to
16 think about.....

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Kristal. Sorry, I'm going
19 to stop you. We lost internet for a second.....

20

21 (Simultaneous speech)

22

23 MS. LAPP: Oh, no.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID:so maybe.....

26

27 MS. Okay, I'll stop.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID:that is why. We'll
30 just take a brief pause and hopefully it'll reconnect.

31

32 MS. LAPP: Perfect.

33

34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: While we're having
35 technical difficulties, we're gonna give a 5-minute
36 stand down for a bathroom break. Only 5-minutes though,
37 so hurry.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: And we will let the record
40 reflect that EIRAC member Sue Entsminger joined us.
41 Thanks.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 MS. MCDAVID: We're doing a mic check for
48 folks online. Can you hear us now?

49

50 MS. VICENTE: Yes, we can. Welcome back.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And we have permission from our Co-Chairs to go ahead and jump right back in with the presentation. Thank you.

MS. VICENTE: Okay. Thanks Chairs. And thanks, Brooke. This is Terese Vicente from the Kuskokwim Fish Commission again. It looks like we're on slide 15. So, this slide just shares some takeaways from the 5 alternatives and from the Draft EIS analysis, because there's a lot of nuances and complexities. So just from like a 10,000-foot level. First the alternatives most likely to reduce chum bycatch overall and WAK chum bycatch in specific are alternatives 2, 3 and 5, with the lowest cap options for each one selected. We'll note these are also the most restrictive for the pollock trawl industry, or likely to be the most restrictive, so we expect the industry to push back really hard on these. Second, the analysis says that combining alternative 2 or 3 with alternative 5 could reduce chum salmon bycatch even more by creating a migratory corridor for WAK chum through alternative 5 and then combining it with a backstop cap across the entire Bering Sea. So that kind of like outside the corridor cap through alternative 2 or 3. So in this way, if there are stat area closures for an in-season corridor under alternative 5, and then vessels go to open areas outside the corridor to trawl and get their quota, those vessels will still be subject to an overall limit of how many chum can be caught as bycatch in a year.

And third, the analysis does note that under alternative 5, there is a possibility for an increase in chinook salmon and herring bycatch if the industry is closed in some areas until September, which would potentially cause them to fish longer into the fall to meet their quota. However, the industry also has a regulatory requirement to prioritize keeping chinook salmon bycatch low. So, they'll have to be balancing that requirement with a cap corridor under alternative 5 if that's selected. And then finally, again, the new requirements for the industry's contracts that are proposed in alternative 4 are already in place and they may have been helping reduce Chum Salmon bycatch since 2022. However, selecting alternative 4 would make these requirements regulatory and mandatory, not just optional, for the industry to follow. You can go to our next and last slide please.

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1 MS. LAPP: And so, here's some ways that
2 we can all engage. First, tribes, Regional Advisory
3 Councils and individuals can submit their written
4 comments on the Draft EIS and alternatives to NMFS by
5 January 5th, 2026. These comments are submitted online
6 or by mail to the Federal Register. Second, tribes, RACs
7 and individuals can submit written comments to the Draft
8 EIS and alternatives to the North Pacific Fishery
9 Management Council by January 30th, 2026. They can be
10 the same comments as those submitted to NMFS through the
11 Federal Register. Although the North Pacific will
12 receive a copy in summary of the NMFS comments. A helpful
13 North Pacific Fishery Management Council comment will
14 include a recommendation for a preferred alternative,
15 or alternatives that you would like to see them select
16 in their final action. Third, federally recognized
17 tribes, authorized tribal consortiums and ANCs can
18 request tribal consultation with NOAA Fisheries. We
19 recommend doing this as soon as possible, as the agency
20 is under capacity due to federal cuts. It is also likely
21 that they will invite tribes and ANCs to participate in
22 a tribal consultation in January. Fourth, RACs, tribes
23 and individuals can attend the February 2026 North
24 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in person in
25 Anchorage or virtually. You can also testify in person
26 or virtually. This is almost always the most impactful
27 way to engage representatives from tribal governments,
28 companies and organizations are usually given 5 to 6
29 minutes to testify. So, it is helpful to go on behalf
30 of an entity to get as much speaking time as possible.
31 And I just want to thank everyone for sitting through
32 these slides. It is a lot of information and thank you.

33
34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Any
35 questions for Krystal in the room or online? Go ahead,
36 Dorothy.

37
38 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you so much. This
39 information is very helpful. In regards to the comments,
40 can an organization that is not a tribe, RAC comment as
41 well?

42
43 MS. LAPP: Yeah, everyone is allowed to
44 comment.

45
46 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you. And
47 another question. I mean, this is great, but one thing
48 that I've been thinking about is educating Alaska and
49 educating America in regards to our salmon crisis. I
50 feel like, you know, my neighbor, which I had -- I don't

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1 even know, but I mean, people sitting right next to us
2 a lot of times don't even know there's a salmon crisis
3 here in this State. And so, it's really important, you
4 know, that we educate people and we educate America. You
5 know, I had the opportunity of going on the riverboat
6 discovery and, you know, 800 people or more. And, you
7 know, they're all very passionate about Alaska and the
8 culture and salmon and everything, but they have no idea
9 either, you know, that there's a crisis. So, you know,
10 I think about, you know, how not only to educate, but
11 also how we can -- not -- well, educate America, but
12 also educate the consumers. And what this is doing to
13 Alaskans and to our food source. You know, I think it's
14 really important. I went to a mining conference and,
15 and, you know, they suggested that instead of targeting
16 miners, you know, the companies target the consumers,
17 you know, like the big three. The people that are buying
18 the product. So, I think that's also really important
19 that we target the consumers. And who is buying these
20 products or the fish, the pollock. So, thank you.

21
22 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. Any other
23 questions? Go ahead, Don.

24
25 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't
26 really know if this is the time or place to ask you. Are
27 you referring to the presentation that we just saw?
28 Because I mean I don't know who compiled these numbers.
29 And it says, like chum bycatch in the Bering Sea. And I
30 don't want to put you on the spot Krystal or whether you
31 want to answer this or not. But where do you come up
32 with the 19%? I mean, you know, a few years ago, when
33 we had the area emptying before us with Tanana Chiefs
34 and AFN and it was a big, you know, kind of a pretty
35 decisive thing over that. Well, they mentioned you know,
36 and they mentioned in the Area M the ones that were
37 targeted for the Yukon and the Kuskokwim was just maybe
38 13% or something. And I asked at the time, well how do
39 you combine these numbers? And so, I'm -- also with this
40 and like I said, I don't know if there's a time or place
41 to be asking it, but it's interesting that they come up
42 with these numbers and who in the heck is doing these
43 numbers? That's all. Thank you.

44
45 MS. LAPP: Through the Co-Chairs. That
46 is a very good question. So, on that slide that's up
47 right now, kind of where chum salmon and the Bering Sea
48 by the numbers. So those numbers not in parentheses are
49 coming from NOAA Fishery reports. So right now, the
50 industry reports the amount of bycatch and then genetic

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1 testing is done. And so, when we look -- yep. Yeah, I
2 know. So, when we look at the public reports, this is
3 what they are reporting and those are the numbers that
4 we have to go by. And then we look at the genetics which
5 is in the parentheses. So, like in 2021 you see that
6 50,800 WAK chum. So, when we're looking at the percentage
7 that comes to about 19% of bycatch, is meant for Western
8 Alaska, Kuskokwim, Norton Sound. So those numbers are
9 reported by industry. And those are the numbers that we
10 have to go on at this time.

11
12 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead.

13
14 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Tim, online. You have
15 your hand up.

16
17 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 This is Tim Gervais from Western Interior. I -- when I'm
19 looking at this Draft EIS, all I'm seeing is this same
20 tactic by the trawl industry to pretend like they're
21 taking conservation actions that are going to have some
22 meaningful impact when the reality of their conservation
23 measures are -- is just -- it's just putting up a false
24 front. They're -- the main thing the industry is trying
25 to do is just continue fishing. There should be more
26 alternatives like alternative 6 should be that -- the
27 BSAI trawl fleet can only fish from January to March.
28 And they're -- they don't have nets in the water for 9
29 months out of the year. And you know, at this point with
30 our -- I know we're talking this morning on chum, but
31 you know, this behavior affects our king and chinook
32 salmon also is -- these -- we know you know, TEK says
33 that the salmon fishing has been going on our -- in our
34 Alaskan rivers for 10,000 years, and then we have actual
35 documentation that natives are net fishing on the Yukon
36 in 1865 for chum salmon and king salmon. And so, with
37 this, rural Alaskan users have all this historical
38 record of using a resource and then the industrial trawl
39 fleet coming in 1991 and starting a fishery and having
40 huge impact on -- with bycatch, on multiple species and
41 then now the trawl fleet -- not now. I mean, for their
42 entire existence, the trawl fleet has gone under the
43 assumption, well, we've invested so much into our
44 fishery, and we catch so much food for basically
45 McDonald's, that they're more -- their economy is more
46 important than the subsistence economy. And that's not
47 true or that's not correct. I mean, they're just
48 violating so many of the national standards regarding
49 bycatch and effects on communities. And I feel all these
50 alternatives are inadequate to address the problem for

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1 chum salmon and king salmon. And I would like some
2 people's opinions on what we can do to get a more
3 meaningful Draft EIS or EIS that's actually going to
4 have a -- recover -- a recovery of the species in
5 question.

6

7 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Tim. So, I
8 have a question for you. This is Charlie. If you're left
9 with only these 5 alternatives, which one would you pick?

10

11 MR. GERVAIS: This is Tim Gervais on
12 Western Interior. I would pick 5, 4 and -- hang on a
13 minute. I have to read them here. 5, 4 and 2. But I'm
14 really -- real serious about what I'm saying is for --
15 let me think where we are 26, 30, approximately 35 years
16 into this trawl fishery, and we're all living with our
17 fish camps not producing, escapements not being met,
18 transboundary agreements being violated. There is North
19 Pacific Management Council is not providing enough
20 relief on the regulations to preserve our stocks,
21 preserve our lifestyle, and preserve our food security.
22 And these -- this Draft EIS is inadequate. And quite
23 frankly, it's pretty insulting to subsistence users that
24 this is what they're bringing forth to say that they're
25 doing the best they can or they're using the best
26 available science. The best available science says that
27 there's not enough salmon in the river. There's not
28 enough salmon on the spawning grounds. And this -- I've
29 been hearing this rolling hot spot for over two decades,
30 and it's just a buzzword to make it seem like they're
31 being proactive when their main objective is to continue
32 to fish as much as they want in the -- you know, with
33 annual harvest of 1.4 million metric tons. I mean that
34 is -- the ocean can't sustain that level of harvest of
35 any species, especially one that's indiscriminate like
36 trawling.

37

38 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you for that
39 answer. We have a couple more questions in the room
40 here. Jack, go ahead.

41

42 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: My question for
43 Krystal is, in the B season, the majority of the
44 bycatches are those adult fish or immature fish that are
45 out-migrating or do you know the composition of that?
46 We're trying to get adult fish back on the spawning
47 grounds. And my -- as we have North Pacific Fisheries
48 Management Council members at our evening meeting last
49 year, we need a area closure to allow -- the B season
50 is a big problem to allow adult fish. Which -- we got

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1 to get spawning on the spawning grounds. So, which the
2 majority of the WAK numbers for -- those adult fish
3 moving through those in the B season that the bycatch
4 or is that's immature?

5
6 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. Good
7 question. My computer's about to die, but I do have --
8 the battery got real cold on the drive in. I do have
9 some statistics so I can charge it up, and I can get
10 that over to Brooke and Nissa to provide that to you
11 guys. I don't have the number off the top of my head.

12
13 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: But I -- that's, you
14 know, that's what the issue is. We need to get escapement
15 on the spawning grounds. We should be in full-on
16 protection of adult fish. This -- you know, some of the
17 bycatch is just immature fish. Those are -- that's why
18 there's so much Asian fish mixed in there. That's -- but
19 we need adult fish on the spawning ground and we're not
20 going to get that unless we have corridors. Period. It's
21 also chinook -- adult chinook are moving through that
22 same corridor also, June through the end of September.
23 We got -- though that's -- every fish counts on the
24 spawning grounds. So, I'll turn it back to you, Mr.
25 Chair.

26
27 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I agree with you. Great
28 question, Jack. And I agree that every egg counts now.
29 Okay, next on the list we have Eva.

30
31 MS. BURK: This is Eva. This is kind of
32 more in response to some of the questions that you guys
33 are asking. Don, when you talked about the genetics of
34 19%, they've only collected genetics on their chum
35 bycatch in the pollock fishery since 2011. That's
36 already when we were experiencing declines on all of the
37 Western Alaska rivers. If you look at Area M, their
38 genetics have varied in -- from 2007 to 2009, it averaged
39 about 66% Western Alaska chum in the Area M fishery, but
40 that data -- same data is not available on the other
41 side for the pollock fishery. And then, they had just
42 like a one-season study of genetics in Area M and, and
43 that showed a much bigger or much lower percentage of
44 Western Alaska chum, like closer to 20%, if I remember
45 right, I had this stuff written down, but I need to
46 revisit it. So those are really good questions. And we
47 specifically asked their scientists and data people, do
48 you know the cumulative impacts of all of this bycatch
49 over the years of you've only taken genetics after the
50 fish stocks have been very seriously depleted and they

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1 don't. So, all of that historical stuff is not in this
2 document. And that's part of -- yesterday I was
3 complaining about a shifting baseline, how we only look
4 20 years back when really, we need to look 60, 70, 100
5 years back in all the data that we have, even though
6 data collection and analysis improves, it's important
7 to put everything together.

8
9 And then the age. From what I understand
10 a lot of the chum are age 3 to 5 as far as, like,
11 percentages that somewhere -- Krystal can pull it up.
12 But from what I understand, it's a large composition of
13 age 3 to 5 chum. Yeah, and I always think of some of
14 those age 3s, they might not be on their way home. They
15 might be learning from those older fish where to feed
16 before they migrate home. And that's exactly why there
17 is these areas above Unimak where all this pollock is
18 being caught is because the chinook and chum salmon feed
19 on age zero pollock on the baby pollock. And so that's
20 why they're mixed in with that pollock fishery. And as
21 our numbers have declined, that rolling hotspot, that
22 bycatch rate is -- if you're only catching a few chum
23 salmon and you're in these areas that have a lot of
24 pollock, it's going to throw off a rate and average over
25 time especially if the salmon are declining. So just
26 wanted to add a little more context about some of this
27 information. Thanks.

28
29 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Appreciate it very
30 much.

31
32 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair. I'd just like to
33 thank Eva for that clarification, because a lot of us,
34 I mean, you know, are not even knowing these numbers
35 are, I mean, are actually being studied. But what I find
36 is fascinating is how can they in Area M or someplace
37 says, well, they aren't designated. Are they all tagged?
38 Or how do they know that? They aren't designated for
39 Western Alaska or the Kusko or Yukon. I mean, that is
40 my take from that. But, I thank you.

41
42 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much. And
43 we have one more online. Andy, go ahead.

44
45 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 Good discussion. I'd like to direct some of the
47 conversation to get some recommendations from those that
48 have worked on this the most closely. So, Eva and others
49 in the room there, that are part of the AP process and
50 have done these analysis. I think from my perspective,

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1 the most important thing we can do collectively is to
2 take their recommendations for what they feel is going
3 to be our best alternative at this point in time. And
4 all stand behind that with a unified voice. So, if maybe
5 we could direct the conversation to that, I think that
6 would be very effective for our use of time and try and
7 get everybody on board with the same alternatives. Also
8 acknowledging, you know, what Tim said earlier, I -- but
9 this is the process we're in, and this is a process that
10 is the next step. So, we need to make the most of that
11 process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you very much for
14 that, Andy. And since we're lacking time, I appreciate
15 that very much since we're here to try to pick an
16 alternative and learn the best we can and going forward,
17 take advantage of this time together. So, I appreciate
18 that very much. Any more questions for Krystal around
19 the room? Go ahead, Jack.

20
21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: My question is, Brian
22 was giving his presentation at the beginning of this
23 meeting and TCC has some -- has preferred action. Can
24 you revisit that again? I was trying to make some notes.
25 My notes were unclear. I appreciate all of the time and
26 effort that's been put into this. So, if you could review
27 what those alternatives or combinations of alternatives
28 and -- are I would appreciate that.

29
30 MS. LAPP: Thank you. Through the Chair.
31 Yes. And I want to also thank the Co-Chairs for allowing
32 Chief Chair Brian to do that testimony so he could
33 skedaddle out of here. Let me pull up some rationale.
34 There's a lot of pages, you guys. So TCC stance is
35 alternative 2. So, we would like to select alternative
36 2 with a fixed overall cap. We do not support the
37 abundance based on alternative 3 or any other abundance
38 based just because we need more reliable data and co-
39 management in order to have reliable abundance data. So
40 that would just set the overall B season chum cap limit.
41 We're asking for 100,000 fish or fewer for the entire
42 pollock industry. And then we're asking for alternative
43 5, option 1, which is a backstop. So, combining
44 alternative 2 with a Bering Sea wide overall cap and
45 then having alternative -- I'm sorry, option 1 to close
46 those 40 stat areas that closes the most amount of areas
47 within those two clusters of where the fish are going
48 to be migrating. So basically, they hit their \$50,000 -
49 - or 50,000 chum limit, which is what we're asking for,
50 they're going to stop fishing. There's still an

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1 additional 100,000 that they can get in other areas,
2 which means that they can go in other areas to fish. And
3 then alternative 4, we are advocating for because we
4 would like to see what industry is doing already codified
5 into rule and law. It's something to hold them
6 accountable too. This also goes into the framework of
7 sharing that burden of conservation. There's a lot of
8 rules that we have to follow for the Western Interior,
9 Norton Sound and Kuskokwim. Basically, all the river
10 systems, we have a lot of rules regarding fishing, and
11 we don't have the option to make our own rules. So,
12 we're just asking for that same courtesy on the federal
13 side. You know, if we're going to be regulated out of
14 fishing, then that's a possibility here too. But this
15 also gives something for us to set the bar. So right
16 now, because it's voluntary, there's really no way that
17 we can hold them accountable. So that's kind of our
18 rationale with that combination of alternatives.

19
20 Also, within the executive summary
21 itself, it goes over -- let me pull those notes up.
22 There it is. So, in the Executive Summary, it references
23 multiple times about different caps and what may or may
24 not affect Western Alaska chum. And so, as we went over
25 through the whole EIS itself and the Executive Summary,
26 which is a really good thing to read if you guys can,
27 really good summary of the whole document. Even in that
28 document and their own analysis, it shows that that
29 combination of alternatives would have the greatest
30 impact in lowering chum bycatch. So, we also want to
31 make sure that we are holding them accountable to their
32 own analyses as well. And if that's what they're
33 indicating would be the best combination of all of our
34 alternatives, then we need to ask for those alternatives
35 with the lowest caps possible. TCC also does not condone
36 caps of 550,000. That's not a meaningful action. So,
37 when we're thinking meaningful action, we're going to
38 take the long year and the short year averages, and
39 we're going to ask for lower from that. And industry
40 itself has already proven in the last couple of years
41 that they have been able to lower their bycatch amount.
42 So, I don't feel like that combination of alternatives
43 is too much of an ask if they've already shown that they
44 can do it voluntarily.

45
46 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Follow up. The TCC
47 analyze prior -- first pick would be alternative 1 the
48 overall Bering Sea bycatch cap. But I feel strongly that
49 the corridor is a major issue. And so, did you analyze
50 the impact to the adult fish in the corridor savings in

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1 the B season in your analysis? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2

3 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. Yes. That
4 was something that was in kind of a collaborative
5 analysis amongst the cooperating agencies, the tribal
6 cooperating agencies. I don't have that right in front
7 of me. I'm pretty sure Terese could pull it up quickly.
8 But that -- I can mark that for another thing to provide
9 to you.

10

11 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: And my final comment
12 on the corridor. That should be an annual closure, right
13 off the bat. There's really no reason because they can
14 fish. They just have to fish further west. They just
15 stay out of those corridors. That's where our fish, the
16 whole AYK stocks are coming into the Bristol Bay fishery,
17 the Kuskokwim -- WIRAC has Kuskokwim River, you got
18 portions of Yukon River and Norton Sound. Those fish are
19 moving through that -- those species and corridor --
20 corridors in the Bering Sea. Those should be closed right
21 off the bat every year. That should be likem they should
22 not be fishing in the corridor until we start seeing
23 some significant numbers into the -- in-river. We're
24 never going to get our fish back with them being able
25 to fish, even with thresholds, because they're still
26 impacting the returning stocks. It's the adult stocks.
27 So, I'm -- you know when we analyze these alternatives,
28 we selected 5 as the corridors, as the primary and the
29 caps are very important. The sea -- the Bering Sea wide
30 cap of 100K to 50K on these returns kind of returns
31 should be no more than 50K, thousand. But you know that's
32 -- we're in a crisis situation. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

33

34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much for
35 that, Jack. Any more questions?

36

37 (No response

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 MS. LAPP: Thank you.

42

43 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair. This is Tim
44 Gervais. One quick one.

45

46 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Go ahead, Tim.

47

48 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim
49 Gervais, Western Interior. A flaw I see in this Draft
50 EIS is in the earlier part of the slides, there's a

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1 slide showing that the North Pacific Management Council
2 saying they're not responsible for salmon in the rivers.
3 And I feel strongly that we need to get rid of that.
4 It's a big problem in getting the salmon bycatch under
5 control is North Pacific Management Council saying no,
6 we don't have any jurisdiction inside three miles. And
7 ADF&G saying, well, we don't have any jurisdiction in
8 the exclusive economic zone, and it needs to be a
9 memorandum of understanding or some kind of recognition
10 that the stock -- salmon stocks. It's the same fish. No
11 matter where it is. Because its migratory lifestyle
12 doesn't fit into congressional boundaries that are drawn
13 up, you know, within the last 50 years. Doesn't mean
14 that the North Pacific Management Council should not be
15 responsible for ensuring their management practices
16 allow us to meet escapement and subsistence harvest
17 goals. So, I would like that. I would like the final EIS
18 to strike that language that says that North Pacific
19 Management Council is not responsible for the numbers
20 of salmon in the river or in the -- on the spawning
21 ground. Thank you.

22
23 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you very much,
24 Tim. So, on the agenda, we are in Council discussion and
25 comment formation of the conversation just had. So, at
26 this time people can speak on the matter. Go ahead.

27
28 MR. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
29 is Brooke. Yeah. I think in the interest of time, if we
30 could have a little bit more discussion about the
31 alternatives that you all would like to support. We heard
32 what TCC is suggesting. If -- I'd be nice to hear if you
33 all think those are good options that you would also
34 like to support, if you think there are other
35 combinations. And I did also want to follow up on what
36 Tim, you just said. Those are comments that the RACs
37 have raised for years now about the disjointed
38 management across the salmon ecosystem. And the Chairs
39 have asked that we flag that comment to also bring up
40 during the Secretarial Review this afternoon under other
41 topics. So, I have a note about that for later that we
42 could -- you guys could discuss that a little bit more,
43 but yeah, let's try to focus in on the alternatives and
44 we'll move on our agenda. Thanks.

45
46 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree
47 with her. In the interest of time to me, I would like
48 to know what Eastern Interior did. I mean, which one
49 they preferred. I'm kind of confused. I thought we did
50 this before, and I think we did, Mr. Jack. But I would

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1 like to know you know precisely what Eastern Interior,
2 their preferred and Western Interior. And the pros and
3 cons or why? I mean, just to try to speed it up. I mean,
4 I don't know. Thanks.

5

6 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you for that, Mr.
7 Honea. Working on it now. Go ahead, Dorothy.

8

9 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you. I like
10 the idea that we focus on getting the adults into the
11 river for spawning. So, do we have enough information
12 on which of these options that -- in order to pick,
13 which option would be best?

14

15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I'll respond to that.
16 The reason I'm afraid of going for alternate 1 is the
17 option -- or alternative 2 is the option. It's got too
18 big a range. It's 100- to 500,000 and for requesting
19 100,000 threshold, the Council is not going to do that.
20 You already picked 550,000. That's what they're going
21 to try and force it. They're going to force for high
22 numbers. And we'll never get a corridor closure because
23 we've already asked for their range. I'm afraid of that.
24 If you look at alternative 5, it's 50- to 350,000
25 threshold and we go into corridors and so that's -- that
26 goes into a much more reasonable, and we can push for
27 50 to 100,000 with that one. But I think you're going
28 to have a real hard time for alternative 2 trying to get
29 -- because you're going to -- they're going to want to
30 go to 350- to 400,000. They'll never hit that threshold
31 with these runs we got. We do -- and we should be strong
32 on the closure during the whole B season right out of
33 the chute because we're in a crisis situation on returns.
34 And we can add a comment on the EIS that the North
35 Pacific Fisheries Management Council is responsible for
36 returns of fisheries fish into this river -- in in-river
37 systems. But I feel that the corridors are the way we're
38 going to get this because that's where Area M, you get
39 66% of the fish moving. Those are adult fish. Those are
40 caught and gillnet gear and seine gear. Those are adult
41 fish returning back to AYK. Those are moving into the
42 Bering Sea. So, the timing of the -- they start that
43 South Alaska Peninsula fishery in early June. And so
44 that's -- the corridors are the way we're going to get
45 the adult fish back to the spawning grounds. So, I'm
46 afraid of alternative 2, I feel strongly that
47 alternative 5 is going to be our segue. Ann alternative
48 4 should be in regulation. We should request that
49 alternative 4, the excluders and all that that's in
50 regulation, not option -- not optional. That's my -- what

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1 I think about this whole process right now.

2

3 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I agree with you on the
4 corridor. It's easy to move away from and fish somewhere
5 else. And it's small enough to direct fish back to the
6 AYK. So, I'm with you on that. But we do have some
7 professionals.....

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: I just wanted to respond
10 to Don's.

11

12 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay, go ahead.

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
15 is Brooke, for the record. Just in response to member
16 Honea's comments about what EIRAC supported the last
17 time. So, this was a full year ago, before this final
18 draft was published with all of alternative 5 fleshed
19 out. At the time this Council took that up It wasn't
20 quite fleshed out yet. So they did not support
21 alternative 1 because it's the status quo and does not
22 adequately address anything. Alternative 2, they did
23 support an overall cap, and they wanted that to be at
24 the lower end of the limit. And there was discussion,
25 of course, we would always like it to be less or zero
26 but working -- we definitely -- they definitely didn't
27 want it to be at the high end. So that's why they
28 selected that range. It -- then they said the cap should
29 be significantly less than historic bycatch amounts with
30 the goal of increasing return. They did not support
31 alternative 3 because of the abundance, the tie to
32 abundance. And alternative 4 they did agree like TCC
33 suggested that those incentive plan agreement item
34 should be mandatory. And then they also strongly
35 supported a time and area closure. But like I said at
36 the time, the detailed and the sub options for
37 alternative 5 were not published. So, they didn't -- we
38 didn't get to discuss those in detail. So very similar
39 to the suggestions by TCC. But like you said, you could
40 add additional comments about -- within that bycatch
41 range they're suggesting and for anything else related
42 to the timing area closure.

43

44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Charlie had to step
45 out for a second. So -- oh, you're back. Go ahead,
46 Charlie.

47

48 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Did that answer your
49 question, sir?

50

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1 MR. HONEA: Yeah. Pretty much. I mean,
2 in response, I mean, yeah, she clarified that pretty
3 good. And so, I'd like to hear what Western did. Thank
4 you.

5
6 MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
7 the record. So Western Interior -- the letter wasn't
8 drafted in part because I knew we were going to be
9 revisiting it here after that meeting came to a
10 conclusion. But Western Interior supported alternative 5,
11 option 1. You guys didn't discuss a -- or supporting
12 multiple different options. Yeah.

13
14 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Mr. Chair, it was my
15 recollection that we didn't have that option. But if
16 we're going to cherry pick also, we -- I would like to
17 be able to utilize other portions of those other options.
18 Like the Bering Sea wide cap should be tied directly to
19 this corridor cap and -- which is a lower cap. We can't
20 have these huge spikes and, you know, have -- allow them
21 to go to 550,000 caps. But I do feel that, you know,
22 alternative 5, this -- these incentives, they've been
23 working as -- it helps. So that should be put in the
24 regulation. So, I think that staying with alternative 5
25 which gets -- is actually smaller cap, overall cap 50
26 to 350,000. Not up to 550,000. Don't even go there.
27 Don't even give the Council the ability to go to the
28 high cap and then and then ask for regulatory
29 implementation. I think we could say, I think that's
30 what we're after. We're after the spawning escapement.
31 So that's -- I think we'll probably -- we'll discuss it
32 further. But that's what we probably will.

33
34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Andy.

35
36 MR. BASSIC: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In an
37 essence of time, I'd like to offer a motion on the table
38 to adopt the recommendations presented to us by TCC at
39 this point in time for discussion and possible action.
40 Thank you.

41
42 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'll second.

43
44 MR. BASSICH: So, speaking to the motion,
45 Mr. Chair, if I may.

46
47 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Go ahead,
48 Andy.

49
50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I think we're
2 hearing a lot -- what I'm hearing is we could very easily
3 go into the weeds on all these little details. I think
4 at this point in time so that we can come out of this
5 meeting with some agreement and some direction for the
6 public and people to support. It would be advantageous
7 for us to compile a document that would have the
8 recommendations from TCC on which alternative and what
9 option within that alternative is being recommended and
10 then support that unilaterally. Thank you.

11
12 MS. SHOCKLEY: So in regards to TCC
13 recommendation, what does.....

14
15 (Simultaneous speech)

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Can you state your name,
18 please?

19
20 MS. SHOCKLEY: Sorry. Dorothy Shockley.
21 We got TCC recommendations, but also what is the
22 Kuskokwim River recommendations?

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Terese is
25 no longer online, so I'm not sure that they have formally
26 finalized their comments at this time. So unfortunately,
27 we probably won't have them before the end of the
28 meeting. But I know there's been a lot of discussions
29 together with TCC, so. And sounds like Krystal might
30 have a follow up.

31
32 MS. LAPP: Through the Chairs. So most
33 of the Executive Boards cross regionally are actually
34 meeting this week next -- or in the week after Christmas.
35 And so, what we've been anticipating so far, based off
36 of some kind of tribal inter policy discussions with
37 analysis, is having that unified voice. We know that the
38 options are not perfect. It's definitely not what we
39 ultimately want. But it's a start. And so, we anticipate
40 a unified voice with TCC recommendation at this time,
41 but things could change, so who knows?

42
43 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

44
45 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I want to point
46 out that on the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission,
47 we have six CDQ communities on the Yukon River. And we
48 had a meeting last spring, actually, in January of 2025
49 of this year. And we couldn't agree on an overall cap
50 on the for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

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1 So, I think it's important to state that some of our
2 tribal orgs weren't able to come to the unified position.
3 But it is important to note that the TCC tribes within
4 the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission do support
5 an overall cap, so there's a little difference there.
6 It's also important to note that the cap that they
7 support at that time that we didn't pick a number,
8 everybody was just saying a low cap. And the thing that
9 we fought for and eventually was included into the
10 analysis -- you have to have a range of alternatives as
11 they were talking about. Well, the range was at, I think
12 200,000 starting at. But through tribal input of that
13 not being a significant reduction of the long-term
14 bycatch, because the long-term average is like 111,000.
15 So, because it wasn't that long-term, we wanted -- I'm
16 getting a little mixed up. I'm tired. Excuse me. So,
17 that's what we are -- were asking for collectively, was
18 a cap to be included in the alternative. And now we're
19 actually deciding that number. That's the process that
20 we're all at. So, we're all picking that number right
21 now. And from the last meeting that we had in February
22 of 2025, the industry stated on the record that they're
23 operating under a cap of 200,000, a self-imposed cap of
24 200,000. The bycatch numbers, which are -- they haven't
25 been like, you know, checked, the preliminary bycatch
26 for this year of chum salmon in the Bering Sea pollock
27 fishery is over 150,000. So, all that work to go down
28 and they're back up to 150,000. The reason that I was
29 told was that there's this herring savings area where
30 there was a lot of herring on the ground, and they didn't
31 want to get closed out of that herring area, so they
32 were bouncing back and forth between two areas to try
33 to stay under the caps and keep operating. And I think
34 what Tim is really pointing out is we're being asked to
35 make these tradeoffs between species that are stocks of
36 concern in the Alaska regulatory system. We're being
37 asked to trade off herring with crab, with halibut, with
38 salmon with -- we're -- even in this analysis they're
39 like if you have this cap in the fishing area shut down,
40 you could fish longer in the season, which would give
41 you more chinook bycatch. So that's their rationale for
42 not having a low cap in the corridors because, oh, you
43 might push them to catch instead of just like, no, we
44 need to limit our fishing. We need to take it down a
45 notch. I think it's important to note that the total
46 allowable catch by the pollock industry for the Bering
47 Sea was increased in December of 2024, and so the boats
48 were in the water longer. And so, you did see that higher
49 chum bycatch this year because of that increase in TAC.
50 But if you ask them that, they'll say it's not the

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1 increase in TAC. It's -- they say that the higher bycatch
2 is related to water temperature. So and we could go back
3 and forth about all these details which many of you have
4 stated, but I -- what I would -- I'm hoping that the
5 Yukon River Inter Tribal Fish Commission will entertain
6 and maybe we don't, but what I'm hoping is that we can
7 agree on a cap of 200,000, because that's what they're
8 already operating under. Or do I agree that we should
9 be asking for a cap of 100,000? Wholeheartedly. That is
10 just a hair under their long-term average. It was
11 included as an alternative at the last minute because
12 if it wasn't, it could be said that this Draft
13 Environmental Impact statement did not include a
14 reasonable range of alternatives because it didn't have
15 a lower end that was lower than its average, you know,
16 bycatch. So, I just wanted to add a little bit more
17 about all that. And I support personally, Eva Burk, I
18 want to make that very clear that this is me as a Nenana
19 Native Tribal member, not as anybody else representing
20 anyone else. I support -- I stand with TCC and I support
21 a cap of 50,000 in the corridor. I support the option 1
22 for alternative 5. Yeah, and then I do support a cap of
23 100,000.

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: So, I put those
26 alternatives on the screen so we can adjust
27 recommendations or have more discussion before voting.

28
29 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just
30 had a question like -- oh, I'm sorry, Don Honea. I just
31 had a question. Now, the Yukon Inter-Tribal Fisheries
32 Commission is going to take the same stance. Are they
33 going to meet about this or are you speaking? Because I
34 kind of see the reason behind the TCC one and the one
35 that you mentioned.

36
37 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, thank you, Mr.
38 Chair. I appreciate having a display of TCCs position
39 on the proposal that they're going to advocate for. I
40 can support this because it's better to have cohesion
41 at one front at the meeting. I would feel better about
42 alternative 5 as a primary. But I -- we need to be
43 together at the North Pacific Fisheries meeting so I can
44 support this myself.

45
46 MS. BURK: Thanks. I sent Brooke -- this
47 is Eva, sorry. I sent Brooke a document you had asked
48 for Western Alaska bycatch rates per area like spatial
49 data. They never present this stuff. You have to
50 piecemeal everything together. So, I sent the file to

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1 Brooke, which shows this Alaska Department of Fish and
2 Game Statistical Area and how much western Alaska
3 bycatch is in each statistical area. Then I had to pull
4 up a separate map of statistical areas from the State
5 and then try to see where is that. As I'm -- in my first
6 round trying to place these dots on the map, the spots
7 in statistical areas that have the most Western Alaska
8 bycatch are outside of the corridor, a number of them.
9 So that is information we didn't have when we saw this
10 first analysis. That's all industry data. We couldn't
11 even make this analysis until right now. That
12 information just came available last week, I think.
13 Yeah. And so that's why I'm -- I bring this up because
14 that overall cap is critical to reducing Western Alaska
15 bycatch.

16
17 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. But I'm
18 really afraid of the 550,000 going over 200,000. I'm
19 afraid of going anywhere over 200,000. So, I think that
20 we should be lying in the sand, no more than 200,000.
21 Period. We can't. We can't go there. So, I think we've
22 -- we should -- I feel uncomfortable because I don't
23 have quorum on my -- on the Western Interior right now.
24 But we got to move forward. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. Andy's been
27 waiting online. And then Jenny and Tim. Go ahead, Andy.

28
29 MS. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
30 just wanted to -- what I'm hearing is what I hear
31 oftentimes on some of these really huge topics that are
32 very complicated. And one of the ways that the industries
33 and the North Pacific Council has made their wins in the
34 past is by dividing people over minute details or some
35 of the finer aspects of something. And so, I just want
36 to call attention to the fact that I think the most
37 important thing is to be unified. I don't think
38 everybody's going to get exactly what they want or what
39 they feel is most important. But I think what I'm hearing
40 from TCC covers most of the major concerns, and I have
41 quite a bit of confidence in that. And I want to caution
42 us against going down rabbit holes and not coming to a
43 full consensus of support drainage wide. Because we get
44 caught up in some disagreements over fine points of the
45 process. This process is going to take many, many years.
46 It's not going to be solved at this next meeting with
47 any decision that's made. This is a long-term problem
48 that we're going to be dealing with on the Yukon River
49 and the Kuskokwim River and the AYK region for another
50 decade. So, we need to think of this in terms of small

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1 wins and compile those. And once we make those small
2 wins, move on to the next small win that we can have so
3 that we can have continual progress. I think that
4 momentum will build, but we have to start that momentum
5 with the unified voice. Thank you.

6

7 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
8 Andy. Go ahead, Jenny.

9

10 MS. PELKOLA: Jenny Pelkola. After
11 listening to everyone speaking about what option to
12 take, I'm sure -- and I thank you, Eva, for, you know,
13 doing so much research and keeping, you know, on top of
14 it. But I also agree with TCC. I'm sure they really dug
15 into this and included all the villages from way down
16 river to, you know, way upriver. So, I feel comfortable
17 with their options. Thank you.

18

19 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay, go.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
22 just wanted to say something about process, because, as
23 Jack noted, WIRAC doesn't have quorum today. So, my
24 suggestion would be that Eastern Interior could vote if
25 they wanted to support this now, and then Western
26 Interior tomorrow, when you hopefully have quorum could
27 take this up. If you want to make additional changes or
28 anything, you could submit your own letter. Or if you
29 wanted to join in with the Eastern Interior letter, you
30 could choose to do that at the -- at that time.

31

32 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. Tim, go ahead.

33

34 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Chairman Wright.
35 Tim Gervais, Western Interior. I think I've heard -- my
36 questions been covered by Andy and Jenny and I'm -- I
37 feel comfortable and I feel like probably most people
38 on the WIRAC are good with supporting this -- these
39 options that Chief Ridley put out and we could -- yeah.
40 At some -- on some level or not -- it would -- I'll turn
41 -- what we're seeing on the PowerPoint screen with the
42 alternative to, with a cap of 50- to 100,000. That's --
43 that meets the meets the requirements of what needs to
44 be done today. But I -- if I could -- if we had a quorum
45 and I could vote for the sake of process, I would just
46 support Tanana Chiefs recommendations as written.

47

48 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much, Tim.
49 Go ahead, sir.

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. Tomorrow
2 when we -- hopefully we have quorum. We'll motion to the
3 same effect. We'll adopt. I plan on adopting. Our Council
4 is affirming that -- we'll find out with what Tommy and
5 Robert are going to do, but I think that we'll be able
6 to support what EIRAC is doing and what TCC is proposing.
7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8
9 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I appreciate that
10 because unity is going to be real important. Like you
11 stated earlier, on to go forward. I appreciate that very
12 much. Go ahead, Dorothy.

13
14 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you. Dorothy
15 Shockley. I agree we need to be unified and from what
16 I'm hearing or heard, is this correct that you will
17 continue to meet right with other organizations and come
18 up with a definite option, or is this your definite
19 answer in regards to options?

20
21 MS. LAPP: Through the Co-Chairs. This
22 is TCC's official stance and all other organizations and
23 tribes and individuals will come out with their own. I
24 -- the discussions that we've been having has been
25 talking about that unified voice. The reason why is in
26 the EIS process that we're going through, it is a
27 process. So, comments are counted based on what you put
28 in there. So, if you clearly state I'm looking for x,
29 Y, and z, that is going to be summarized on the federal
30 level and presented to the Council, and then all of us
31 that will be there advocating for the same or similar.
32 So, the goal is to try to make the option as easy as
33 possible for that Council.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: There is a motion on the
36 floor, if there's any more discussion or we could
37 entertain a question.

38
39 MS. BURK: I call question, this is Eva.

40
41 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay. At this time,
42 we'll vote with the EIRAC. All those in favor of the
43 motion, please signify by saying aye.

44
45 IN UNSION: Aye.

46
47 All those against same sign. And Andy
48 online, we'll wait for your vote.

49
50 MR. BASSICH: Aye.

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1
2 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. All those
3 against, same sign.

4
5 (No response)

6
7 Hearing and none. Passes. Appreciate you
8 all, thank you. Moving down the agenda to -- we're on
9 7b Alaska Board of Fisheries. Summary of the Tri-RAC
10 working group meeting.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
13 is Brooke, for the record. Prior to the government
14 shutdown in late September, representatives from the
15 three Yukon RACs met together to discuss Board of
16 Fisheries proposals for this year's cycle. I do just
17 need one second to switch around some documents. For
18 WIRAC -- or sorry, for EIRAC there is a copy of the Tri-
19 RAC Working Group Meeting summary in your little clear
20 covered folder that got mailed to you. And we do have
21 copies to pass out to Western Interior.

22
23 Okay. Thank you for your patience as
24 we're shuffling many things around here. So, the Tri-
25 RAC working group met. They did talk about the AYK
26 proposals, the Alaska Peninsula Area M proposals and
27 then some statewide proposals. As you know, we had the
28 government shutdown, and the RAC weren't able to meet
29 as planned in October. And then the AYK Board of Fish
30 meeting happened before you all could meet. So those
31 comments on the AYK proposals no longer really apply.
32 So, we didn't include them here, just in interest of
33 time. We really wanted to focus on the upcoming meetings
34 that you all might want to take action to submit comments
35 on. And so, though -- those meetings are going to be the
36 Alaska Peninsula meeting that's happening in February,
37 and then the statewide meeting that is happening in
38 March. And the working group did spend most of their
39 time talking about the AYK proposals. But they took a
40 slightly different approach for the Alaska Peninsula
41 proposals and the statewide proposals because those had
42 like literally just been published a couple days before
43 they met and decided to kind of take them up as a group
44 of proposals that try to address similar issues and just
45 kind of provide a general support for certain ones as
46 opposed to getting into the details of each of them.
47 They've noted that there are other groups working
48 together across AYK and across different regions that
49 are working to develop more pointed comments on specific
50 proposals.

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1
2 So, what I've put up here on the screen
3 is just kind of a summary of what the Tri-RAC Working
4 Group recommended for proposals to support. There's a
5 number of them here for the Alaska Peninsula or Area M
6 meeting. And the group noted that they strongly support
7 all proposals that seek to implement chinook and chum
8 salmon savings measures and fisheries that intercept AYK
9 bound salmon. Of course, they noted escapement goals
10 have not been being met on the Yukon, and the salmon
11 need to be protected across their entire range, not just
12 in our river systems. Another note about subsistence
13 users bearing the burden of conservation and that this
14 would help distribute a small amount of that burden by
15 reducing interception.

16
17 There were two sets of statewide
18 proposals that the working group suggested be supported,
19 and we broke those down by sort of the theme. Proposals
20 163, 164 and 165 addressed trawl fisheries. And the
21 working group strongly supported efforts to better
22 regulate trawl fisheries, reduce bottom contact and
23 subsequent habitat destruction and use salmon excluders
24 as is done in other fisheries to reduce bycatch. And
25 then the other set of statewide proposals that they
26 supported were related to hatcheries. They strongly
27 supported 170 and 172 to support reductions in egg take
28 and overall hatchery production. They noted that a
29 growing body of scientific evidence shows hatchery
30 salmon compete with wild salmon for resources and impact
31 the diet, growth, fecundity, productivity, and abundance
32 of wild salmon and other species in the marine
33 environment. And that there's a need to reduce hatchery
34 production so that our struggling wild stocks have a
35 better chance at health and survival. And a separate
36 note that not only does this need to be done
37 domestically, but on an international level, but of
38 course that international level is outside the scope of
39 the Board of Fisheries. But those were the summary of
40 comments from the working Group on proposals for
41 upcoming Board of Fisheries meetings. We might have a
42 member of the public and the Fairbanks AC Gale Vick
43 joining us online. And I see Andy -- member Andy Bassich,
44 who was a part of that working group, has his hand up.
45 Thank you.

46
47 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

48
49 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I really
50 appreciate that summary Brooke. I think my takeaway from

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1 that meeting was that we had a pretty unified voice on
2 conservation measures to protect chinook and chum salmon
3 in the AYK region. I wanted to highlight right now the
4 issue of the hatcheries. I know many of you know me.
5 I've been talking about this along with Virgil and
6 Stansberry for decades now, over 20, 25 years on the
7 impacts of hatcheries to all salmon species and other
8 species in the marine habitat. And I think this is our
9 fundamental root cause of a lot of our declines. And I
10 think we need to keep the pressure on that. I do think
11 that we should include the comments of reduced hatchery
12 production in the international arena. I think the only
13 way we're going to begin to make some progress on that
14 outside of the state of Alaska is to keep bringing that
15 topic up so that it becomes a topic for discussion and
16 hopefully some action into the future on an
17 international level. Because this is an issue that will
18 ultimately be an international effort if we're going to
19 be successful. So that's the only thing I wanted to add
20 to this, and I really appreciate the summary. Thank you.
21 I'm in full support of those recommendations.

22
23 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
24 Andy. Any public comment on what we've been going over?
25 Anybody else online? Anybody in the room? Anything to
26 say?

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 All right. We're going to move on down
31 the agenda then. And the next thing on the -- oh, go
32 ahead.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. This is Brooke,
35 for the record. So, if the Council's wanted to submit
36 comments to Board of Fish, we would need to take action.
37 If you want to support the recommendations of the working
38 group and to forward those comments to the Board of
39 Fish, we just need a motion to do so. And again, Eastern
40 Interior could vote now, and Western Interior could vote
41 tomorrow. Thank you.

42
43 MR. BASSICH: This is Member Bassich from
44 the Eastern RAC. So moved to support the recommendations
45 from the working group.

46
47 MS. SHOCKLEY: Second, this is Dorothy.

48
49 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Any discussion?

50

00053

1 (No response)

2

3

Asking, do you have anything to say?

4

5

6 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I support the
7 motion and the reasons being that the present -- the
8 data and presentations that we're seeing from the
9 different fisheries scientists is that the fish are
10 coming into the Yukon River, and their -- they don't
11 have enough gas for their journey, basically. They're
12 not getting enough of their high fat food. And so, their
13 health is poor because of that. And there's also stuff
14 like because of -- in the ocean, the algae blooms because
15 of warmer water that will cause toxic feed of like sand
16 lance and capelin for chinook. So, there's already an
17 issue with food. And then you put the hatchery to compete
18 with the other food sources that they're having to switch
19 to or rely on. And it's just too much on these struggling
20 stocks.

20

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CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you for that.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay, well, if I can
follow up, please. Dorothy again. Yeah, it's -- I think
it's important that we try to get that information,
because if, you know, the salmon are feeding on the
pollock and they're catching all the pollock, then of
course that would affect the food that they're -- and

00054

1 then if it', again, if it's the opposite or a combination
2 of all of that, I think that's really important.

3

4 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Go ahead.

5

6 MS. BURK: Thank you. I see somebody in
7 the room who could also answer a little bit more about
8 salmon eating pollock, Mr. Keith. He had his research
9 about that. And there is observation of the salmon eating
10 the pollock that are infected with ichthyophonus. Could
11 you maybe give us a little bit more on that? Just not
12 too much, but a little bit. Thanks.

13

14 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Keith.

15

16 MR. HERRON: Yeah. Good afternoon. This
17 is Keith Herron, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I think
18 Eva pretty much covered it with her prior comments about
19 the age zero pollock.

20

21 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you very much for
22 that.

23

24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: One question. And what
25 age class salmon are eating age zero pollock? Is that a
26 certain size in their life cycle when they're
27 predominantly doing that? Or is that adults, you know,
28 mature salmon eating those age zero pollock?

29

30 MR. HERRON: Through the Chair. I'll be
31 honest, I'm not a expert in marine diet of our salmon.
32 I want to learn more. I'm still learning all the aspects
33 of the whole life cycle myself, so I couldn't answer
34 that exactly. But I just knew the fact of when there was
35 some evidence of possibly of ichthyophonus being one of
36 the sources of them getting infected was through eating
37 pollock. But the exact stages, I would assume, was maybe
38 cumulative.

39

40 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Is
41 it to the motion?

42

43 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, no.

44

45 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you.

46

47 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yeah.

48

49 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: We'll have ample time
50 at the North Pacific meeting if you're coming to ask a

00055

1 lot of questions. Not today though. Thank you.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: And I will say -- this is
4 Brooke. In March, we're starting a fisheries regulatory
5 cycle, so it'll be another chance to dive into a lot of
6 the fisheries reports. Thank you.

7

8 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: And we have a motion
9 on the floor. Okay. Thank you. If no more questions or
10 comments on this motion, then I would entertain a vote
11 -- question. Okay. All those in favor of this motion,
12 please signify by saying aye.

13

14 IN UNISON: Aye.

15

16 All against, same sign.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Aye.

19

20 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Hearing none, thank
21 you.

22

23 MR. BASSICH: That was for the
24 informative -- affirmative aye.

25

26 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I hear you, Andy. Thank
27 you. Thank you so much.

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also,
30 under the Board -- this is Brooke, for the record. Under
31 the Board of Fish agenda item there was -- okay, great.
32 There was a note for the preliminary summary of the AYK
33 meeting that did happen. And we passed out a handout.
34 The printout of the preliminary actions that were taken
35 by the Board of Fish at that meeting. And there were
36 three Yukon subsistence fisheries proposals that the
37 Tri-RAC Working Group did take up. Like I said, they
38 weren't able to submit comments in time, but I believe
39 we have Ms. Deena Jallen online with us who might be
40 able to give just a quick overview of what happened with
41 those Yukon proposals at the meeting. Deena, are you
42 joining us?

43

44 MS. JALLEN: Yeah. Hi, Brooke. Thanks.
45 This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish
46 and Game for Yukon River Summer Season Fishery Managers.
47 I can give just a really brief update. So, there were
48 three proposals. Proposals 15, 16 and 17. Proposal 16
49 and 17 did not pass. Most folks might recall that
50 proposal 17 had to do with the opening up of six-inch

1 mesh in various non salmon streams. There was a lot of
2 support for that proposal from AC and from the public,
3 and while the Board did not pass that proposal, I think
4 it was pretty clear that they were in favor of that
5 direction by the department to take that time and gear
6 authority to allow that fishing. The proposal that did
7 pass was number 15, and that passed with some pretty
8 significant modifications. Andy Bassich, who authored
9 that proposal, was involved in those changes. And so,
10 if there's anything else he wants to add, that would be
11 much appreciated to all the discussions that went on.
12 Basically, proposal 15 passed with the addition of
13 adding the fall chum management plan, recognition of
14 traditional knowledge as a source of (indiscernible)
15 available data when managing fall chum. And then adding
16 a clause to the fall chum management plan that when
17 Yukon River fall chum or a stock of management concern,
18 the plan would be implemented starting July 13th. So, a
19 few days earlier into the end of the summer season for
20 the management of fall chum.

21
22 And also, at the Board of Fish meeting,
23 they did look at the escapement goals for the AYK region.
24 There were no changes to the Yukon area escapement goals.
25 However, through the Yukon River panel process, which
26 is totally separate there is a seven-year agreement
27 which has a border passage objective of 71,000 chinook
28 salmon heading into Canada, which is kind of recent. And
29 then also at the Board of Fish meeting, they discussed
30 stocks of concern. So, chinook salmon and Yukon River
31 fall chum are both listed as stocks of management
32 concern. So, Yukon chinook was changed from a yield
33 concern to management concern. And fall chum was placed
34 into a stock of management concern, and this was based
35 on the most recent five years of data and looking at
36 whether or not escapement goals were able to be met. The
37 department will be working on items for action plans,
38 and so the action plans for those stocks will be
39 discussed at the statewide meeting in March. And if folks
40 have any suggestions for things that should go on to the
41 management plan for that species, they can send them to
42 myself or Matt Olson, or to Aaron Tiernan, who's the AYK
43 Management Coordinator with the Alaska Department of
44 Fish and Game. So, with that, thanks so much. There's
45 definitely people in the room who can go way more into
46 depth on the meeting than I just did.

47
48 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
49 Deena. Anybody else have anything to say? Go ahead, Eva.
50

00057

1 MS. BURK: Sorry. Hi Deena, this is Eva.
2 I wasn't really at the meeting. I just returned to work
3 recently. And I missed all the conversation. I haven't
4 checked in with anybody, so I'm totally going in blind
5 here. But I'm wondering how come kings, chinook wasn't
6 moved up to a conservation concern and then fall chum
7 you know, because it's been listed as a yield forever.
8 So, it should have been management a long time ago. And
9 we're really, truly at a conservation concern now and
10 then fall chum, you know, jumped right on and went right
11 to management concerns. So, I'm just wondering was there
12 a conversation or good reasoning for that? Thanks.
13

14 MS. JALLEN: Yeah, there were definitely
15 -- there definitely have been a lot of conversations
16 about the conservation concern. I would hate to tap on
17 Olivia and have her put her Board of Fish hat on, but
18 there's some pretty specific criteria that have to do
19 with conservation concern. And they have to do with
20 setting a sustained escapement threshold, which is like
21 a different type of escapement goal. And there haven't
22 been any set. And so, it's just kind of a weird function
23 of the policy. But the management concern for the stocks
24 are based on a concern arising from the chronic
25 inability, despite the use of management measures, to
26 maintain escapements for a stock within the bounds of
27 their SEG or their BEG goals, or the sustainable or
28 biological escapement goals. And so, conservation
29 concern kind of relies on a different goal that we don't
30 have on the Yukon. So, there's some weird policy kind
31 of hairsplitting in that. And we do recognize that
32 definitely there are concerns for these stocks. And
33 those concerns were based on the recent five years. So
34 we were, you know, we have fewer meeting goals, at least
35 for some of the goals for the chinook and the fall prior
36 to that five-year period. And that's kind of why they
37 weren't elevated at the previous cycle.
38

39 MS. BURK: Thank you for that.
40

41 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: All right. Anybody else
42 want to add?
43

44 (No response)
45

46 Okay. Proposal comments in the Alaska
47 Peninsula and statewide meeting. It's already done. And
48 then I guess we're to lunch. Yep. We're at lunchtime
49 then food people. Appreciate you all being here. What
50 time is it now? So, 5 to 12. So, we'll see you guys back

00058

1 here a little after one. Thank you.

2

3 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. We're time
4 certain for DOIs on our next.....

5

6 (Simultaneous speech)

7

8 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: At 1:00?

9

10 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah, 1:00.

11

12 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Okay, so we need to
13 talk a little bit early.

14

15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We have to be at the
16 table at 1.

17

18 MS. PILCHER: I have some wiggle room if
19 we want to do after one.

20

21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, we do? Okay.

22

23 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: So, let's try to get
24 back around one for best results. If you want to be in
25 the room when stuff happens, try at 1. Might be a little
26 wiggle room, but I can't promise.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (On record)

31

32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, it's quarter after
33 one and our next agenda item is the Secretarial Review
34 of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. And this
35 was time certain after lunch, and Charlie had called it
36 quarter after. I don't have any other Western Interior
37 Council members, and there's only four with, I guess --
38 is Andy on there? And is Tim on the phone? Oh, there's
39 Eva. So, I think Eastern's got -- so Tim Gervais.....

40

41 (Simultaneous speech)

42

43 MR. GERVAIS: Jack this is (distortion).

44

45 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. So, Tim's there.
46 And, Andy Bassich?

47

48 MR. BASSICH: I'm here. Thank you.

49

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay, so. But I don't
2 have any of my other Council members. And we had people
3 -- we had -- Robert Walker and Tommy Kriska were supposed
4 to be flying. And I don't see them here either. So, but
5 -- and the EIRAC, Don was supposed to show up. Did he
6 show up? Oh, he did not.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Don's having some health
9 things he's taken care of, so he's excused. Thank you.

10
11 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. So, don't want
12 to -- but I can't do anything about Don Honea and Jenny
13 not being here, and there was myself. And so, it's Tim
14 and I, and we're time certain. And do we have Sara Taylor
15 on the phone?

16
17 MS. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is Sara
18 Taylor.

19
20 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, there you are,
21 behind me. So, I would like to have my Council members
22 here also for this. Can we -- what's your time frame? I
23 mean, how long do you have to be with us?

24
25 MS. TAYLOR: This is Sara Taylor. I'm
26 here all day.

27
28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. So, I'm a little
29 bit in a pickle here because my Council's not with me.
30 And so, what do you think we should do there, Brooke?

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: Well.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: OSM report.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Thank you. Yes,
37 we could move on.....

38
39 (Simultaneous speech)

40
41 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We got Lisa over
42 there.....

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: We have a couple reports
45 for later that we could bump up. We have an OSM update.
46 We -- the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update,
47 might take a little bit more time because of -- but
48 maybe we could try the OSM update and then see where
49 we're at. If we needed to wait a little longer.....

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: We could reassess.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Let's let Charlie come
6 back. He's going to come back. He's going to make a
7 couple of calls and then maybe we can move on with
8 something. I don't want dead air space here. But then,
9 I would like to get back to Sara immediately. As soon
10 as I get some kind of Council representation here. It's
11 a really an important issue. The Secretarial Review of
12 the Federal Subsistence Management Program. And I guess
13 we could stand down for five minutes till Charlie gets
14 back.

15

16 (Off record)

17

18 (On record)

19

20 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, we're going to --
21 since we're I don't have a Council we're going to take
22 OSM as -- we're going to have to do something during
23 this dead air space here. So, Jenny and Don are supposed
24 to be getting back pretty soon, and so we'll have Lisa
25 come up, Grediagin. So go ahead, Lisa.

26

27 MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you, Mr.
28 Chair. Members of the Council happy to be like a 5-to-
29 10-minute time filler here. Lisa Grediagin with OSM for
30 the record. So, some happenings in OSM since we last
31 reported to you at your Winter 2025 meeting is OSM
32 received 78 wildlife proposals and are also analyzing
33 17 wildlife closure reviews. On July 21st, the Federal
34 Subsistence Regulations removed from one part of the CFR
35 specific to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 50 CFR
36 part 100, to a new location specific to the Department
37 of the Interior at 43 CFR part 51. This change in
38 location of our subsistence regulations reflects OSM's
39 administrative move to the Office of the Assistant
40 Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. And it's
41 just a change in numbers. No changes in the actual
42 regulations. The same day in July, the fisheries Final
43 Rule published and in addition to the changes the Board
44 made to the fish and shellfish regulations, this rule
45 also removes a Ketchikan area from the list of non-rural
46 areas, change regulations for Nelchina caribou, and
47 corrected an error for a recent Final Rule regarding the
48 take of wolf and wolverine in Unit 17.

49

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1 On July 23rd to 24th, the Board held
2 their annual summer work session. The Board reviewed and
3 approved replies to fiscal year 2024 Council Annual
4 Reports. They also adopted Deferred Wildlife Proposal
5 WP24-01 as modified, modified by OSM to allow the sale
6 of brown bear hides harvested by federal users and
7 implementation of that proposal will proceed once the
8 regulations are published for the Wildlife Final Rule.
9 Additionally, the Board reviewed recommendations for the
10 Council Charter changes and received briefings on recent
11 Council Correspondence.

12
13 During the 2025 appointment cycle, the
14 Board received 50 applications to fill 48 vacant -- or
15 48 seats on all ten Councils. The Board also received 8
16 letters of interest from young leaders that are
17 interested in the non-voting seats, and the Eastern
18 Interior Region received 5 membership applications and
19 2 non-voting young leader letters of interest. And the
20 Western Interior Council received 3 membership
21 applications and zero non-voting young leader letters
22 of interest. The Board held their Executive Session on
23 July 24th and developed their recommendations on the
24 Council appointments. The new application period will
25 open sometime in January 2026 and will close on March
26 26th, 2026. So, we're requesting your help with
27 soliciting applications in your region, including the
28 non-voting young leader seats in the Western Interior
29 region specifically.

30
31 In 2024, OSM initiated the modernization
32 of the federal subsistence permitting application. Part
33 of this modernization was to make permits more readily
34 available to users through an option to obtain permits
35 online. The new system was released for agency use on
36 September 30th. However, the permit portal is not
37 currently functioning, so users are unable to request
38 profiles and permits online, and so they should continue
39 to obtain permits by contacting a local issuing office,
40 federal agency office until the portal is ready and when
41 the online options available we will broadcast this
42 through a news release, and a link to the online permit
43 portal will appear in the program's website.

44
45 Some OSM staffing updates. Roughly 25%
46 of OSM positions are vacant, and many employees are doing
47 double or even triple duty. And we're awaiting to receive
48 further guidance on, you know, if we're able to proceed
49 with filling vacancies. As recently in early December
50 it was announced that government wide hiring freeze was

1 lifted. But so, waiting on further guidance on that
2 several OSM employees opted to retire earlier this year
3 through the deferred federal -- deferred retirement
4 program. This included OSM Fisheries Biologist Karen
5 Hyer, OSM Council Coordinator Lisa Hutchinson, OSM
6 Cultural Anthropologist Pippa Kenner and OSM Permit
7 Specialist Derek Hildreth. Two lateral staffing moves
8 from other DOI agencies into OSM were recently approved.
9 Caron McKee came back to OSM as the Subsistence Outreach
10 Specialist, and Anna Senecal has joined the OSM
11 Fisheries Division to fill one of the three vacant
12 fisheries positions. And additionally, Katya Wessels is
13 officially the Acting Deputy Director for Operations
14 through January 5th. And we also have Grace Cochen --
15 Cochon, on detail with us helping with the Secretarial
16 Review as well as Council Coordination.

17
18 The OSM Director and deputy directors
19 have been conducting monthly in-person meetings with the
20 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Deputy Commissioner
21 and Federal Subsistence Board Liaison. These meetings
22 are helping to ensure strong communication and
23 collaboration, especially with data sharing and analyses
24 review. In addition, OSM and the Interagency Staff
25 Committee held a workshop earlier this year to identify
26 opportunities for strengthening the agency's
27 relationship with the State, which has produced several
28 action-oriented results. And as you all know, due to a
29 lapse in government appropriations, eight out of ten
30 Council meetings had to be rescheduled. And I'd like to
31 take this opportunity to extend a huge kudos to the
32 Council Coordination Division in being able to pull off
33 rescheduling these meetings on such a short notice and
34 time frame. I have to admit, when we came back from
35 shutdown and we were talking about what to do, I was
36 like, no way. Like, no way are you going to be able to
37 schedule eight Council meetings in a, you know, two
38 months with the holidays and they're like, well, let's
39 just try. And then three days later they're like, okay,
40 they're rescheduled. So huge kudos and appreciation
41 thanks to Council Coordination on.....

42
43 (Applause)

44
45 Yeah, on making these meetings happen.
46 Tribal and ANCSA Consultations on wildlife regulatory
47 proposals and closure reviews took place on August 19th
48 and 21st, in person and via teleconference. Several
49 tribal corporation representatives participated, and
50 there will be two more opportunities for tribes and ANCSA

1 Corporations to consult with the Board on the current
2 wildlife proposals and closure reviews. First following
3 the fall 2025 Council meeting cycle on February 19th and
4 20th. And then just before the April 2026 board meeting.
5 Council Chairs are welcome and encouraged to attend
6 these consultations, and we'd like to remind tribes and
7 ANCSA Corporations that if the scheduled dates don't
8 work for you, you can always request a separate date and
9 time by emailing OSM Tribal Liaison Orville Lind. The
10 Federal Subsistence Board will hold an FRMP work session
11 on February 5th to review the draft Fisheries Resource
12 Monitoring Plan and make recommendations on projects to
13 include in the final 2026 FRMP plan.

14
15 The Board will hold the Wildlife
16 Regulatory Meeting on April 20th to 24th to consider the
17 2026 wildlife closure reviews and regulatory proposals
18 and -- oh so litigation updates from the solicitor. So,
19 I'm just going to read this verbatim. United States vs.
20 Alaska Ninth Circuit. In 2022, the U.S. brought this
21 action against the state of Alaska to resolve a dispute
22 over the regulation of subsistence fishing on the
23 Kuskokwim River within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife
24 Refuge. In March 2024, the court granted summary
25 judgment to the U.S. and issued a permanent injunction
26 against the State. The State appealed. On August 20th,
27 2025, a Ninth Circuit panel ruled in favor of the United
28 States. The court upheld its previous holding that
29 ANILCA defines public lands to include navigable waters
30 in which the United States holds reserved water rights
31 based on three previous Ninth Circuit decisions,
32 commonly referred to as the Katie John cases. The court
33 rejected the State's arguments that the Katie John cases
34 were clearly irreconcilable with Sturgeon vs. Frost
35 (Sturgeon II) and Sackett vs. Environmental Protection
36 Agency. The state of Alaska petitioned the Supreme Court
37 to consider the case, and the U.S. and Intervenor filed
38 an opposition brief. We expect to find out in late
39 January or possibly later, if the Supreme Court will
40 take up the case.

41
42 The State of Alaska -- or State of
43 Alaska Department of Fish and Game versus Federal
44 Subsistence Board et al Ninth Circuit. On June 2nd,
45 2025, Ninth Circuit panel ruled in favor of the United
46 States in this lawsuit filed by the state of Alaska
47 after the Board authorized an emergency subsistence hunt
48 in 2020 for moose and deer on federal public lands in
49 the vicinity of Kake, Alaska. The court's basis for
50 upholding the Board's decisions was twofold. First,

1 ANILCA provides the Board with the authority to provide
2 access to subsistence resources on federal lands, and
3 second, the Board has the authority to authorize an
4 emergency subsistence hunt to ensure that rural
5 residents of Alaska have a reasonable opportunity to
6 reach and use subsistence resources found on federal
7 lands in Alaska. The panel also concluded that the
8 State's claims that the Board improperly delegated the
9 administration of the Kake hunt to a tribe were not
10 properly before the Court. So, thank you, Mr. Chair and
11 Mr. Chair and Council members. So that concludes the OSM
12 report and I just want to take one more opportunity to
13 say thank you so much, Council members, for all you do
14 on behalf of the resource and subsistence users. I
15 recognize your volunteers. This is not your job. And so
16 again, just thanks so much for being here and for all
17 you do.

18
19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Lisa. Does
20 anybody got questions? Sue.

21
22 MS. ENTSMINGER: Could I -- this is Sue
23 Entsminger. Could I get a copy of that report? Yeah.
24 Thank you.

25
26 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Other questions or
27 comments?

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 I don't see any. Thanks so much, Lisa.
32 I got -- we got Don and Jenny back, and Tim is on the
33 phone. And so, I'm here and that's all we're going to
34 get out of WIRAC today cus [sic] our other members are
35 trying to travel, so we're going to go back in the agenda
36 to the Secretarial Review of the Federal Subsistence
37 Management Program. And so, we have Sara Taylor on. Are
38 you still there, Sara? I don't see you.

39
40 MS. TAYLOR: I am here, Mr. Chair.

41
42 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay, so. They're
43 going to put your -- put you up for us. Oh, there you
44 are again. So, you're going to give us an overview. Go
45 right ahead.

46
47 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you so much. This is
48 Sara Taylor for the Secretary's Office. I apologize to
49 my -- oh, great. I was going to apologize to my
50 colleagues for the echo, but it has disappeared. So, I

1 just want to say thank you so much for allowing me to
2 join you today and to join your discussion today and to
3 be part of your discussion. I just want to say,
4 especially I want to send a sincere thank you to Council
5 Member Entsminger for inspiring me for 20 years with
6 your dedication and tireless perseverance and also your
7 vast wisdom and knowledge and you never give up on
8 anything. And it really has been an inspiration to me.
9 You have been -- and I worked with Brad Palach in the
10 Innoko program for a long time, and your work with him,
11 too, really inspired me in a lot of ways. Just thank you
12 for always doing your best to make sure that the right
13 things were being done and the right things were being
14 brought to the table. And to Council Member Burk, who I
15 don't see. I see Council Member Entsminger has found my
16 favorite chair at every meeting, which is the one between
17 two cameras. So, I can't see her, but -- oh, there.
18 Council Member Burk, I want to say thank you for your
19 tireless perseverance and really fearless research into
20 some impenetrable bureaucratic procedures that have long
21 mystified all of us. And I have learned a lot from what
22 you've brought back from your investigations into these
23 issues. And it's meant a lot for the last couple of
24 years and working on the salmon crisis and its profound
25 impact and trying to do something and to bring that
26 education forward. And I couldn't have done it without
27 the things that you found and discovered. And I'm very
28 grateful to you for that work.

29
30 So, I'm very grateful to be here at the
31 joint meeting. I came to Alaska as a intern for the U.S.
32 Fish and Wildlife Service. I wanted to be a bird
33 biologist in the worst way. And I was one in, like, the
34 worst way. But I had an amazing experience on the
35 Kuskokwim River my first summer. And my second summer
36 as an intern with Fish and Wildlife, I spent in Northway
37 on the Chisana and was able to go out to fish camp. And
38 it breaks my heart every day to know that I can't go
39 back. So, I'm very pleased to be here and to be part of
40 this discussion and to help explain what we're trying
41 to do here at the Secretary's Office with this
42 programmatic review. And again, I appreciate that I'm
43 not able to be there to shake your hand in person and
44 to introduce myself in person. I, like you, I have a lot
45 of people that depend on me, and I really am grateful
46 to meet their needs at the same time that I'm able to
47 meet with you today.

48
49 So, without further ado, on Monday in
50 the Federal Register, a notice came out that we are

1 doing a review of the Subsistence Management Program.
2 So, this is very similar to two other reviews that were
3 done in the past. This is, I think, in the tradition of
4 accountability that those reviews represent. The
5 Secretaries take their responsibilities to subsistence
6 users very seriously. And they want to make sure that
7 the program is at all times meeting those needs. And so,
8 in 2009, Secretary Salazar had a review done that was
9 done by the Special Assistant to the Secretary for Alaska
10 Affairs. And that review came out with a very different
11 Board. So, this was -- when that review happened they
12 came out with a series of recommendations after a public
13 scoping process. They did a regulation, and after that
14 we had public members added to the Federal Subsistence
15 Board and a variety of other changes were made as a
16 result of that review, including policy changes. And
17 then in -- just a few years ago we had another
18 opportunity to kind of check in with Alaska Native people
19 and a lot of other stakeholder groups around the State
20 to just see -- under Secretary Holland's leadership, we
21 looked around to see how the program was operating,
22 whether it was meeting subsistence needs. And from that
23 review, which was also led by this special assistant --
24 or by the Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska
25 Affairs, same position, different title, but was also
26 led. And then when the -- when that review culminated
27 in recommendations and a regulation, we got three
28 additional public members to the Board. And also, some
29 criteria for membership on the Board as well as some
30 clarification about Secretarial Ratification of Special
31 Actions. So that was another thing that came out of that
32 consultation process. And that was done through a series
33 of listening sessions and consultations and meetings all
34 over the State and in Washington, D.C.

35
36 So, we are now picking up from there and
37 saying there's a lot of other folks that need talking
38 to and we'd love to have that be a big part of the public
39 discussion. So, we are here to really start that public
40 discussion. That's what started on Monday. It's a 60-
41 day public scoping process. So, during this scoping
42 process, we're looking at some specific things that
43 we're curious about. And the reason for that is because
44 of a lot of correspondence that we've received this year
45 about the program and about some things that we could
46 do to make improvements or some things that we should
47 investigate to make sure that they could be more
48 efficient. So, we came up with about seven things that
49 are really kind of themes throughout the correspondence
50 that we've received from multiple different

1 stakeholders, as well as a petition for rulemaking. So,
2 we -- we're looking at the relocation of the Office of
3 Subsistence Management to the office of the Secretary.
4 This had been a request that was -- it was a request
5 that was part of the record during the 2009 review. And
6 which was addressed in the second 2022 review through
7 rulemaking. So, or I guess actually it was just recently,
8 a few months ago, addressed through rulemaking when we
9 finally did move those regulations over to the Office
10 of the Secretary. But the Office of Subsistence
11 Management has been in the Secretary's Office for a while
12 now, and I think it'd be good to see, you know, did that
13 work? Were those -- you know, when we took those
14 recommendations very seriously and tried to do the best
15 we could with them. So, I think the question is, you
16 know, is that working? And if anybody has questions about
17 where the Office of Subsistence Management is in the
18 Office of the Secretary's Office, I'll do my best to
19 navigate you there. It's -- they're in an office called
20 the Office of Policy, Management and Budget, which is a
21 -- which is an amazingly diverse unit of the Office of
22 the Secretary. And I'd be happy to explain that in more
23 detail if anyone has questions.

24
25 The second thing we're looking at is the
26 criteria for RAC membership. Is that something we need
27 to look at? That's -- that would be -- any of these
28 changes would obviously not happen right away. So, this
29 public scoping process is just information gathering.
30 Like how -- what should we be looking at in making
31 recommendations to the Secretary? What are some possible
32 solutions to issues you see on the ground? The cobbler
33 doesn't ever know where the shoe pinches. So, we really
34 have to know kind of what's going on so that we can
35 apply the right fixes and make good policy judgments.
36 So, you know, the criteria for RAC membership, what
37 should that look like? What would help? Is that fine?
38 Is everything fine? That's a really good thing to know
39 as well. Also, the Board membership. So, the composition
40 of the Board now, is that right sized? Is there something
41 else we should be thinking about? I know it's really
42 soon. We haven't had very many meetings with this new
43 Board, so. But, you know, what do you think? What are
44 your thoughts? Should there be something we should look
45 at there that needs to be changed, or I should they
46 celebrated?

47
48 So also, the fourth thing we're looking
49 at would be federal and state regulation duplication and
50 inconsistency. I know everybody you know, kind of gets

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1 to hunt with both or two, three, four handy dandies. And
2 so, is there a way we could make that easier for people?
3 You know, is the way that we explain regulations and the
4 way that we communicate regulations, is that working?
5 Or could we, federal and state, get together and do
6 something that makes things easier? Another thing we're
7 looking at is the special action regulations. So those
8 are in regulations. So that would be part of a rulemaking
9 that would follow recommendations to the Secretary. But,
10 you know, the way that special actions -- you see how
11 special actions are made. And you as a -- as RACs have
12 been able to watch the evolution of how special actions
13 are made. So, you're the -- you're in the best position
14 to tell us how that's working.

15
16 Also, I know the role of the State and
17 the role of the Department of Fish and Game in the
18 program, that's also something that's changed over the
19 years. And I think the question is, what should it look
20 like? And maybe there's some work we could do. I know
21 OSM has taken a lot of initiative in making stronger
22 relationships and more integration. So, I think the
23 issue is we'd like to know what you think about the role
24 of the State and should you know, their presence at the
25 meetings, their involvement, all of those things. And
26 lastly, we are interested in the rural determination
27 process. I think we've -- we understand that communities
28 change, communities grow and communities shrink. And so,
29 I think the issue is, we really want to make sure that
30 we're finding the right inflection point to capture
31 people who are living a subsistence lifestyle. So, does
32 -- do those regulations really get us there? And I think
33 the last few years have, have given us a lot to think
34 about there. So, I think this might be a good time to
35 check.

36
37 So those are the things that we're
38 really focused on. There's a web page that we have
39 through the Office of Subsistence Management you can go
40 to for updates, and that -- those updates will include
41 the date of a joint open house that we are working to
42 set up in Anchorage probably around the time of the next
43 Federal Subsistence Board meeting so that we can see if
44 we can get members to come. And also, to be able to
45 capture anyone who's coming into town for that meeting.
46 So, we're going to work on that. And, but the final
47 dates and locations will be posted on the website. And
48 if you want to submit comments, which I very much
49 encourage you to do, they must be postmarked by February
50 13th of next year. And they can also be emailed any time

1 before that date or on or before that date. And those
2 can be emailed to an address that's also on the web
3 page. So, you can also call, we always take oral comments
4 by appointment. So please feel free to call and we will
5 be able to take your comments and transcribe them. And
6 I want to be very clear that our goal is to make all of
7 the comments publicly available so that everybody can
8 assess our recommendations against the written comments
9 that we received. So, when you do submit comments let
10 us know if you'd like us to hold some information back.
11 But no promises, because we really do want to make all
12 of this public and so, there's portals for this so that
13 the public can access the materials.

14
15 So, if there's any questions at all
16 about what we're doing or what we're looking at or what
17 we're hoping to find or anything like that, please,
18 please let us know anytime. Also, I just want to let you
19 know too, when it comes to the RACs, you're always able
20 to communicate with our office. So, when you, I mean,
21 if you want to contribute comments, I know that there
22 are some restrictions under FACA for that. And I just
23 want you to be aware that you can communicate with our
24 office anytime through the Federal Subsistence Board.
25 So, if you if you put comments together and you send
26 them to the Federal Subsistence Board, the Chairman will
27 pass them along to us. So, I will pause there for any
28 questions and any comments that you have to make now.
29 And I'd love to be able to listen in on that discussion.

30
31 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you so
32 much, Sara. Does any of the Council members in the room
33 have questions for Sara on her presentation? Andy.

34
35 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Sara. Andy
36 Bassich with the Eastern RAC. Thank you for that. I was
37 curious to get maybe some discussion going on co-
38 management on the Yukon River. And I'm -- I just really
39 want to make that front and center for possible actions
40 and development moving forward. And I might want to
41 modify that to say, tribe management, because I think
42 the long-term solutions for a lot of our issues statewide
43 is going to require not only the state and the federal
44 entities to work together, but to incorporate the
45 tribes. So, I just wanted to put that out there. I know
46 that's something that will take quite a bit of work to
47 develop, but I think that's super important moving
48 forward for long-term sustainable salmon throughout the
49 state of Alaska and I'll just leave it at that right
50 now. Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: You have a follow up
to that, Sara.

4

5

MS. TAYLOR: I love that, I wrote that
down. I've been kind of a little obsessed with all the
things that have been going on with Yukon the last couple
of years, so I can't wait to dig in more to that. I'd
love any input you have on how we can make that a
reality. Thank you.

10

11

12

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. Do
we have any other -- go ahead, Dorothy.

14

15

MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. Yes, thank you Sara,
really appreciate your report. Dorothy Shockley. A
couple of questions. The comments that would be
submitted, who actually reviews those and where and who
makes the recommendations from the reviews? And then I
have another question after.

20

21

22

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Sara.

23

24

MS. TAYLOR: This is Sara Taylor. Thank
you. Through the Chair. Thank you so much for asking
that. So, we are going to put together an interagency
working group. So, members from each of the bureaus that
are on the Federal Subsistence Board, as well as people
from the Secretary's Office and the Office of
Subsistence Management -- we haven't really finalized
who's going to be on that interagency working group yet,
but it will also include USDA representation. And they
-- we also have the assistance of OSM and Grace Cochon.
We have a lot of people who are going to be helping us
review all of the comments. I myself read them -- during
the 2022 review I just read them every day. And, so
there will be a lot of people with eyes on the comments
we put together. And then when we get together in the
interagency working group, we'll be coming up with
recommendations for the Secretary probably next spring.
So, we'll be doing this as quickly as we can, just so
we can make sure that we get the changes in place.
Because it does take time. So, we'll be putting together
that report, hopefully getting that report with
recommendations out in the May-June time frame for
action. I think if we do if -- if one of those
recommendations is to start a regulatory process and
that recommendation is accepted, we would expect that
regulatory process probably start in the fall of 2026.

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. You have another
2 question, Dorothy?

3
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Well, maybe more of
5 a comment. And, you know, it's always important and --
6 that we of course do reviews, but there's always room
7 for improvement. But as a subsistence user taking and
8 as a department that is to protect the subsistence way
9 of life. Taking recommendations from the Safari Club is
10 very concerning. And, you know, it's a potential threat
11 to rural subsistence and would be a significant stepback
12 in regards to some of -- to the recommendations. So, I
13 just want to put that out there and yeah, I'm just very
14 concerned as well as many Alaskans. And, you know, I got
15 an email from AFN last night and they are very concerned
16 as well. So just want to make that statement. Thank you.

17
18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Dorothy.
19 Other Council members have comments, questions? Oh, Sue.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. This is Sue
22 Entsminger. So, your -- this -- the review is going to
23 be done by the different agencies. Are they mostly in
24 Alaska? Are there going to be saturated with the -- more
25 people from the Lower 48 that don't understand Alaska?

26
27 MS. TAYLOR: So -- this is Sara Taylor.
28 Through the Chair. The interagency working group is
29 going to be people who understand Alaska. Yeah, we're
30 going to be putting together a group of people that
31 don't have to be taught this stuff, right, that they're
32 going to know these things. So, it's not going to be a
33 -- the people who are going to be making the
34 recommendations they need that information, right? So,
35 we're going to -- it's going to be those people. If --
36 I'm an Alaskan, I know my boss, the Senior Advisor is
37 an Alaskan, probably going to have quite a few Alaskans
38 representing the bureaus. But we'll -- we will also have
39 people representing the Office of the Secretary. And
40 that's one of the advantages of being in the Office of
41 the Secretary.

42
43 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I -- my comment is,
44 you know, the Board members, Federal Subsistence Board
45 members, they basically had subsistence people that they
46 work with that they actually relied heavily on. But a
47 lot of those people are not there now, like BLM doesn't
48 have that. You know, Chris McKee left. I'm concerned
49 that the agency people may not have the subsistence
50 overview, you know, understanding. Can you assure us

1 that you're going to have that -- those kinds of
2 qualifications also? I mean, you might be able to do
3 that, but through all the agencies, BLM, all these
4 agencies that they actually have that kind of staffing
5 to make valid comments on the comments that are coming
6 in for this -- through this process.

7
8 MS. TAYLOR: That's a really good
9 question. I can't make a lot of assurances without
10 knowing who's going to be involved, but I can say that
11 I know the comments will be key for, I think, for any
12 person with expertise in managing a program, right? So,
13 even if we had somebody who -- they were really, really
14 good at coordinating but they were new to federal
15 subsistence itself, and we and we gave them these
16 comments. I still think they'd you know -- I think having
17 multiple perspectives on this is really helpful. But I
18 agree with you. Those perspectives need to be informed,
19 right? They need to come from a basis of what all of
20 these regulations say, how they came together and what
21 the program does, right. These things are essentials and
22 baseline information. So, we're -- those are the people
23 who are going to be involved is the people who have
24 those skills. But like we're always learning I guess is
25 the best way, always learning about these issues. And
26 so finding -- I agree with you, we have lost some really
27 key knowledgeable people. And in 20 years of government,
28 I am sorry to tell you that I say that every year. And
29 we work really hard to build the bench, and this is one
30 way that we do that. And I'm grateful to all the people
31 who are going to be sending us comments and participating
32 to help us with that effort.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you for
35 your response. I have Tim Gervais, has his hand up
36 virtually. Go ahead, Tim.

37
38 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sara,
39 this is Tim Gervais on Western Interior. My comment, you
40 can respond to it, or maybe it's a training issue, but
41 I would like to know what's the relationship between the
42 RACs and the Solicitor. I don't understand exactly what
43 the Solicitor's job is and if he -- if he's able to
44 advise the RACs or does he just like oversee that we
45 don't do anything that's outside of the regulation. I
46 just don't know what his role is or how much of a
47 resource he could be for our individual RACs. I'm just
48 seeing so many issues that I feel like there's violations
49 of ANCSA or ANILCA or NOAA national standards. And I
50 would like somebody within OSM to be able to make or

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1 state determinations on why these, in my opinion,
2 violations are occurring and if it's the Solicitor's job
3 to deal with them. For example, when we had the All-
4 Council RAC meeting in March of two years ago, I was
5 talking to the Solicitor about this issue of the salmon
6 migrating between state jurisdiction and North Pacific
7 Management Council jurisdiction, and the Solicitor told
8 me that he couldn't deal with any of my questions
9 regarding the exclusive economic zone, because that was
10 under Department of Commerce. And he doesn't he doesn't
11 ever delve into Department of Commerce issues. So that's
12 like one example where I've had trouble understanding
13 how are we going to be Advisory Councils on these Is
14 really egregious issues for subsistence users when the
15 Solicitors doesn't want to go to bat for the RACs.

16
17 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Sara, your
18 response?

19
20 MS. TAYLOR: I'll have to -- this is Sara
21 Taylor. Through the Chair. I will have to look into
22 that, actually, because I know that the -- this -- the
23 Solicitor that you spoke with retired, and the new
24 Solicitor is Lisa Dole, and she -- it's we have a very
25 small office of the Solicitor here in the Alaska region
26 especially considering our size. But we have a whole
27 Solicitor dedicated to this, to the subsistence program.
28 And she is one of the brightest lawyers that I know. And
29 so, I know that what the previous solicitor told you
30 it's -- is the position of the department. But I know
31 that as we learn more, we have really good legal counsel
32 to be able to make good policy about how to respond to
33 that situation. So, I will look into, I think, more into
34 how that works, and maybe that can be something that we
35 can bring to the next meeting as an update.

36
37 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Sara.
38 Any other Council members -- go ahead, Don.

39
40 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don
41 Honea, Western Interior. I had a question. I guess I'm
42 -- I didn't know whether you were talking about the
43 composition of the Federal Subsistence Board or RAC
44 members, so, I mean can you kind of clarify that little
45 bit in the you know, what exactly do we have to be or
46 to do or whatever to -- because I think right now, I
47 mean, you know that filling out for this position, it -
48 - there's a lot of, there's a lot of questions that you
49 know, with redundant you might say same questions over
50 and over. And a lot of us serve in different capacities,

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1 whether it's your local hunting and fishing or Migratory
2 Bird Committees or whatever. The Yukon Inter-tribal or
3 something. And so, I'm -- can you kind of explain that
4 whether you are talking about the RAC members or to be
5 on there? I mean, I'm kind of unclear on that. Thank
6 you.

7

8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Sara.

9

10 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, this is Sara
11 Taylor, through the Chair. So, both. The answer is both.
12 We're looking at the way the program -- the structure
13 of the program, right. Is the structure of the program
14 functioning in its -- at its peak to be able to be
15 responsive to subsistence users. I know the Federal
16 Subsistence Board composition has been changing over the
17 last few decades. And, you know, I think that evolution
18 is, I guess, what we're asking about. But also, you
19 know, the Board started out as just federal, the federal
20 land managers, right. The five land managers here or the
21 five bureaus that that manage land resources and then
22 and a Chair. And so, from there, they added two public
23 members, and from there they added three more public
24 members. And so -- and those three additional public
25 members are nominated by tribes. So, I think the -- I
26 think what we're asking when we come to the Federal
27 Subsistence Board membership is, you know, thumbs up,
28 thumbs down. What else can be done? What are your
29 concerns about it? And then I think for RAC membership,
30 I'll just -- I can just say what I'm mostly concerned
31 about with RAC membership is how can we get more
32 applications? I would really like to know how to do
33 that. But I know we're interested in any comments you
34 have about RAC membership as the experts on that.

35

36 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you. Oh, go
37 ahead, Don.

38

39 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes.
40 Sara, I think you hit on a good point. It's always --
41 it always bothers me that within the Western interior,
42 and if there was a way whether to try to recruit people
43 from different areas, and I'm talking about McGrath and
44 Red Devil, Stony River that area that we don't -- when
45 I first came on here, I was talking about you know, many
46 years ago and at a McGrath meeting and one of the members
47 said, hey, you gotta [sic] realize you're talking for
48 the whole, not just your area, but that's why we're
49 here. I mean, so all I know is about my area, but I want
50 to recruitment [sic]. I like to see some somewhere,

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1 whether it's the Galena office or McGrath office or some
2 kind of recruitment, because I don't know what's going
3 on down there, and maybe they're hurting. Thank you.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks for that
6 comment, Don. I have Andy Bassich online and got a hand
7 up. Go ahead, Andy.

8

9 MRBASSICH: Yeah. Thank you very much.
10 Andy Bassich, Eastern RAC. Yeah, on that topic I think
11 the key thing is to start recruiting younger people that
12 can be identified as future leaders. I think that's been
13 identified as a real strong need. And I'm not really
14 super clear on what the criteria is for residency, but
15 I think it should be opened up so that you can recruit
16 from universities, fisheries programs or wildlife
17 programs or habitat programs utilizing people that are
18 coming from their communities to a university. But
19 identifying as their home community representation on
20 RACs. I think that's a good starting point. I think that
21 that's what we need for the future. The future will be
22 theirs, and they need to be engaged. And if people are
23 showing interest in a particular field, that to me just
24 seems like it's the right way to go. The -- to the point
25 that Tim Gervais was bringing up, I think one of the
26 things that I would really like to see, which kind of
27 goes towards my earlier statements on co-management, is
28 the fundamental problem that we have in regards to
29 fisheries in Alaska is that the management structure is
30 siloed. So we have the Yukon River panel, which oversees
31 parts of the Yukon River. We have the Board of Fish and
32 then we have the North Pacific Management Council. And
33 then layer on top of that, NOAA in certain areas. So, I
34 think there really needs to be some brainstorming done
35 on how we can bring those regulatory entities together.
36 Whether it be in an official capacity or in an advisory
37 capacity, if we're going to be able to move forward into
38 the future. And I'd be happy to talk more about that.
39 There's a lot of discussion going on within the state
40 of Alaska and the Interior here and AYK region on that.
41 But I think that is where we need to make the greatest
42 strides, and that will probably actually be one of the
43 more difficult things to do, because agencies are so
44 locked in. But I think those -- maybe I'm not really
45 sure how that change happens if that has to happen at a
46 legislative level or whatever, but that's what I think
47 is one of the key goals to work towards long-term. Thank
48 you.

49

50

1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Andy. We have
2 Eva Burk, also wants to make a comment. Go ahead, Eva.

3
4 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. Thank
5 you for your kind words as well. I just have -- I'm
6 looking through the text of the -- on the proposed rules
7 and the Federal Register. And on the bottom of the second
8 page at the very end, I guess it's technically the third
9 page, but the second page of text: the focus of this
10 review is on the regulatory and organizational changes
11 to the program. And then after that it says, along with
12 discrete areas of interest. And I just thought that was
13 weird, kind of strange phrasing. Is there anything more
14 to understand there, or are we just looking at the most
15 recent program review changes?

16
17 MS. TAYLOR: For the discrete areas of
18 interest is more like the seven topics that are kind of
19 the target of this review that we drew out of the recent
20 changes, right. Like the comments that we've received
21 on the recent changes, we drew some of those themes out
22 of those comments, but also some themes that are kind
23 of just traditionally part of this process, review
24 process. So, it's -- does that help at all? I appreciate
25 the comment on the phrasing. That was probably mine.

26
27 MS. BURK: Thank you. It probably
28 wouldn't have been the words that I would have chosen,
29 but it just like you're saying you're talking about the
30 program review and then you say this other sentence, I'm
31 like, wait, what kind of -- so I'm just double checking
32 that there aren't other discrete areas of interest that
33 we're not aware of and who they're discrete to. So,
34 thank you.

35
36 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, thank you, Eva.
37 And any other Council comments? We sort of have a -- the
38 game plan would be to take Council questions from Sara
39 who made the presentation. Then we're going to have
40 public comments after we get done asking sort of
41 clarifying what this is about. And so, we're going to
42 finish off our -- and then we're going to have RAC
43 discussion after that. So yeah, we want to get all the
44 regional Council questions before we move on to public
45 comments. So, Sue, go right ahead.

46
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. The -- I'm here
48 as a commercial sport. I had to choose. I couldn't be
49 one or both. Which is, I felt poor for the system. But
50 it's my understanding that, I don't know how many years

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1 ago there was a lawsuit on the federal program that made
2 30% sport commercial on these RACs. And that was -- it
3 was done by the SCI, I believe, Safari Club
4 International. And I just want to know if that still
5 exists and then when we go into other comments of the
6 Board or the Council. I'll have some more comments on
7 that.

8
9 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead. Do you want
10 to respond to that, Sara?

11
12 MS. TAYLOR: Yes. This is Sara Taylor,
13 through the Chair. Yes. That settlement still exists.
14 And we do our best, right. Because it is tough. I --
15 yeah, it's tough to try to find that balance and that
16 ratio, but I feel like we're trying every single time
17 to do it. So, I think we'd love to know if there's ways
18 we could do that better, but that settlement is still
19 in existence, yes.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just want to know point
22 out.....

23
24 (Simultaneous speech)

25
26 MS. TAYLOR: And for those for you who
27 don't know -- oh.

28
29 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm sorry.

30
31 MS. TAYLOR: I was just going to say, for
32 those of you who don't know that settlement, it is a
33 lawsuit.....

34
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.

36
37 MS. TAYLOR:about -- that was
38 brought by Safari Club.

39
40 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. I'm getting old.
41 I lost my train of thought. Gosh. Well, I just think
42 it's important to -- that people don't have to wear one
43 hat because everybody at this table is wearing multiple
44 hats. So, thank you.

45
46 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks for the
47 comments, Sue. And Dorothy.

48
49 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, yes. I guess I just
50 want a clarification on the comments that we make, will

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1 they be included in the Federal Register or wherever the
2 -- our comments or the comments will go? Will these be
3 included? Whatever comments we make.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Brooke, go ahead.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Dorothy. And
8 Sara can jump in after. But if you all formulate comments
9 that you want to submit to the Federal Register, we can
10 work to type those up and submit it as a comment letter
11 like we do for several different, you know, scoping
12 things. So, the comment deadline is February 13th, so
13 we have plenty of time to get that in after this meeting.
14 We can also send those comments to the Federal
15 Subsistence Board in addition if you guys would like to
16 do that. Thanks.

17

18 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Well, she asked for
19 Council comments. So as far as a Council member, where
20 do -- I mean, if we -- if I may, comments, would that
21 be included in the comment criteria or do we as a Council
22 have to come together and make those comments together?

23

24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Brooke.
25 Clarification.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Member Shockley.
28 So typically, we submit comments as a Council. So you
29 guys will kind of come to consensus on general agreement
30 of issues you would like to raise. And if you want to
31 suggest something specifically to be added into that,
32 and if everyone else agrees, we can certainly add it.
33 There's also opportunity to comment as an individual.
34 And so, I would also encourage folks to do that too if
35 something comes up that's not captured in the discussion
36 today. Thank you.

37

38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Do you have any
39 comment on that, Sara?

40

41 MS. TAYLOR: Nope, that's it.

42

43 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, any other Council
44 questions on the presentation? We're not in discussion.
45 We're in clarifying. My only clarification, did I
46 understand you to mean that you're contemplating moving
47 OSM back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, under U.S. Fish
48 and Wildlife out of DOI, or is that just part of your
49 questions?

50

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1 MS. TAYLOR: This is Sara Taylor, Mr.
2 Chair, the -- we're not contemplating moving it. But we
3 are asking about the move that just happened, like was,
4 you know -- I definitely -- it was exhausting to move.
5 So, if we have to move back, it would be good to know
6 now so that we can get started. I guess was the point,
7 but we don't have a specific place like that we want it
8 to be located I think, really the Secretary -- for the
9 Secretary to have oversight. Yeah.

10
11 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. I was just
12 wondering. You mentioned the move and I wasn't sure if
13 there was a reason why you would be discussing that.
14 There was a big ordeal to get it moved. I -- that's just
15 not, let's not go there again. So, we're on the same
16 page there. So, any other comments from the Councils on
17 the presentation? We're going to move towards public
18 comments imminently. Do we have anybody online? Tim? Go
19 ahead, Tim.

20
21 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim
22 Gervais, Western Interior. Sara, during this last
23 shutdown, we -- the Council members didn't get any
24 information about anything that was going on. We just
25 got a voicemail on our -- on Nissa's phone that said she
26 couldn't answer the phone or respond to any emails or,
27 yeah, or texts and is -- was there anybody in the Office
28 of Subsistence Management that was still available to
29 communicate with, or was the entire office closed during
30 a shutdown? I feel like the likelihood of another
31 shutdown is a potential possibility. And I would like
32 to have better communication between the OSM and the RAC
33 members in the event of a future shutdown.

34
35 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: You have a response,
36 Sara?

37
38 MS. TAYLOR: I do before -- this is Sara
39 Taylor, Mr. Chair, I do have a quick response before I
40 hand it to Crystal Leonetti. But I just want to say that
41 yes, there's a continuing resolution right now that's
42 funding the government that ends January 30th. So that
43 would be during the 60-day period. I just want to be
44 transparent about that, but I will let Ciisquq answer
45 that question.

46
47 MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Sara and hi,
48 Mr. Chair. Through the Chair. I was working during the
49 shutdown. I was the only person at OSM, and it was merely
50 to respond to any urgent hunting and fishing needs. And

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1 so the main email address and the main phone number
2 we're working for the Office of Subsistence Management.

3
4 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: As a RAC member, I
5 would -- if we do have another shutdown, could you
6 possibly as an essential staff member send out sort of
7 a news update to all of the -- to your listserv of all
8 these Regional Council members so that we kind of know
9 what's going on periodically, like, are we -- we're on
10 hold. We possibly might move our meetings up or what --
11 you know, something to that effect. Because like Tim
12 says, we're kind of like sitting in limbo. We have no
13 clue what's happening. And so, I'm sure that you don't
14 know anything, but just a little update once in a while
15 might be a good idea. Especially for people who are
16 almost in travel status. They didn't know if we were
17 going to have a meeting at all. And you know, this --
18 the fall meeting. So, thank you. I -- something to
19 consider. I'm not saying you have to respond or anything,
20 just something to consider. So, any other questions from
21 Council members?

22
23 (No response)

24
25 I don't see any more. So, we're going
26 to start to take public comments. And so, we got some
27 green sheets here. We got Carrie Stevens. There she is.
28 Carrie, come on up to the mic there. Try to hit the
29 little button so it lights up and go right ahead.

30
31 MS. STEVENS: Thank you. Through the
32 Chair. Charlie, Jack, appreciate all of you serving.
33 It's good to see you, Gerald. I know that, Don, Jenny,
34 you all serve as volunteers so, thank you. Dorothy,
35 Linda, Eva, Sue, all of you. I really appreciate you
36 all. It's a lot of time and energy and paperwork. And I
37 think that that speaks to some of the challenges with
38 membership. If you all know me, I will try to be direct
39 and to the point and not give a one-hour lecture on
40 ANILCA Title VIII. But I do want to first and foremost
41 thank Sara Taylor ever so graciously for her commitment
42 and work to Alaskans, to tribes, to subsistence users
43 in a very equitable manner and her investment in
44 relationships and understanding. So, a big ana baasee'
45 to Sara Taylor. I want to recognize our first ever Alaska
46 Native Subsistence Program Director, Ciisquq Crystal
47 Leonetti, who is also a phenomenal powerhouse and works
48 hard to serve in her federal position.

49
50

1 My name is Carrie Stevens. I reside here
2 in Fairbanks for the most part. My family that I married
3 into is from Stevens Village. They are Dene Hut'aane
4 that is the Upper Yukon 25D East. I lived in 25D West
5 for many years in Gerald's community, Gwichyaa Zhee. And
6 so, in particular, the Eastern Interior issues have
7 always been very important in our life and in our ability
8 to feed our family. Which goes to the heart of this
9 review and this scoping. So, what is really interesting
10 about this review is the trigger. And I really do want
11 to thank Sara Taylor for reminding us of the two previous
12 reviews by the Department of Interior of the Federal
13 Subsistence Management Program, and whether or not it
14 was meeting the intent of the law, the standing law. And
15 those were triggered by subsistence users and their
16 concern that the program was meeting the intent of the
17 law. This review seemingly goes exactly
18 counterproductive to all previous reviews as triggered
19 by subsistence users. I think that it is rather
20 transparent to anyone who is engaged in these systems,
21 that this review has been triggered by Safari Club
22 International, and the letter that they have written to
23 the Secretaries of Ag. and Interior earlier this year
24 under this administration. As Member Sue pointed out,
25 they have certainly their own political agenda. I do not
26 think that it is a food sovereignty agenda. I do not
27 think it is a subsistence agenda, and I do not think
28 that it is a fisheries or wildlife health agenda, which
29 is your purview, is to make sure as best as you can
30 within your authority and the authorities of the Federal
31 Subsistence Board that there are one, both healthy and
32 productive fish and wildlife populations to support your
33 ability to feed yourself. So, this is very concerning
34 to me that this review seems quite politically motivated
35 as an open access issue and not an issue of subsistence
36 rights, or of ANILCA Title VIII, or of fish and wildlife
37 conservation. And I hope that -- I'm assuming that this
38 is all public record for the scoping, and I do intend
39 to submit technical comments of my own. I'm representing
40 myself and of course, this came out Monday, so I'm
41 winging it a bit here, Chairs. So, but I think that's
42 rather transparent, right. The points of the review are
43 directly in line with Safari Club's letter.

44
45 One of the things that's really
46 concerning about their concerns is that this is a time
47 that we are all, all of us in this room, abundantly and
48 acutely aware that subsistence is under grave threat,
49 as it was in the 1900s, and as reported to Congress, due
50 to an influx of outside users and due to, as just came

1 out this week, the climate report card, the exponential
2 impacts of climate on fish and wildlife in Alaska. At
3 this time, I think it behooves the United States
4 government, the Department of Interior, the Department
5 of Agriculture to really hone in the ability of Americans
6 to feed themselves, no matter who you are. And that that
7 is an American right. And that the people closest to the
8 resource obviously need to be feeding themselves. That's
9 the best for every economy. And so, I think that we
10 really need to consider the overall tenants of this
11 review of ANILCA Title VIII and of the Federal
12 Subsistence Management Program, and why it was set up
13 in the first place, which the scoping and letter
14 initiating it seemed counterproductive to those goals.
15 The Federal Subsistence Program, as we all know,
16 hopefully in this room was established '93. We had the
17 McDowell case, and the state simply was legally unable
18 to meet the legal obligations of ANILCA Title VIII. This
19 is not a question as to the intent of the State or any
20 state administration, that is law. The state by
21 constitution cannot meet the tenants of the federal law
22 of ANILCA Title VIII.

23
24 So of course, for that reason, my issue
25 number one and I'll get to my couple of issues, is the
26 seemingly required deference to the state in the request
27 and in the scoping review. Obviously that goes against
28 directly federal law. That additionally, is concerning
29 when your whole purview is on federal public lands.
30 Nowhere in the nation does the federal government defer
31 to a state government for actions on federal public
32 lands. Why would we do that here when there is a
33 specific, very specific statute to ensure just that does
34 not occur? So, any deference to the state is concerning.
35 I want to point out a couple things regarding the state
36 and the Federal Subsistence Program. As you all know,
37 and especially our Chairs, who go to the FSB to represent
38 your RACs, they have a seat at the table. They're there
39 at every meeting. They're sitting to the table, and their
40 comments are always and readily able to be made on every
41 proposal and every action. Additionally, the State sits
42 on the Interagency Working Group. Subsistence users do
43 not. Tribes do not. RACs do not. So, in my mind, in the
44 structure of the Federal Subsistence Management Program
45 as it stands, there is a concerning deference to the
46 State already. And I know this speaks to our current
47 presidential executive order calling -- for Alaska to
48 call for deference to the State. So, I think we have to
49 look at where the State already has power in the federal
50 subsistence management decision making system. Within

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1 that if any of you have attended a work session, I
2 attended the last work session of the Federal
3 Subsistence Board and with all due respect, every time
4 they deferred to the state representative assigned to
5 the Federal Subsistence Board, he had no answer. He had
6 no information. It was outside of his knowledge base and
7 his purview. So, I would suggest that the State maybe
8 beef up the opportunity they already have and send
9 someone with knowledge and ability to comment on federal
10 subsistence regulations to Federal Subsistence Board
11 meetings if they would like an adequate say, which they
12 already have in Federal Subsistence Board decision
13 making. So, I think we really could legally delve into
14 that. But I do think it's probably against legal purview
15 to defer to the State for all closures, as suggested by
16 the Safari Club International, and I highly suggest you
17 all read that level -- that letter. That's their
18 suggestion. Any closure has to be deferred to approval
19 by the State, which essentially guts your main function
20 and power.

21
22 Positioning of the Federal Subsistence
23 Management program. As Sara Taylor mentioned, this just
24 occurred. How on earth in a bureaucracy can we say
25 whether it's successful or not? It hasn't even been a
26 year. I mean, that's not grounded in reality that we
27 have any way to say that is or isn't functioning
28 effectively at this time. And for the staff within the
29 Department of Interior, Office of Management, Budget and
30 Policy, my hats go off to them for how hard they have
31 worked to accommodate this change. And it seems against
32 the tenants of this federal administration of
33 effectiveness, efficiency and financial tightening of
34 the strings to just move it back. That's like a big
35 waste of time. That's a yo-yo. So, I highly suggest it.
36 Stay where it is. And to your, I believe your y WIRAC
37 member online, Tim's point is that having access to the
38 Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Agriculture is
39 greatly increased by being located directly within the
40 Secretary's Office. And furthermore, it was seen,
41 although I have to say, I do appreciate Sara Boario and
42 want to put that on record that she is our first Alaskan
43 to head the Fish and Wildlife Service, that the Fish and
44 Wildlife Service had undue influence over the Federal
45 Subsistence Management Program when it was under Fish
46 and Wildlife Service. So, if it was under BLM, I think
47 people would be irritated. If it was under National Park
48 Service, people would be irritated. And if you all may
49 recall, the issue we had regarding positioning for
50 caribou that went to the Board multiple times from the

1 Bristol Bay region. We never actually got an answer from
2 the Solicitor as whether or not they were deferring to
3 ANILCA Title VIII or Fish and Wildlife Service
4 regulations. So, there's just a specific example of
5 deference to an agency and why it should be positioned
6 directly in the Office of the Secretary.

7
8 Closures. I just have a couple more
9 points, I promise I won't go on forever. Closures. I
10 want to talk about this because this is a real meat
11 along with temporary special action requests of the
12 scoping of the regulatory change. That is your function
13 as the Federal Subsistence Management program, 804 and
14 805, to be able to ensure that if there is not enough
15 resources, especially in these times of scarcity, as we
16 see everything from caribou to salmon struggling against
17 extra patient that you can protect those resources for
18 the American people, period. And those who rely on them
19 the most, the subsistence, the federally qualified
20 subsistence users. So, they are suggesting not only that
21 the State has to rubber stamp any closure of the Federal
22 Subsistence Board, they are also proposing that they can
23 only be two years and then they automatically go away.
24 Now this is an all-access issue by the Safari Club. And
25 I again, I have nothing against the Safari Club, but
26 it's very transparent. We're struggling with sheep. You
27 all know that desperately, right? It's not good. We're
28 struggling with caribou populations. It's not good.
29 We're struggling with salmon populations, so they're
30 taking away your only mechanism, one, and temporary
31 special action requests and in-seasons, of course. But
32 your primary tool to protect those species and those
33 populations. And that seems arbitrary and capricious,
34 not based in any Western science, management or
35 conservation, which is the purview of how you make all
36 your decisions, let alone indigenous knowledge, let
37 alone the need of the subsistence user, all embedded
38 within ANILCA Title VIII. So, I think several of their
39 recommendations go against federal law. The closure
40 piece was very concerning to me.

41
42 Two more -- one more piece and that is
43 membership. ANILCA Title VIII, Section 801 calls for
44 meaningful participation by subsistence users. The last
45 two reviews, as Sara Taylor pointed out, stated that we
46 needed more public members in 2010, and most recently,
47 we needed even more subsistence user representation
48 because they could just get outvoted by the agencies,
49 most of whom are not from Alaska, as some of your RAC
50 members poignantly pointed out to the Interagency

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1 Working Group. Thank you. And so there is no meaningful
2 participation if subsistence users have no final say in
3 decision making. So the public members and the new three
4 tribal seats must remain, and in accordance with the
5 last two reviews. And to the RAC membership and to Don's
6 earlier point, I do really suggest, you know, the
7 consideration of, this is a little off topic, but
8 requesting more trainings and work sessions that you can
9 do at home while you're hunting and fishing or online
10 to understand the system because it is not made for
11 subsistence users in the regulatory mindset. That's not
12 how any hunter or fisher thinks.

13
14 And so lastly, I will say this is there
15 a win? I think the consideration that we could have,
16 every subsistence user I know hates that they have to
17 go to 8000 meetings that they have to go to the Board
18 of Game, the Board of Fish, ACs, RACs, FSB and so forth,
19 as Andy Bassich has pointed out as well. And so where
20 can we find alignment that works for subsistence users?
21 Sara Taylor mentioned one handy dandy. Wouldn't that be
22 nice? So, I think there are wins that we can consider
23 from this review. And I very much appreciate your time
24 and thank you for letting me speak very much.

25
26 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you Carrie. Any
27 questions? Don.

28
29 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don
30 Honea, Western Interior. Carrie, you don't mince words
31 here. I mean, this is and I just so appreciate your
32 trainings and the things that you do. I guess all of
33 this to me, it really comes on kind of heavy. I mean,
34 you know, and I don't know who he's doing it, like you
35 say, maybe it's -- I mean, like, that's why earlier I
36 questioned the membership of even being on a RAC. I
37 mean, okay, so I did not -- I just learned something
38 here that you -- that the probably the Sierra Club or
39 somebody had something to do with that. You had to have
40 sportsmanship, whatever thing on there. So, and that's
41 why I was kind of asking the question of, well, what
42 constitutes our membership? I mean, I guess, I mean, I,
43 I just -- well, earlier when I first started, I said
44 that you know Robert Walker and I had a talk in the past
45 when we stepped down for a while from the Western
46 Interior. And then a few years ago at a TCC convention
47 got to say, hey, let's go back in there. What did we do?
48 Did we make a difference? Is what we're saying and I
49 always said that, gosh damn it look like we're just
50 piecemealing stuff, you know what I mean? That we should

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1 not. And so, I'm glad that you are -- should I say frank
2 about it? Outspoken about this. It gives us, I mean, are
3 we -- do we just sit here and take this stuff? I mean,
4 I -- it kind of fills me with questions. Exactly as you
5 said. Who's -- what -- are they taking down my comments
6 like Dorothy asked. Are they taking down my comments as
7 a as a Board member or I mean, so I guess we -- it just
8 drives me to maybe even fight more or find out the facts.
9 Education is -- let's say knowledge is power. But I
10 thank you for that.

11
12 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks for your
13 comments, Don. Eva.

14
15 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva.
16 Thanks, Professor. You helped us write our comment
17 letter. Actually, I really do want to thank you, because
18 I was struggling with the words to ask her, and it was
19 really important, I think to -- how you framed the
20 trigger of the review being initiated by prior
21 subsistence users and then the trigger of this review,
22 who it was initiated by. And then also the issues with
23 open access. I don't really have any questions other
24 than these were all just comments. These were all great
25 facts for us to have and more history. And also, and I
26 was a little hesitant to ask Sara this because I wasn't
27 sure how to phrase it. Can -- and when people --is it
28 typical -- so I guess I do have a question. Is it typical
29 or normal for a group like Safari Club International to
30 be able to write a petition to trigger something like
31 this? Is this a first of its kind, or is this something
32 that that can happen again?

33
34 MS. STEVENS: Thank you, Eva. And you
35 know, all of you know, I'm not an attorney. And I think
36 there's a lot of legal aspects to the review, but to
37 your point, I mean, it's just it's political, right. So,
38 who has the power to trigger a review within any
39 administration, state or federal, is the decision of the
40 administration who they would like to listen to. And
41 they can trigger scoping and rulemaking as they see fit
42 in the policies that they would like to forward. So,
43 this goes to, I guess, just demonstrate that the Safari
44 Club International feels that they clearly have the ear
45 of this administration. And in another administration,
46 it could be The Nature Conservancy or whoever they feel
47 politically aligned with. So, anybody can write a
48 petition, right, like a letter. It's up to the
49 administration what they decide to do with it and what
50 they've decided to do with it is scoping. What we -- you

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1 know, we'll never know or fully understand. And I really
2 appreciate Sara Taylor's presentation because maybe they
3 just want to respond by doing scoping. I don't know if
4 their decisions are made or not, you know, and
5 politically, maybe they have to answer the Safari Club
6 with the scoping. You see what I'm saying? So, I'm really
7 not -- you know, I don't hang out at those fundraisers
8 and to know those people know that answer. But that's
9 really it. It's not more than that. There's, you know,
10 there's the little guy behind the, you know, screen like
11 in Wizard of Oz and we're just, you know, we don't always
12 know what he's going to pull.

13
14 The one quick thing I wanted to mention,
15 and you all might know the answer because I haven't
16 looked into this in a long time. The Federal Subsistence
17 Program used to have an MOA with the State. And when I
18 found this out, God, 20 years ago, my head blew off. So,
19 whereas, they can fund tribes and other non-profits
20 through 809 agreements to do harvest surveys, etc., the
21 Federal Subsistence Program. They used to give
22 approximately \$2 million a year to the State Subsistence
23 Division to do their studies. So, the State Subsistence
24 Division is all soft funded. Most of their research is
25 soft funded. That -- a good amount of that used to come
26 from the Federal Subsistence Program, but I haven't
27 looked into that in years. So again, this issue with the
28 State, I think that you can really respond to that, how
29 much power they already have, they don't need more. And
30 I think all that power is really understated. But
31 they're, I mean, they're on the interagency working
32 group, so there you go.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you. Other
35 comments. Sue.

36
37 MS. ENTSMINGER: Hi Carrie. Okay. You
38 know, my background. And yeah, I love the Native people
39 of Alaska, and I respect and dearly, dearly want to see
40 equal for people. And we worked on this hunting program
41 together. The Eastern Interior RAC just said, hey, we
42 gotta educate the Safari Club International, basically,
43 or this other hunter that can do a lot of waste at times.
44 And unfortunately, sometimes it's our military. And we
45 spent, I don't know how much money the government spent
46 for us to meet, and we decided it would be good to get
47 all the user groups together, including people like the
48 Safari Club. And I just want to point out that if we're
49 going to -- we really care about -- we all really care
50 about the resource, even the people that go hunt them

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1 from the cities, they care about it. And I think us all
2 working together and really respecting each other is
3 vital to see Alaska and this resource get back to where
4 it should be. And my question is, I'm sure you agree?

5
6 MS. STEVENS: Yes.

7
8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay.

9
10 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. I mean, I most
11 certainly agree and I would just say that I wish that
12 they also had the numbers of those populations and where
13 they're at. And because I don't know that they always
14 have that information, right. How many sheep there are,
15 how many there were, where the populations at. They might
16 consider that this closure is actually a good thing for
17 their children who want to hunt sheep in the future from
18 Iowa, because there's not going to be sheep for anybody
19 if we just never have closures. That's my point and I
20 agree with you.

21
22 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Carrie.

23
24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Other questions? One
25 more. Eva.

26
27 MS. BURK: I have two tickets to the
28 Safari Club Christmas party if you want to go. Sorry, I
29 had to break it up.

30
31 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so much,
32 Carrie. One final comment, Don.

33
34 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just -
35 - Don Honea, Western Interior. Just a quick, quick
36 question. Carrie, you said that the federal government
37 and the state of Alaska used to have a MOA or MOU. I --
38 and I've always -- it's been my kind of contention that
39 I think that we have to have members on there to beef
40 that up, the federal sides because they just, in my
41 opinion, they just let the State do what they want. And
42 so, is so my question is, is that dissolved or is it
43 still ongoing? Thank you.

44
45 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you. Go ahead,
46 Carrie.

47
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: It's very interesting. I
49 don't know if one of your staff know. Maybe. Here we go.
50 Here's an answer, as we don't know. But I think when the

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1 state and the feds fight, I will say this. Who loses?
2 The salmon and the fishermen, the caribou and the hunter.
3 So, I do agree that the state and the feds need to get
4 it together, but I don't think the solutions are posed
5 in that petition. Thanks.

6
7 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Lisa.

8
9 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the
10 record. And currently that MOA with the State expired.
11 I forget the exact year it expired, but it was somewhere
12 around 2014, somewhere around in that time frame. And
13 there are efforts after it expired to renegotiate it,
14 but they just weren't fruitful. And I will say that it
15 expired in 2014, which is about the same time that the
16 funding dried up. And so, I mean, we'll just say, like
17 there's been some efforts to reestablish it actually,
18 that just this last April when we had this State
19 relations working group internally, we discussed trying
20 to revise that MOA. But again, I think lack of funding
21 might have something to do with it. You know, like we're
22 used to fund a state liaison, like \$500,000 a year for
23 them, and now we don't. Yeah.

24
25 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so much,
26 Lisa, for clarification. We're going to move on to the
27 next. Oh, Sue. Okay.

28
29 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to say
30 that the State funded the program first and then when
31 they weren't in conjunction, that's where that money
32 came from because the federal government passed ANILCA.
33 And then they funded the State to do this, these Regional
34 Advisory Councils. So that's where that money was for.
35 And then once the State, the federal, took over, it
36 would -- I'm sure their funding went away because it's
37 here. That's just a point. Thank you.

38
39 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Right. That was under
40 State Board of Game Management. There were six regional
41 councils. They met, you hardly heard anything about it.
42 When the federal process started in 1993, I was at the
43 first meeting in McGrath for the Western Interior. There
44 was a there was every agency person, ten out of each
45 agency wanting to know what subsistence was. They had
46 no idea what subsistence was at the agency level, in
47 1993. No in 1993, when the federal government took
48 control, they -- the federal agency had no idea what
49 subsistence was. The McGrath was booked out. There was
50 no room Inn the end for anybody because of all the agency

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1 people at that first meeting. So, Olivia, we're going
2 to have Olivia Irwin, come up and have a chat. Welcome
3 to the mic, Olivia.

4
5 MS. IRWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's
6 good to be back. Good to see everybody. I am just going
7 to touch on a couple of points. I didn't plan on
8 speaking, but Tom said everybody was waiting for me to
9 testify, so I figured I'd come up and put some thoughts
10 on the record. So, my name is Olivia Henaayee Irwin. I'm
11 from Nenana, Alaska. I'm an Nenana Native Tribal Member,
12 and I'm speaking solely on behalf of myself today as a
13 private citizen. As it was mentioned before me, the
14 Federal Subsistence Board exists to uphold ANILCA Title
15 VIII, and the primary function is to protect rural
16 subsistence resources and users. It's integral more than
17 any other time in our lives, I think that upholding
18 subsistence preference is supporting the food security
19 needs of rural Alaskans. Throughout our State, within
20 our region, a lot of people are facing food insecurities.
21 And so, it's more important than ever that we're ensuring
22 that those individuals have access to the resources and
23 that these -- this body has the tool in its toolbox to
24 focus on conservation when necessary. The SARs are the
25 main tool of this Council to enact conservation
26 measures. And without those, that main tool from the
27 toolbox is really taken away.

28
29 In response to the membership, I urge
30 the Secretary's Office to protect the three tribally
31 appointed seats. I want to take this moment just to make
32 sure that everybody's on the same page and educate the
33 public, if necessary, that tribes in Alaska is not a
34 racial status. Tribes does not equal Native tribes are
35 a sovereign government to government relationship from
36 one tribal sovereign to another, or to a state, or to a
37 federal body. Tribe has that unique status. The federal
38 government has unique provisions that must protect
39 tribes. And so, these tribally appointed seats is the
40 other important word. These aren't even tribal seats.
41 These are seats that are appointed by tribal
42 organizations and tribes. And so this is not a racial
43 card that's being played. This is a political card that
44 recognizes the unique status and citizenship of over 22%
45 of residents within this State that fall within that
46 tribal category. It took a long time to get to that
47 point. And if it is the will of this body and other
48 management bodies within the State to begin working on
49 true co-management between state, federal and tribal,
50 this is a good start. The three seats, having that

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1 representation, is a good start to that.

2

3 I also would just like to mention that
4 from previous reviews it was proven that rural Alaskans
5 need to be the ones sitting on the FSB and the RACs. And
6 so, I think it's integral that we continue to uphold
7 that. And ensure that the rural Alaskans within our state
8 are the ones that are representing the interests of rural
9 federal qualified users. I also agree that OSM should
10 make additional efforts to recruit members. Make the
11 process easier. I'm a huge process girly and so, I really
12 would like to see any programmatic changes that are made
13 during this review, not undermine the original intention
14 of the creation of this Board, but rather increases
15 public access, meaningful participation. Because if we
16 make this process more complex, especially for our rural
17 users to be a part of and to use, then this space will
18 be stripped of all of the bones of what it's really
19 worth. I would also just like to say that I think it's
20 so integral that while we still have split management
21 in this state, that we are working together across
22 jurisdictions, across management bodies. It doesn't work
23 for us to pin each other against each other. We all have
24 knowledge systems and information and management tools
25 and strategies that I think can work if we are willing
26 to work together. And I think that's the end of my
27 comments. So, thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

28

29 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you Olivia. Any
30 comments or questions from Olivia? Sue.

31

32 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm just giving you a
33 thumbs up. Good job.

34

35 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Great comments. Any
36 other public comments in the room? Is there anybody on
37 the phone? Oh, one more public comment from the room.
38 Two? Two more public comments. So, we have Sarah James
39 and -- come to the mic, Sarah. Turn the mic on. And
40 we're discussing the program review for the Federal
41 Subsistence Board process and Regional Councils. Do you
42 have comments on those? So, turn the mic on.

43

44 MS. JAMES: Yesterday I did talk --
45 yesterday for a while. Well, anyway, my name is Sarah
46 James. I'm an elder from Arctic Village. I am an elder
47 spokesperson on Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for
48 Native Village of Venetie, NVVTT, and that's my title.
49 And I'm going to talk about -- since I've been here, I
50 heard a lot about elders, so I want to talk a little bit

1 about elders because I am an elder from Arctic Village,
2 and there's very few of us nowadays. So, it's very
3 important that I -- we get their input on subsistence
4 and our way of life and on their human rights, because
5 that's what make us be here. So, the more I hear about
6 elders, I -- yesterday, I kind of explain why elders are
7 important to me because I was raised out in the land by
8 my parents. They taught me very well about taking care
9 of the environment and taking care of what we eat and
10 how we treat our food, how we treat the environment. And
11 this is all about environment, and this is all about
12 keeping the land clean in order to eat good from the
13 land. So those are a very important practice that I was
14 taught out in the land, even to get a stick of -- to
15 cook my food to the fire, my mom said, you just get only
16 one. You don't try out four of them, you know, and find
17 the best for you. You get the best one to begin with.
18 You just not here to cut down your trees. You know that
19 kind of way. So those are important.

20
21 And, and she also said, you know it
22 wasn't -- if we didn't practice that way of life, we
23 wouldn't be here today. All this going to be gone if
24 they left that way That kind of ways, they talk to us.
25 And to be clean and to keep it where we fish the water
26 clean and where we have net and all of that. We have to
27 practice cleanliness and how we prepare the food, we
28 have to practice cleanliness. All that has to be
29 discussed to make the right decision for subsistence,
30 our way of life. And I just want to talk that way. And
31 then another thing is that I put down -- also, I was
32 here yesterday, all day. I didn't know there was a public
33 input more open then. So, I did, I missed out on there
34 talking about bears there, talking about sheep
35 yesterday, and the bears. I got allotment 100, I mean,
36 maybe 50 miles from the nearest neighbor. And there
37 there's a lot of bears there. There's a lot of there are
38 food, fish, whatever they depends on there, a lot of it
39 there because nobody's there. Nobody goes there. So
40 that's how -- and when we move one place to another, out
41 in the land, when we're living out in the land, we see
42 a sign of bears, the track, the dropping, how fresh it
43 is, we don't put a tent there. We put -- we kind of go
44 a little way from it to -- so they can have their control
45 of their territory because they do have territories.
46 Animals do have territories. And so, all that practice
47 is very important to me. And yesterday we were talking
48 about bears. Should we kill two bears, or I don't know
49 what it is. That's just not how we make the decision.
50 That's just being a subsistent out there. That's how we

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1 make decisions. I live we live out in the land.

2

3 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Sarah, we're talking
4 about the makeup of the Council. So, you would be
5 advocating for elders on the Councils so that they can
6 have custom and traditional knowledge.

7

8 MS. JAMES: Yes.

9

10 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's basically what
11 you're saying.

12

13 MS. JAMES: Exactly. And that's.....

14

15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: so, I do think that
16 that's a very important thing to have that we have, you
17 know, like Pollock Simon, he's on our Council. He
18 unfortunately couldn't come. So, we -- I really like to
19 have some elders with customary traditional knowledge
20 on to convey the knowledges that you have for Eastern
21 Interior. But we have Western and Eastern together.
22 We're talking about the makeup of these Councils. So, I
23 feel that your comment is regarding that aspect. You
24 have a another -- we have -- not that we don't have a
25 lot of time to for comment, but do you have another
26 comment on another issue.

27

28 MS. JAMES: Yes. What did I say now for
29 the other one? Oh yeah. Sheep. Yesterday they talked
30 about sheep and today they talk about, there's not enough
31 sheep. Not enough. I mean, there's a problem with caribou
32 and sheep and salmon. My father is a salmon people. He's
33 from Birch Creek. So, I know about salmon because we
34 live on by the fish wheel. And then my mother's caribou
35 people. So, we did the caribou. And I'm a sheep hunter,
36 so those things are very important to me. That's why I'm
37 here. So subsistent is my life, and that's who I am, and
38 that's what is being discussed. And I'm just trying to
39 explain what it means to me as a subsistent, as an elder.
40 And I just want people -- seem like people need to hear
41 more of this in order to make the right decision. Thank
42 you.

43

44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Sarah. And
45 I would encourage giving Sarah an application for the
46 Eastern Interior Regional Council. So, Eva, comment,
47 question.....

48

49 (Simultaneous speech)

50

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1 MS. BURK: Thank you.

2

3 CO-CHAIRREAKOFF:for Sarah.

4

5 MS. BURK: Thank you for that, Sarah.

6 Well, I think she was getting at another issue, which

7 was closures and the importance of closures, right?

8

9 MS. JAMES: Yes.

10

11 MS. BURK: Because of the sheep, right?

12

13 MS. JAMES: Right.

14

15 MS. BURK: You've had this ongoing

16 closure and I had a question about that. And then I

17 about the closures importance of that. And then I might

18 have a follow up for you.

19

20 MS. JAMES: Yeah. I'm kind of afraid that

21 the closure have a lot of things to do with this, even

22 though we just got it a few years ago, a couple of years

23 ago. And that it's going to come up again in four years.

24 That's not even enough for us. And so now and they even

25 talking about maybe less than four years and that's a

26 threat to my way of life. Because I am a sheep hunter,

27 and there's guys that went out, I mean, it's 50 miles

28 to go there. In order to go by the plane, you -- at my

29 time, I paid \$600 to chartered plane, plus drifting back,

30 and then set up a boat to pick us up to take the meat

31 back to the elders or who we going to share with. And

32 it's a lot of work and so all of that is very important

33 and all that we have to keep up with our younger people.

34 And they went out two times this fall, and they didn't

35 get to see sheep, so they came back without sheep. And

36 I mean, they're walking, packing and climbing, and

37 that's what we do. Thank you. You got your answer? Okay.

38

39 MS. BURK: Thank you, I have just one

40 more quick follow-up. So I read something yesterday, and

41 I was trying to find the exact quote, but I wanted to

42 keep listening to you, so I stopped looking here. But I

43 remembered from my reading yesterday that down in the

44 Ahtna area, they had -- they were sheep people. They

45 talked about the importance of sheep being even more

46 important to them than like moose or caribou. It was

47 second important to salmon. I believe that's what I read.

48 But the thing that really got my attention was they said

49 they didn't really hunt that much sheep. They most --

50 they hunted more sheep in 1960s. But by the time that

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1 the 1980s had come, they weren't even really hunting
2 anymore, because in their mind, there wasn't that much
3 sheep. And then that's when, if I look at the data, you
4 see that's when they started counting harvesting sheep
5 hunts here. And so, I've always been concerned that
6 people, they're hunting on just a few sheep. And then
7 what our people saw was much more sheep. So, I guess my
8 question to you is, did do you have any -- a similar
9 story, like a time frame when you used to hunt more
10 sheep and then when you saw less sheep?

11
12 MS. JAMES: Yes, there is even a sheep -
13 - the same sheep, Red Sheep Creek. They came as far as
14 Arctic Village, and that's about 50 miles. And we haven't
15 seen them that far. And we have to go that far, 50 miles
16 to get our sheep. And we don't, you know, that doesn't
17 mean five crew went and just, only one crew from the
18 village. And we don't know how many crew. And that's --
19 I mean we got we got that four years to keep the sport
20 hunting out just of subsistence. And I don't know how
21 far this sheep goes. Maybe they are past their limit. I
22 mean, their area where they got shot down now, that our
23 hunters not getting sheep. So, all that had to be
24 observed and study and all that in order for us to keep
25 that subsistence area clear for subsistence. Got it?
26 Thank you.

27
28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you,
29 Sarah. Appreciate that. Any other public comments? Go
30 ahead, Nissa. Oh, here. Go ahead.

31
32 MS. PILHCER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for
33 the record. Just to remind folks that are online if
34 anyone did want to sign up to give public testimony,
35 that is star five to raise your hand. Star six also
36 mutes and unmutes as well. Thank you.

37
38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, we have another
39 person in the room, Pamela Miller. Oh, there you are.
40 Go ahead, Pam.

41
42 MS. MILLER: Hi, I'm Pamela A. Miller
43 from Fairbanks. And I have just a few questions on this
44 Federal Register rule. Today's the first day I've seen
45 it, even though it was published a couple days ago. I
46 think there should have been a link in the Federal
47 Register notice to the petition upon which this proposed
48 action is based. We've heard today about a long letter
49 of petition from Safari Club International. It's a very
50 opposite end of the spectrum from the Sierra Club is

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1 protecting the environment. They're both pretty
2 controversial in Alaska. And at any rate, it talked about
3 discrete areas of interest. I do think there's no need
4 for this action to be taken at all. I would like to know
5 who is the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management
6 and Budget at the current time? If anybody has that
7 answer. And who is the Senior Advisor to the Secretary
8 of the Interior for Alaska Affairs?
9

10 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That would be Sara
11 Taylor. She was -- oh, go ahead.
12

13 MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin
14 for the record. And so, Kara Moriarty is the Senior
15 Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska Affairs. Oh, Sara's
16 online. She can probably answer this better than I can.
17 And she replaced Tina -- Raina Thiele. Yeah.
18

19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, go ahead, Sara.
20

21 MS. TAYLOR: This is Sara Taylor. Through
22 the Chair. That's correct. Kara Moriarty is the Senior
23 Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska Affairs. And the
24 Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget
25 is Michael Boren.
26

27 MS. MILLER: I will just note for the
28 record that for decades, the role of Kara Moriarty was
29 the Head of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association. I was
30 never aware of any particular expertise in the
31 subsistence side of all this. And there's talk in the
32 comments about a joint open house to be hosted in
33 Anchorage. Anchorage is not a subsistence use area, and
34 I definitely believe that for something that has this
35 big of a potential impact, that there should be a
36 different mechanism to get the feedback from the rural
37 communities, and obviously that might take a lot longer.
38 And the time of this open house is to be publicly posted
39 on a website. I would advise that at the bare minimum,
40 notification of this committee should be made and that
41 there be a press release. It's just a -- not a very
42 efficient way for most people to find out about a
43 meeting. It's not the standard way to notice about a
44 public meeting. So that's just kind of a bureaucratic
45 things. That's the kind of things I do to make -- to
46 involve myself, but not -- also more of the public in
47 public processes. And this does not seem like it's in
48 the public interest at all from beginning to public --
49 to this first publication that it -- you know, we had a
50 piece of paper on Monday or Tuesday the day the meeting

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1 started. It wasn't the Federal Register notice, even
2 though it had been published in the Federal Register on
3 the 15th. So I could have given a little more detailed
4 thought and review without my just reading it while we're
5 sitting here. And I'm trying to listen to everybody. So,
6 thank you for taking the time to listen to me. Any
7 questions?

8
9 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Any questions for Pam?
10 Go ahead, Dorothy.

11
12 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. Dorothy Shockley. I
13 have the letter if you would like. I don't know if we
14 can make copies of it or is there a link to it somewhere?
15 Do you know?

16
17 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Dorothy's referring
18 to the Safari Club letter?

19
20 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes.

21
22 MS. PILCHER: I believe -- this is Nissa
23 for the record. I believe there is ADN article that has
24 a link to it. And I can probably.....

25
26 MS. MILLER: Oh, I can find that.

27
28 MS. PILCHER: Okay. But we can make
29 copies too. I assume so. Thank you.

30
31 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Any other questions or
32 comments? My question to you, Pam. You're basically --
33 you're saying that there's -- this review was
34 unnecessary?

35
36 MS. MILLER: Yes.

37
38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, you would -- your
39 comment is that, leave it status quo? Is that what you're
40 saying? Leave the federal program as is?

41
42 MS. MILLER: At this time, there are
43 always improvements needed in this program for
44 involvement of subsistence users and the public and good
45 conversations. But this seems like a very narrowly
46 tailored request that for the magnitude of the declines,
47 as everyone has mentioned in our most vital populations
48 of animals that our whole State depends on for its very
49 economy, from subsistence to recreation and tourism and
50 everything else. But at the root, is the people who live

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1 on the land. So, I don't know if I answered your
2 question.

3

4 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: You did. Thank you.
5 Appreciate that. So, any other public comments? Do we
6 have any on the phone? Anybody raise their hands? I
7 don't have access to a computer. Go ahead, Brooke.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There
10 was a Leonardo Wassilie that had his hand up earlier. I
11 wanted to make sure we didn't just take too long and
12 forget about him. If he would like to comment. Thank
13 you.

14

15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Leonardo, are you
16 going to speak?

17

18 MR. WASSILIE: Sure. Can you guys hear
19 me, okay?

20

21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah, you're great. Go
22 right ahead.

23

24 MR. WASSILIE: Awesome. All right. My
25 name is Leonardo Wassilie. I'm here speaking on my
26 behalf. I'm a member of the Nenana Native Association.
27 I live in Nenana. I grew up in Seward in Ocean Fish
28 Community, and I was born in Bethel. And I was taught
29 like, values of, like, how we take care of our food. And
30 so, I just want to make some comments about, like what
31 I was taught. Like my auntie Esther Green you know, she
32 taught me, like she said, this is our way of life and
33 like, subsistence. And so, it's a way of life, and it's
34 like, there isn't a lot of, like, cash or like you know,
35 that economic benefit, the benefit is like feeding
36 yourself and your community and your family and then,
37 you know, enriching the culture that -- around that. So,
38 you know, the other piece that I want to is -- she said,
39 we take care of our animals and by meaning we take care
40 of our animals, she would say we don't waste anything.
41 So, we use all the animals. So, like she taught me, like
42 we're stewards of the land. We take care of the land.
43 Like when we find the land we take -- we leave, either
44 leave it how it was, how we found it or better. And, you
45 know, in the Western culture, like stewards are like
46 paid, right? Like they get paid to take care of things
47 and, but in the indigenous culture like that was just
48 taught from one generation to the next. And like an
49 expectation of, like participating in like your
50 community and, and the changes of the season and like

1 what that meant for like your food security and for, not
2 just your family but for your community. And so, and
3 then also the animals like you're talking about like
4 ecosystem management that thrives. And so, you know,
5 that participation in that activity and then teaching
6 it to -- has been a part of our culture since time
7 immemorial. Like these are passed along in in stories
8 and art and dance and the way we like take care of our
9 food and our people and our elders, you know, that teach
10 us these things, you know, and we honor the process,
11 right. Like we -- it means a lot to put honor into people
12 who are there like doing this, like, and the respect of
13 people who provide for their people, their communities
14 for, for themselves and, you know, for the livelihoods
15 of that ecosystem. Because remember, it's -- these are
16 like roles that are like fulfilled in since time
17 immemorial, so. And you gotta understand, like these
18 rules that are imposed by, you know, the colonial laws
19 that, you know, define like how those resources should
20 be managed, you know, are sort of like, you know, really
21 are what causing this harm or, you know, this conflict
22 or -- and in many places it's traumatic. So, you gotta
23 understand like there's this evolving, we've always been
24 evolving with the ecosystems and, but when you have like
25 practices that like, I mean bycatch on a fish wheel or
26 bycatch. What -- that's not even a concept. I mean,
27 because bycatch, we use it all, right. I mean, there's
28 a purpose and there's a use and it's not just either
29 thrown overboard or waste. So, we -- we're talking about
30 like some like people who use this with honor and
31 integrity, right. And, and I think that is really
32 important to like have representation of people who
33 like, honor that utilization of the resource that is
34 available for everyone and not just everyone now, but
35 everyone in the past and our -- everyone, our goal is
36 to everyone in the future has that same access. So, I'll
37 leave it at that. Thank you.

38
39 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, thanks so much.
40 So, you're basically for the -- for what we're talking
41 about is the Federal Subsistence Program. You're in
42 favor of membership in the Federal Subsistence Board and
43 on the Regional Council that have customary and
44 traditional knowledge of the intricacies, as you
45 described in your comment. Would you agree with that as
46 a synopsis?

47
48 MR. WASSILIE: Yes. That's correct.

49
50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so much.
2 Appreciate those comments. Any questions for Leonardo?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Hearing none. Thanks so much. Do we have
7 anyone else online? Brooke.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
10 a reminder to folks who might be calling in by phone.
11 You can press star five on your phone, and that'll raise
12 your hand. If you would like to provide a comment.

13
14 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Do we have anybody on
15 the phone?

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: I don't see any other folks
18 wishing to comment online. Thanks.

19
20 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. And so, we're
21 coming into Regional Council Discussion. I heard a
22 request for a 10-minute break. So, we'll take that before
23 we go into Regional Council Discussion? Sounds good.

24
25 (Off record)

26
27 (On record)

28
29 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, we're going to
30 gather up our meeting here.

31
32 MS. BURK: We're starting our meeting
33 now. Thank you.

34
35 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, we're looking to
36 get the meeting back to order again. We're looking for
37 Dorothy and Charlie, Charlie Wright. And Dorothy was
38 around, but -- we're going to have Council discussion,
39 Regional Council Discussion. And Brookes put up a
40 PowerPoint on the screen with the various topics,
41 issues. So maybe you can expand the -- each one and
42 we'll look at, there's eight different topics.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One
45 moment. There's a lot of screens happening right here.
46 Alright. Okay. Thank you. So, the first topic is the
47 move to the Department of Interior that happened last
48 year in 2024. And I don't know that we really need to
49 read into this. We all know that that happened, but I
50 did just -- there's some bullets for reference.

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1

2

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, any discussions or
comments for the record about the move? Dorothy.

4

5

MS. SHOCKLEY: How are we going to do
this? Are you -- we're going to go through each one and
make comments and then agree on it? Do we make motions
or what?

9

10

11

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We would like to get
these comments on the record. They're all going to be
transcribed. Then each Council can write their own
letter.

14

15

MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay.

16

17

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Respectively or
jointly regarding these various aspects of the request.
So, Brooke.

19

20

21

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
to answer you, Dorothy. I think it's up to you to decide
how you want this process to go. But if you want to make
comments and you want us to summarize all the points
that are the made, as long as you know, if there is
something that folks don't agree on, we'll have to
address that. But if it seems like everyone is kind of
in consensus about the comments that are being made, we
can incorporate those into the draft letter and
circulate that for review. I mean, that draft letter
wouldn't be ready at this meeting, but it would be based
on the transcripts and everything, and yeah.

32

33

34

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So that looks like a
good course of action. So, any comments on moving OSM
from U.S. Fish and Wildlife over to DOI? It's happened.
I've had no problems. I've talked to staff, they've had
no problems with it. Does anybody have any issue with
that aspect? Eva.

39

40

41

MS. BURK: Thank you. I have no issues,
but I just for as far as, like comments, I think it
needs to stay where it's at and that it sounded like it
was a lot of administrative legwork and cost to move it.
And so, I think leaving it where it's at is important.
And then also, it was noted by a public comment that the
communication lines are improved by having OSM in the
Secretary's Office, Department of Interior.

48

49

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. And
2 Dorothy, comment.

3
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, I agree to leave it.
5 The move was based on strong support from Alaska tribes,
6 Alaska Native Corporations, the public and rural
7 subsistence users, and was authorized by the Senate. As
8 part of the scoping process, Secretary should consider
9 whether any further move of OSM would be disruptive to
10 the smooth operation of the program. So, no. Yes.

11
12 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Appreciate those
13 comments. Any other comments? Don.

14
15 MR. HONEA: Don Honea. Thank you, Mr.
16 Chair. I agree with these comments. I mean, it's almost
17 like you know, we're told after the fact. I mean, when
18 we met in McGrath, I don't know how many years ago, and
19 they were moved to Galena where there was, I think three
20 offices, three refuges there. And then we -- it's as if
21 we were told after the fact. I mean, so I agree and I
22 think, you know, I mean, I don't like the same day
23 notice, I mean, all of this stuff that's coming down on
24 us. So just for the record, thank you.

25
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I would just add
27 that how could you comment on something that's only been
28 in place one year?

29
30 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's a good point.
31 So, any other comments? It's a consensus that the two
32 Regional Council members that are -- memberships that
33 are here at the table feel that the move to DOI from the
34 OSM office is working to date, and so we can't -- we
35 feel that it should stay where it is. That would be the
36 consensus. I see heads shaking. So, moving on to number
37 two, Brooke.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
40 this is -- just if you're curious, this was the org.
41 chart for within the Office of Policy -- Assistant
42 Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget. OSM falls
43 under the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and
44 Environmental Management. And then these are all the
45 other organizations that are in with OSM under that
46 umbrella.

47
48 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. So,
49 number two, Regional Council membership. And so, this
50 is an overview of, you know, the qualifications that we

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1 all looked at and were reviewed and actually questioned
2 by -- when we were being asked -- every time you apply
3 you have to answer these various questions. And the
4 concern that, you know, the Safari Club letter was
5 concerned that there was somehow gerrymandering, there
6 was all these applicants, and they were sort of down to
7 certain kinds of people. It's like, that's not the way
8 it works at all. Lisa has told us on the OSM report
9 there's only 50 applicants for 48 seats. We just can't
10 hardly -- I got a whole portion of our region in the
11 Kuskokwim, we can't get membership. We had a member and
12 he quit. So, we got -- we're scrambling for every member
13 we got. The problem that Safari Club had, but there
14 wasn't enough commercial or the sport aspect on the
15 Councils. We've had that since back in '98 or whenever
16 that happened. It's always been hard. Certain regions
17 could get all the members they want because they have --
18 -- in their region, they have a large resource of
19 commercial users. We don't have that many in the Western
20 Interior. I feel that Safari Club and Alaska
21 Professional Hunters and Alaska Outdoor Council, they
22 need to make nominations for that. If they want those,
23 if they want to fill those seats, they should make
24 nominations and we've tried all we can to get people
25 within our region. Or heck, I was trying to induct Sarah
26 there for your Council. I'm always constantly doing
27 that. We can't get enough applicants because it's a lot
28 of commitment and there's some really good people in our
29 region that have commercial, but they don't want to give
30 up the time to with. You know, we talked about the per
31 diem aspect at our All-RAC meeting. You know, not just
32 the per diem but the stipend to get something because
33 people are losing work. I'm losing work right this --
34 you know, everybody's got their jobs and stuff and you're
35 just losing on going to these meetings. But it's a really
36 important thing. But it has nothing to do with trying
37 to control it with -- yeah, it's weighted towards
38 subsistence because it's a rural subsistence priority
39 thing and that's what it's all about. So what? What the
40 what? So other Council members we're going to talk, go
41 around the Board. Oh. Sue, go ahead.

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, okay. I just
44 wanted to speak to the -- when that first came out Craig
45 Fleenor was our Chair. And he said, well, I'm a trapper,
46 so I can put down commercial. And truly, that is
47 commercial. So, it -- the hard part was to look somebody
48 like an elder in the eye who's a trapper, and hey, you
49 gotta put down a sport, commercial or subsistence. And
50 they don't want to put down sport commercial and they

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1 could and, and it's good to have trappers represented.
2 So, I'm a trapper too. So, or I was, I don't get out
3 like I used to. But yeah, I think it's important that
4 people know that there's other aspects of sport
5 commercial trapping, sport fishing. There's other
6 aspects that you would qualify.

7

8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Charlie.

9

10 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Like, like Jack said.
11 The commercial, we've had commercial people on our
12 Eastern Interior RAC and it happened just like Jack said.
13 They didn't have the time to end up having the time and
14 had to leave. So, it's really hard to keep them because
15 they're trying to make money and time is everything.
16 Thank you.

17

18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Other comments. Oh,
19 Dorothy.

20

21 MS SHOCKLEY: Yes. I agree the system has
22 worked well and has served the purpose of the RAC as
23 stated. So, thank you.

24

25 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Eva.

26

27 MS. BURK: Thank you. I don't, you know,
28 this comment came up and I heard Sara kind of really
29 like digging in and asking for feedback on how to
30 increase the RAC membership, because that that seems to
31 be more of the issue than the meandering that people
32 might be thinking is happening. You know, I was raised
33 in Nenana my whole life, and I've always maintained my
34 ties to my home community, which is rural. And, you
35 know, I -- there's no job for me in Nenana. So, people
36 like myself and Olivia, was on here too, we often have
37 to either live in Fairbanks or travel to Fairbanks quite
38 a bit in order to work or go to school. And so as I'm
39 like looking at the language of like resident of the
40 region, is there a way to count for being a former
41 resident or a part time resident, a seasonal resident,
42 these other things that really can be more inclusive of
43 people like myself and Charlie where, yeah, we have to
44 be in Fairbanks for a lot of meetings, but we also spend
45 a significant amount of time in Nenana most of the summer
46 and then travel to Rampart quite a bit as well. So yeah.
47 But trying to be more flexible. I'm trying to like,
48 think of ways to change the wording of the first bullet
49 to be more inclusive. Because what's the definition of
50 resident? You have to have your mailing address and your

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1 home address in that community. And so, I'm thinking of
2 great people for your Western RAC. But unfortunately,
3 they live in Fairbanks and they live in Fairbanks because
4 that's where they have to work. Yeah.

5

6

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Sue.

7

8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, this is Sue. I
9 wanted to just add, when that law that changed Virgil
10 got on here. That's the only reason I'm on here. I'm in
11 the region, but -- and Fairbanks was in the region, but
12 they weren't allowed to be on, and then they changed it.
13 So now it's everybody that's in the region. So, it would
14 work. And I see different, you know, North Pole, Rampart
15 and it's working. It looks like it's working to me as
16 long as you get the people. Yeah. So, I would support
17 that.

18

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Dorothy.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: And I think -- yeah, I
mean the region to me, I mean, to me, you know, this is
a -- Fairbanks is region Interior. So, I guess we need
to define if there's, if we need to the definition of
region. I mean, is that the Eastern Interior RAC region,
is it, you know, I mean, I live in Fairbanks, but I have
a home in Manley as well, so and I go back and forth.
But my primary home at the moment is Fairbanks. So, like
most of us, you know, I think because of work or yeah,
I mean, I work here too, so.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So those are valid
points. I see that Andy has a -- has his hand up and
I'll take Andy.

MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Andy
Bassich, Eastern RAC member. That was the point I was
trying to bring up earlier. And I think that there needs
to be some flexibility built into the interview process
and acknowledgement that a person may grow up in a remote
village and gain that experience growing up there, and
then the recognition that -- the way the society's
demographics is changing and people are more tied to the
cash economy of the State, that all that was just spoken
about would be considered. And I think as long as you
grew up within the region that you are applying for,
that should be a change that could be maybe adapted. I
think the big issue would be the concern for, say,
someone from Southcentral or Southeast who wants to be
on the Eastern RAC. That might be something that would

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1 have to be teased out a little bit, but I don't see this
2 as insurmountable. It's just a matter of building a
3 little more flexibility into the initial interview
4 process. Thank you.

5

6 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Nissa has one comment
7 before you, Charlie. Go ahead.

8

9 MS. PILCHER: Okay, this is Nissa for the
10 record. I just did want to mention so what Eva was
11 getting at is that Western Interior Council can't pull
12 from people that live in Fairbanks. They can't pull the
13 way that -- how you guys say that you live. And that's
14 how some people in Western Interior live to where they
15 have ties, both to this hub and also to the region. But
16 since their primary residence is Fairbanks, it
17 disqualifies them for membership on the Western Interior
18 Council.

19

20 MR. BASSICH: Could I follow up?

21

22 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh. Andy, go ahead.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. That's
25 exactly the kind of change that I'm suggesting that gets
26 made. I -- that's exactly the reason why we're having
27 this discussion and the feedback that they're trying to
28 get. And things have changed in the last 25 years as far
29 as how people make their living and how they're tied to
30 their local communities. And so, the program has to adapt
31 and modify if they want to have continued representation
32 on that particular point. That's exactly the point we're
33 making. So, building in very rigid guidelines for
34 residency needs to be looked at and modified and maybe
35 loosened some as a recommendation. Thank you.

36

37 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: And that's a double-
38 edged sword though. You could start to have a whole
39 bunch of applicants from Fairbanks that would preclude
40 real subsistence users that are handy dandy writers on
41 their application. So, Eva.

42

43 MS. BURK: Thank you, but wouldn't they
44 have a permit if they were real subsistence users in
45 that area that they were, you know what I mean? Like,
46 that could be.....

47

48 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Not necessarily. They
49 have to have customary and traditional use. If their
50 primary household, their household goods and all of

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1 their qualifications in residency in the federal
2 regulations, if all of that's in Fairbanks, they don't
3 have customary in traditional in another place. You
4 can't just start jumping your C&Ts all over the place.
5 So that's -- you get it? That's why this -- you have to
6 be a resident of the region. And for us, the Western
7 Interior, what's our biggest community? Aniak? that's
8 not that big of a place. And so, whereas you get into
9 like Fairbanks or South Eastern Interior, Southcentral,
10 Southeast, they got huge cities full of commercial
11 users. They have no problem meeting their 30/70. We have
12 a real hard time with that. We've had applicants get in.
13 You know, they got their guide business going on there.
14 That's too much trouble. I don't want to do it. You
15 know, they just give up.

16
17 So, another aspect of what Safari Club
18 will seem to have heartburn about was there's no vetting
19 process or no affirmation process like the Advisory
20 Committees. Advisory Committees are voted on to the
21 Advisory Committee by the communities when you have
22 Advisory Committee meeting, I'm on the West -- I'm on
23 the Koyukuk River Advisory Committee. How many people
24 are on advisory committees in this room sitting on these
25 Councils? Don, are you on the advisory? Hold up your
26 hand. So almost all of this Council sitting at this
27 table are on the ACs. We've been voted onto the ACs, and
28 the ACs is an 805 of ANILCA are advisory to the Regional
29 Advisory Councils. Read it. And so, every club seems to
30 think that we're just like skating in there on under the
31 wire. It's like -- we're voted in members of ACs. And
32 so, I want that on the record to recognize that Advisory
33 Councils under 805 are part of the Regional Council
34 process, and a lot of the membership of the advisory --
35 of the Regional Councils are already AC members. We wear
36 3 or 4 different hats, so resource -- Subsistence
37 Resource Commissions, etc., etc. So that kind of speaks
38 to that complaint. That was a complaint about the region,
39 about the qualifications for the Regional Councils. The
40 Regional Councils have deference to the Federal
41 Subsistence Board because they have a -- you know, when
42 you go all the way back to ANILCA Title VIII, Section
43 8015 requires a proper regulation for conserving fish
44 and wildlife on the public federal lands, and continue
45 to -- for the continuance of a subsistence way of life
46 for rural residents, requires that administrative
47 structure be established for the purpose of enabling
48 rural residents who have a personal knowledge of local
49 conditions and requirements, to have a meaningful role
50 in management of fish and wildlife, and of subsistence

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1 uses on the federal public lands. So, the deference comes
2 because of our qualifications primarily are -- that we
3 have that we live on the land. We have personal knowledge
4 and the deference to the Councils is because we have
5 that knowledge. And as a body, we're making
6 recommendations on that customary and traditional
7 knowledge. That's important for the DOI office to
8 understand. That there are qualifications, and it has
9 to do with recommendations on to the ACs and also under
10 the interviews. And also, you have to have an
11 endorsement, you have to put up two people. So, if you're
12 on EIRAC, Charlie's going to get a call and he's going
13 to get people on his Regional Council, is going to ask
14 him a whole list of questions, all of those questions
15 to -- so your OSM is actually is actually verifying the
16 applicant with other -- you have to have references. So,
17 I don't think that the system is broken. I think it's
18 misunderstood by Safari Club. I think the Regional
19 Council process, and we're trying to get as much
20 membership as we can. But it's misunderstood and it has
21 quite a bit more interaction with references and so
22 forth.

23
24 So, the deferences to the Council is an
25 important issue. And that was that was in the past of
26 public process or the Federal Subsistence program
27 review, the deference to the Councils that was part of
28 that whole process. That's -- the Councils -- when the
29 Board, when the Federal Subsistence Board actually
30 violates that -- I've not spoke up, but I do feel that
31 they count -- that the Federal Subsistence Board has to
32 pay close attention to what that Council is actually
33 saying, and they have to think about, is it violating
34 subsistence, detriment to the resource, etc., etc. Those
35 Councils have a lot of a lot of authority, and it's
36 actually said as authority in 805. So, you had a comment
37 there. I was on a thought process. I had to get it out.

38
39 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, I was just going to
40 say and it's something that Sue said to, you know, as
41 individuals, I think especially back in the day when we
42 did have commercial fishing on the Yukon. I mean, you
43 know, most everybody, you know, did subsistence and
44 commercial. So, you know, that was the makeup pretty
45 much, I think of the RACs and, you know, I mean, if you
46 count, you know, trapping and that kind of thing, I
47 mean, that's all, you know, classified as commercial
48 too, even though we don't even look at it that way. But
49 yeah, I mean, you know, individuals are we, you know,
50 group balance as individual or as the Board. I think,

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1 you know, we're making that -- I mean, I believe there's
2 a balance anyway, already.

3
4 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you. I
5 appreciate that comment, Eva.

6
7 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I was
8 thinking about back to Andy's comment, and I wasn't
9 talking about federally qualified subsistence users.
10 What I was thinking about was the residency
11 requirements. What is the definition of a residence here
12 in this use? And I was thinking, you know, it's address
13 in the region, or it could be a state or federal hunting
14 or fishing license permit in the region, or it could be
15 residency in the past ten years with a documented move
16 for education or employment or something like that.
17 Those are my options for increasing residency, like the
18 definition of residency, so that you might get more
19 applicants. And it's not perfect, but it's an idea.

20
21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Something to think
22 about, but I wouldn't want to sign on to it unless I
23 really thought about it closely. We're in discussion.
24 We're not voting on anything. We're just -- we're
25 discussion. We're not calling votes on this. We're not
26 making motions. We're just in discussion.

27
28 MS. BURK: I made a joke that Jack didn't
29 have quorum in my joke was -- it was not to be offensive
30 about making motions, but that if you had a deeper bench,
31 then there might be -- quorum is less of an issue. We
32 struggle to meet quorum on our local Fish and Game
33 Advisory Committee all the time, so.

34
35 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Right, exactly. So,
36 Don.

37
38 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don.
39 Western Interior. Really, really, actually good comments
40 here because, you know, I mean, when you're looking at
41 that commercial thing, everybody is saying, well, hey,
42 it's gotta be a guide or something like that. I like the
43 idea of saying, hey, if you got a -- if you're a
44 commercial, you know, one of the older things, a
45 commercial license for fishing, it used to be something
46 like that, if that idea would be more susceptible, not
47 so rigid in that fact, because that really keeps a lot
48 of people from not applying. Say you're a trapper and
49 you're registered. I don't know if you gotta be
50 registered, but isn't that a qualifying thing? So, what

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1 I'm saying is, I don't like to see it put up there as
2 you have to be a commercial fisherman, you have to be a
3 guide and stuff like that. So, if this conversation is
4 leading toward more lenient things. So, it's good. Thank
5 you.

6

7

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. Sue.

8

9

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. And I think it's
10 really important. I don't know how they do it, but they'd
11 have to weigh it out. I think it's been offensive to be
12 told that you have to put one or the other. You should
13 be able to say, yeah, I live a subsistence lifestyle. I
14 live with people in Mentasta, and we do all kinds of
15 things together. And but I also am -- have a commercial
16 guide license. So, I had to choose, and I did it because
17 I tried to help the Council out. We had three at one
18 time, and we only had me now. And I think, just a sport
19 fishing. Somebody that's sport fishing. I think we're
20 getting, like Jack said, too often in the weeds here.
21 It's not this high-profile commercial person. It's --
22 you're just supporting all these other individuals that
23 are out there. Sport fishing or sport hunting. Sport
24 hunting. That's really what Safari Club is. They're
25 sports hunters. And then they don't like that. They don't
26 like being called sport hunters or headhunters. They
27 hate it. But most of them, I will say there are probably
28 some. Everywhere we go, we're going to have people that
29 make bad apples out of the rest of us. But if we --
30 Jack, are you wanting us to -- okay, now we're going
31 bullet by bullet. Should we just do -- you brought a lot
32 of stuff already, and I was thinking we should probably
33 say, okay, can we all agree on this and then just keep
34 going down the line?

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, I -- you're
exactly right. I mean, the -- we try as hard as we can
to meet our membership. You know, inducting people in
meetings and trying to get them to send in an application

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1 and so forth. The main thing to get membership is if the
2 DOI would seriously consider a stipend, if there was an
3 incentive, an additional incentive to that they -- under
4 you know this as we discussed in the All-RAC meeting
5 Regional Councils aren't just advisory we have
6 deference. We actually have qualifications. We're
7 actually an integral part of the deliberation process,
8 just like a Federal Subsistence Board member as a
9 specific authority. We have an additional authority than
10 a normal FACA member. So, the deal I would think about
11 a stipend, we would get a lot more membership if it was
12 worth somebody to leave a couple days of work to go to
13 the -- it might help offset that. That would be a comment
14 that would be appropriate in this question of RAC
15 membership, meeting our quorums and so forth. Dorothy.

16
17 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, if I may. I received
18 a letter from AFN, and what they mentioned in the
19 membership part is, the RAC were created in ANILCA to
20 further the encouragement of local and regional
21 participation in the decision-making process affecting
22 the state -- affecting the taking of fish and wildlife
23 on public lands within the region for subsistence uses.
24 I mean, that's their recommendation as far as some of
25 the wording in that.

26
27 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: They're submitting
28 that as a comment? So, I think we've covered this issue
29 thoroughly and so, it can be -- go ahead, Brooke.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
32 yeah, I think this was all great discussion. I did hear
33 earlier when Sara was up on the screen, Don made a -
34 member Honea made a comment about. Also, we're thinking
35 about the membership criteria, but the process for
36 applying or reapplying, and it sounded like you thought
37 there could be something done to make that a little
38 easier. So, comment -- any comments on that would also
39 be welcome, not just on the criteria, but the actual
40 process that you guys go through that I know you're all
41 familiar with that.

42
43 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay, Sue.

44
45 MS. ENTSMINGER: I totally could hear
46 what Don was saying, how redundant it is to answer all
47 those questions whenever you get -- they call you up and
48 you've already sent it to them. Now they call you up and
49 now they talk to you and you're like, you know, you just
50 asked me the same thing three times. So, can't we

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1 simplify this? I have a favorite saying, kiss, keep it
2 simple, silly. And I mean, I heard you loud and clear,
3 Don. I think that could be simplified. You just -- they
4 just keep asking the same question.

5

6

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Don.

7

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9 MR. HONEA: Don Honea, Western Interior.
10 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, when I was doing this,
11 I mean, I was thinking about exactly, exactly what I
12 mentioned a couple of minutes ago. I mean, I don't think
13 that you have to have a guiding license to be on there.
14 That's not the qualifications. I mean, making up the
15 criteria to be on you know, and I don't know. Well,
16 Sierra did that or not, but what I'm saying is, you
17 know, it is redundant doing that, this whole process.
18 But what I'm saying is, why not make it -- and I don't
19 know if we're opening a can of worms. I might have to
20 disagree with Charlie. It's just suggestions. It's just
21 -- I mean, I hate to be saying this, this discussion,
22 and then we leave this room and nothing is done about
23 it. So, maybe we will have more conversation on this. I
24 want to make it easy as possible for somebody to serve
25 on this, whether it's in, you know, Crooked Creek or
26 Aniak or somewhere. And because, I mean, I also hear
27 Eva, I mean, I have a heck of a time getting Ruby AC up
28 because I'm this old guy, just a couple of us trying to
29 keep that alive. And I can -- and she's talking about
30 Nenana, which is a good-sized community. So, you could
31 see what I mean. But I'm just trying to, you know, take
32 some of these ideas. We could take it back to our
33 respective RACs and to our members who aren't here but
34 right now. But to make it easier to use these ideas, I
35 don't want to see them dropped. Thank you. Thank you,
36 Chair.

36

37

38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, I think we've
39 covered that subject, and I think we're pretty much in
40 agreement about the various comments. The need for
41 membership and various issues that we discussed. So, the
42 number three, Federal Subsistence Board membership,
43 there's currently 11 members. There's the Chair. In the
44 previous -- the first Board was the Chair was Mitch
45 Demientieff, and it was the five agency heads. And then
46 we had a public review starting in 2007, I went to
47 Anchorage with Pat Pourchot and with the other Regional
48 Councils. I was Secretary at that time of the Western
49 Interior Council. We talked about the need for
50 additional public members because there was five
agencies that -- many times did not -- were not fully

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1 engaged with the subsistence priority. And so, we've
2 needed to have -- go back to the statute as to that the
3 federal subsistence, rural subsistence users have a
4 meaningful role in this process. And when you have a
5 Federal Subsistence Board that's made up of five agency
6 heads and one Chair, Mitch Demientieff, he was getting
7 outvoted a lot. So that's a problem. So, we wanted to
8 have additional rural membership. So, we -- cthere's a
9 lot of discussion about that. We were at that time; we
10 were talking about three additional members. They're
11 only allowed two. So, then it was the Chair and then
12 two, two rural members. And then another review, which
13 just happened in 2024. We talked about the additional
14 three members appointed by the three -- you know, and
15 we talked about the regional appointments of those three
16 members to the Board. And then we ended up with six
17 members of the Chair, which is Tony Christianson and the
18 five rural members.

19
20 And so that -- going backwards, the
21 Safari Club's proposal is to go back to five agency
22 heads, period, with no designation of a Chair. Who's
23 going to pick this Chair? Is that going to be the State's
24 deference? They want the State to have deference in this
25 -- they're imaginary Federal Subsistence Board? This
26 does not provide meaningful role in subsistence
27 management to allow -- to regress to five agency heads
28 with no designated Chair from rural Alaska, there would
29 basically be no rural person on, and the Councils would
30 be at a distinct disadvantage with a federal board makeup
31 like that. So, we -- I feel that we've moved forward
32 over years of requests for additional meaningful role
33 to the to the rural membership that we have right now.
34 The six members, the state, the Federal Subsistence
35 Board Chair and the five rural membership is -- it
36 balances with the agencies who have staff working with
37 them and the Council -- the Federal Board members, they
38 have to review all this stuff in their head, and they
39 have to work on their own. And but they're dug in as --
40 and they have a meaningful role on the Federal Board.
41 I'm distinctly opposed to dissolving the current Federal
42 Subsistence Board and regressing back to five agency
43 heads and deference to the State of Alaska. The State
44 of Alaska has lots and lots of opportunities and in the
45 deliberation process. The state system, they -- a lot
46 of compliance because they don't have a rural
47 preference. So, deference to the to the State has no
48 place in the Federal Board process. None. Because they
49 don't -- are never going to agree with a rural priority
50 on any priority hunt. So, the Federal Subsistence Board,

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1 as is, has been a long process of trying to get to a
2 point where there's a balance between the agency
3 mandates and the meaningful role as designed in Title
4 VIII of ANILCA to come up with a -- and the States'
5 comments a lot of times will morph the Board. So, they
6 have a big effect on the Federal Subsistence Board. And
7 they're in the Interagency Staff Committee meetings.
8 They were there before the Board meeting. So, the states
9 has a lot of pull with the -- for the Federal Subsistence
10 Board process. So that's the question, is changing --
11 is discussion about the membership of the Federal
12 Subsistence Board.

13
14 Yeah. So, the -- I -- of the 2024 makeup
15 of the Board, current makeup of the Board, which is only
16 had like what, 1 or 2 meetings. It hasn't even had a
17 chance to actually drop into its working status. I feel
18 that the current Board makeup is meeting the statute,
19 and it's also meeting the needs of the subsistence
20 priority because it's an allocation system. If you go
21 before the State Board of Game, they have an allocation
22 for all Alaskans. And they also have a have a priority
23 for non-resident a participation. Why is that? Because
24 they get a lot of money from the non-resident
25 participation. So, there's an allocation. They have
26 discretion to allocate however they want to. Fortymile
27 Caribou Herd is down to 20,000 caribou. But they still
28 got non-resident hunters driving up to Steese Highway,
29 staying in this hotel and hunting right with those
30 subsistence users and everybody else up there. That's
31 the Board of the Game allocation process. The Federal
32 Subsistence Board is an allocatory [sic] process towards
33 rural subsistence priority. It can't have the State as
34 a as a deference. Deference means they actually have a
35 vote. They have an authority. That's what you do. We
36 have an authority as Council members. We have deference
37 before the Federal Subsistence Board. We have an
38 authority. You're giving the State something they never
39 were -- the Congress didn't give them. They fell out of
40 compliance when they didn't have a rural priority. So,
41 I would like comments from the -- from all the Council
42 members here and Tim. Oh, Andy. Okay. Andy is there. Go
43 ahead, Andy.

44
45 MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I
46 appreciate your analysis of the past and the present.
47 And I agree that the current status is -- should be
48 given a chance to work. I think it has been shown to
49 work. And I think if everyone in the room is in agreement
50 with status quo, then we could probably move on to the

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1 next topic.

2

3 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Well, we're going to
4 get comments. So, Charlie had his hand up there. Go
5 ahead, Charlie.

6

7 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Yeah, I agree. I agree
8 with what you're saying, Jack, and I look forward to
9 hearing from the other members.

10

11 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, go ahead, Dorothy.

12

13 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Yes, I totally
14 agree. The agency leaders who sit on the Board bring
15 valuable experiences as public servants and agency
16 experts. But as the Secretaries have previously noted,
17 they do not have the same firsthand experience as the
18 rural Alaskans who live in a subsistence way of life.
19 And that is the purpose of the RACs is to bring that
20 subsistence firsthand knowledge to the Board. Thank you.

21

22 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, I do have a
23 question. I'm at a disadvantage since I don't have so
24 many members, but I have Tim Gervais that wants to make
25 comments. And then we're going to go back to EIRAC again
26 or -- so we're going to go back. Tim. Still there, Tim?

27

28 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
29 Tim Gervais, Western Interior. I agree with Jack's
30 analysis on the make-up of the current Board is good for
31 the subsistence users, they (distortion). I'm glad we
32 got away from that agency head model that was originally
33 in place with the subsistence program. And I'd like to
34 keep things as they are.

35

36 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, do we have any
37 other comments? Don or Jenny?

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 And do we have any other comments from
42 EIRAC? Go ahead, Eva.

43

44 MS. BURK: Thank you. I got to step away
45 for a second. I want to pay attention to the comments
46 that were made about -- sorry, I just got a text, and I
47 got something going on. I totally lost my train of
48 thought. Give me one second.

49

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Any other
2 comments? Andy, I -- we got your comment. Let's see.
3 Okay, Eva, you got it.
4

5 MS. BURK: Thank you. Made a comeback.
6 The changing people within the agencies all the time.
7 The constant turnover. We don't always see the same
8 people. And so, the -- you're always going to have,
9 like, we're going nowhere. The subsistence people are
10 always going to be there. They've always been there.
11 They've seen all these different agency people come and
12 go. And so having the continuity of the program through
13 the public members is really important. That was my
14 comment.
15

16 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's an excellent
17 comment. It -- because the people on -- the public
18 members on the Federal Subsistence Board, they were
19 typically on Regional Councils to start with or they're
20 at least in the region that are involved in subsistence.
21 Whereas the agency heads, it's just like a constant
22 training new staff and rotating through, moving up from
23 Utah and dealt with BLM, dealt with oil and gas or
24 something else that's not their forte, fish and wildlife
25 management. They're at a complete disadvantage unless
26 they got real good staff. And I'm concerned about BLM
27 right now because they don't have a staff member for
28 their agency. I'm concerned about that problem. So
29 that's what we're having to deal with, with agencies.
30 That's why the meaningful role of these rural members
31 on the Federal Subsistence Board is so easy. And that's,
32 you made an excellent point about that. Any final
33 comments on this particular topic?
34

35 (No comments)
36

37 I think we've covered that one. So next
38 one up is Special Actions. Special Actions are -- I'm
39 sure that EIRAC and Western Interior occasionally had
40 to use special action request because of emergency
41 issues or data present for production finally pops up
42 where you have the data to support a Special Action
43 request before the Federal Subsistence Board. You might
44 have had the problem for two years, but the data was
45 slow in coming and it's out of sight, out of sync with
46 the Federal Board process. So, the Special Action
47 Requests are very important to this, to this whole
48 process. So that's the topic of discussion and -- is
49 people as any Council members want to have -- any
50 comments on that?

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(Pause)

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Andy. Go ahead, Andy.

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MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Other comments from Council members, Don.

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MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don Honea, Western Interior. I concur with Andy. I think that any time that we in the past have had to use Special Action, it's been approved and taken care of by, I believe OSM maybe. Thank you.

23

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Federal Subsistence Board process. Charlie.

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(No comments)

So, the Special Action Request usually you have to be supported with significant biological information. And so, if you, if the Council cannot -- does not have that data, it's hard to move forward with a Special Action Request. So that's the primary reason that there are Special Action Requests because we have

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1 a biannual cycle of fisheries and wildlife. We used to
2 do both simultaneously. So, we didn't have to use Special
3 Action Requests as often. Emergency requests or Special
4 Action Requests. So, I think we've covered that, we are
5 in consensus that the status quo is providing the
6 mechanism for the federal subsistence program and leave
7 it alone. That would be the consensus? Okay.

8
9 And number five, oh. States -- the role
10 of the State of Alaska. Alaska Department of Fish and
11 Game with the Federal Subsistence Management and the
12 federal state regulatory duplications and
13 inconsistencies. So that's number five. We'll deal with
14 that one first. The State has -- as provided by
15 statements from the public. And in this process, the
16 state is at the Federal Subsistence Board meetings that
17 have their own corner of the table that they sit on. And
18 they have -- usually have 2 or 3 staff members there,
19 and then they have their -- they're involved in the
20 deliberation process, and they're also involved in the
21 in the Interagency Staff Committees that are reviewing
22 the various proposals. So, they're making comments
23 continuously. So, but Safari Clubs wanting deference for
24 the State. And I'm distinctly opposed for that because
25 deference is actually a vote. And I don't feel that the
26 state, you know, the state, the federal liaison to the
27 State Board of Game, that used to be George Pappas, he
28 didn't have it, didn't have deference. He provided what
29 the regional Councils had done, and he provided that
30 stuff. But he didn't have deference. So what? The state
31 should not have deference. It's an allocation process.
32 They're at disparate priorities and their allocations.
33 And so, the state of Alaska should not have deference
34 before the Federal Subsistence Board. They should have
35 this -- the opportunities that they have right now. I
36 have no problem at the Interagency Staff Committee
37 meetings, I've got no problems of extensive comments at
38 the state, at the Federal Subsistence Board level. And
39 a lot of times they provide integral information that
40 the Federal Board needs. And so, I highly appreciate the
41 information that the State provides before the federal
42 process. But they don't -- should not have a vote. They
43 shouldn't have deference at the at the table. So that
44 would be my comment. And we'll go around the room and
45 talk about this further. Have any further comments?

46
47 MS. SHOCKLEY: I just agree that the
48 State should not have any role in subsistence
49 management. I mean, they have consistently voted against
50 it. So yeah, no role.

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MS. MCDAVID: And that was Dorothy Shockley for the record.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, Dorothy and I got Tim Gervais, just popped up here. Go ahead, Tim. Tim.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Appreciate those comments, Tim. Any final comments? Okay, Sue.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I agree, they still have to have a presence. And I can agree with you that yeah, they don't need to vote.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes. The state of Alaska is very important to the Federal Subsistence Board process in the advisory aspect and the biological parameter aspect. That's super important to the Federal Subsistence Board process. Charlie.

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CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I agree with you and Sue and Andy. All three of you. I think that they're important, but no difference -- deference.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, any other comments from Council members? Dorothy.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Just one more. The Alaska State Board of Fisheries and Board of Game do not include a voting federal representative. So why should we have a state voting rep?

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's exactly right. So, I think we've covered that. So that's all on the record and other regulatory duplications. They basically

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1 didn't -- Safari Club didn't like that there were, you
2 know there's a regulation book here. And it's basically,
3 sometimes it's just redundant of what the state
4 regulation is. But the issue is if you live in an area
5 like I do, I have a federal priority use to use firearm
6 and snowmobile which is not in state regulation. I hunt
7 with the state caribou tag. But if I didn't have an open
8 season for caribou, which is redundant to the state
9 regulation, then I would -- I could not have a hunt.
10 That's why you have redundancy or -- of the state and
11 federal books. The state and federal regulations may say
12 exactly the same thing but has to do with methods and
13 means. And unless you have a hunt, then you cannot
14 participate. So that's why it's that way. And so yeah,
15 it's a pain in the butt to have two different books. But
16 it also allows a subsistence user to look at what the
17 state -- don't have to go to the state book. It's in the
18 federal book. So, it's already there. It also helps the
19 federal subsistence user find out if they have an open
20 season for the species that they have. And so OSM can
21 correct me if I'm wrong, but that's the primary reason
22 why we have redundancies in the federal regulations was
23 with current state regulations also. There might be
24 disparities specific to subsistence users. Okay. Brent.

25
26 DR. VICKERS: Brent Vickers, OSM. Yes.
27 I'm just confirming that we -- they are, because they're
28 in the Federal Register. That's why you see them. If --
29 I believe if you -- what they would -- in the past, what
30 I have seen, read in the past is requests to have them,
31 these duplications removed from the Federal Register,
32 which would remove that regulation.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So as far as redundant
35 regulations, that's the reason it's there. Okay, we got
36 another comment. Gerald.

37
38 MR. ALEXANDER: Hi, my name is Gerald
39 Alexander, Fort Yukon. We have that same situation with
40 our fall moose hunt. You know, we go by boat and you
41 could travel, what, maybe 20 miles, and then you gotta
42 put your gun down because you're in state land. You go
43 around the corner, and you can pick it up again, you
44 know. So, you get tired of this. I mean, we're -- who's
45 going to want to -- I mean, you're paying \$8 a gallon,
46 \$15 for a quarter oil. Who's going to pass a moose, you
47 know, in state land? I mean, I wouldn't -- I don't care,
48 you know, I'm going to cut it up and take it home, you
49 know what I'm saying? I mean, you know, that's, I --
50 that's outrageous.

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2 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah. I can feel for
3 you. We're didn't to get a moose this year after 30
4 something years. I didn't get a moose, when floods put
5 the moose way up in the mountains, and the moose
6 population is only about a third of what it was ten
7 years ago. So, well, it's -- you can't pack a moose
8 (indiscernible). The (indiscernible) mountains, they're
9 above tree line or 3000ft off the valley. Nearly 3000ft.
10 So that, you know, that's something that needed to be
11 addressed, is this duplication of regulations. Sue.
12

13 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Well, I was on the
14 Board of Game when there was one book and -- but there
15 was no Federal Subsistence Board. So, there were the --
16 all that stuff was in one book and then there was a
17 different season for the subsistence. Of course, you
18 know how it's transpired since. But when it was like
19 that, I will say it was a lot easier even for the Board
20 to make regulations, because it was all under one system.
21 And -- but now when I look at these two books, this
22 one's way thicker. And the idea of putting them together
23 and being able to translate what we can do on federal
24 land and what we can do on state land. I think it's too
25 difficult to do that right now, because that was asked
26 of her to think about that one handy dandy. I kind of
27 don't see it as something that was going to make it
28 simple for the user.
29

30 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: If the state would
31 print the priority regulations into the into the state
32 regulation book like you did when it was under the Board
33 of Game was managing through 1988. If they wanted to be
34 accommodating to the public, they could -- then the
35 public would see two different seasons. This is a federal
36 priority on the federal lands, and this is the state
37 regulations. You could color code it then. Then you could
38 just issue one book. You just have one state book and
39 have all the federal regs and all state regs, all in one
40 book, and then everybody would know what the seasons
41 are. Because sometimes I'm running in a closed tight
42 period under state regulations, but it's under -- I'm
43 hunting under federal subsistence season. And people are
44 like calling the trooper the troopers like, yeah, they
45 have an open season. So, the troopers -- but sometimes
46 you get a new, a rookie trooper, they don't know what's
47 going on. So, it actually behooves the state of Alaska
48 to have state and federal regulations printed in the
49 same book. Then you'd only have one book, and the feds
50 could pay for the for that extra few pages and those few

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1 little, those few federal subsistence priorities. That's
2 the way you would go to one book. But we're never going
3 to go away because we are -- the state, the legislature
4 will not allow an amendment to the state constitution
5 for rural preference, period. So, we're always going to
6 have two books. That's the way it's going to be until
7 something changes. That's why we're here for 35 years
8 now, 33.

9

10 MS. ENTSMINGER: I was just wondering,
11 are you promoting to have one book?

12

13 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: No, you're just.....

14

15 (Simultaneous speech)

16

17 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh, okay.

18

19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF:talking about
20 back in the day.

21

22 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: No, I'm not. I'm just
23 like. So the question is, why do we have redundancies?
24 That's the question on the Board. The reason is we have
25 disparate seasons and we have different, also have
26 different methods and means. So, we have to have both
27 seasons in the federal book so that we know if I'm using
28 a different methods and means I still have the hunt.
29 That's what the issue is. So, I wanted to have that all
30 in the record. So, any further comments about the two-
31 book thing? Redundancies? Eva.

32

33 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I'm
34 going to have to leave soon. I'm having a family
35 emergency. But I've actually needed to back up to the
36 number five. The role of State of Alaska and Fish and
37 Game in Federal Subsistence Management. The thing about
38 the Special Action Request and the thing about co-
39 management is who's collecting the data and who has all
40 of that data and who shares that data. So, Fish and Game
41 has an incredible amount of data that if we wanted to
42 do federal co-management on Yukon River, for example,
43 we would have to be working very closely with State of
44 Alaska because they're the ones that have these long-
45 term data sets and continue to collect the data. And so,
46 I think -- and also here there was other things that
47 came up in these wildlife proposals where data wasn't
48 provided to us from Fish and Game that we really needed
49 here to make our decisions. So that is something that I
50 think needs to be noted. In saying that, I also wanted

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1 to say that there's a lot of people in this room and
2 who've been asking for different ways to manage the Yukon
3 River for a long time. And so maybe some of us don't
4 always agree with the management decisions. And that's
5 why it's really important to have -- to be able to act
6 on the federal level, to be able to submit a Special
7 Action Request. And this was so important recently on
8 the Yukon River, because the Fish and Game Commissioner
9 in the state of Alaska really believe and believed, and
10 I don't know if they still believe, I hope not, that
11 there was going to be 1.8 million summer chum coming
12 back to the Yukon, and that there could be a commercial
13 opening up for regulation. So that's the importance of
14 the Special Action Request is because it's going to make
15 sure that there's an opportunity for subsistence users
16 before we're talking this other commercial opportunity.
17 And then also within our subsistence users group
18 talking, if you compare the way that the Kuskokwim is
19 being managed versus the way that the Yukon is being
20 managed, the Kuskokwim is, there's a range of escapement
21 lower and higher, and the Kuskokwim people and working
22 group for the past ten years have only fished if they're
23 meeting the high end of their escapement goal. Us on the
24 Yukon, that's not the case. We're barely above
25 escapement goals and asking to fish. We haven't ever hit
26 the high end of escapement goal. We should actually do
27 a retrospective analysis and look at that. So those are
28 two big differences. And the way that the Kuskokwim
29 management came about was through that federal
30 management and the nation-to-nation relationship so,
31 between the tribal sovereign nations and the U.S.
32 federal government. And that's why all of this is in
33 place, because people knew that the day would come when
34 the resources in Alaska would be at such a critical
35 state that hard decisions were going to have to be made.
36 And that is why we exist, and that's why we're all here
37 today. And so, I think we do a decent job of trying to
38 match regs and as somebody who creates documents all the
39 time, I could put these together myself. Like, this is
40 not that big of a lift, like, get it done. That's my
41 advice. Put the map there, say state regs, fed regs.
42 Here's the main difference. Point it out. Make it easy.
43 Everybody's happy. And we're not here to fight the State.
44 But we cannot rebuild rivers. And we cannot have
45 sustainable wildlife if we're not working together. And
46 we're acknowledging what the people of the land are
47 saying and have been saying for quite some time. So, I'm
48 just going to give that little speech and then I'm going
49 to hit the road because I have kids to take care of.
50 Thank you.

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3 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so much,
4 Eva. So, the data sharing aspect needs -- Eva, I'm making
5 a statement. That the data sharing problem is as revolves
6 around the memorandum of understanding with the state
7 that expired several years ago. And so, they need -- if
8 the DOI needs to do anything with the state, they need
9 to get that memorandum of understanding for data sharing
10 squared away sooner than later. That is -- if they want
11 to talk about the state, that's a problem, a real big
12 problem. They have access to a lot of federal data,
13 survey data and stuff. We need data. We need the
14 memorandum of understanding. That's what we need with
15 the state of Alaska. I don't know why that's failing.
16 Since when was that, Lisa? 2014. It's been out of
17 compliance for a long time now. So that's 11 years. So,
18 we need to that -- the DOI needs to work on that issue.
19 So, I think we've covered those subjects pretty well.
20 Thanks so much Eva for your participation. Probably --
21 okay. Okay. So, any other -- Where are we at here,
22 Brooke? Oh. Dorothy.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. On number six. You
know, if they're tired of the federal state regulation,
duplication and inconsistencies they can always go to
tribal stewardship and we'll fix that. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So -- well, if you can
fix the problem, that'd be great. And so, Tim or Andy,
any final comments on those two issues? State's role in
subsistence management and the redundancy of federal
regulation books.

MR. GERVIAS: Mr. Chair, this is Tim
Gervais, Western Interior.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: On the duplications, I
think it's going to take a little bit more thought to
do it if you want to combine it in one book, because the
regulations aren't 100 duplicates, there's a lot of
hunts and key regs that are -- that don't match up. So,
yeah, I think your suggestion is useful on different
color coded or something like that. I think it's a good
goal to work towards one book. But their regulations are
-- have a lot of inconsistencies to them. And so, you'd
have to just be looking at designing a handy dandy that
definitely had a obvious difference between what's a
federal regulation, what's a state regulation and other

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1 than that, I think the conversations been pretty good.
2 And I think there's enough on record that's meeting the
3 needs of the subsistence users.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim. Oh,
6 go ahead Brooke.

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Just one final
9 comment on that too, about the federal reg books. They
10 also include the customary and traditional use
11 determinations for the different hunts. And that's
12 pretty important information for the federal users to
13 know where they're eligible. Thank you.

14

15 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's an excellent
16 point. For the federal assistance regulation books, they
17 have reasons why they're set up the way they are. They
18 help the subsistence users determine their eligibility
19 and their seasons and customary and traditional use. So
20 as is, unless the State's willing to wade into this
21 Bible of a regulation book, then let's just leave it the
22 way it is. If it's not broke, let's not fix it. So that
23 would be my final comment on that. And so where are we
24 at now? One more.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
27 we're moving on. The next one is about not -- the
28 rural/non-rural determination process.

29

30 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, this is a little
31 more -- and the main thing that I haven't liked about
32 this rural/non-rural determination is that the Councils
33 do not have deference in this, on this process. We have
34 deference on subpart C and something for regular fish
35 and wildlife management. We don't have a deference on
36 this, but these Councils under 805, if you read 805,
37 they can address, have authority over any issue that
38 affects subsistence. So really the Council should have
39 deference before the Federal Subsistence Board for --
40 in this rural determination process. So, I do feel that
41 that's -- that should have been done. But that didn't
42 happen. But that's, if they want to talk about that
43 issue. That's something that needs to happen. Because
44 the Councils have a lot to say about how rural
45 determination processes are going to affect the
46 subsistence user's, pro or opposed. So, the -- what's
47 the whole process that would be -- there would be -- a
48 community would not be nominated to be excluded as rural or
49 be added as rural? And that would be -- Brent. I was going
50 to go for Liz. But go -- you want to talk about that, Brent?

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DR. VICKERS: Brent Vickers, OSM. Yeah.

3 I can tell you a lot about the rural/non-rural
4 determination policies and it's very -- I'm sorry. It
5 means a lot into the particularly the Eastern Interior
6 region, I think, because one of the things obviously is
7 for changes, proposals, like anything proposal would
8 have to be put in for a community to change its status.
9 So a status that is currently being recognized as non-
10 rural such as the Fairbanks, North Star Borough area or
11 rural to change the status. So, these -- the policy, the
12 guidelines for it up till 2017 were based very much on
13 quantitative metrics. So, population size was
14 essentially the biggest one. Communities over 7500 were
15 essentially all designated non-rural. And then there's
16 other things that wade into aggregating communities. And
17 so how many of the residents for like -- I'm sorry, I
18 don't know, all the communities around Fairbanks that
19 are aggregated into it, but how many people are --
20 actually work in Fairbanks that live in this community?
21 And what is the school board? So how many schools are
22 part of this board and things like that. And so that's
23 how they aggregated communities into Fairbanks or non-
24 rural areas to say that, okay, you're also non-rural.
25 Well, after 2017, they changed the guidelines to make
26 it much more of -- holistic and to get much more
27 information on the community's subsistence way of life,
28 harvesting basically anything that they, you could. In
29 2021 Moose Pass, for example, was able to disaggregate
30 from Seward through this process by showing that they
31 had a very different way of life than people in Seward
32 that they really were dependent on subsistence that, you
33 know it was very meaningful to their community. And then
34 just this past year, Ketchikan was -- changed its
35 designation to rural by essentially demonstrating that
36 food sovereignty, and subsistence, and having a
37 traditional way of life was very important to many of
38 it's residents.

39

40

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So there the question
41 before the Councils is, is that process working
42 adequately for the Federal Subsistence Program and...?

43

44

DR. VICKERS: I just wanted -- I should
45 have added -- sorry, Jack to cut you off, but you're
46 absolutely right. Councils do not have deference. They
47 make recommendations that are heard much more than they
48 were prior to 2017. But just in this last situation, the
49 Council did vote to oppose changing Ketchikan status to
50 rural, and the Board voted -- still did not -- they

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1 don't have deference. So, the Board did not align with
2 that vote.

3
4 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: But personally, in
5 this whole rural determination process, I feel that the
6 Councils, the affected Councils should have a more
7 weighted say in how these communities -- the reason that
8 the -- that Southeast opposed the proposal for
9 Ketchikan, because that gave them the use all the way
10 up through the whole Southeastern section. Far away from
11 where Ketchikan is. Because that gives them the whole
12 region of use and that's, that was a -- that's why the
13 Southeast, if you read the -- listened to the Southeast
14 Council, they were pretty concerned about that. And so,
15 I empathize with that. And I feel that this is an
16 opportunity for at least the Western Interior Council
17 to comment that the Regional Council should have
18 deference because of 805 of ANILCA in the red bible
19 here, it says that the Councils have authority on any
20 issue that affects subsistence. And so that's -- we have
21 authority to talk about the effects, the major effects
22 of causing a basically a fairly urban community have all
23 that subsistence access to resources that are relatively
24 limited. And the Board should have to at least think
25 about more seriously what the Councils are saying.
26 That's what I feel our comment should refer to is that
27 the need is for deference, or more serious consideration
28 of the of the Councils. Because the Council spent you
29 know, I've not done one of those because we don't have
30 a big city in our region. But that Southeast spent a lot
31 of time on that one and thought about a lot of different
32 pitfalls that could happen with that proposal. So, any
33 other comments from the Council on that particular
34 issue? We do need to build a record of -- in our
35 discussions. Charlie.

36
37 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I agree with you very
38 much on what you said, as we had partnership with those
39 Southeast people and some of the -- one of the votes
40 that came from the Interior really pissed them off. It
41 made them really mad. So, we really got to be careful.
42 Thank you. I support what you said, Jack.

43
44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Other Council
45 members, Andy or Tim?

46
47 MR. BAISSCH: Nothing to add. I support
48 the statements.

49
50 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Okay, Dorothy.

1
2 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
3 Shockley. In 2015, the Secretaries revised the
4 regulations governing the rural determination process
5 and removed specific rural determination guidelines and
6 criteria, including requirements regarding population
7 data. And then the Board adopted in 2017 to clarify --
8 to provide clarity and transparency while allowing the
9 Board to be flexible in making determinations that
10 account for the definition or allowing the Board to be
11 more flexible and determining you know, who and what or
12 if people come from rural Alaska, I guess. So, and I
13 just wanted to point out, too, that the state, you know,
14 has so many times ruled against, you know, rural
15 definition for communities. And yeah, I just would not
16 go with their recommendations as far as the state goes.
17 Thank you.

18
19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy Bassich.

22
23 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead, Andy.

24
25 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I, you
26 know, for a long time at our Council, I've been bringing
27 up the issue of declining resources for local harvesters
28 as a top priority. And I -- as fish and wildlife
29 resources begin to decline more and more, I think what
30 we're going to end up seeing from my perspective is more
31 and more of an erosion of priority of a resource to a
32 local area. And I think into the -- well into the future
33 we're going to we're just going to come up against that
34 more and more. And so, I -- my personal feeling is, I
35 know when it comes to the C&T, you can't discriminate.
36 As far as if someone can show C&T, I'm fine with that.
37 But I am -- I was very concerned when they started
38 changing the definitions of rural based on population
39 changes and, and things like that. So, I just want to
40 point out that as a law, it's one of those things that
41 kind of sneaks up on you over time, and you don't realize
42 the impacts until the impacts are right in your face.
43 And so, I just wanted to bring that attention to these
44 two RACs that keeping that relatively tight is probably
45 more important than ever right now due to the long-term
46 decline in harvestable resources for subsistence people,
47 especially in a more, even more rural areas. The further
48 out you go, the less opportunity you have. What I'm
49 seeing more and more, and what I'm hearing at these
50 meetings more and more, is how people who used to live

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1 a very subsistence lifestyle, tied to the local
2 resources, building their life around those resources
3 are now having to enter into the cash economy and relying
4 on those food sources. And so, with that thought and
5 with that reasoning, I think it's really important to
6 keep it pretty tight. I don't want to see it liberalized.
7 Thank you.

8
9 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks for those
10 comments, Andy. They're integral to our discussion. You
11 know you're talking about available alternatives. That's
12 an 804 of Title VIII. You know, number one is customary
13 and direct dependence upon the populations as the
14 mainstay of livelihood, local residency and three, the
15 availability of alternative resources. So, if a
16 community -- distant community is determined rural, they
17 can travel all the way over to where you live and compete
18 with you. This should -- this 804 should actually be
19 enacted as -- it's referred to as Tier II. You have Tier
20 II. That's where Tier II comes from. It's from this.
21 That's where the Sue and the State Board of Game actually
22 came up with Tier II. You'd have a Tier II priority if
23 you live closest to a very limited resource. I've always
24 said that, I thought I should say that at this joint
25 meeting with EIRAC also, because currently OSM is what
26 a draw permit for 804. I don't think that suffices to
27 meet the ANILCA statute. So, I feel that this rural
28 determination should take into consideration the 804
29 aspects that they're going to invoke against the rest
30 of the region. So, I think that that's something to
31 discuss if they're going to discuss this issue in the
32 DOI. So, Brooke.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Just one final point
35 on the rural/non-rural determination policy. Since our
36 regions don't really haven't dealt with them. Is that
37 it comes -- the call for proposals comes up every other
38 fish regulatory cycle. So just for your awareness and -
39 - oh, including this coming cycle? Okay, good to know.

40
41 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. So, Tim is on
42 the phone. Go ahead, Tim.

43
44 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim
45 Gervais, Western Interior. Yeah, this is a really
46 intense topic, defines -- it's in the definition of the
47 whole subsistence program, whether it's your rural
48 resident or not. But I just want to put in the record
49 that there's a lot of demographics that change in the
50 state, like maybe 20 years ago, nobody would expect

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1 Bethel to grow to the size it has. What if they found
2 another gold strike, you know, over by Pogo and then you
3 have 12,000 people living in Delta Junction. I mean,
4 there's just a myriad of things that can change and it's
5 never going to be an easy decision. Both sides have a
6 point and these are -- I think that these Councils should
7 be really slow to move, deliberate on their decisions
8 because the decisions are so critical and it's really
9 hard to foresee all the potential problems with changing
10 the rural determination, but I hope that whatever
11 transpires, there should be a lot of input from the
12 local Councils because they would have a better handle
13 on the variety of issues than people from other parts
14 of the state.

15
16 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim, for
17 those comments. Those are important aspects to
18 incorporate it into the record. Any final discussion on
19 this rural determination, the issue by the joint
20 Councils?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Hearing none. So, how are we going to
25 proceed? Should we have a joint letter promulgated by
26 our staff, Brooke and Nissa and then when we meet quorum
27 on WIRAC, we can vote to make motion to adopt. Would the
28 Eastern Council be amenable to having a joint letter to
29 the program, or should we have different -- both or with
30 different letters saying the same thing? Or how would
31 you like to do that? Go ahead, Charlie.

32
33 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I think we hear
34 constantly about unity, and I think that we'll be
35 stronger together as one. So, I'm all for unity, if you
36 guys agree. Thank you. Yep, we agree.

37
38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I'm affirmative for
39 that. Tim and Andy.

40
41 MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, this is Tim
42 Gervais, Western Interior. Yeah, I agree with
43 (distortion).

44
45 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So joint letter. Go
46 ahead, Andy.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Andy Bassich, Eastern
49 RAC. I'm in the affirmative on that, too.

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead,
2 Brooke.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
5 know it's been a long day, and we're going a little
6 late, but there were a couple of other topics that you
7 guys might want to consider commenting on that you have
8 raised in the past that you kind of asked us to flag for
9 you and some of those came up earlier today. I know some
10 of the fisheries discussions. Those were brought up by
11 Andy and Tim. But on the slide here, I just put a couple
12 bullets of -- because the Secretaries are also asking
13 for comments on any other topics related to federal
14 subsistence that you may like to comment on. So, it's
15 up to you how you would like to proceed, but I just
16 wanted to make sure those didn't get left off if you
17 wanted to include anything. Thank you.

18
19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Andy.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I have a -- Andy
22 Bassich, Eastern RAC. I have a lot on my mind about a
23 lot of these topics, but the overall one that I would
24 like to make sure gets across is that the Federal Program
25 is, in my view, the lifeblood and the only thing keeping
26 rural subsistence lifestyles alive in Alaska right now.
27 And I am 100% supportive of it. And I feel like if we
28 didn't have it, life would be even more tough than it
29 is right now. So, I think that, as a baseline needs to
30 be expressed in some manner. Thank you.

31
32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Andy. That's
33 -- those are important issues. That's a -- it is -- the
34 Federal Subsistence Program is extremely important for
35 specific areas that are associated with federal public
36 lands. And so, I appreciated the wisdom that I read in
37 Title VIII. It's well written, it's concise and it gave
38 a priority to rural residents who need those resources.
39 And so that's what this Council's job is to accommodate,
40 the public forum for discussion on these issues. So, how
41 -- we're at 5:15, Brooke.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A
44 suggestion because of time is you have for a couple of
45 these topics already elevated letters to the
46 Secretaries' Office on things like fisheries
47 correspondence and compensation. You could, to save
48 time, just reference those previous letters if you
49 wanted to include those comments as part of this review
50 as well. Thanks.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes. I think the compensation letter should be transmitted. What's the other one?

MS. MCDAVID: Fish -- fisheries issues and then the third one was about correspondence between the Councils, the Board and the Secretaries, and maybe some inefficiencies in that process.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes. We want to reiterate that since we have a new administration. And one issue that I failed to address when we're talking about the makeup of the Federal Subsistence Board, they added -- they have all these rural board members, but their coordinator is Orville Lind. He's only one person for six people. Whereas the agencies, they have staff for each one of them. So, I'm concerned about that issue, that Orville is being overworked. Plus, he has all the tribes to contact. So, I feel that that should be part of that Federal Subsistence Board make up process is providing Orville with additional help or staff that that's what my opinion was. Oh, you got your hand up, Andy?

MR. BASSICH: Yes. Mr. Chair Andy Bassich, Eastern RAC. I'm wondering if we need a motion to draft the correspondence that Brooke just spoke of.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We're sort of -- well, EIRAC got quorum. We don't have quorum. And so over here at WIRAC. So EIRAC can make a motion to adopt promulgation of the letter and then we will be co-signing to that. But we can't make a motion over here.

MR. BASSICH: Can I -- I'd like to make the motion then, Mr. Chair. The motion would be that the Coordinator's extract discussion throughout the joint meeting to address the topics under 8 of other topics. And circulate that letter to the appropriate entities. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, motion on the floor. Did you want to comment during deliberation of the motion, or are you second?

MR. BASSICH: Well, I think we need a second. Yeah, we need a second.

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I got Dorothy with her
2 hand up, and I'm trying to find out if she's a second
3 or if she's got comments that she would be able to do
4 during deliberation.

5
6 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, I suppose -- I mean,
7 I could -- I will second it, but I have comments on the
8 topics. But I also, I have a work meeting that I have
9 to go to at 5:30 or call in to, so I'm going to have to
10 leave here shortly.

11
12 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, we have a motion
13 and a second and court -- go ahead. That's why we're in
14 deliberation.

15
16 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Didn't we at one
17 point make comments in regard to the annual report
18 process? And we wrote a letter. I would like to include
19 that as well. I think these are great topics and I wish
20 we had time to go over them more, but yeah, I would like
21 to include the annual report process because we had
22 issues with that a few years back.

23
24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Charlie.

25
26 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I think Dorothy's
27 referring to the fact that when we send in a letter to
28 the Board, it doesn't go past them sometime where it's
29 supposed to go. So, we want to make sure that happens
30 and put some pressure on that. Thank you.

31
32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes, we're fully in
33 agreement with that. We send letters, we get no response.
34 We -- oh, you can talk directly to the agency, they
35 don't talk back. The Board wanted us to talk to the
36 agency, and they don't send us a response. So that's a
37 problem. And those agency heads on the Federal Board
38 need to know they got a problem with their response to
39 the Councils. So that's an issue. So, I'm fully agreeable
40 to all of this correspondence resubmitted because we do
41 have a different administration. So, thank you, Dorothy,
42 for those comments. And, Andy, you're on the phone.

43
44 MR BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 Andy Bassich, Eastern RAC. I just wanted to, I'm not
46 sure what the process will be, but I'd just like to show
47 my support for the motion. And if they're Coordinators,
48 need any kind of a committee or a few people to work
49 with them on drafting some of the topics or language, I'm
50 happy to help for the Eastern Interior RAC. Thank you.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: And we have further discussion. Any other Council members discussing on the motion on the table?

UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Question's called. Those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Aye. No, we're not voting. EIRACs voting. We can't -- I'm just chairing the EIRACs side is what I'm doing.

MS. MCDAVID: We got a plus one on that one.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, EIRAC adopted. And when we get quorum tomorrow, we'll make the same motion and we'll work with, Nissa and Brooke will work together to -- for the joint letter. Nissa.

MS. MCDAVID: I will do my best to explain to the missing members what this letter will encompass.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Right. So, go ahead.

MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. Just one -- and we can circulate a draft to any Council members that are interested for input and review before the Chair's finalize it.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So -- go ahead, Charlie.

CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: Dorothy, thank you for being here today. Yep. Thank you. Have a good evening.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah. Thanks so much, Dorothy. Appreciate all your comments. Good to see you too. Oh, we'll be around tomorrow. We'll be in a different room around here somewhere, so. Okay. I think we've covered our -- pretty much most of our agenda. There's some -- a couple things we can probably do. Oh, BLM is here. Okay. All right. Oh, this one. Okay. Go ahead, BLM. So, state your name for the record, please.

1 MR. SLAUGHTER: Good afternoon. I'm Kent
2 Slaughter, and I'm the Acting District Manager for the
3 Fairbanks district for Bureau of Land Management and
4 thank you for inviting me here today. I was asked to
5 provide a few agency updates on a couple of topics, and
6 so I will attempt to do that. And the first one that I
7 was asked to talk about was the revocation of Public
8 Land Orders 5150 and 5180 along the Dalton Highway
9 corridor. Those were directed under Executive Order 14
10 -- 14153 and followed up by Secretarial Order 3422 that
11 we are to consider the potential revocation -- oh.
12 Thank you. A microphone adjustment. Consider potential
13 revocation of those public land orders north of the Yukon
14 River up to the Galbraith Lake area. And they cover
15 approximately 2.1 million acres of BLM managed lands
16 within that corridor. Most of that land, just over 2
17 million acres, is top filed by the state. And so, if the
18 decision is made by the Secretary to revoke the PLOs.
19 Those top filings become valid selections, which would
20 be available for conveyance to the state under the
21 Statehood Act. It would also mean that any of the state
22 selected lands would be segregated from entry from
23 public land laws, including the mining laws of 1872.
24 They would also for the topic, really probably for
25 discussion or your interest here. They'd no longer be
26 available under ANILCA for federal rural subsistence
27 priorities. So, everything would be -- subsistence
28 activities would be subject to state hunting and fishing
29 regulations. There's approximately 72,000 acres that the
30 state has not top filed within that area, but that would
31 still remain open for federal subsistence. But the rest
32 of it would be closed.

33
34 During the development of the Central
35 Yukon Resource Management Plan Final Environmental
36 Impact Statement, there was a section, ANILCA 810
37 section evaluation for that considered revocation of
38 those public land orders within the Dalton utility
39 corridor. Earlier this year, we, the BLM, did inform
40 tribes and the Alaska Native Corporations of the effort
41 and invited consultation, and we did get some response
42 on that. We also launched a Section 106 consultation
43 process under the National Historic Preservation Act,
44 and that was working with interested parties, including
45 at least one of the Board members here and the state
46 Office of the Historic Preservation. And they have
47 developed a programmatic agreement to mitigate impacts
48 to historic properties that could occur as a result of
49 the potential revocation of the PLOs. At this time, the
50 PLOs are that -- recommendation on potential revocation

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1 is with the Office of the Secretary for Review and
2 Decision. And so, it's now at a pre-decisional phase,
3 and we do not have any other information beyond that.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: My question is their
6 top filed, they lift the PLO, they're automatically
7 selected. They're going to convey.

8

9 MR. SLAUGHTER: No, they do not
10 automatically convey. They're top files, which means
11 that at this -- so the public land order, those public
12 land orders prevented any state selections from
13 attaching. There's a difference between, so we call them
14 top filed, which means the state has selected that land.
15 But the selections -- it also prevented Native
16 Corporations from collecting the lands there. So, the
17 state top files land. Those do not attach until the PLOs
18 are lifted or the withdrawal. In the case of, say, Fort
19 Wainwright, the Army Garrison. But when selections
20 attach, they do not automatically then transfer. So, the
21 state has over selected under the Statehood Act and
22 subsequent amendments to the Statehood Act, the state
23 is allowed to have a 25% over selection of lands of the
24 remaining entitlement and right now, they have more than
25 that. So, lands do not get conveyed after selection until
26 there's an agreement with the state and the BLM that
27 those lands are available for conveyance. We've gone
28 through, done a -- survey work. Well, not the survey
29 work, but the preliminary work. And the state agrees to
30 take title to those lands. So, the state has all the
31 land statewide in four different buckets of priorities.
32 And their top priorities are priority one. And they go
33 to priority two, etc. So, some of the lands of this 2
34 million acres are in lower priorities. And if the
35 revocation -- if the public land order is revoked, the
36 state would probably not take title to all of that, but
37 I don't -- I'm not at a point to be able to say how much
38 the state would take.

39

40 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, go through the
41 normal -- the continuing process.....

42

43 (Simultaneous speech)

44

45 MR. SLAUGHTER: The continuing process.

46

47 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF:of the state
48 selection that's been going on for over 65 years.

49

50 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes.

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1
2 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: And so -- even though
3 the pillows are lifted until they select, until they
4 actually.....

5
6 MR. SLAUGHTER: Until they are
7 tentatively approved for conveyance. The state selection
8 stays on top and actually, unless the state -- either
9 the Secretary or the state, the secretary revokes a state
10 selection because of over selection, or the state lifts
11 their selection because they have too much selected.
12 Those selections stay attached.

13
14 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: But they're still --
15 until they actually pick those lands, they're like no
16 other federal public lands -- all other federal public
17 lands that we have hunts on. They're under selection.
18 There's all kinds of lands in this book that are under
19 selection. They're basically in the areas that they've
20 -- that they're, you know, thinking about, but they're
21 not actually selecting them. They haven't picked them.

22
23 MR. SLAUGHTER: My understanding is that
24 once the selections attached, that they are no longer
25 available for federal subsistence priority. So, the
26 state regulations then start applying.

27
28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So then if they give
29 -- if they only take like 50% of it, then those lands
30 would become eligible for subsistence again.

31
32 MR. SLAUGHTER: That is my understanding.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That doesn't make any
35 sense because the state's been.....

36
37 (Simultaneous speech)

38
39 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm sorry.

40
41 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF:been messing
42 around for 65 years so far.

43
44 MR. SLAUGHTER: Right.

45
46 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: But I'm talking about
47 that because that affects our community specifically.
48 We would -- we're going to sit in limbo for another 65
49 years until the state gets around to finally making their
50 -- if they have had 11.5 million acres previous to these

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1 PLO lifting. And so, they have a lot of land that they're
2 going to be under consideration. I don't feel like
3 starving to death for another 65 years until they get
4 around to giving -- allowing subsistence to occur.
5 They're not actually selected lands. They're just
6 allowed to select on them. They're no different than any
7 of the other federal lands that are under their purview.
8 So, I need a solicitor interpretation of that one and
9 not the BLMs. I feel that there -- that those lands are
10 no different. Once they're lifted, they're eligible to
11 select on them, but they're no different than --
12 Charlie's was on caribou. They're still -- you got
13 Caribou show up. You ought to be able to harvest. And
14 there's all kinds of federal BLM lands that you have --
15 that the state could select on outside of the utility
16 corridor. They're in the same process. They're in the
17 same status so I don't actually agree with your
18 solicitor's interpretation, and I've disagreed with your
19 solicitor about forestry products and a whole bunch of
20 other stuff. They're not always right. So, I'm saying
21 that on the record for -- because this is -- and that's
22 not your problem. That's the whole state of Alaska. And
23 the bottom line is the state of Alaska should get their
24 act together and take their lands and stop whining about
25 it. They got all kinds of land to select from, and
26 they've been dragging their feet for 65 years. In fact,
27 this utility corridor they had from 1959 to 1971 to take
28 that land, they knew the pipeline was going up that area
29 and they didn't take it. Then they're whining about it.
30 They need -- the state to take their land so that we
31 know where the state lands are, and the state and the
32 federal lands are then really defined. That's -- this
33 has been an ongoing process and its state overreach, the
34 BLM won't convey. I've talked to the BLM lots of times.
35 They're like, the state won't prioritize. They won't
36 take their lands. That's the problem. So, I've been well
37 involved in all this process. And I disagree that until
38 the state actually selects the land, it's the selection,
39 until they select their eligible to select until they
40 select the lands, they're not state lands. So, I we're
41 going to continue. And you got other portions of your
42 report. I'm not -- I'm done venting.

43
44 MR. SLAUGHTER: I do have a few other
45 things. Let's see. Just one update. I was asked to talk
46 about D1 lands. I don't have much on D(1) lands, but I
47 do have news on the Alaska Native Veteran Era -- Vietnam
48 Veteran -- Vietnam Era Veterans Land Allotment Program.
49 The deadline for applications currently is December 29th
50 of this year. So just two weeks away. Yesterday the

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1 Senate did pass a legislation that would extend it for
2 five years. The House had already passed that
3 legislation. So that goes to the President for signature
4 and that should extend the selection period for another
5 five years.

6
7 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Question there is,
8 since when they left the PLO in its top file, can the
9 can the feds select their allotments in their states
10 precluding them also?

11
12 MR. SLAUGHTER: I don't know. I'm sorry.
13 I'm.....

14
15 (Simultaneous speech)

16
17 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's an important
18 question.

19
20 MR. SLAUGHTER: I will.....

21
22 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: If you're going to --
23 if it's good for the goose it's good for the gander and
24 if -- are they saying that the state, you can't hunt
25 there, can the vets actually select there either? Are
26 they in limbo? So, you can get back to me on that one.
27 I'm not giving you a hard time. I'm just.....

28
29 MR. SLAUGHTER: You're asking good
30 questions.

31
32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: You're the messenger.
33 I'm not shooting you. I'm just commenting. Yep. Go ahead,
34 continue.

35
36 MR. SLAUGHTER: We're also asked to
37 provide any information on Ambler Road and very limited
38 on that. So earlier this year BLM transferred title to
39 -- at the west end of the proposed Ambler utility
40 corridor to Nenana and to the state of Alaska. So, the
41 only BLM land involved is at the east end within the PLO
42 5150 area. On October 6th, the President signed a
43 decision under Section 1106 of ANILCA that directed the
44 federal agencies to reissue the right of way to the
45 Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. BLM
46 reissued its right of way on October 21st, and then any
47 questions about activity or plans on the right of way
48 should be addressed to ADA.

49
50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's a given.
2 They're going to take that. Any questions on the BLM
3 presentation? EIRAC has portion of the utility corridor
4 in their region also, Finger Mountain to the south. So,
5 anything else from BLM?

6
7 MR. SLAUGHTER: And the one other final
8 note, it wasn't on the questions that were previously
9 asked. But earlier this fall, the House and Senate both
10 passed the Congressional Review Act resolutions to
11 rescind the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan, and
12 the bill was signed by the President on December 11th.
13 So, at this time, land management decisions for most of
14 the area covered are now being guided by the prior plans,
15 including the 1991 Utility Corridor Resource Management
16 Plan and the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management
17 Plan. And we're still waiting for a determination from
18 the department on how to move forward for lands that are
19 not covered by any existing land management plan. The
20 Congressional Review Act, there -- says that we can't
21 replace rescinded rules with substantially similar. So,
22 we -- the solicitors, are going to be working on figuring
23 out what is substantially similar or not substantially
24 similar.

25
26 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: That's called
27 throwing the baby out with the bathwater. And so that
28 was a \$6.5 million plan that we worked for 12 years on
29 that, that Central Yukon plan through the whole thing
30 out. They should have picked out what they wanted on it,
31 they didn't like and left the rest. That's what I
32 commented to my delegation, but they didn't listen. So,
33 we wasted \$6.5 million on that plan, and we can't have
34 certain -- there's some good aspects of it. We can't
35 have similarities to it. So, it's like, oh gee, the 1991
36 plan, the Utility Corridor Plan, if they top, they lift
37 the 5150. Is that plan actually valid? Are you going to
38 -- are you just toss that one out so we can't hunt there.
39 You can't manage on it either.

40
41 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'd have to look at the
42 land that's covered under the utility.....

43
44 (Simultaneous speech)

45
46 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: You ask your solicitor
47 that one. Can you manage on those lands while they're
48 in limbo status. And if you can't manage there -- if we
49 can't hunt there, you cannot manage there either. And
50 the -- according to that interpretation, the vets can't

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1 select there either. Those are very important questions
2 for your solicitor. They better have a sharp pencil. He
3 or she. So those questions are on the record.

4
5 MR. SLAUGHTER: Any further questions for
6 me?

7
8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Any questions? Oh,
9 Don. Go right ahead, Don. And Don -- recognize, Don
10 Woodruff just showed up. Go ahead, Don.

11
12 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
13 I was late because I was getting a chemo treatment. So,
14 I agree with you totally, Jack. If you can't hunt there,
15 you can't manage it. It's just basic. So, that's all my
16 statement. Thank you.

17
18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Don.
19 Appreciate that.

20
21 MR. SLAUGHTER: All right. Thank you for
22 your time.

23
24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you.

25
26 MR. SLAUGHTER: I appreciate it.

27
28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Appreciate someone
29 coming up and informing us of those important issues.
30 And so, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Management Program
31 -- Monitoring Program, Partners for Fisheries Monitoring
32 Program. And who is -- okay. I'm bad with names, so
33 state your name for -- oh, there it is, Kristen Morrow.

34
35 MS. MORROW: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
36 My name is Kristen Morrow. I'm with the Anthropology
37 Division at OSM, and I'm going to now present a brief
38 overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
39 funding process, which you guys may all be familiar with
40 from hearing it over previous cycles. But after sort of
41 reviewing the funding process, as a reminder, we're
42 going to request Council comments on the projects that
43 have been submitted for the Yukon and the Kuskokwim
44 regions for this upcoming funding cycle. This is not an
45 action item, but your comments are an important part of
46 the process. Bear with me because you have different
47 meeting books. There's page numbers for the Western
48 Interior meeting books and the Eastern Interior meeting
49 books. So, I will be dropping the page numbers for both,
50 just to try to keep everyone on the same or different

1 pages, I guess. So, the monitoring program materials for
2 the Western meeting material books start on page 197.
3 And in the Eastern Council meeting books start on page
4 333. As a reminder, the goal of this program is to fund
5 research on federal subsistence fisheries, to enhance
6 the management, and to work with rural Alaskans to
7 sustain these fisheries. Volunteers from different
8 Councils met during the fall of 2024 and created a list
9 of priority information needs for the Yukon and
10 Kuskokwim fisheries regions, and the monitoring program
11 funding process starts with Councils first identifying
12 gaps in knowledge and developing these priority
13 information needs for each region. The priority
14 information needs for the Yukon region are listed on
15 page 198 of the Western Council Meeting Book and page
16 342 for the Eastern Interior Council Meeting Book, and
17 the priority information needs for the Kuskokwim region
18 are listed on page 215 of the Western Council Meeting
19 Book. The Kuskokwim region priority information needs
20 are not listed in the Eastern Interior Meeting Book,
21 because that fishery region does not overlap with your
22 RAC region.

23
24 So, after these priority information
25 needs are developed, investigators can then submit
26 project proposals to OSM, with the goal being that
27 submitted projects would address at least one of these
28 priority information needs. For the current funding
29 cycle, the -- there were five proposals submitted for
30 the Yukon region, and these proposals are listed
31 beginning on page 199 of the Western Council meeting
32 book and page 343 of the Eastern Council meeting book.
33 For the Kuskokwim region there were eight proposals
34 submitted for funding, and they are listed on page 217
35 of the Western Council Meeting Book. Those proposals are
36 now going through the review process. The first step of
37 which is for the Technical Review Committee to assess
38 and evaluate the projects. And the Technical Review
39 Committee consists of a panel of expert scientists that
40 review the proposals based on five criteria. Those
41 criteria include strategic priority, the technical and
42 scientific merit, the ability and resources of the
43 investigators, the partnership and capacity building of
44 projects, and the cost benefit. After reviewing
45 projects, the Technical Review Committee writes
46 justifications that summarize what they thought of these
47 projects, and these justifications can be found at the
48 end of each project's executive summary in your Council
49 meeting books. After this process, we then collect
50 comments from the Councils, which is what we're doing

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1 at this meeting now. Your comments and the Technical
2 Review Committee justifications are combined and then
3 presented to the Interagency Staff Committee. The
4 members of this committee are Federal Subsistence Board
5 staff, and they also provide comments on the projects.
6 After that step in the process, the Federal Subsistence
7 Board meets, that this will occur in early next year in
8 February, and they will be presented information from
9 the Technical Review Committee, from all of the Councils
10 and from the ISC. And then we'll add their recommendation
11 on which projects to fund.
12

13 The final selection of projects will be
14 determined by the OSM director, based on all of the
15 provided input and based on how much money is available.
16 OSM funds as many projects as possible based on our
17 budget, and the goal is that these projects that are
18 funded would start next year, in the spring of 2026. As
19 I'm sure you're all aware, we are awaiting a budget.
20 This whole process happens every two years and projects
21 can be funded for up to four years. But some projects
22 submit proposals for a 2- or 3-year project. So, it's
23 not necessary that a project last an entire four years,
24 but that is typical. So again, this is not an action
25 item, but your comments are an important part of the
26 process. If you would like, I can sort of give a brief
27 summary of each individual project and ask for comments.
28 Or I could give the Council a moment to review the list
29 for the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions and provide comments
30 on only some of them. It's however you'd like to proceed.
31

32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I think it would be
33 expeditious to give your -- a brief overview of each
34 project by number, and that's on page for -- on
35 respective books. 199, I'm on 199. What's the EIRAC? Oh,
36 it's up there. Oh, they're up here. So here on the table
37 behind us, give us an overview of each one, respectively.
38 Go ahead, Kristen.
39

40 MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
41 is Kristen Morrow. Just to clarify, do you want me to
42 do sort of one and then pause for comments, or do...?
43

44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I would like that.
45

46 MS. MORROW: Okay. So first for the Yukon
47 region project 26-200, the Chena River Chinook and
48 Summer Chum Salmon enumeration. This project will
49 estimate chinook and chum salmon escapement and
50 escapement quality in the Chena River using counting

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1 towers. There are more details about this project on
2 page 200 of the Western Council book, and on page 344
3 of the Eastern Council book.

4
5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Any comments on this
6 -- on this project from the Council? There's aspects of
7 this project that are pretty important. Age composition,
8 spawning success and things like that. Those have -- any
9 comments from Council members on this project? We have
10 Tim and Andy on the phone also. Don.

11
12 MS. WOODRUFF: Thank you. I know that the
13 Chena River is one of the biggest producers of salmon
14 in this district. And any time that we can get good
15 enumeration over a long period of time, then we have
16 really good data set. And so, I would really like to see
17 this one go. Thank you.

18
19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Well, it's in
20 progress. But they want these comments as to the
21 viability of this of this project. Any other comments
22 Council members. Go ahead, Don.

23
24 MR. HONEA: Don Honea, Western Interior.
25 Forgot where I was from. Are these projects now, are
26 they -- the money is already allocated for them? And so,
27 what I was seeing one here. Could you, like 26-202.
28 Could you give a little brief on that? Just a -- thank
29 you.

30
31 MS. MORROW: Thank you, Member Honea.
32 This is Kristen Morrow for the record. Just to clarify,
33 funds have not yet been allocated for any of these
34 proposals. These are projects that have been proposed
35 and we're currently going through the process to
36 determine which ones to prioritize for funding,
37 depending on how much funding is available. once the
38 budget is finalized. I can give a summary of 26-202 if
39 you'd like me to skip ahead to that one? Sure. Give me
40 just one minute. So, project 26-202, the Feasibility of
41 Sonar Estimation and Adult Salmon Passage in the Middle
42 Yukon River near Ruby Alaska. This project will develop
43 and operate a middle Yukon River sonar focusing on
44 chinook and summer chum salmon. There's more detail
45 about this project on page 203 of the Western Council
46 meeting book. And page 347 of the Eastern Council meeting
47 book.

48
49 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, if you don't mind.
50 Oh, okay. One other question. I know that sonar project

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1 or something initiated by TCC was, is this have any
2 collaboration with TCC or...? I don't know where they're
3 at on that project. Thank you.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: -203 it shows who the
6 collaborators are. It's Diloola Erickson and Nicole
7 Farnham. So, you can -- that gives you sort of a brief
8 overview of what the costs are annually. So that --
9 you're good and you're supportive of this project?

10

11 MR. HONEA: Oh, yes.

12

13 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: we can number them
14 first, priority second or just their good projects
15 or...?

16

17 MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
18 the record, this is Kristen Morrow. I believe we're just
19 soliciting comments from the Council on -- general
20 comments about the perceived quality or importance of
21 these projects, rather than necessarily having the
22 Councils prioritize their preference.

23

24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh. So, we're okay.
25 Go ahead Charlie. I got a comment on that one. Go ahead.

26

27 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I think that the Mid
28 River sonar feasibility study is very important. Going
29 to go forward and the rebuilding of the stocks in the
30 Yukon because of the ichthyophonous and the comments made
31 today about salmon running out of gas and not having
32 enough food due to overpopulation or whatever it may be.
33 I think this is a really good tool of knowing what's
34 going on in the river, what's going past Pilot Station,
35 what would be seen in the Mid River below the Tanana
36 River and some other tributaries, and what's going to
37 end up at Eagle. I think this is a really good tool
38 going forward to help the rebuilding of the salmon stocks
39 in Yukon. Thank you. Okay.

40

41 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: He took the words
42 right out of my mouth. So, good comment. Any other
43 comments? Don.

44

45 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don
46 Honea, Middle Yukon, Western Interior. I like that idea.
47 And, you know, I mean, if we were to prioritize this, I
48 mean, I am in favor and like your comments. Thank you.

49

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Don. And
2 Nissa took off. Oh, we got a public comment on this
3 issue. Come up to the mic there and turn that on and
4 introduce yourself, Kyle.

5
6 MR. CUTTING: My name is Kyle Cutting. I
7 work at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, and I'm just
8 sharing a letter from the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence
9 Resource Commission on two of these proposals. The SRC
10 met September 25 and 26 of 2025, in Tok and the SRC
11 supports -- the Wrangell-St. Elias supports all of these
12 investigation plans submitted to the FRMP for the Yukon
13 region, especially the 26-202 Feasibility of the Sonar
14 Estimation of Adult Salmon Passage in the Middle Yukon
15 River proposal, and then also the 26-252 the In-season
16 Yukon River Subsistence Salmon Survey Program. So, I
17 just -- I wanted to share that with.....

18
19 (Simultaneous speech)
20

21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yes. We, the Councils
22 always are appreciative of SRC and Advisory Committee
23 comments on any aspect of subsistence and this -- these
24 projects are instrumental in rebuilding some of these
25 salmon stocks and investigative. It's not -- it's
26 science that we need to further the rebuilding of these
27 stocks. So, we appreciate your comment. It's on the
28 record. So, thanks so much, Kyle. And any other comments
29 on this one? This -- go ahead, Sue.

30
31 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to add
32 that I'm on the SRC and they are looking at what happens
33 on the Yukon and to know if that's going to have any
34 effect on the Copper River, because there's indications
35 that there might be things happening and they really
36 want to know what's happening here for that reason.

37
38 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks so much
39 for that, Sue.

40
41 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I just want to say
42 about the whole thing.

43
44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Go ahead, Charlie.

45
46 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I too, in support the
47 whole list. They're all important projects in my mind, and
48 some of them have a little bit more priority in my mind.
49 But I think that they're all equally important to salmon
50 and rebuilding salmon stocks. Appreciate you. Thank you.

1
2 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, Tim, you got
3 comment.

4
5 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
6 support all these programs. I have a comment on 26-250.
7 I think that would be good if that survey could be done
8 on the entire Upper, Middle and Lower Yukon. The TEK is
9 especially important because there's a lot of elders
10 that have really good life experience with salmon, and
11 because of the current state of the chinook and some
12 stocks, the younger folks are missing out a lot on fish
13 camp culture and fishing culture, and it would be
14 priceless to be able to document and archive this kind
15 of information so it doesn't get lost with the passing
16 of our beloved elders.

17
18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah, that's a
19 dwindling resource. So, I appreciate that comment. Tim.
20 Gerald -- recognize Tommy Kriska has just arrived. And
21 with flight delays, all from 24 hours or so. So welcome
22 to the table, Tommy. And so, we're kind of jumping around
23 here. We're kind of showing consensus that all of these
24 are worthwhile projects. It is apparent that -202 is a
25 real high priority in my mind and most of the comments
26 that we've had here, the Middle Yukon River Sonar project
27 is a is a real high priority. So, we don't know what
28 kind of budget you're going to get. So, I would like to
29 state that on the record that -- is it the consensus of
30 the Council members at the table and in the on the phone
31 that 202 the Middle Yukon Sonar project is the highest
32 priority project if funding comes in limited,
33 affirmative? Head shakes? Sue, I -- Charlie, you and
34 Charlie stated for the record that he thought that was
35 a high priority also.

36
37 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, I'm going to do this
38 for Eva. She just texted me. She said she agrees with
39 everything Tim said and the TEK surveys for the whole
40 river.

41
42 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. So, she can
43 comment on the phone there. Oh, okay. So, Tim. Tim, you
44 got another comment? Go ahead.

45
46 MR. GERVAIS: No, Jack, I forgot to put
47 my hand down. Thanks for.....

48
49 (Simultaneous speech)

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS:acknowledge it.

4

5 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, at this point,
6 it's 6:00. I think that if we just looking at these
7 projects, everybody's of the opinion that all these
8 projects are worthwhile with the highest priority the
9 Middle Yukon, the Sonar Project. Is that good with the
10 Councils that we're in agreement that these, all of these
11 are worthwhile projects? I see affirmative from all in
12 the room here. So any further....

13

14 (Simultaneous speech)

15

16 MR. GERVAIS: Affirmative, from Tim.

17

18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF:discussion?
19 Okay. Tim. Andy.

20

21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Eva commented.

22

23 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, Andy dropped and.

24

25 MS. ENTSMINGER: Eva just said -
26 commented. She agrees on the sonar.

27

28 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay.

29

30 MS. ENTSMINGER: Very high criteria.

31

32 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: All right. So, we're
33 all good on that? Thanks so much, Kristen.

34

35 MS. MORROW: For the record, this is
36 Kristen. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council members, for
37 those comments. We do have the proposals that were
38 submitted for the Kuskokwim region. Would you like to
39 do that same process as well?

40

41 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: No.

42

43 MS. MORROW: Okay.

44

45 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: We're going to do that
46 at the WIRAC meeting.

47

48 MS. MORROW: Okay.

49

50

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: This -- that's out of
2 their area.

3
4 MS. MORROW: Great. Then if it is okay,
5 Mr. Chair, I can quickly give a Partners Program update.

6
7 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Sure.

8
9 MS. MORROW: Okay. So, as a reminder, you
10 may be aware that the Office of Subsistence Management
11 posted a notice of funding opportunity for the Partners
12 Program last spring. This is a competitive grant for the
13 Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations. The
14 intent of the program is to strengthen Alaska Native and
15 rural involvement in federal subsistence management by
16 providing salary funds to organizations so they can hire
17 a biologist, social scientist, or educator. The grant
18 also provides funds for science and social camps --
19 sorry, for science and culture camps and for paid student
20 internships. There were a total of eight applicants for
21 the new funding that would begin in 2026, and this
22 funding lasts for up to four years. The Partners Program
23 Review Panel, which is made up of subject matter experts
24 across various Department of Interior agencies, has
25 reviewed the proposals and they expect a funding
26 decision soon and those details will be shared during
27 the Winter Council meetings. The next notice of funding
28 opportunity will be sometime in spring of 2027, for
29 funding that would begin in 2028. If you would like to
30 learn more, you can contact OSM staff Jarred Stone or
31 Liz Williams. Liz is here in person, or you can contact
32 either of them via email or phone, and their contact
33 information can be found on the Partners web page at
34 www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners or if anyone is
35 interested you can speak to Liz here at this meeting.
36 And that is it for updates on the Partners Program,
37 unless anyone has any questions.

38
39 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you so much. Any
40 questions on the Partners Program?

41
42 (No response)

43
44 No. Thank you very much. Appreciate
45 that. I think we've covered -- where are we at here?
46 We're pretty much.....

47
48 MS. PILCHER: So, yes. You guys have
49 covered all the agenda items other than the Kuskokwim,
50 which I'll make sure is on the agenda tomorrow.

1

2

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Right.

3

4

MS. PILCHER: The -- you can technically be on number nine. Joint Council open discussion, which we did note would be when we had time. We also did say we would open the floor to public comment on non-agenda items if there was time. We seem to maybe not have as much public in here as we did at the beginning. So that's up to you guys. And then closing comments. And this is Nissa Pilcher, for the record.

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CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: So, any Joint Council open discussion? We could combine that with closing comments since we're late in the day here. So, I think we had a very productive meeting between the EIRAC and WIRAC, as usual. And I think we had -- made a lot of good points on the record in our joint letter to the -- on the Federal Subsistence Program is going to be instrumental for the future of subsistence in Alaska. And so, we're going to have to bring our other Council members who weren't here up to speed on what we did today. But I think we had a very productive meeting. Charlie.

CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I thank you. Jack, I think we had a great, productive meeting also. So good to have extra minds in the room, expert -- expertise. And I think it was a great outcome. There's some really good decisions made. Went over a lot of stuff today. Holy cow. I appreciate each and every one of your patience and the people who are hanging in the room still paying attention half asleep. But thank you and appreciate you all. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Yeah. So, I'm going to go on. Let's go on to the phone and get Andy and Tim, because it's hard for them to hang on there. And Andy's gone, so Tim's still there. You have a closing comment, Tim Gervais.

MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais, Western Interior. I'd like to acknowledge a great job by yours and Charlie's Chairmanship. I've really learned a lot of great information from Eastern Interior. I enjoy being able to have these Joint Council meetings every second or third year, you guys really bring a lot to the table. I hope some of you can take some time from your subsistence activities to run for governor or become commissioner of the State Fish and

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1 Game Commission. And I appreciate everybody. Real civil
2 and working with everybody and respecting everybody's
3 point of view. It's really encouraging to have so many
4 people working together to maintain and rebuild our
5 subsistence resources. Thank you for all you guys do.
6

7 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you, Tim.,
8 We'll see you tomorrow online. I'm going to -- okay. So,
9 I'll go back and forth. We'll go to Don. You got any
10 comment? I know you're really late into the meeting,
11 but.
12

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Well, I think that the
14 important aspect of us meeting together and going
15 through whatever it is that affects subsistence harvest
16 is a big step towards co-management. And it's not just
17 the Council, but with all the feedback that we get from
18 everyone, and it's good that we listen and take it to
19 heart. Thank you.
20

21 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. Jenny.
22

23 MS. PELKOLA: Yeah. Jenny Pelkola. I know
24 I haven't really spoken a lot today, but I just -- I was
25 just enjoying listening to everybody that I got lost and
26 what they were saying. But everyone contributed so much
27 and spoke their own opinions, and it was good to hear
28 from Eva and Dorothy. I just learned a lot. I'm always
29 learning, even though I'm supposed to be an elder, but
30 I'm still learning the new technology I guess what you
31 know, compared to the way I grew up a long time ago, I
32 know that side. But the new technology and all these
33 reports is very interesting. And I'm trying to -- my
34 mind is just rolling, trying to understand a little bit
35 of what they're talking about, and I get lost in trying
36 to keep up with them. But I -- at the end, I'm quiet,
37 but then I know I'm taking it all in and I'm -- my wheels
38 are turning. And I really think we need more of this
39 kind of meeting because we're united, you know, we're
40 not fighting. We're working together. And that's what
41 we need. We need strength to get things done. So, I just
42 thank you and thank you for your leadership.
43

44 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny.
45 Appreciate those -- that perspective. Sue.
46

47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Well, I really
48 appreciate Jenny, what you just said. That's -- whenever
49 I got on a little bit younger than I am now, it took a
50 while to get it all together and understand the process

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1 and it is good to meet especially on similar topics like
2 the Yukon River. That's, that is so important. And it's
3 nice to see Jack again. I knew him when he was in high
4 school, and it's nice to see you again, Don. So, I
5 appreciate all you guys and all the work you do. Thank
6 you.

7

8 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Sue. Thanks
9 for your service for so long, appreciate that.

10

11 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. This is my last
12 meeting. So. Oh it is this is my last meeting.

13

14 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, gee.

15

16 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is it. I'm not
17 retiring. Like somebody said, you're retiring.

18

19 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Just going to spend
20 more time on the trap line.

21

22 MS. ENTSMINGER: I should have spent a
23 lot more time on the trap line. Yeah. Make another fur
24 hat. Okay.

25

26 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks for your
27 service. Appreciate it.

28

29 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you Jack.

30

31 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: And Don.

32

33 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
34 thank you guys for hey, collaboration, working together
35 and stuff. You know, we have more in common than you
36 think, right, Charlie? I mean, we, you know, Ruby and
37 Tanana, share Nowitna in fall time. And, you know, we
38 have some, like things there, I mean, you know, same
39 kind of, you know, problems maybe, or something that we
40 can work on. And so, you know, years ago, this was --
41 we had a meeting at over there at Pike's. Okay. So, we
42 had a -- we had something that that involved the lower
43 part of Novi hunting and stuff, and it ran up all the
44 way up to Tanana or up to Boneyard, I believe. And so,
45 hey, I mean, Lester was on there and on the Eastern. And
46 so, you guys supported that, and I think that's a good
47 example of how we can help each other. I mean, you know,
48 and so I really enjoyed this time. I mean, you know,
49 somebody mentioned maybe we gotta -- because we have the
50 same kind of problems and maybe we ought to do this more

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1 often. Thank you.

2

3 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: I appreciate those
4 comments, Don. Linda.

5

6 MS. EVANS: Yes, I too was very thankful
7 to listen to everyone's, bring up their point of views
8 and their comments on all the different issues. I think
9 it showed a very good heartfelt effort where people were
10 willing to work together on all these issues that face
11 us. I appreciate everyone's comments and look forward
12 to tomorrow.

13

14 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Linda. And
15 Tommy, you just came in right at the end. But good to
16 see you.

17

18 MR. KRISKA: Oh, yeah. Well and sorry I
19 missed out today. And I'm really, you know, knowing all
20 you guys for a lot of years. I trust that you guys did
21 a great job today, and I'm right with you. Just looking
22 at some of their things with on your book there, and you
23 know, a lot of this stuff that where we need to discuss,
24 you know, all the moose, the fish and we all do have the
25 same problems. We have to work together. We have to.
26 And, you know, we it -- hopefully one day there'll be
27 more Regional Councils working together. And, you know,
28 I think there's so much on the table and that we need
29 to cover you know. This meeting maybe should possibly
30 be three days instead of two. Not just because I missed
31 today. I mean, you know, going back in the days we barely
32 finish up the things we're talking about and it's one
33 of the reasons that you're still here. It's after 6:00.
34 It's just going to keep on going like that. You know,
35 there are a lot of the issues in the Yukon, the Koyukuk
36 River, the fish, the moose hunting, Kuskokwim areas,
37 it's all over the whole state around the coast and
38 everything. That's where a lot of our issues are
39 happening that we need to talk about and how to possibly
40 get something done about it. There's a lot of things
41 that I thought of on the plane, and I was writing things
42 down, but you luck out, I left my notebook in the truck.

43

44 There's just a lot of things that I
45 really been thinking about this last -- well, you know,
46 I had a rough month, though. Seemed like things came out
47 to me more serious than ever. Just, you know, just by
48 losing the people that we -- that I lost things got more
49 serious, even though that they're gone. To think about
50 the rest of the family, looking at my granddaughters,

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1 the other folks that's around you know, we really gotta
2 do something. I don't know what it's going to be done.
3 I know I really thought about the, you know, the higher
4 up way down in the Washington D.C. areas, the North
5 Pacific Fisheries Board of fish, all of that. I don't
6 know where they stand or what they could do. I mean, you
7 know, somebody is pushing this this big \$7 billion
8 industry, fish industry and seem like nobody -- I don't
9 know who's doing it, nobody got control of it and kind
10 of made me think today, once I left out there looking
11 at the moose and looking at their river you know, a lot
12 of this stuff happened down in the states where the
13 buffalo are one time -- many buffalo as well as we had,
14 you know, for them to lose all of that and getting run
15 over, I shouldn't say that, but it's like they lost all
16 their rights to hunt. And now it's all in -- all
17 commercial and everything like that. And it's the same
18 thing that's I see that's happening with our fish, our
19 moose and everything else up here in Alaska where you
20 know, I don't know what they're working on, but they
21 really want our land and want us, I don't know, wiping
22 out our fish and wiping out, thinking we're going to go
23 somewhere, but you know, they're going to run out of
24 money at some point. So, we just got to, for me -- I
25 probably could talk all day, but I just want to say that
26 we need to stick together and be as one. Seriously, and
27 yeah. I'm sorry that I missed the -- some of the days
28 here, but I'm on the same page with you all. Thank you.

29

30 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thanks, Tommy. So that
31 covers all the comments. Chair will entertain a motion
32 to adjourn the meeting. Oh, we didn't?

33

34 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: I wanted to add a
35 little bit more.

36

37 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead. Go right
38 ahead.

39

40 CO-CHAIR WRIGHT: But everybody said the
41 same thing that I had written down right here. But it's
42 true. We have unity right here. And we all are connected
43 through our resources and especially salmon. So, I
44 really like this meeting. And I like the unity. And I
45 like the people are talking from their hearts and here
46 and willing to do the important work on the go forward.
47 I just appreciate you all. I can't say it enough. Thank
48 you.

49

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1 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Charlie. I
2 really appreciated the EIRAC. You got memberships -- got
3 gifts or talents that you know I don't have. It was
4 really good to meld that together. Those two Councils
5 together like that. Important, really important to do
6 that. So, Brooke.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
9 just wanted to make one comment and thank all of you all
10 for a lot of really good discussion. Today is a really
11 long day. And just remind you, too, that we'll be meeting
12 in separate rooms tomorrow. The Western Interior will
13 be just down this hallway, in the Boardroom, it's called.
14 And there -- for folks online. There is a separate Teams
15 meeting link for the WIRAC meeting tomorrow. Just wanted
16 to make sure folks were aware. Thank you.

17
18 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you. Is that --
19 so motion to adjourn.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: I make a motion to
22 adjourn.

23
24 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Motion to adjourn, by
25 Sue.

26
27 MR. WOODRUFF: Second.

28
29 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Second by Don. Those
30 in favor of adjournment signify by saying aye.

31
32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33
34 CO-CHAIR REAKOFF: Thank you, Tim. We'll
35 see you -- we'll hear you in the morning.

36
37 (Off record)

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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 155 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 17th day of December;

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 20th day of January 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager