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SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

January 20, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Martin Aukongak, Acting Chair

Louis Green

Kelsi Ivanoff

Robert Moses

Regional Council Coordinator, Gisela Chapa

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Nome, Alaska - 1/20/2026)

(On record)

MS. CHAPA: We'll go ahead and get started. I have more announcements to share, but later on that.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Now do invocation. Gabe, all right. Invocation.

MS. CHAPA: Go ahead, do an invocation.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Anybody in the room? Roy. Roy, can you do the invocation, please?

(Talking)

(Pause)

MR. ASHENFELTER: I don't know who's Chairing the meeting, well, Martin. First question I have is on the agenda, I don't see it here, but was Tom Gray, part of the RAC?

MS. CHAPA: Yes, and if I may, Mr. Chair. My name is Gisela Chapa. I am the designated federal officer for the meeting. And yes, we are going to save some room to honor Council Member Gray and there will be time to modify the agenda shortly. Thank you.

MR. ASHENFELTER: Alright, thank you. Thank you for addressing my concerns.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Call to order.

MS. CHAPA: Okay. That is call -- the meeting has been called to order at 11:43. And if I also may ask that everybody, please identify yourself when speaking. Just say Martin or state your name for the record. Thank you. And this is Gisela Chapa, by the way. Okay.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Martin. Roll call.

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1 MS. CHAPA: You wanna [sic] do roll call?
2 Okay, alrighty. Gisela Chapa for the record, I'm going
3 to do roll call. Kelsi Ivanoff.

4
5 MS. IVANOFF: Here.

6
7 MS. CHAPA: Louis Green.

8
9 MS. GREEN: Louis' here, thank you.

10
11 MS. CHAPA: Martin Aukongak.

12
13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Here.

14
15 MS. CHAPA: Robert Moses.

16
17 MR. MOSES: Here.

18
19 MS. CHAPA: And I got notice that Mr.
20 Seetot and Mr. Kirk are not able to join us, but Mr.
21 Chair, we have 4 members present, so we do have a quorum.

22
23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Got any
24 meeting announcements? I believe you did that already.

25
26 MS. CHAPA: I have more announcements,
27 if I may. But this would be a good time to pay tribute
28 to Council Member Gray. Tom Gray unfortunately passed
29 away a couple of weeks ago, I believe. And for those who
30 knew him, Mr. Gray didn't do things halfway. He was just
31 recognized for 21 years on the Council, serving the
32 Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. And that
33 wasn't the only thing that he did. He was also the
34 Chairman of the Alaska Beluga Whaling Committee. I
35 believe he was President of the Reindeer Herders
36 Association. He was a member of the Arctic Western
37 Caribou Herd Working Group, and he was also on the
38 Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee. And those are
39 just the things that I knew, you know, that he was
40 involved in. So, Mr. Gray, Council Member Gray also had
41 a way to really encourage us to think beyond barriers.
42 He was a very driven person and motivated to affect
43 change in the region and ultimately benefits subsistence
44 users in the region. So, Council Member Gray, I hope
45 that you're joining us today in spirit, I want to
46 personally thank you for your service and your
47 contributions to the Federal Subsistence Management
48 Program. We're going to miss you, Tom.

49
50

1 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
2 Roy.

3
4 MR. ASHENFELTER: Thank you. Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman. My name is Roy Ashenfelter, born and raised
6 in White Mountain. I'm glad we're paying tribute to Tom
7 Gray. Besides the role that he -- you mentioned, he also
8 had a fish camp over on the (In Native) River. He guided
9 to add additional personal income, besides the guiding
10 part of it, he worked with the White Mountain Native
11 Corporation cause [sic] he own the property over there.
12 We come from Native Corporations since he's a Council
13 member of Council, he's a shareholder account. He also
14 worked (indiscernible) under the state to acquire the
15 opportunity to guide in this area over there. And he
16 worked with our village to not guide for moose but guide
17 for other animals like bear. So that was significant as
18 a guide. That's, you know, that's a choice that he made.
19 And that was really important because some of the areas
20 you had guide with non-corporation land, but he still
21 stuck to his agreement with the village to try to make
22 sure that the village that he was representing -- that
23 he heard from sorry, meant that you know, they -- they're
24 concerned with food on the table. Besides guiding, he
25 also did teaching there. He had annually at the -- at
26 his camp, teachers from the school that were either
27 Native or Non-Native go to his camp to learn about
28 subsistence. That was his way of introducing what we do
29 in our region. Very significant. And his attitude, his
30 demeanor, his way of doing things, really loud, you know,
31 he didn't do any of the work. He made the teacher do the
32 saving and all that. His wife was the teacher on cutting
33 and hanging fish. But that was one part of it. The other
34 part he used his camp for was Bible camp and he didn't
35 -- his wife was super religious too, but he wasn't --
36 that wasn't his mantra, you know, preaching or anything
37 like that he was just really -- but his wife was super
38 religious, very vocal about her relationship with the
39 Lord.

40
41 The other thing he did is that and this
42 is what he told me, he set up (indiscernible) for
43 children on Fish River. He said he didn't get very much
44 money for that. But he said of all the different things
45 he was involved in, he really enjoyed teaching young
46 kids our traditional way of cutting and hanging fish. I
47 do know that you know, of course being born and raised
48 here and being Tom's friend for many, many, many years.
49 As the Chair of the Northern Norton Sound Fish Advisory
50 Committee for many years, Tom was on the committee. There

1 was no -- he was very blunt, very forthright, very
2 assertive in his views on how things might be of
3 consideration for management, either fish or game. And
4 it took a rocket scientist in my mind to change his
5 mind. And you had -- you really had to convince him that
6 his ideas -- if they were a number of choices to choose
7 from that you might want to compromise, but he barely -
8 - he wouldn't go there unless he had enough information
9 to change his mind. But I just wanted to share with you
10 some of my insights as to Tom Gray and I really
11 appreciate the RAC here taking the time to do that.
12

13 He was a personal friend of mine. And
14 then also all the accolades that I just mentioned, you
15 know, how (indiscernible) story, there's many, many
16 stories. But nothing he did do (indiscernible) He said
17 (indiscernible) beluga at Cape Mountain. He did it
18 annually. He didn't do it this year, but he did annually.
19 And he -- what he learned from (indiscernible) is to
20 minimize his catch, puts out a net out and eventually
21 get (indiscernible) beluga he wanted to. But he realized
22 that since he was the spokesperson, probably the Chair
23 of the Beluga Committee for our part of the world, that
24 -- he was involved in tagging the beluga. So, every
25 beluga he caught that was alive, that was white, which
26 is the preferred (indiscernible) subsistence person
27 hunting beluga. The white ones are the preferred ones
28 and they're the biggest. The gray ones and small ones
29 (indiscernible) but he helped tag beluga so that a
30 greater understanding of where they migrate and where
31 they hang up and what they do can be learned and he was
32 involved in tagging in several places. He learned how
33 to tag out of Bristol Bay or out of the Cook Inlet. So,
34 he learned that.
35

36 The point I was trying to make about
37 netting at Cape Nome, he eliminated the four seasons and
38 then stuff for the net. And the reason for that is he
39 wanted to make sure that one could demonstrate that,
40 that he could catch more. But at the same time, there's
41 a reasonableness to your catch and that he shared
42 everything that he caught so, just like we here
43 traditionally do. So, thank you so much for allowing me
44 to speak for Tom. I'm going to miss him. We're all going
45 to miss him. And I miss that loud voice that no one
46 could ever question what he was thinking, but his mind
47 is saying he never had to question or question what he's
48 thinking. That much I really appreciate it. And I told
49 him that at the Advisory Committee meeting because my
50 dad too was real blunt, very forthright. So, I got to

1 understand, when Tom does it, why he's doing it. He's
2 not doing it to be mean. He's doing it -- just trying
3 to express the way his view is. So, I'm going to make
4 an effort to go to his funeral in a couple of days, and
5 it's going to be a sad day for our region. So, thank you
6 so much for honoring Tom. Thank you.

7
8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you
9 Roy, for being here. And good afternoon, everybody. I
10 do remember Tom. I grew up in Golovin next door to White
11 Mountain. You know, my dad and grandpa were 5000 reindeer
12 strong herder, you know, and then as I became president
13 for our corporation board, you know, Tom would call me,
14 hey, could we graze on your land? I said, you know,
15 being a fact -- my background in herding, I said, yeah,
16 you can. You know, he'd be like, you know, he would send
17 meat or, you know, if you need anything, let him know.
18 And we did work together and I really appreciate him for
19 doing that. And like Roy said, you know, he did
20 everything, and I don't think change he wanted, I think
21 he wanted to bring back the way we live, off our land
22 and the water that, you know, we get our food. And I
23 don't think a piece of paper meant anything to him
24 because, like Roy said, he'd share all the food we
25 gathered and I appreciate Tom, and like I said, I grew
26 up with the family, and he will be missed. Anybody else?
27 Louis.

28
29 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
30 pretty much known Tom my whole life also. Our
31 grandmothers were hunting partners. I remember the first
32 moose those 2 ladies got together. It was Irene and
33 Laura. And taking one out in the Pilgrim one time back
34 in the 60s. But -- and Tommy, over through the years on
35 serving on the Advisory Committee with him, I was really
36 glad that he was there because he had a lot of insight.
37 And he also, you know, he had a lot of knowledge about
38 aspects of governing our wildlife. I will always
39 appreciate the fact that he was there. I used to tease
40 him. I said, I'm glad you're here because everybody says
41 I talk too much but you always talk more than me, Tommy,
42 so that makes me look good. That was just a -- he was
43 bold, he spoke his mind, and that was another thing I
44 liked about him. He will be missed. So, thank you for
45 the opportunity, Martin.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK Yes, sir. Robert.

48
49 MR. MOSES: Yeah, this is Robert Moses.
50 Tom Gray was a big influence to Norton Sound region and

1 all the other regions, whether he was with the Caribou
2 Commission or the whaling and tagging parts. And he
3 strived for subsistence use for our region, for young
4 people like Roy said, to show outsiders how -- the way
5 they grew up and the way we still live and carry on our
6 traditions. And I remember Tom Gray since I was little,
7 with his reindeer herding and there was a lot of reindeer
8 between here and White Mountain back in the day. And he
9 was trying to bring that back, you know, as a food source
10 after the caribou left. And that's a -- and a big
11 something -- a big job to try and get started. It worked
12 out for a while, but his reindeer went back up north.
13 But he tried though, and it's a lot of work. And I
14 remember eating reindeer them days from (In Native) and
15 Tom Gray and thank him for serving on the Board. And he
16 was very outspoken, like Louis said. He knew a lot of
17 rivers, a lot of places for -- to subsistence from. And
18 I'll miss him on the Board also. Thank you.

19
20 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah. I grew up with his
21 sons, and I always found him as this intimidating man.
22 But as I grew older, I realized it was out of a place
23 of care and love for us. And then seeing him in, you
24 know, these professional spaces, policy spaces, that
25 love and care transferred through his -- it wasn't
26 intimidating anymore. It was -- you realize that's
27 coming from a big, you know, deep spot in his heart that
28 he really cared for (indiscernible) and he wasn't afraid
29 to use his voice, and he wasn't on Boards just to be on
30 a Board. He was on there to speak his mind and speak for
31 our people. So yeah, I'm definitely missing him in our
32 meetings.

33
34 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Anybody
35 else in the room or online? Orville.

36
37 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Excuse
38 me. I'd known Tom probably 6 years, but I wanted to say
39 that I -- I've been part of the program since 1993, when
40 the RAC started. And within the -- shortly years after
41 that, I realized what kind of Council members we're
42 looking for to be in RAC. And knowing Tom, just that
43 short time is a perfect example of the kind of people
44 we want involved in the RAC Councils. Very outspoken,
45 not afraid to say anything but also had a wealth of
46 knowledge about subsistence and also -- plus, having the
47 teacher ethics on that, on how to also teach subsistence.
48 He knew the value, outstandingly, about how important
49 traditional values are to our young people. Which made
50 him a really, really strong person to be in the Council.

1 And you could easily see how proud I think the way he
2 spoke and conducted himself to be part of this program.
3 And I think that's one of the keys of a Council to be
4 looking for, I don't think that there would be another
5 person like Tom, but however we can look to other
6 possible candidates to fulfill the vacancies on the
7 Council. I believe we've got 3 or 4 here on this RAC.
8 But I would encourage the RAC Council Members here and
9 to think about who more we could encourage to be a Tom
10 Gray on the Council. I understand that it -- huge shoes
11 to fill, but there are a lot of skilled and talented and
12 traditional strength people, that are very strong in
13 your culture here. And I would encourage the Council to
14 have their eyes and ears years open for other candidates.
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16
17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Anybody
18 else?

19
20 (No response)

21
22 All right, moving on.

23
24 (Talking)

25
26 Intro. Afternoon, my name is Martin
27 Aukongak. I grew up in Golovin. I go back and forth
28 between Anchorage and Golovin. So, I grew up hunting and
29 fishing. And, you know, when I was growing up, we didn't
30 have a piece of paper to regulate what we eat and what
31 we hunt or do anything. And my dad was very vocal, and
32 I've been on almost every Board you could think of, you
33 know, president of my corporation and, you know, former
34 Chair of the (indiscernible) here. I work with my tribe
35 a lot. I love our region. I love our people. I believe
36 in hunting and fishing and subsistence is our way of
37 life. It's very healthy. We don't need to know the
38 calories or anything of that fat. I just know it's damn
39 good for our people. And I say that very bluntly. And
40 thank you for being here.

41
42 MS. IVANOFF: I'm Kelsi Ivanoff, I grew
43 up in Unalakleet, and I moved back there in 2018, when
44 I had her, this is my daughter, Harlow or Ralphie. I
45 work for Native Peoples Action as their Communications
46 and Indigenous Engagement Manager. I also sit on the
47 Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committee. And along with
48 this -- this is my only my second meeting. That's part
49 of the RAC but really honored to represent our community.
50 And I -- you know, getting into these policy spaces, I

1 just saw huge gaps in representation from my generation,
2 and just really happy to see more and more people coming
3 in and becoming comfortable and learning more about
4 these. And it's been a big learning experience for me,
5 too. So, I'm thankful to everyone who's helped me along
6 the way.

7
8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Louis.

9
10 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Louis
11 Green, Nome. My time with the Advisory Councils and this
12 Council, I served on the Northern Norton Sound started
13 in 1993, and part of the time I was there as Vice Chair.
14 Took some time off and I got back involved and decided
15 the Federal Subsistence Board Advisory Council would be
16 a good avenue to help with the governance of our fish
17 and game and I got out in 2010. I served with the
18 Sitnasuak -- for the Sitnasuak Board of Directors and I
19 served with the Bering Straits Board of Directors. Back
20 in the day, 98 Board of Fish came to Nome and decided
21 we needed to -- we were talking about Tier II on our
22 salmon in the Nome Subdistrict. And so, they formed a
23 working group. I ended up becoming the Chair for that
24 working group for the year '98 to '99. And having said
25 that, we became the first Tier II and only Tier II salmon
26 regulated through Fish and Game anywhere in the state.
27 It hasn't happened since in the West, none before.

28
29 I grew up on the Kuzitrin and Pilgrim
30 Rivers, where Tommy and -- you know, spent a lot of time
31 before they'd gone over to Council. Did farming at
32 Pilgrim Springs started, like, in '73, but been a part
33 of that place since the early mid-60s. I always tried
34 to do my part with my kids out there, training them up
35 and down the rivers with the friends. And, you know,
36 it's always an important thing. Hunting and gathering,
37 it's been a good part of my life. And so, this is --
38 this platform or what do you call it, the Council, seemed
39 like a good place to try to bring my knowledge to the
40 table. So, having said that, I appreciate the
41 opportunity, Mr. Chairman. Thanks, Martin.

42
43 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You're
44 welcome. Robert.

45
46 MR. MOSES: Robert Moses, from Golovin.
47 This is my second term on the Board. I grew -- lived
48 with my grandmother in high school and learned to eat
49 the food, what she ate, to help her make them and I'm
50 very thankful for that. Subsistence way of life is a big

1 part in our villages. A lot of people depend on the
2 water, rivers, the land, the greens that come from the
3 land also. The food there is more healthy, less fat but
4 natural fat on the good animals like caribou. We grew
5 up on caribou. They came here in the 90s, my grandmother,
6 Agnes Amarok, said they would come back and they did
7 come back, and they were here last time when she was
8 little, a little girl, and after that I believed
9 everything what she said. Learned to -- learned the land,
10 Fish River area from Shawn Peterson. Peterson and Larry
11 Fagerstrom Sr. I learned Death Valley in that area from
12 them, and they learn from Martin's dad, Siegfried
13 Aukongak. It just shows that subsistence way of life is
14 a big part, and whatever we catch, we try and share with
15 them, the families here. And I hope we can get something
16 accomplished with all this [sic] meetings and stuff. And
17 it's been a learning experience still, and I'm glad
18 everybody else is on. And hopefully we'll get something,
19 something good out of it in the long run. And thank you
20 very much.

21
22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you,
23 Robert. You've been a good hunting partner. I recommend
24 hunting with Robert. All right. (Indiscernible).

25
26 MS. CHAPA: I think we can go ahead and
27 go with introductions, people in the room. Gisela Chapa,
28 I am Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula
29 Regional Advisory Council. And I work with the Office
30 of Subsistence Management.

31
32 MR. TEGOSEAK: Gabe Tegoseak. born and
33 raised in Utqiagvik, I live in Anchorage. Now I'm Tech
34 Director for Talking Circle Media.

35
36 MR. LIND: Good morning, everyone.
37 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for the Office of
38 Subsistence Management. It's good to be here, quyana.

39
40 MS. MORIARTY: Good morning, I'm Kara
41 Moriarty. I'm the Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs with
42 the Office of the Secretary.

43
44 MR. CHEN: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
45 Council Members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm Bureau of
46 Indian Affairs Subsistence Branch Chief. Thank you for
47 being here.

48
49 MR. ASHENFELTER: Good morning,
50 everyone, I introduced myself earlier, Roy Ashenfelter.

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1 Resident subsistence person for (indiscernible). Thank
2 you for allowing me to speak to you.

3

4 MS. HENSLEE: Hello everybody, I'm Sara
5 Henslee, I'm the Area Manager for Fish and Game here in
6 Nome.

7

8 MS. MALLORY: Hi, good morning. My name
9 is Mariana Mallory. I work in Fairbanks. I work with
10 Fish and Game Division of Subsistence.

11

12 MS. JOHNSON: (In Native), good morning.
13 My name is Alison Johnson; I am a Nome Eskimo Community
14 tribal member and a subsistence user here in Nome. Thank
15 you.

16

17 MS. KOELSCH: Good morning. I'm Jeanette
18 Koelsch and I'm the Superintendent of Bering Land Bridge
19 and Acting Superintendent for Western Arctic National
20 Parklands.

21

22 MS. BRAEM: Good morning. I'm Nikki
23 Braem, I also work at Bering Land Bridge National
24 Preserve here.

25

26 MS. HUGHES: Good morning. My name is
27 Letty Hughes, Wildlife Biologist for National Park
28 Service, Bering Land Bridge here based in Nome.

29

30 MS. CARSON: Good morning, everyone. I'm
31 Alicia Carson, I am Sara's assistant here in Nome.

32

33 MS. CHAPA: I can go ahead and read the
34 attendance of the participants online. We have Brendan
35 Scanlon with ADF&G. Daviel Rosa with Lighthouse
36 Services. Brian Ubelaker with OSM. Aaron Poetter with
37 ADF&G. Hannah Voorhees with OSM. Jarred Stone with OSM.
38 Craig Townsend with BLM. Donna Bach with BLM. Fred. We
39 have Grace Cochon with OSM. Lisa Ellanna, Native with
40 Kawerak. Louis Green. Ethan Kelso with ADF&G. Eva Patton
41 with Park Service. Brendan, I already said his name,
42 Brendan Scanlon ADF&G. Spencer Weinstein I believe with
43 Kawerak. Drew McCan, Robin LaVine with OSM and Matt
44 Anderson from Yakutat Tlingit Tribe. Is there anybody
45 else online that I didn't call? If you can, please just
46 introduce yourself. We have Kim Jochum with Park Service
47 as well. And I apologize if I mispronounced your name.

48

49 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Don't be
50 shy.

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MR. DANIELS: Frederick Daniels, Elim Native corporation.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Afternoon, Fred.

MR. DANIELS: Afternoon.

MS. CHAPA: I also have Katya Wessels with OSM, online.

(Talking)

I think we have review and adopt agenda.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right. Everybody review the agenda, you like it?

MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair. I have a question. For -- this is probably for Gisela, the FRMP 14. I know you said you might not have quorum the whole time. I'm wondering because the meeting is coming up next month, if we should move that up to discuss if we're going to have any comments for the FRMP workshop or work session coming up?

MS. CHAPA: Yes, absolutely. I think that if the Council is okay with this, we can proceed to number 7, which is the report from the Secretary's Office, Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes. We can proceed with Regional subsistence Reports, Public Comment on Non-agenda Items. We have a presentation on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Chum Bycatch EIS, and if I -- that could be an action item for the Council, if the Council decides to take action. And after that, I think we can move to non-action items, which includes the FRMP and Partners Program update as well as Agency Reports and Other Business.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Everybody like the agenda?

MS. IVANOFF: Move to adopt.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: A motion by Kelsi. We have a second?

MR. GREEN: Louis will make a second.

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1 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right.
2 All in favor, aye.

3
4 IN UNISON: Aye.

5
6 (Talking)

7
8 MS. CHAPA: Okay, we're now going to
9 proceed with report from the Secretary's Office. Kara,
10 you have the floor.

11
12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You got 2
13 minutes.

14
15 (Shared laughter)

16
17 MS. MORIARTY: Good afternoon, Mr.
18 Chairman. I can be speedy, if you so desire, I think it
19 was a joke, but I appreciate that. Members of the
20 Regional Advisory Committee and everyone else, as I
21 said, my name is Kara Moriarty. I've been the Senior
22 Advisor for Alaskan Affairs for the Office of the
23 Secretary for almost 8 months now. I've lived in Alaska
24 for about 29 years. I started my career here right out
25 of college. I grew up in Western South Dakota and -- on
26 my great grandfather's cattle ranch, on the homestead.
27 And came to Alaska as a schoolteacher and I taught 1st
28 and 2nd grade in Atqasuk, which is 50 miles south of
29 Utqiagvik. So, I was a resident of the North Slope
30 Borough for a year. Met a Cape Smythe pilot, got married,
31 had 3 kids. You know, rest is history. I -- before I get
32 started, I -- if you would so, indulge me. I met Tom
33 Gray 2 weeks ago today. I met him at the National Park
34 Service Office in Anchorage, and we were having a meeting
35 with -- and he was representing -- he was wearing his
36 Beluga Whale Commission hat and you could tell he looked
37 at me with a little bit of suspect, which I did not take
38 offense to, it was just I was a stranger to him and new,
39 and who was this person? And the topic of the Subsistence
40 Review came up. That's not what the meeting was about,
41 but that it came up, and he said, oh, you're going to
42 be in Nome. And I said, yes, sir. Yes, I'm trying to
43 make as many RAC meetings as possible. And he goes, oh,
44 they've been trying to talk me into attending that
45 meeting in person and I wasn't going to do that. And he
46 said, but if you're going to be there, I'm going to be
47 there. And so we were supposed to have dinner tonight.
48 Tom and I were going to go to dinner, and he was going
49 to teach me all about reindeer herding and everything
50 else, I'm sure, about your region. So, when I got the

1 notice 3 days later that he went to meet our Lord, I was
2 heartbroken. And so, I probably knew Tom the least of
3 anyone in this room and anyone listening. But I was very
4 much looking forward to getting to my personal
5 introduction to the region from Tom and learning about
6 all the things and what little he knew -- little did he
7 know, I was planning to invite myself on the next
8 reindeer herding expedition. Because as a cattle
9 rancher, I'm quite intrigued by that whole process. But
10 anyway, that's my personal story. And I -- my heart goes
11 out to all of his family and friends and everyone that
12 he taught both directly within his family and his broader
13 Alaska Native family. So, my condolences to especially
14 those of you who knew him your whole life, and served
15 with him.

16
17 So, with that, on my report here, which
18 I'm sure he would have taken great glee in dissecting.
19 I can tell, but -- so, as you know, the Secretaries of
20 Interior and Agriculture have announced a comprehensive
21 review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program
22 here in our great state of Alaska. This review and all
23 of your participation, especially the RACs, will help
24 us in the Secretary's Office ensure the program is
25 effectively serving Alaskans. On his 1st day in office,
26 a year ago, almost to the day here, President Trump
27 signed Executive Order 14153, will be a year ago
28 tomorrow, I believe, or today, January 20th, it is today,
29 directing all Interior Department bureaus to consider
30 the cultural significance of hunting and fishing in
31 Alaska, and the statutory priority for subsistence
32 management required by ANILCA, and to conduct meaningful
33 consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and
34 Game, prior to enacting management plans or other
35 regulations that affect the ability of Alaskans to hunt
36 and fish on public lands. That's a quote right out of
37 the Executive Order, I believe it's Section 22. The
38 President also ordered all governmental departments,
39 including the Department of the Interior, to review all
40 federal programs and processes, which includes the
41 Federal Subsistence Program. So, I think the main point
42 that we're trying to convey during the RACs is this
43 review is not a formal rulemaking process. The scoping
44 period is to gather information and just like Tom would
45 have 1 on 1, teach us, teach me, about the subsistence
46 program. No decisions have been made whether to make any
47 changes at this time. I think there is a big
48 misconception that we're going to automatically make a
49 bunch of changes, and that is not true. We've made no
50 decisions at this point. The review will focus on some

1 specific areas, some of which have been requested of us
2 to change by other organizations, some of these topics
3 are questions our leadership has about subsistence and
4 want to learn more.

5
6 The specific areas, 1: is the relocation
7 of the Office of Subsistence Management from the U.S.
8 Fish and Wildlife Service to the Office of the Secretary,
9 specifically within Policy, Management and Budget. 2:
10 the membership criteria for all of you who serve on the
11 Regional Advisory Councils. 3: the composition of the
12 Federal Subsistence Board. 4: if there's any duplication
13 and inconsistencies in federal and state regulations.
14 5: special action regulations. 6: the role of the State
15 and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 7, procedures
16 for rural determinations. If you all believe, and we
17 have received public comment from around the state
18 identifying other areas that we should examine and we
19 appreciate that too. So, if you believe there are other
20 areas of the program that should be examined, please let
21 us know in your comments. Again, this scoping process
22 is discretionary. It's meant for us to hear firsthand,
23 to listen and learn and gather information. If the
24 Secretaries determine that they want to make any changes
25 following this review at a later date, and official
26 rulemaking process would begin. But there is no
27 predetermined timeline, nor is there any requirement to
28 do anything after this scoping period closes. However,
29 if an official rulemaking were to occur, all Alaskans,
30 especially the RACs, would have another opportunity to
31 comment on any specific proposal at that time. So again,
32 Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time. Thank you for
33 your commitment. Thank you to all of you, whether you've
34 been on the Board for 20 some years or if you're new to
35 the Board like Ms. Ivanoff, I really appreciate your
36 service, on behalf of the Secretary and for your
37 commitment to the people of Alaska and the subsistence
38 resources. So, I'm happy to entertain any questions Mr.
39 Chairman, at this time. But it's a pleasure to be here.
40 I'll be here in and out all day. I'm not flying home
41 until tomorrow on the jet. I've got to get back for
42 Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission meeting in Anchorage
43 tomorrow afternoon. Otherwise, I was going to stay until
44 Thursday. But in any event, thank you very much.

45
46 MS. IVANOFF: I was wondering if you had
47 -- share information with the Council on the current
48 petition from Safari Club International?
49
50

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1 MS. MORTIARTY: Yeah, we've done nothing
2 with that petition at this point. They've submitted that
3 petition for rule making and we have made no decisions
4 on what's going to happen with that at this time.

5
6 MS. IVANOFF: Okay and comments are due
7 for that sometime...?

8
9 MS. MORTIARTY: It's just -- I don't know
10 that -- I mean, I'll have to double check. I don't know
11 that there's is any specific comment period for that
12 petition for rulemaking. It's for us to consider. The
13 comment period for this scoping notice closes the 13th
14 of February.

15
16 MS. IVANOFF: The 13th? Okay.

17
18 MS. MORTIARTY: Yeah, but there's -- I
19 don't believe that there's a comment period open on the
20 rulemaking petition.

21
22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You have a
23 card for her to get back to you or...?

24
25 MS. CHAPA: I don't have a card, but I
26 can get my information and we met in July.....

27
28 (Simultaneous speech)

29
30 MS. IVANOFF: I think, yeah.....

31
32 MS. MORTIARTY: Yeah, yeah it was nice
33 meeting you there. Yeah.

34
35 (Simultaneous speech)

36
37 MR. GREEN: Hey, Martin. Mr. Chair.

38
39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: I heard
40 Louis. Yep, go ahead.

41
42 MR. GREEN: Yeah, I just wanted to ask
43 Kara, I heard her say there were other groups, or group,
44 that are looking to see changes on the Federal
45 Subsistence Board. Who are they?

46
47 MS. MORTIARTY: Thank you, Mr. Green.
48 through the Chair. I was referencing the Safari Club
49 International petition that they submitted in May, a
50 petition for rulemaking, which we've made no decisions

1 on one way or the other. We've also had some comments
2 from the state of Alaska asking us to look at some
3 changes. It was a letter the governor sent Secretary
4 Burgum back in March with some recommendations around
5 the subsistence program. So those are the 2 specifically
6 I was mentioning.

7
8 MR. GREEN: Thank you for that. I will
9 say this that I served probably 13 years on the Northern
10 Norton Sound Advisory Committee and we made a lot of --
11 we put -- we gave a lot of advice to the state, ADF&G.
12 A lot of that was never, never taken serious, it seemed
13 to me. But at this level, with this Federal Subsistence
14 RAC process, we've actually made changes from the table
15 and the staff at OSM has adhered to those changes. And
16 the Federal Board has backed us and found deference with
17 the RACs. So, the process with the federal side of
18 things, it seems to go right to the people. So, I find
19 that it's a very, very important a process to maintain.
20 And I'm glad that the federal government has reached
21 down into seeing and talking to us directly through you
22 and asking our opinions and our advice on this. Mine is
23 strongly to keep the federal RACs in place and the
24 Federal Subsistence Board process in place. It protects
25 the subsistence rights of Americans, Alaskans, Alaska
26 Natives. I appreciate your time here, Kara.

27
28 MS. MORTIARTY: You're welcome.

29
30 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31
32 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Robert.

33
34 MR. MOSES: No comment but thank you for
35 being here.

36
37 MS. MORTIARTY: Yeah, you're welcome.

38
39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Have
40 anybody from the public? Roy.

41
42 MR. ASHENFELTER: I don't know if you
43 need me to come forward. Again, my name is Roy
44 Ashenfelter. And what we learned recently was, the
45 Supreme Court didn't -- and somebody could help me with
46 the right language, but at the end of the day, the
47 Supreme Court didn't accept the change that's being --
48 that was suggested to be offered by the RAC in terms of
49 managing Fish and Game. And I kind of make this a little
50 bit confusing. But at the end of the day, a week or 2

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1 ago, there was a huge effort, to -- by -- in response
2 from the Native community throughout Alaska to not
3 change the way RACs operate. I'm very confident that
4 that was the change that was being recommended. And then
5 the lower court ruled in our favor. The Supreme Court
6 didn't accept the premise from the state, I'm assuming
7 that's where that came from, so by not accepting the
8 state effort to change our RAC system, (indiscernible)
9 Federal Subsistence Board system. It stays the same.
10 What's your current understanding of where we're at on
11 this?
12

13 MS. MORTIARTY: So, I think you're
14 referencing the challenge that the state had on a
15 decision in Kuskokwim, in the Kuskokwim region and they
16 had -- and so, they were -- the state was basically
17 suing the Department of the Interior, and we were
18 winning, as you said, in the lower court. And they
19 petitioned the Supreme Court to take up the case and the
20 Supreme Court said no. So, it basically dropped the case.
21 And so, the issue -- yeah, so there, I mean, so the
22 state lost in its effort to try to undo the changes that
23 they were suing on and we were winning in court.
24

25 MR. ASHENFELTER: Thank you.

26 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK:
27 (Indiscernible), from you, do you have anything?
28

29 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair. This is Louis.
30

31 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.
32

33 MR. GREEN: I'm sorry, he's called on
34 somebody else or -- oh, okay. So basically, what Roy is
35 stating is ANILCA is upheld. Kara, is that.....
36

37 MS. MORTIARTY: Correct.
38

39 (Simultaneous speech)
40

41 MR. GREEN:more or less the.....
42

43 MS. MORTIARTY: Correct.
44

45 MR. GREEN: Okay. Thank you, sorry.
46

47 MS. IVANOFF: More so on what Roy said,
48 I think there is confusion, how you said there was a big
49 push on the Native group side. I think there is confusion
50

1 on that because that decision to uphold that 9th Circuit
2 decision came out the same time that people were pushing
3 for against this Safari Club International petition. So,
4 the decision to uphold or to not take up the State of
5 Alaska's challenge that they put through last fall came
6 out around the same time. So, I think people were getting
7 confused between the 2. So, there is [sic] still on the
8 table the, the changes that they put forward.

9
10 MS. MORIARTY: Correct. Yeah, they are 2
11 separate -- yeah, 2 separate things, they just happen
12 at the -- the decision from the Supreme Court happened
13 in the middle of our review process.

14
15 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah. And I think that's
16 where confusion was from a lot of the yeah groups.

17
18 MS. MORIARTY: Yeah, and you know, and
19 honestly you know, the -- we've made, you know, I just
20 want to reiterate, there have been no decisions made on
21 the Safari Club petition.

22
23 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah.

24
25 MS. MORIARTY: And I think there's also
26 a misconception -- perception, I'm not hearing it here,
27 but I've heard it in other places that well, at the RAC
28 meeting and that I went to in (indiscernible) there was
29 a question of whether the Secretaries were going to just
30 quote unquote, rubber stamp the Safari Club petition.

31
32 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah.

33
34 MS. MORIARTY: And I think my reaction
35 to that would be, if that was the case, we probably
36 would have done it by now, right. We received that
37 petition for rulemaking in May. I started like the very
38 next week. And so, you know, this review in part came
39 out of that, so that we weren't making any rushed
40 decisions, we weren't making any rash recommendations
41 to the Secretaries one way or the other on that petition.
42 And so, we are trying to understand it more before any
43 decision -- any decisions are made, including the
44 decision to do nothing at all. I mean, that in and of
45 itself is a decision. And so again, we're in the as I
46 had an old high school teacher say, the search and
47 research process about, what do Alaskans think? What is
48 important to them? What do they feel? Like we have heard
49 some comment on the process for how rural determinations
50 are made, used to be a lot more objective, it's subject

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1 -- more subjective now, is that right or wrong? I don't
2 know, but I do know that is something that we have heard
3 of -- or that I heard, especially in Wrangell, that
4 could be an area where maybe some changes are more
5 appropriate based on a recent decision that had been
6 made and that part of Alaska. So again, this is -- I
7 hope, I hope, Alaskans I mean, I'm sure it's natural to
8 be afraid, change is coming that you might not support.
9 But I really encourage folks to view this as an
10 opportunity to teach us, especially, again, those of us
11 in the Office of the Secretary. I mean, I've been a 29
12 plus year resident of Alaska, but I'm not a subsistence
13 user. I live in Anchorage. My family loves the outdoors
14 and the recreation. We've spent a lot of time -- my
15 husband especially has spent a lot of time in your region
16 between here and Barrow. We've been to Serpentine -- my
17 kids have been to Serpentine Hot Springs several times.
18 So, we love the region but we're not rural residents and
19 I recognize that and so, we're here to learn.

20

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Anything
22 else? Louis?

23

24 MR. GREEN: No, Mr. Chair. I really
25 appreciate your comments Kara, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

26

27 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Alright,
28 so, the time frame we have, we're going to review our
29 meeting minutes, we're not going to read word for word.

30

31 MS. ELLANNA: Mr. Chair if I may.

32

33 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Oh Lisa, I
34 believe.

35

36 MS. CHAPA: She's online.

37

38 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Oh, you're
39 online Lisa, go ahead.

40

41 MS. CHAPA: Lisa, if you can hear us, you
42 might be muted.....

43

44 (Simultaneous speech)

45

46 MS. ELLANNA: Yes, I can hear you.

47

48 MS. CHAPA: Perfect, thank you.

49

50 MS. ELLANNA: Can you hear me okay?

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(Distortion)

MS. CHAPA: Yes, Lisa, loud and clear.

MS. ELLANNA: Okay, I've got a little bit of background noise, echo, maybe, but anyway, I'm going to get started. Thank you, Mr. Chair, thank you, Council members. My name is Lisa (In Native) Ellanna. My grandparents were Frank and Ursula Ellanna of King Island and Mary's Iglu. I'm Inupiaq from Nome, and I'm a tribal citizen of the King Island Native community. Right now, I'm here representing Kawerak as the Social Science Program Manager, and I'm providing comments in that capacity. First, before I share some of our comments on these issues, I'd like to just point out a few things. Hello Kara, thank you, I'm glad you're here in person. First, Kawerak expresses that we are really -- we send our deepest condolences to the family of Tom Gray and also to his colleagues here on the RAC. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you during this time.

In terms of general concerns, before I get started into the major points, I'd like to share that Kawerak is very concerned that the Department of Interior is holding tribal consultation sessions on this review only by request and when you think about the Executive Order 13175 and the Joint Secretarial Order 3403, federal agencies are required to consult and coordinate with Indian tribal governments and Alaska Native corporations on policies affecting them. And doing tribal consultation only by request is not consistent with the EO 13175 or the Joint Secretarial Order 3403. Secondly, Kawerak requests that an All-RAC meeting be held for all the Rural Advisory Councils to come together in Anchorage, to fully consider and discuss potential impacts of the scoping issues and allow for a period of public comment from rural Alaskans, and that, importantly, it needs to be said, this part here is important, that those comments be included in the scoping report before it is sent to the Secretary for his consideration. Sometimes we have gone to great lengths to hold tribal consultations and then the agency sends us their notes, and then we incorporate our notes. And we both agree on what those notes say and then later, those notes are not included in the documents that document the tribal consultation. So, that's very important, if it's not on the record, then it didn't happen. So, we need these things said before the scoping report goes to the Secretary so that when he formulates

1 any options to consider, that feedback is part of those
2 options, so that's really important, that part.

3
4 Our communities in our region and in
5 rural Alaska, we've survived for thousands of years as
6 indigenous communities practicing subsistence for food,
7 for maintaining our cultures, for living our lives, for
8 maintaining our languages and our traditions and
9 customs, and the DOI has an obligation to fully consider
10 all potential impacts regulation changes might have on
11 tribes and Alaska Native Corporations. So, those were
12 my general housekeeping comments at this moment. But I'd
13 like to dive a little deeper, if you'll indulge me.
14 Kawerak did send a official comment letter and a board
15 resolution earlier this month and officially submitted
16 that on the regulations.gov website, so, if anybody's
17 curious, you're free to look at it there and I believe
18 the packet has been distributed as well.

19
20 So, there are 6 major points that
21 Kawerak really hopes to make and that really get through
22 to the Department of Interior in this process. We need
23 to keep the Office of Subsistence Management in the
24 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management
25 and budget of the Department of Interior. When they moved
26 it, they did so because it was an efficient -- it was
27 efficiency in mind. When it was under the Fish and
28 Wildlife Service, administrative costs really impacted
29 the effectiveness of the Board. And the move was -- this
30 move was really deliberated on for a long time, and it
31 was authorized by the Senate and had the support of our
32 esteemed Senator Lisa Murkowski and all the tribes in
33 Alaska and all the Alaska Native corporations and rural
34 subsistence users. So, the Secretaries need to think
35 about that when they're considering -- if they're
36 considering moving it again, that it doesn't -- it's not
37 in line -- a move is not in line with the efforts to
38 maintain efficiency. Second, we need to preserve the
39 Board's public seats. The Board implements rural
40 subsistence priority and it's really important to
41 preserve the public seats on the Board, including the 3
42 tribally nominated public seats. The agency leaders who
43 sit on the Board, yes, they bring valuable experience
44 as public servants but as the Secretaries themselves
45 have even said, they do not have the same firsthand
46 experience as rural Alaskans who live a subsistence way
47 of life. So, just for some context, Kara, there's 10,000
48 rural Alaskans in the Kawerak region and you probably
49 already know this. There's nearly 100,000 rural Alaskans
50 across the entire state and we all depend on subsistence

1 foods harvested from surrounding lands and waters. And
2 most rural Alaskans eat 80% or more of their diet as
3 subsistence foods. There's reasons for that, it's not
4 because we like to go hunting and take pictures going
5 hunting or we think it's a vacation. It's actually for
6 our survival, it's actually for our food. It's
7 inordinately expensive and very difficult to ship food
8 to rural Alaska. So, protecting the ability to harvest
9 from the lands and waters is critical to our existence,
10 to our survival. With over 70% of rural Alaskan people
11 being tribal members, over 70% of rural Alaska are tribal
12 citizens. These facts underscore the necessity for
13 tribes to have a meaningful and effective voice in the
14 management of subsistence resources on which they
15 depend. The public members of the Board bring expertise
16 in subsistence ways of life, which is actually required
17 by the law, by ANILCA. When rural residents are able to
18 bring their multi-generational knowledge, like Tom did,
19 about wild foods that they rely on for food, into those
20 decision-making spaces, their local knowledge and
21 expertise help the Secretaries meet their statutory
22 obligations to protect subsistence uses. Keeping the
23 public seats on the Federal Subsistence Board provides
24 critically needed voice to those interests that are most
25 impacted. So, we have to consider that, and not only do
26 we have to just think about it and consider it, it's
27 actually required of us by ANILCA, federal law. So, in
28 the scoping process, the Secretaries must consider
29 maintaining public members on the Board to fulfill the
30 intent and statutory obligations of ANILCA.

31
32 The third point that Kawerak wants to
33 make is that the Federal Subsistence Board can't defer
34 to Alaska State Subsistence Regulations on federal
35 lands. There's a constitutional question right there.
36 Pursuant to Title VIII of ANILCA, the United States
37 Congress expressly established Rural Subsistence
38 Priority as a federal program that applies to federal
39 lands and waters. The Secretary established the Federal
40 Subsistence Program to administer that rural subsistence
41 priority on federal lands and waters. Because, the state
42 of Alaska cannot implement a rural subsistence priority
43 that is consistent with federal law. And that's why, the
44 Safari Club's request to defer to state regulations
45 would be contrary to federal law and inconsistent with
46 ANILCA's mandate. So, scoping process considering
47 deferring to state law creates a constitutional
48 question, and the Secretaries need to consider that.
49 It's legally required for the federal government to
50 maintain management of subsistence on federal lands and

1 waters in Alaska. The fourth point I would like to make
2 -- Kawerak would like to make is that preserving the
3 existing Regional Advisory Council membership criteria
4 is very important. Those 10 RACs advise the Board with
5 knowledge from each region. The members of those RACs
6 must be residents of the region they represent and have
7 personal knowledge of the fish and wildlife life
8 resources and subsistence uses in that region. The RACs
9 were created in ANILCA to further the quote, the
10 encouragement of local and regional participation in the
11 decision-making processes affecting the taking of fish
12 and wildlife on the public lands within the region for
13 subsistence uses, unquote. That's straight from the law.
14 Pursuant to this law, ANILCA, the Secretaries have
15 thoughtfully created a system for RAC membership to
16 represent a balance of subsistence and sport and
17 commercial hunters. As part of soliciting applications
18 for RAC membership, the Secretary's conduct outreach.
19 They include commercial and sport use organizations in
20 that outreach, and they carefully consider the
21 qualifications of all applicants. This system was
22 created in full and meaningful consultation and with the
23 support of all interests and was developed over the
24 course of several years. It has worked well and it needs
25 to stay in place.

26
27 The fifth point that Kawerak would like
28 to make is that we need to preserve the Board's
29 flexibility to implement special actions. Special
30 actions allow the Board to take action in response when
31 they need to very quickly. Courts have recognized that
32 this Board must be able to take emergency actions to
33 protect rural Alaskans food supplies, especially when
34 emergency situations arise out of the usual regulatory
35 cycle. Any attempt to introduce regulations to make it
36 more hard [sic] for the Board to use this authority will
37 likely result in unnecessary hardship for rural
38 Alaskans, when there's times of scarcity or hunger, or
39 when there are situations involving public safety, or
40 when there are situations involving inability for
41 transportation to bring food to certain areas. Alaska
42 is, and we all know this, it's very highly prone to
43 powerful natural forces that lead to really big changes
44 in our food supply and transportation supply. So, when
45 we have extreme weather, like Merbok or like Halong, or
46 when we have volcanic eruptions or when the ash gets
47 kicked up in the Katmai area and the planes can't fly,
48 then we have to rely on our ability to go hunting and
49 fishing because our stores are not stocked. So, the
50 ability of the Federal Subsistence Board to take special

1 action in those kind of situations is critical for us,
2 they need to maintain that special action authority.

3
4 And the sixth issue that Kawerak would
5 like to raise is that there is a need to preserve the
6 Board's authority to make rural determinations. The
7 rural determinations process, the way it was revised,
8 is working really well right now and it does not need
9 to be changed. There's no reason to change it. In the
10 past, Native perspectives were not considered enough in
11 that process regarding rule determination. But now
12 things are in a place where it is working well, so we
13 want that maintained. Kawerak is urging the Secretaries
14 to host an All-RAC meeting as part of the scoping
15 process, make opportunities available for tribes and
16 Alaska Native corporations to engage in full and
17 meaningful tribal consultation and absolutely ensure
18 that those comments and that feedback from tribes and
19 ANCs is considered by the Secretaries when formulating
20 options for action. So, if the Secretary doesn't know
21 where we stand on it and then there's some voices in a
22 room telling him to put this option or that option down.
23 Of course, you know, our voices won't be in that space.
24 Our options for the Secretary to consider when he's
25 taking action, need to be on -- in that document, in
26 that scoping document, that report. So, we thank you for
27 this time. Thank you for indulging. I know I took quite
28 a few minutes and I apologize for that, but this is
29 extremely important to Alaska and the people of our
30 region. Thank you.

31
32 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you.
33 I'll quickly comment, you know, 5 years ago we were at
34 the Old Saint Joe having a meeting, and we heard a
35 biologist talk about the bycatch of the big boats out
36 in the water, catching X amount of pounds and then a lot
37 of it go into the waste. And then at the end of the
38 guys, you know, little meeting intro or whatever, I asked
39 him, do you have a second career option? And he said,
40 no, why do you say? I said, you're not going to be able
41 to study all the fish, is going away. You're going to
42 have second career, you're gonna [sic] have no more job.
43 He didn't have no reply. That's how much we like our
44 food. And hopefully it does stop. You heard Lisa, hear
45 our people, you heard Roy, Kelsi, we love our food. I
46 took a teacher when I was in ninth grade, he's from
47 Oregon, he said, hey, Martin, can I go with you to get
48 some king crab for dinner? I said, yeah, you can follow
49 me, I said, go to the store, buy BR9 NGK, Spark Plugs.
50 He said okay, he bought 2 of them. I opened my engine

1 cowlng. I took the old ones off and I said, one for
2 you, one for me. I put the new ones, and we went out and
3 I cut the trout out, and I got the twine and I grabbed
4 the spark plug and he was so in awe, he was like a spark
5 plug, what's the spark plug going to do? I said, there's
6 a magnet in the crab there watch so he put down the
7 crack of the hole and a few minutes they were picking
8 it up and he was in awe. He said, I'll be darned. He
9 called his mom and said, mom, I caught a crab today with
10 a NGK Spark Plug. And she's like, what? So yeah, we do
11 love our food.

12
13 MS. MORIARTY: And Lisa, just to comment
14 on your letter, I do have a copy of it, Gisela gave me
15 -- another copy, I did have one at the office though.
16 And we know that there is a request for the -- for an
17 All-RAC meeting and it's under consideration. No
18 decisions have been made at this time but we're -- we
19 understand the desire and so more to come on that
20 potentially.

21
22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you.
23 Moving on.

24
25 MR. GREEN: Chair, this is Louis. I got
26 a comment.

27
28 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
29 Louis.

30
31 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With
32 the new -- 3 new tribal seats, a lot of folks are
33 delighted at the point of -- the fact that there are 6
34 Alaskan Natives sitting there at the table and 5 agency
35 seats now. I'm just wondering if that didn't have
36 something to do with what the Safari Club one was trying
37 to undo. But anyway, that's my comment. Thank you, Mr.
38 Chair.

39
40 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: So, we have
41 a motion to accept?

42
43 MS. CHAPA: If I may, Mr. Chair. Gisela
44 Chapa. So, if there are no further questions or public
45 comments on the topic, this is an opportunity for the
46 Council to formulate your comments as a Council. If you
47 proceed with that, then this will be an action item. The
48 Council can discuss each topic that was shared with you
49 by Kara. And if you have comments that you would want
50 to include in a letter, we can do that. So, we can do

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1 that -- we can have the discussion and then if the
2 Council wants to take action and submit something,
3 that'll be the time to make a motion and a vote.

4

5 (Talking)

6

7 Sounds good. So, I believe Brent Vickers
8 is going to help us through the discussion. And we'll
9 be taking notes. And at the end of the discussion, I can
10 present the general thoughts that were captured. If that
11 is agreeable to the Council, then you can go ahead and
12 make a motion to submit this -- the comments as
13 discussed. Yeah. Thank you.

14

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you.

16

17 MS. MORIARTY: Thank you.

18

19 MS. CHAPA: So, I have copies of the
20 specific topics for both of you to consider.

21

22 DR. VICKERS: Suns in a perfect spot. I
23 got up here expecting a microphone. I keep forgetting
24 that there's no microphone. Yeah, sure. Thanks, I
25 appreciate that.

26

27 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You got 1
28 minute.

29

30 DR. VICKERS: 1 minute. Good afternoon,
31 Brent Vickers, Office of Subsistence Management. So,
32 thank you Kara, for giving the presentation on the
33 program review. So far, the majority of other Councils,
34 and I'm sorry, I'm trying to quickly think this might
35 be -- you might be the last 2 Councils, between you and
36 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta go through this process. And if I
37 remember correctly, all the other Councils have
38 commented, I guess, I haven't heard every meeting, so
39 don't quote me on that. But every -- almost every or
40 every Council has gone through and provided comments on
41 the program review because this is your only opportunity
42 as a Council to produce comments on the review. Of
43 course, as individuals, you can leave the meeting and
44 get online and provide your own comments. But as to act
45 on the Council, this is your only opportunity to do so
46 because, as Kara said, the review -- the comment period
47 ends on February 13th. And most other -- of the other
48 Councils, at least the ones I've been able to attend or
49 at least listen to, have gone through point by point on
50 each of those targeted areas that the program review is

1 focusing on. I -- there's also been some additional
2 comments provided by some Councils. I believe the
3 Eastern Interior and Western Interior Councils were able
4 to do this jointly and go through point by point. Some
5 Councils have taken some time, maybe looked at some of
6 the -- discuss things amongst each other. At least, read
7 through some more things, particularly in the very
8 beginning when this is brand new and they didn't -- it
9 kind of came out of left field and they wanted some more
10 time to digest it and then make -- provide comments.
11 I'll say it's up to you guys, but this is your
12 opportunity. And I'm sitting here just because it --
13 it's become sort of a pattern now. This wasn't the way
14 we said it in the beginning, but for Kara or someone in
15 her else [sic] -- coming from her position to give a
16 presentation and then someone from OSM such as myself
17 to lead providing comments. So, we can do that now we
18 can go through point by point, if you'd like or however
19 you want to do it. If you want to go, I can try to lead
20 that discussion.

21
22 MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair, I think with
23 time -- the time that we're given, the February 13th,
24 we should go point by point and we only have today
25 really, if we're going to take action and decide what
26 our comments are going to be.

27
28 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: I agree.

29
30 DR. VICKERS: Okay, then let's get to it
31 and feel free to ask questions. I might be able to
32 provide some background on it. Kara or anyone else,
33 Gisela might be able to, but if so, let me know if you
34 have questions. Okay, I didn't know if you were leaving
35 or not, Martin. So, if you want to start from the
36 beginning, I have listed as Topic 1: OSMS move from Fish
37 and Wildlife Service, Office of Secretary. This was an
38 administrative move that happened last year. It was
39 completed in July. And so basically moving, you know,
40 it's -- we remain within the Department of Interior. We
41 were positioned at a certain office within Fish and
42 Wildlife, but they moved us out of that. So, we're no
43 longer under one of the land management agencies, Fish
44 and Wildlife, National Parks, and now we're sort of
45 directly, more directly in line with the Secretary of
46 Interior and with this Office of Secretary, which I'm
47 still learning about but that's the gist of it.

48
49 MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair. Just want to
50 share my thoughts on this. I like the move where it is

1 now. I think the -- being where it is has allowed it to
2 be more efficient. Funding flows through easier when
3 you're in the spot that it's in and I strongly, strongly
4 oppose moving it back to where -- back into the Fish and
5 Wildlife.

6
7 MS. CHAPA: And, Mr. Chair, if I may,
8 Gisela Chapa. I just wanted to point to the screen. Our
9 staff is trying to capture the comments and again, this
10 can serve as a guide when the Council is ready to make
11 a motion to vote on. Thank you.

12
13 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Council Member
14 Ivanoff, is it? Thank you. Any other comments from
15 Council members on this topic?

16
17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Do you have
18 anything, Louis?

19
20 MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you.
21 So, having said that, about the Office Subsistence
22 Management under the Secretary, Kelsi pointed that out
23 already. We're moving down to the criteria for Advisory
24 Council membership, we'd like to keep that -- I'd like
25 to see that current -- keep with the current requirements
26 already [sic]. The membership of the Federal Board --
27 with the retaining of the 3 public seats and the new 3
28 tribally nominated seats, would like to keep them in
29 place and no change. I'd like to see an All RACs meeting.

30
31 MS. CHAPA: Louis.

32
33 MR. GREEN: Go ahead.

34
35 (Simultaneous speech)

36
37 Are you having a hard time hearing me?

38
39 MS. CHAPA: No, no, sorry to interrupt,
40 we can hear you loud and clear, I think it would be a
41 lot easier if we just move point by point.

42
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44
45 MR. GREEN: Okay, okay.

46
47 MS. CHAPA: We're capturing all your
48 comments, if you don't mind. We're still trying to
49 incorporate all of the Council members' comments on the
50 OSM move. Sorry about that, and thank you.

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MR. GREEN: I was just looking at looking at the list, sorry, I guess we're going to do one at a time. So, the criteria for Regional Advisory Council membership keep as current.

MS. CHAPA: Thank you.

MR. GREEN: That would be.....

DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Louis. This is Brent Vickers OSM, I got those comments down. But yeah, I just want to make sure all the Council members -- so we're not jumping all over, back and forth and lose track of where we're at. I think it's easier for us all, especially with people on the phone, people in the room, we just go point by point.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GREEN: No problem.

DR. VICKERS: Yeah. Thank you, I appreciate that. Does anyone else have any comments on the OSM move from Fish and Wildlife?

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Robert.

MR. MOSES: No comment.

DR. VICKERS: Thank you. Okay. The Council membership and as you know, this has several aspects to it. The application process, how is that working for you? Not only as people who have gone through it, do you also feel that it's doing a good job of getting good representatives? Subsistence and also sport and commercial representatives. Also, the composition of the Councils is this 70/30 subsistence to sport at least sounds like a good idea. We might not always be getting that balance, but do you agree with it? Do you agree with the process? Do you think that it's getting the best representatives? Do you think that -- yeah, I guess. And any other thoughts you might have on it.

MS. IVANOFF: I agree with what Louis said about keeping this (indiscernible).

DR. VICKERS: Okay, don't hear anyone else. So, I'll just go to the Federal Board Membership. As you know, it's been changing over the years, most

1 recently last year adding 3 public representatives who
2 are nominated by tribes. That makes the public
3 representation 6 members and the agencies have
4 maintained throughout the 5 members coming from the
5 agencies, and the 6 public members, of course, including
6 the Chair of the Board who is a member of the public.
7 So how do you feel about where we're at with the Federal
8 Board Membership? Would you like to see changes? Would
9 you like to see reverted back to 3 public members or
10 even less?

11
12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKOGAK: I would like
13 to see more advertisements, I mean, is it the -- you
14 know, as a Board member right now we only got 4 and I'm
15 a little bit hurt that we don't have any more. We lost
16 a great long time Board member, but you know, a couple
17 other people didn't run again. It'd be great to advertise
18 in the tribal building.

19
20 DR. VICKERS: Okay and just for
21 clarification, because the words get switched up. And
22 what I was just talking about was the Federal Subsistence
23 Board, which are the in -- basically the meetings are
24 always in Anchorage.

25
26 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Right.

27
28 DR. VICKERS: That's the heads of the 5
29 agencies.

30
31 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Right.

32
33 DR. VICKERS: And also, representatives
34 from -- there's one from Yukon-Kuskokwim, there's one
35 from the Northwest area. And it sounded to me like you're
36 talking about the Councils, your Council. I put that
37 comment on RAC membership, which we just went through,
38 to say that we do need better outreach and recruitment.
39 That sound good to you?

40
41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yeah.

42
43 DR. VICKERS: Okay.

44
45 MR. GREEN: I had a question on that, Mr.
46 Chair.

47
48 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

49
50

1 MR. GREEN: Is there any way to that we
2 could possibly speed up when we need to replace people
3 by seating? You know, we're getting short on this Council
4 as it is, and I was just wondering how we could do
5 anything to, if necessary, appoint people to seats.
6 That's my question, I guess.

7
8 DR. VICKERS: That's an excellent point
9 and extremely poignant, shall I say, with the current
10 context, you guys recently leaving -- losing 2 members.
11 So, thank you.

12
13 MS. IVANOFF: That is my concern too,
14 because even just me getting on took, what, a year, I
15 think? So yeah, replacing when we have -- when we lose
16 a couple people and we're struggling to make quorum is
17 a huge, huge issue.

18
19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Gabe.

20
21 MR. TEGOSEAK: Gabe Tegoseak. What if you
22 had extra people that had extra people -- like people
23 you know, who already passed the backgrounds and they're
24 on deck basically.

25
26 MS. IVANOFF: Like alternates?

27
28 MR. TEGOSEAK: Yeah, alternates and
29 people who -- so, when that transition happens, you're
30 able to look through their list.

31
32 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, that's a good idea
33 because we -- on our ACs we have that, alternates in our
34 Fish and Game.

35
36 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: I think on
37 the reference part, you know everybody in our region
38 knows everybody. I think, you know, a Board member could
39 be a reference for, you know, getting that to speed up.

40
41 MS. IVANOFF: For nominations.

42
43 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yes.

44
45 MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chair, if I may, I was
46 going to echo what Kelsi mentioned. Absolutely, anybody
47 can apply to serve on the Regional Advisory Council. But
48 people can also be nominated. So, Council members can
49 also choose to nominate a person to be considered or a
50 RAC. And that person just has to agree to the

1 eligibility, you know, agree to the terms of being on
2 RAC, like traveling and meeting twice a year, assisting
3 with outreach and sharing information, being that point
4 of contact between the community and the RAC and vice
5 versa, the RAC and the community, exchanging information
6 things of that nature. And as long as they meet the
7 eligibility criteria, they should be considered.

8
9 MS. IVANOFF: Is that something that we
10 can do just like if we come to a meeting and we have
11 open spots or should we add it as an agenda for the next
12 meeting in March?

13
14 MS. CHAPA: Yeah, if I may, the -- I think
15 as long as the application and nomination period is open,
16 I can totally reach out to each of you and ask, do you
17 have anybody that is interested or that can be nominated?
18 And that would be the time and the place to also add
19 their applications.

20
21 MS. IVANOFF: Okay.

22
23 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair. Hi, Mr. Chair,
24 this is Katya Wessels and I'm the Council Coordination
25 Division Supervisor with the Office of Subsistence
26 Management. So, I just wanted to add a little bit of
27 clarity to this discussion. So, in -- you were talking
28 about the alternates, currently your Council in your
29 Charter, you have the language, all the alternates. But
30 the way the alternates work, if your region has enough
31 of applications to designate the alternates, those
32 alternates can only start serving on the Council if a
33 seat is vacated permanently. If somebody, for example,
34 moves out of the region or passes away or resigns from
35 the Council, then that alternate can be moved into that
36 seat out of cycle, out of appointment cycle. And -- but
37 that requires to have more applications than there are
38 seats to have alternates. And as you know, your Council
39 had several vacant seats for last several years. So, we
40 at the Office of Subsistence Management would really
41 appreciate anyone helping us to recruit more members for
42 your Council. We know that this process takes a very
43 long time, but you're the Secretarial appointees, so
44 that requires a long process in order for Secretary to
45 select the most qualified applicants to serve on the
46 Council. We are on our side trying to improve this
47 process as much as possible. As, for example, we shorten
48 now the period when the -- we have the open call for
49 applications and nominations. But that said, even though
50 we don't have currently, the call for applications and

1 nominations open. Anyone can apply at any time. If we
2 receive your application or if we receive your
3 nomination for somebody, we're just going to hold this
4 application nomination and as soon as we can, as soon
5 as the next appointment cycle opens, then we are going
6 to put that application in the pile for that period.
7 Like right now, we are awaiting the appointments from
8 the Secretary of the Interior, it's in final stages.
9 It's -- we're hoping to get the appointment letters very
10 soon, hopefully by the end of January for 2025
11 appointment cycle. And as soon as we get these
12 appointment letters, we're going to open the new
13 appointment cycle for 2026. So, just kind of keep that
14 in mind, you know, and any kind of suggestions that you
15 have on the improvement of the appointment process, very
16 welcome. Thank you for your time and if you have any
17 questions, I'm happy to answer them.

18
19 DR. VICKERS: Okay, let's move -- we
20 jumped back towards Council Membership and I just want
21 to make sure before we move on, does anyone have anything
22 to say about the Federal Subsistence Board membership
23 in the 6 public members specifically, or are we okay
24 with like where it's at is what I've heard voicing
25 Louis's statement to keep that in place. Okay, that
26 brings us to Topic 4: Special Actions. So that we're all
27 clear a special action is a temporary change at most 2
28 years depending on when a special action is implemented.
29 It's a response when there's -- essentially you don't
30 have the time to submit a proposal and a notice that
31 there's been a change in the resource level or you --
32 something else is getting in the way of people being
33 able to practice their subsistence uses. And their need
34 to do a quick and temporary change, whether it be
35 emergency or what's called temporary special action or
36 emergency special action. There's processes that may
37 differ, but this is a tool that's been used by Councils
38 and the public before to respond to these, you know,
39 quick changes. Suddenly there's just not as many fish
40 as expected, something like that. And how do you -- how
41 does the Council feel about special actions? Do you think
42 that they're helpful as subsistence users and Council?
43 Do you think that process is too difficult or too easy?
44 Do you like how it's been going? That's it, I guess.
45 Anything else?

46
47 MR. GREEN: Louis.

48
49 MS. IVANOFF: Would an example of this
50 be -- the -- like what they did in Kake with that moose

1 during Covid?

2

3 DR. VICKERS: Yes, that's exactly an
4 example of that, that they did that because of
5 essentially food insecurity reasons. And so, they
6 requested to expand, I think it was to expand the season
7 temporarily.

8

9 MS. IVANOFF: Okay. I think it should
10 just -- my opinion is they should -- it should be kept
11 in its current -- the way it works now. Thank you.

12

13 DR. VICKERS: All right, Louis.

14

15 MR. GREEN: Yeah, I -- ditto on what
16 Kelsi said. I think the Federal Subsistence Board should
17 have that authority remaining. Thanks. Just a point of
18 clarification there on that Board membership, public
19 membership. It says 3 public seats, I said, I think it
20 should be 6 public seats. Thanks.

21

22 MR. VICKERS: Thank you, Louis, again so
23 that we're clear, are you suggesting to add 3 more to
24 the 3 that were just added? Or are you saying to keep
25 it as it is with -- we have a -- the Chairm the 2 public
26 members that have had those seats for several years now,
27 and now the 3 tribal nominated public members that were
28 just added last year?

29

30 MR. GREEN: Yeah, we're throwing that
31 public seats around here a little bit. So, by accident
32 -- the 3 -- I'd like to see the 3 tribal seats remain
33 with the 3 public seats that are already there.

34

35 (Simultaneous speech)

36

37 DR. VICKERS: Okay, I just
38 (indiscernible).

39

40 MR. GREEN: Thank you.

41

42 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, I'm sorry for -
43 - if I'm actually confusing people more than I'd like
44 to be, more than helping. All right, anything else on
45 special actions?

46

47 (No response)

48

49 Okay. Next topic is the state's role.
50 By the state, I mean Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

1 their role in the Subsistence Management Program. And
2 there's obviously a history between the Alaska
3 Department of Fish and Game and Federal Subsistence
4 Management in the program. Currently, the -- we are
5 always very lucky to have -- the Alaska Department of
6 Fish and Game has a huge component in, if not very, very
7 large component and managing resources throughout the
8 state, getting all the extremely valuable data, showing
9 up to these meetings which I -- I'm always so happy to
10 see representatives here because they have such great
11 insight on a lot of the things. And the state provides
12 recommendations in the regulatory process. They sit at
13 the meeting, and recommendation on special actions and
14 such. Do you feel that this -- there should be more
15 involvement from the state, that they should have more
16 say than just a recommendation? Should they have a vote
17 essentially as Board members? Or do you think they should
18 have less involvement in the subsistence program, or do
19 you like the involvement that you're seeing, or any other
20 comments you might want to make?

21
22 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis.

23
24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

25
26 MR. GREEN: Yeah. I think it should stay
27 as it is currently with ADF&Gs role in the management
28 program. Thank you.

29
30 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, this is Kelsi. I
31 agree with Louis. I think with the state -- the state
32 regulations not having a rural subsistence priority, I
33 don't think we should defer to them. And though I do
34 appreciate they are our boots on the ground people,
35 basically, they do provide a lot of good insight. But I
36 think given the history between OSM the -- between OSM
37 and the state, I don't think they should have a -- I
38 don't think they should be giving a voting or non-voting
39 seat.

40
41 DR. VICKERS: Thank you. Anybody else?

42
43 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Robert,
44 you got anything?

45
46 MR. MOSES: No comment, Mr. chair.

47
48 DR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you. The next
49 topic is duplication. And this is a kind of a confusing
50 one to, I think, a lot of people. Basically, there's --

1 all regulations, ADF&G has all state regulations, and
2 the Federal Subsistence Board program has its own set
3 of regulations. And many times, across the regulations
4 might be the same -- identically the same, hunt season,
5 the bag limit, the methods across the board may be the
6 same. Do you find this to be excessive? Unnecessary to
7 have 2 set of regulations, especially when they are the
8 same? Do you think as subsistence users that this is
9 confusing to be -- have to look at both sets of
10 regulations to see where they may differ? Do you think
11 it's a good thing to maintain those regulations on the
12 subsistence side of things, even if they are the same.
13 Maybe, that having it on in the books is you're better
14 off in the long run, even though they might be the same
15 now. How do you guys feel as subsistence users?

16
17 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, this is Kelsi. I
18 think it should be kept for rural determination, given
19 they just adopted a policy back in 2017. Yeah, I believe
20 they're -- I believe they can make good determinations
21 on what's rural versus non-rural.

22
23 DR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you, you may
24 have jumped ahead to the last item. Maybe you're getting
25 ready -- I was talking about the duplication of
26 regulations. But I took note on your comment on rural
27 determinations, which is coming next and we'll be the
28 last one. Do you have anything you want to say?

29
30 MS. IVANOFF: I think it shouldn't be
31 touched.

32
33 DR. VIVKERS: Okay. Anyone else on?

34
35 (Simultaneous speech)

36
37 DR. VICKERS: Yeah, go ahead, thank you.

38
39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead
40 Louis.

41
42 MR. GREEN: Yeah. I think that on the
43 duplication, I think, you know, we've gone through this
44 with housekeeping, basically we call it where we adjust
45 to align. And I like that process. This gives us, as the
46 Council, the ability to have our say. Thank you.

47
48 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, I appreciate
49 that. Anything else on that one?

50

1 MS. IVANOFF: Once more comment. Having
2 that gives us more opportunity for subsistence, just
3 specifically thinking of like moose and muskox, where
4 we might not have that opportunity if we didn't have the
5 rule, if we didn't have the FSB or OSM regulation.
6

7 DR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you. Okay,
8 thank you. In the last item, non-rural determinations.
9 Hasn't been a huge issue in your region. There's no non-
10 rural. Nome is rural -- this has been more of an issue
11 in the Southcentral, Eastern Interior and Southeast. But
12 as member -- Council Member Ivanoff just mentioned, they
13 changed the policy in 2017. Prior to that, rural
14 determinations or non-rural determinations was based on
15 the decennial reviews. Every 2 years -- 10 years, you're
16 going through the U.S. census and then they do the
17 population counts and would do some calculations on
18 population, and also the communities around them, and
19 who's -- how many people are working there, blah, blah,
20 blah. And punch out these numbers and based on those
21 numbers, decide on which communities are rural and which
22 are non-rural. There was a big push from Councils prior
23 to 2017 to say, hey, we want more say in this process,
24 we don't like that it's so numbers driven. And so, they
25 did a review and changed it to make it much more
26 subjective. We've been only through 2 proposals, and now
27 proposals have to go in, before they didn't. Proposal
28 to change the status of whether it be a community -- a
29 rural community to non-rural or vice versa, there's been
30 2 proposals to change what were previously considered
31 urban or non-rural and rural and now all of those
32 residents can participate in the Federal Subsistence
33 Program. They weren't previous to that. That probably
34 would not have happened if not for the policy changes
35 most recently Ketchikan. And so even though your Council
36 doesn't go through that process, it hasn't been through
37 that process. You know, it's very -- it's on the table
38 for anyone to put on a proposal for Nome to be non-
39 rural, for example. And then it would have to go through
40 the process, and the Council would have to hear an
41 analysis and make a recommendation to the Board and all
42 this.
43

44 How do you feel about that? It's very
45 theoretical to you because you haven't been through it.
46 But do you think it's a good process as you see it
47 written? Do you think that there should be more -- there
48 should be some more thresholds as far as population
49 counts or something that help make those determinations.
50 Do you like the Council having more say? Because right

1 now Council do not have deference in the decision. They
2 just make a recommendation to the Board.

3
4 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah. I think it should be
5 kept as is. Just speaking with others from other areas,
6 with that change back in 2017, for words subjective
7 versus qualitative or quantitative. I think it should
8 be (indiscernible).

9
10 DR. VICKERS: Anything else on that one?

11
12 DR. VOORHEES: Through the Chair and
13 Brent leading this discussion. This is Hannah Voorhees
14 with OSM. Well, see, I'm keeping notes and I didn't
15 catch the last part of your statement. Would you mind
16 just repeating that?

17
18 MS. IVANOFF: I just -- I like that it
19 had more -- took more subjective considerations over
20 just quantitative or rural versus non-rural.

21
22 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you.

23
24 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Hannah. That's
25 the 7 main points, I -- is there anything else you would
26 like to provide comments on outside of those 7 items?

27
28 (Simultaneous speech)

29
30 MR. GREEN: (Indiscernible). I just
31 wondered if anybody thought that we should be able to,
32 at the Council level, have a vote on that. I guess we
33 just basically give our advice at this point. Kelsi, you
34 got anything to add to that.

35
36 DR. VICKERS: Just to clarify, are you
37 speaking about the non-rural determinations and having
38 more of a voice in it rather than a recommendation, or
39 am I off?

40
41 MR. GREEN: Yeah, you're right on there.
42 I just was wondering if that was anything that Kelsi
43 considered for comment.

44
45 MS. IVANOFF: I -- this is Kelsi. I
46 thought of that too. But given how we currently operate
47 where we make comments and, you know, advise rather than
48 vote on things I think that uniformity works. And
49 providing you know, I think the Board does a pretty
50 good job of taking the RAC comments and concerns into

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1 consideration.

2

3 MR. GREEN: Great, that's great, thank
4 you. Thanks for (indiscernible).

5

6 DR. VICKERS: Thank you both. Okay, now
7 does anyone have anything else they want to add to this
8 program review or a wish list, sort of speak?

9

10 MS. IVANOFF: This is Kelsi. I did see
11 on there that you put Council compensation, and this was
12 never something that I -- you know, I did this because
13 I wanted to do it and I wanted to be -- know what was
14 going on and help advise. And but with the struggle of
15 -- and I know this is across all RACs, this isn't just
16 our RAC, with the struggle of membership that might help
17 incentivize people to serve, since they are spending
18 time away from their families and away from work, that
19 might incentivize more people to serve on these RACs.

20

21 DR. VICKERS: Thank you. Anything else
22 from anyone?

23

24 MR. GREEN: Yeah, this is Louis. I think
25 that was kind of the -- yeah, that kind of follows the
26 intent of the compensation in my mind. Just to kind to
27 get to the point where we can encourage others to serve.
28 Thank you.

29

30 DR. VICKERS: Okay. Got anything else? I
31 basically have across the board almost the 7 items to
32 maintain as they are. Except for with Council Membership
33 to find better -- quicker ways of replacing people and
34 better outreach, improve outreach to get membership. The
35 -- but everything else pretty much across the board and
36 then to support for the idea of providing Council Members
37 compensation because that could incentivize more
38 applicants. I hope you guys want to -- someone want to
39 make a motion, then we can drop this letter or these
40 recommendations and send them to the -- provide them to
41 the (indiscernible).

42

43 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis,
44 I'll make that motion to recommend.

45

46 MS. IVANOFF: This is Kelsi, I'll second.

47

48 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All in
49 favor, aye.

50

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1 IN UNISON: Aye.

2

3 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Robert?

4

5 MR. MOSES: Aye, yes.

6

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Motion
8 carries.

9

10 DR. VICKERS: Thank you very much.

11

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Alright.
13 Robert said, we're taking a 5-minute break, everybody.
14 Thanks, Robert.

15

16 MR. MOSES: Hey, Mr. Chairman, I need to
17 be excused to go to my other job from 2 to 4.

18

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Okay.

20

21 MS. CHAPA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, if I may, I
22 guess the next agenda item will be review and approve
23 the agenda minutes and then yes, exactly the meeting
24 minutes. So, do we want to?

25

26 (Talking)

27

28 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Hey
29 Robert, could you join us at 4?

30

31 MR. MOSES: It'll be a little after 4.
32 I'm going to have to leave that job, then go check
33 generator, and then I could call back in.

34

35 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Okay.

36

37 MR. MOSES: Okay. Thank you.

38

39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you,
40 Robert.

41

42 MR. MOSES: Yep.

43

44 (Off record)

45

46 (On record)

47

48 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Everybody,
49 review the minutes, please. We're not going to read word
50 for word. That's going to take up a lot of time.

1

2 MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chair, if I may. Is this
3 something that the Council can move to the winter meeting
4 because we just lost quorum?

5

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yeah, all
7 right. Moving on ahead. Is that March? All right.

8

9 MS. CHAPA: Or actually later in the
10 meeting once we get back. Sorry.

11

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
13 Louis.

14

15 MR. GREEN: This is -- yeah, okay, sorry.
16 I think we can move it to the next meeting. I don't
17 think it's an issue. That's my feelings. Thank you.

18

19 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right,
20 move on to reports. Number 9, everybody. Anybody have a
21 report? Louis.

22

23 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well,
24 successful moose hunt this fall. I heard a lot of success
25 stories, seeing stuff on Facebook. So, younger
26 generations moving quite well in that aspect. Heard good
27 comments about beluga. I think the muskox has been a
28 success for what it is. The numbers aren't that great,
29 but still people are still getting their subsistence
30 muskox. The caribou is another question, the herd keeps
31 shrinking, I didn't get the -- I don't have the correct
32 number right now in front of me, but it's disturbing to
33 see how that's going. The question in my mind is, when
34 are we ever going to look at the idea of predator control
35 when it comes to ungulates in our region to where we get
36 some kind of control over predation.

37

38 I was very, very disturbed to see
39 spawning beds in the Nome River were completely empty.
40 One of them's by my cabin. That's always got at least
41 pink salmon and humpies in there, but nothing this year.
42 When I started advocating on our behalf in 1993 at the
43 Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee, we had fish
44 in the rivers. We're getting to the point where there's
45 just absolutely nothing. So, something's gotta change.
46 But overall, I think the gathering berries were good.
47 So, setting aside the salmon issue everything else
48 seemed to be -- people were able to get what they needed,
49 so. Thank you.

50

1 MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair, this is Kelsi.
2 Another good moose year for Unalakleet. I believe this
3 is the second year we haven't had a quota on our hunt.
4 Yeah, super and I heard good things about the counts
5 from Fish and Game. It was good to see a lot of first
6 catches this year. Unalakleet is planning on holding a
7 first catch potluck. Beluga, we had a lot of -- saw a
8 lot of beluga. People harvested some beluga as well this
9 year. Sea ice is always an issue, but we're actually
10 seeing some finally this year. And so, people are hoping
11 to get out and subsistence (indiscernible), which we
12 haven't done and probably -- I'm gonna [sic] say at
13 least 10 years or so. So, it'll be cool to -- if the ice
14 stays, it usually goes away as soon as it freezes. But
15 hoping to get out and do that. It was a good berry year.
16 Good weather all summer, people harvested the fish they
17 needed. Fins were low, of course, but we're able to rely
18 on the other fish that we do -- that we are lucky to be
19 able to get. Yeah.

20
21 (Talking)

22
23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yeah, like
24 everybody said moose, my friends get moose all the time
25 and Golovin. And I'm very fortunate to have that, you
26 know, of course caribou, are kind of far away. You know,
27 we do get, you know, a few salmon, not like Louis said,
28 it ain't what it used to be. This last winter when I was
29 in Golovin, you know, I had a pet lynx behind my house
30 and I called him puddles, so I'd give him a trout every
31 day, and he -- I'd call him and he'd come right out
32 (indiscernible), I'd give him the trout, and he'd just
33 sit there and eat it and go right back. We had a bunch
34 of them by our tribal building. It's pretty cool and
35 that's our hometown mascot, too, by the way. Yeah. And
36 we had a lot of ptarmigan everywhere. It's always good
37 to see the young, young men and women go out there and
38 hunt, and it's pretty cool. So, that's my report. Did
39 you have a report, Louis?

40
41 MS. CHAPA: Yeah, he did, he sure did.

42
43 MR. GREEN: I kind of gave my kind of
44 gave my report there.

45
46 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Okay,
47 alrighty.

48
49 MR. GREEN: Thank you.

50

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1 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Are there
2 any public comments online?

3
4 MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chair, if I may. This is
5 Gisela Chapa. And so, we've just moved from item 9,
6 Regional Subsistence Reports, into item 10. So, this is
7 an opportunity for the public or tribes to chime in and
8 provide comments on any items that are not included in
9 the agenda. And this is an opportunity that is provided
10 at the beginning of each meeting day.

11
12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Fred, you
13 online from Elim yet?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 Everybody happy?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 All right. We've got the North Pacific
22 Fishery.

23
24 MS. CHAPA: Spencer Weinstein, are you
25 online?

26
27 MS. WEINSTEIN: Yes, I'm here.

28
29 MS. CHAPA: Oh, thank you. So, I believe
30 the Council is now on item 11, which is the North Pacific
31 Fishery Management Council Chum Bycatch Draft EIS.

32
33 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You got
34 three minutes.

35
36 MS. WEINSTEIN: Are you able to share my
37 presentation, or should I share it from my computer?

38
39 MS. CHAPA: Oh, yes. Give me a minute.

40
41 MS. WIENSTIEN: Okay.

42
43 MS. CHAPA: Sorry.

44
45 (Pause)

46
47 MS. WEINSTEIN: Yeah, I think I -- it
48 looks like I'm able to.

49
50

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1 MS. CHAPA: Yes, okay, thank you, sorry
2 about that.

3
4 MS. WEINSTEIN: No, it's fine. Are you
5 able to see the slides?

6
7 MS. CHAPA: Yes.

8
9 MS. WEINSTEIN: Hi, everyone. Thank you
10 for the invitation to present today. My name is Spencer
11 Weinstein and I'm the Fisheries Biologist at Kawerak.
12 As you may know, at next month's North Pacific Fishery
13 Management Council meeting, the Council will be
14 discussing and taking action on proposed management
15 measures to reduce chum salmon bycatch in the Eastern
16 Bering Sea Pollock Fishery. The meeting is being held
17 from February 2nd to 11th and will be a hybrid virtual
18 and in-person meeting in Anchorage. Today, I'll be
19 sharing an overview of the issue, the alternatives to
20 reduce bycatch that are being considered, Kawerak's
21 position on the alternatives and upcoming opportunities
22 for input and participation and I'm then happy to answer
23 any questions that you might have.

24
25 So, first to give an overview of the
26 issue. Chum salmon are an important subsistence species,
27 and chum populations have been in decline in recent
28 decades, which has been impacting subsistence
29 opportunities in Western Alaska. There are likely
30 multiple stressors impacting the species, one of which
31 is the bycatch of chum in the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock
32 Fishery. There is currently no cap on chum bycatch in
33 the pollock fishery, and chum bycatch has averaged
34 approximately 250,000 fish per year, approximately 18%
35 of which are Western Alaska origin. After years of tribal
36 pressure, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
37 is taking final action on the alternatives in the chum
38 bycatch DEIS at their February 2026 meeting. So, the
39 North Pacific Fishery Management Council manages the
40 federal fishery 3 to 200 miles offshore and the Council
41 has 15 total seats, of those, 11 are voting seats and 4
42 are non-voting seats. And so, the 11 voting seats, 7 are
43 representative of fishery interests, 5 from Alaska, 2
44 from Washington state and 4 federal -- or state or
45 federal representatives, 1 each from Alaska, Washington,
46 Oregon, and then the National Marine Fisheries Service.
47 And then the 4 non-voting seats, those are held by the
48 Pacific States Marine Commission, the U.S. Fish and
49 Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of State and the
50 U.S. Coast Guard. And it's important to note here that

1 there are no designated tribal seats on the Council at
2 present. And then the National Marine Fisheries Service,
3 or NMFS, sits within NOAA, which sits within the
4 Department of Commerce, And Commerce is the final
5 decision maker regarding Council actions and NMFS
6 implements and enforces those actions. And then just 2
7 other acronyms that might come up through this process
8 are AKRO, which is Alaska Region Policy and Management
9 based in Juneau, and then AFSC, the Alaska Fisheries
10 Science Center and they conduct science and are based
11 in Seattle.

12
13 So, there are 5 alternatives being
14 considered by the Council. Alternative 1 is no action
15 or to continue with the status quo of no chum bycatch
16 cap in the pollock fishery. This alternative is required
17 to be present in the DEIS and is mutually exclusive of
18 all other alternatives. As it would continue to allow
19 for uncapped chum bycatch in the pollock fishery,
20 Kawerak does not support this alternative. Alternative
21 2 is the implementation of a fishery wide bycatch cap
22 based on the options presented in the DEIS, the cap
23 could range from 100,000 to 550,000 chum annually, and
24 the cap would be apportioned among the pollock sectors.
25 Kawerak strongly supports the implementation of a
26 fishery -- a hard fishery wide bycatch cap, and the
27 selection of the lowest possible cap so 100,000 chum
28 annually.

29
30 Alternative 3 is the implementation of
31 a fishery wide bycatch cap tied to abundance metrics.
32 This alternative would implement a bycatch cap, only
33 following years of low chum salmon abundance, which
34 would be based either on a 3-area index or a Yukon River
35 only index. Kawerak does not support this alternative,
36 because the abundance triggers presented in the DEIS
37 would basically support low chum abundance in Western
38 Alaska rivers and bycatch wouldn't be capped at all
39 levels of abundance. Alternatives 2 and 3 are mutually
40 exclusive, exclusive of each other, but either can be
41 selected in combination with one or both of alternatives
42 4 and 5. Alternative 4 would require the pollock industry
43 to incorporate 6 additional requirements into their
44 incentive plan agreements, which are contractual
45 avoidance plans. Since 2022, when the chum bycatch issue
46 began receiving more attention, the pollock industry has
47 been implementing most of these provisions, but they are
48 not yet formalized in regulation. Kawerak supports
49 alternative 4, but only in combination with alternatives
50 2 and 5, to ensure that there is a regulatory limit on

1 how much bycatch there can be.

2

3 Alternative 5 would create a
4 conservation corridor with bycatch restrictions in areas
5 that have historically had high western Alaska chum
6 bycatch. Within alternative 5, there are various options
7 that would affect the area that would be covered by the
8 corridor, as well as how many chum salmon could be caught
9 within the corridor until the corridor were closed for
10 fishing. And this potential cap ranges from 50,000 to
11 350,000 chum annually. Kawerak supports specific
12 portions of alternative 5, which I will discuss in more
13 detail on the next slide. There is also an option within
14 multiple of the alternatives that would allow for the
15 creation of a CDQ reserve pool, which would increase the
16 amount of chum that CDQ vessels would be allowed to take
17 as bycatch under certain conditions. And I won't talk
18 much about that option, except to say that Kawerak does
19 not support it, because it would simply allow more
20 bycatch over any established cap, up to 8% more than a
21 cap would call for as a limit.

22

23 As I mentioned on the previous slide,
24 Kawerak supports implementing a combination of
25 alternatives 2, 4, and 5. Alternative 2 is the only one
26 that implements a fishery wide hard bycatch cap and is
27 therefore the only alternative that represents true and
28 meaningful action on the chum bycatch issue. It is the
29 only option that can ensure that there will be a cap on
30 the total amount of bycatch. Within alternative 2 there
31 are bycatch caps being considered, ranging from 100,000
32 to 550,000 fish annually and Kawerak supports the lowest
33 possible bycatch cap of 100,000 chum salmon per year.
34 The historical average over the past 15 or so years has
35 been approximately 250 chum salmon bycaught per year,
36 and we do not think that anything near or above the
37 historical average is making an improvement on the
38 status quo. In our opinion, of everything being
39 considered, a low fishery wide bycatch cap is the most
40 critical alternative. The changes presented in
41 alternative 4 have been implemented by the pollock
42 fishery over the past 3 years but they are not currently
43 codified in regulation. Reduced chum bycatch over the
44 past 3 years indicates that the changes have been at
45 least somewhat successful but show that the pollock
46 industry is unwilling to change their behavior absent
47 significant public pressure. Accordingly, Kawerak
48 believes that any changes, even if they are already being
49 implemented, must be codified in regulation.

50

1 Alternative 5 will create a conservation
2 corridor to protect areas that are known hotspots for
3 western Alaska chum. Within alternative 5 there are
4 several proposed corridor caps and areas to be closed.
5 Kawerak supports a corridor cap of 50,000 chum, which
6 is the lowest option presented in the DEIS, with the
7 maximum allowable area closed if the cap is met. These
8 50,000 limits would accrue to the fishery wide limit
9 presented in alternative 2, meaning that with a fishery
10 wide limit of 100,000 chum, if the cadre cap were met,
11 50,000 additional chum would be permitted to be taken
12 as bycatch outside of the corridor. While this measure
13 holds promise for reducing bycatch of Western Alaska
14 chum without an overall cap, it's more of a hope for
15 bycatch reduction. This is because significant bycatch
16 occurs outside the corridor and the corridor is limited
17 in time and space, and fishing effort might get displaced
18 outside the corridor when the cap is hit, and then
19 bycatch may be increased elsewhere. An overall low cap
20 across the entire fishery is the only way to take a step
21 that tries to ensure bycatch reduction across the
22 fishery as a whole.

23
24 There are several upcoming
25 opportunities for input, on January 26th tribes are
26 invited to attend a tribal consultation with NMFS. Then
27 on the 27th, there is a tribal engagement also with
28 NMFS, that tribes and tribal citizens are welcome to
29 attend. The deadline for providing written comment to
30 the Council in advance of the meeting is January 30th,
31 and then once again, the Council meeting is taking place
32 in Anchorage and then also hybrid virtually from
33 February 2nd to 11th. And during that time, people
34 including the RAC, if it's so desired, would have the
35 opportunity to provide verbal testimony. And that's all
36 I have for you today, and I'm happy to answer any
37 questions if there are any.

38
39 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this is Louis.

40
41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

42
43 MR. GREEN: Oh, okay. Thank you. I guess
44 the question remains on you know, the trawlers are
45 claiming they're catching less chum. But related to the
46 rivers, the rivers are having less returns of chum. So
47 maybe that indicates that there are less chum in the
48 marine environment for them to catch in their trawls.
49 Is there any consideration for that of Kawerak? Is
50 there -- has there been any of your -- in any of your

1 discussions about that?

2

3 MS. WEINSTEIN: We haven't discussed that
4 specifically, no, and I know there are some lingering
5 questions and sort of research gaps regarding chum in
6 the marine environment. And there has been -- the bycatch
7 rates over the past 3 years have been lower than what
8 they've historically been. I believe they've been below
9 100,000. Like the 3-year average has been below 100,000.
10 But from Kawerak's perspective, that has been in
11 response to public pressure and the implementation by
12 the pollock industry of what's currently being
13 considered in alternative 4. And so, we think that that
14 needs to be put into regulation, along with the other,
15 alternatives 2 and 5. And even if -- and again, I'm not
16 saying that this case because we don't know, but even
17 if the reason for lower bycatch were lower salmon, I
18 think that's an even stronger reason to implement these
19 caps and try to conserve what we can now when maybe
20 there's still hope of restoring some populations in our
21 rivers.

22

23 MR. GREEN: Okay, thank you for that
24 answer. I've always felt that and others that discussion
25 over the years that you know, the 500,050 -- 550,000
26 numbers, maybe that's number there that's been floating
27 along. But if you're not under there with a considerable
28 lower cap number like you picked 100, I don't disagree
29 with that, that you're not going to find any meaningful
30 regulation if you're allowing it to be up there where
31 it's at its highest point. So, appreciate the 100,000
32 that you're pointing to. Thank you.

33

34 MS. WEINSTEIN: Yeah, thank you and I'll
35 say, yeah, we completely agree with that. And several
36 tribes in the region have passed resolutions stating
37 that their desire is for 0 bycatch. However, 100,000 is
38 the lowest option that was presented in the DEIS. But
39 in an ideal world, bycatch would be reduced even further
40 if possible.

41

42 MR. GREEN: Yes, thank you for that. At
43 one point in time, when the North Pacific Fisheries
44 Management Council came to Nome, and they made 2 trips
45 there, there was this -- there was a resolution going
46 around with everybody in the region that it was, I think,
47 30,000. And for some reason it got left behind and 50,000
48 was an agreed number, but which was never developed. So,
49 there is past history of trying to reduce those numbers.
50 And anyway, thank you for your presentation.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right.
Anything else?

MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair this is Kelsi. I -- with the deadline coming up for comments. I really think our Council should submit something. Since this does affect our area, affects people south of us. I -- yeah and I'm -- and I know we can't direct that right now because we don't have quorum, but on another day, I think we should take up directing on comment letter.

MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chairman if I may. I think that even though the Council does not have quorum right now would be a good opportunity to discuss the recommended options.

MS. IVANOFF: Okay.

MS. CHAPA: Since we have Spencer on the line that can answer further questions if they come up as they're discussing the topic.

MR. GREEN: This is Louis. Kelsi, if you've got anything to offer, I'd sure like to hear it, because I think you're correct in this. We need this. (Indiscernible). Thank you.

MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, this is Kelsi. I think we should -- not be -- I mean, we can be specific, but I think really emphasizing that we do need time and area closures on their way to our spawning grounds. And then seeing that hard cap, I think we should recommend a hard cap rather than just seeing a cap when abundance is low. In previous drafts, they had caps well above 200,000, and that's just not -- that's not acceptable. But we do have to find a -- you know, going for 0 is what ideally what we want. But we have to be realistic in that the Council will never pass something like that. So, I think aiming for, you know, a number like 100 or 150 would be more realistic. And if we do want to recommend a cap.

MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chair, if I may follow up with you, Kelsi. So, are you suggesting to recommend alternative 2 -- yeah, let me, Spencer, do you think you can share your screen again with the alternatives? I think what Kelsi is recommending is to support alternative 2 and 5.

1 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah. Yes.

2

3 MS. CHAPA: Okay and alternative two with
4 a cap of -- you floated two numbers, 100 or 150.

5

6 MS. IVANOFF: But not -- I know they have
7 put in 200, but that's not what we can agree with that.
8 We can side with Kawerak, I mean, if the Council -- I'm
9 not sure what the Council's thoughts are, but I think
10 with its position being 100,000 coming from our region
11 aligning that with Kawerak would be a good idea.

12

13 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair.

14

15 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

16

17 MR. GREEN: I think this is in alignment
18 with TCC.

19

20 UNIDENTIFIED: It is, yeah.

21

22 MR. GREEN: Okay. I'm inclined to agree
23 with that. I guess my number stays at 100,000. Thank
24 you. I'll let somebody else speak. Thanks.

25

26 MS. CHAPA: So, if I may just follow up
27 for clarification, at the moment, the Council is
28 considering submitting a comment in support of
29 alternative 2 with a cap of 100,000. That's -- I believe,
30 Kelsi, you shared that you're in support of Kawerak's
31 position and Louis you stated the same. And alternative
32 5 conservation corridor and not necessarily alternative
33 4. I would emphasize.....

34

35 (Simultaneous speech)

36

37 MR. GREEN: You need a second?

38

39 MS. CHAPA: Oh, go ahead Louis.

40

41 MR. GREEN: I guess we need the motion,
42 and then I'd be willing to second, if somebody's making
43 a motion.

44

45 MS. CHAPA: Hey, Louis, we don't -- we
46 just lost Council Member Moses. And so, we do not have
47 a quorum right now. So, all I'm doing is just trying to
48 make sure that I understand the Council's discussion and
49 potential recommendations so that when we have quorum
50 again, we can revisit the item and take action at that

1 moment.

2

3 MR. GREEN: Thank you. So, I just -- I
4 forgot about him stepping out. Okay. Moving forward.
5 Thanks.

6

7 MS. CHAPA: Okay and I do have a
8 clarifying question for Spencer. Does alternative 5 need
9 to also have a recommended cap?

10

11 MS. WEINSTEIN: I will double-check what
12 the options are. I'm not sure that it needs to have a
13 recommended cap. I -- you may be able to support it
14 without. Lisa might be able to chime in here if you
15 remember, off the top of your head.

16

17 MS. ELLANNA: I don't -- I think it
18 varies year to year. They monitor on their own. The
19 industry monitors where there's real hot spots
20 happening. And the observers on the trawlers themselves
21 as well.

22

23 MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair. This is Kelsi.
24 If you look at the DEIS, it has maps included in it. And
25 they are changing and they would follow where they have,
26 where, you know, Western Alaska bound chum, there's --
27 it's a huge, huge document, it's really -- yeah, it's a
28 lot to look through, but I don't think specifics would
29 need to be mentioned the (indiscernible) . Just because
30 it is so broad and thick. I do think we should include
31 -- and this is emphasized and said time and time again
32 but coming from a Subsistence Council I think we should
33 emphasize that. That they -- you know, indigenous
34 knowledge is the best knowledge, best science out there.
35 And they should be really taking these into
36 consideration and doing a better job of doing so.

37

38 MS. CHAPA: Thank you, Kelsi. And Mr.
39 Chair, I think I have enough information to bring it up
40 again at a later time. Once we have quorum so the Council
41 can take action.

42

43 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right,
44 moving on.

45

46 MS. CHAPA: And if I may, again. Gisela
47 Chapa. Okay, so since we've just lost quorum, I think
48 the Council is now going to consider non-action items.
49 And that means that we are moving to item number 14:
50 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and Partners for

1 Fisheries Monitoring Program and I'm going to post the
2 items that we can continue on the chat so that people
3 online can also see that and I will continue to guide
4 us in that as we're moving along with our agenda.

5

6 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right.
7 Louis, you got that?

8

9 MR. STONE: All right, good afternoon,
10 Mr. Chair and Members of the Council. My name is Jarred
11 Stone. I'm a Fish Biologist with the Office of
12 Subsistence Management. I'm also joined here by my
13 colleague Hannah Voorhees, who is an Anthropologist. I
14 will now present a brief overview of the Fisheries
15 Resource Monitoring Program's funding process. After
16 describing the funding process, we'll request Council
17 comments on the projects submitted for the northern
18 region. This is not an action item, but your comments
19 are an important part of the process. The Monitoring
20 Program materials start on page 329 or tab 14A of your
21 Council books.

22

23 The goal of the Monitoring Program is
24 to fund research on federal subsistence fisheries, to
25 enhance management and to work with rural Alaskans to
26 sustain these fisheries. The Monitoring Program funding
27 process starts with the Councils first identifying
28 information gaps and then developing what we call the
29 priority information needs for each of the regions
30 listed at the bottom of page 329. Volunteers from your
31 Council, as well as the North Slope and the Northwest
32 Arctic Councils, met during the fall of 2024 and then
33 created a list of priority information needs for the
34 entire northern region. You can see that list on Tab
35 14B. We took this list and the requested projects that
36 address these priorities. Investigators from the
37 northern region then submitted projects -- proposals to
38 OSM. And for the northern region, we had 6 proposals
39 that were submitted for funding. The proposals are
40 listed in the table on page 4, of tab 14B.

41

42 Those proposals have gone through the
43 review process. The first step in the review process is
44 for the Technical Review Committee to assess the
45 projects. The Technical Review Committee is a panel made
46 up of expert scientists, and they review the proposals
47 based on 5 criteria. The criteria are strategic
48 priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator
49 ability and resources, partnership capacity building,
50 and then lastly, cost benefit. The Technical Review

1 Committee writes justifications that summarize what they
2 thought of your projects. The justifications can be
3 found at the end of each project's executive summary in
4 your Council books. After the Technical Review Committee
5 reviews the proposals, we collect the Council's comments
6 on the projects. And that's what we're here doing today.
7 Your comments and the Technical Review Committee's
8 justifications are then combined and presented to the
9 Interagency Staff Committee or ISC. The ISC, who are the
10 Federal Subsistence Board staff, also provide comments
11 on the projects. The Federal Subsistence Board will then
12 meet here in a few weeks on February 5th. During their
13 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program work session. They
14 will be presented with all of the information from the
15 Technical Review Committee, the Councils and the ISC and
16 will then add their recommendation on what projects to
17 fund. The final selection of projects will be determined
18 by the Director of OSM, based on all of the provided
19 input and how much money is available.

20
21 OSM funds many projects as possible
22 based on our budget. The funded projects will start this
23 year in the spring of 2026. And so, this whole process
24 happens every 2 years and projects can be funded up to
25 4 years. Again, this is not an action item, but your
26 comments are an important part of the funding process.
27 And we're requesting the Council's thoughts and comments
28 about the proposed projects in the northern region. We
29 want to know if the Council has any specific concerns
30 or comments about the proposed projects, and if the
31 Council wishes, what we can do is go through each project
32 and then provide a brief summary. And I've got some
33 brief summaries written up here for each project. And
34 as we work through them, we can stop and pause and see
35 if the Council has any comments or recommendations about
36 that specific project. If that sounds okay to you, Mr.
37 Chair?

38
39 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yeah.

40
41 MR. STONE: Okay. Project 26-100:
42 Assessment of Life History Patterns and Hypoxic Stress
43 of Northwest Alaska Whitefish and Arctic Grayling. This
44 project aims to characterize habitats, moving -- or
45 sorry, movement patterns, life history, and hypoxia
46 frequency for whitefish and arctic grayling in Northwest
47 Alaska using otolith microchemistry. Are there any
48 comments from the Council on this project?

49
50 (No comment)

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: On the funding I do have one question on the -- that graph there where it says blue, when it says other, what's - what funding is that, is like donation or could you elaborate on that?

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MS. IVANOFF: Mr. Chair. This is Kelsi. I have a question. Just to clarify, otolith is like the inner ear bone or parts, right?

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MR. STONE: Yeah, through the Chair. That is absolutely correct. The otolith is a small bone structure found in the fish's ear. And researchers are able to dissect that, extract it, slice it, and then put it under a microscope and actually age the fish. That way, similar to like how you would age a tree, almost. But just at a different scale. Great question.

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MS. IVANOFF: One more question. Again, this is Kelsi. I haven't read through the whole thing, but are you guys gathering these fish -- going out and gathering themselves? Are you doing -- asking people to provide these when they catch them themselves? How are you going about that?

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MR. STONE: Yep. Through the Chair. Council Member Kelsi. So, OSM is not actually doing the field work. We're simply the funders. And so, we provide the funding. And so, this particular project, I can find out the details on who is submitting this project. Unless Hannah, maybe, perhaps, you know off the top of your head. The investigators.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

MR. STONE: Go ahead, Hannah.

MS. VOORHEES: Thanks, yeah, Hannah Voorhees, anthropologist. It looks like this is Kevin Fraley, Dr. Kevin Fraley, with the Wildlife Conservation

1 Society. Does that sound right?

2

3 MR. STONE: Yes, that is right. Yep. So
4 just to add to that, thank you, Hannah. Dr. Fraley with
5 the Wildlife Conservation Society as the lead
6 investigator on this project. And so, himself, and
7 likely a team of people will be going out and doing
8 their focused research here on in the field.

9

10 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you.

11

12 DR. VICKERS: Yeah, Jarred, were you the
13 reviewer of this project?

14

15 (Simultaneous speech)

16

17 MR. STONE: I -- through the Chair,
18 through -- to Brent. No, I was not the reviewer of this
19 project but if there are specific questions to that, I
20 have the investigative plan pulled up here and I can
21 help answer those questions.

22

23 DR. VICKERS: No, thank you. I just
24 believe that if the question, I think was more on also
25 how the fish were -- the methods of collecting the fish.
26 If the researchers were collecting them, who was
27 collecting the samples, I think, was the question that
28 she, Council members Ivanoff, was trying to ask.

29

30 MR. STONE: Okay, that makes sense. I can
31 answer that. So, I've got the methods pulled up here.
32 It's discussing how fish will be captured by the Wildlife
33 Conservation Society field crews using beach seines,
34 gill nets and angling. And then the investigators,
35 including contaminant assessments, proximate
36 composition analysis and stable isotope food web studies
37 will be collected. And then additionally, it goes on to
38 say the otoliths would be extracted, stored and
39 available and prepared for laboratory microchemistry.
40 And some of the -- and what I mentioned earlier about
41 aging the otoliths. What they're planning or proposing
42 to do with this is actually look at the microchemistry
43 of the bone structure in the otolith. And so that's
44 where the stable isotopes comes in. They're actually
45 able to analyze that bone and then further tell the
46 strontium levels in the ear bone.

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48 The fish that they're targeting here,
49 it looks like humpback whitefish, least cisco, bering
50 cisco, broad whitefish, arctic grayling.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Sound,
like we need to go fishing.

MR. GREEN: This is a this is Louis, just
a question. We're doing this -- the samples on there
that -- are they sampling -- maybe I missed it if it's
in there, I see the otoliths, are they looking at the
liver?

MR. STONE: Through the Chair, to answer
your question, Council Member Louis Green. On the liver,
I don't know that there's an aspect to that for the
liver. At least not off the top of my head here, looking
at the proposal.

MR. GREEN: I was just curious because
it seems like it's the liver that would show contaminants
also, wouldn't it?

MR. STONE: I believe you're correct. I
don't know if that's part of -- let me see if I can dig
through this a little quicker and see if I can find.....

MR. GREEN: Okay, thank you.

MR. STONE: The strontium analysis
looking at the stable isotope from the otoliths, I
believe has to do with looking at their habitat occupancy
and where they're spending their time either in
freshwater, brackish or saltwater environments. And so,
strontium is -- I'm not as familiar with strontium as
carbon and nitrogen. I had done some graduate research
work on stable isotopes and with those 2 elements, but
not strontium. And so, I'm not as familiar.

MR. GREEN: Okay, thanks, Jarred. I guess
one other question is, does that otolith help identify
a river of origin of any type or not? That's like say a
yes or no.

MR. STONE: Through -- yeah, through the
Chair, Council Member -- Mr. Green. Not that I'm aware
of. I think that's more -- to answer those questions,
you need to look at the genetics of the fish. I believe
the strontium is just a simple look at how much of its
life has been spent in the marine environment and how
much of its life has been spent in the freshwater. It's
kind of more coarse in scale and not so much specific
to which river exactly.

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MR. GREEN: Okay, thank you.

MR. STONE: Okay, if there's no other questions, I can move on to the next project if you'd like, Mr. Chair.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go for it.

MR. STONE: All right. We've got Project 26-101: Beaver Expansion into the Arctic, Current Impacts and Future Implications for Fisheries in Northwest Alaska. This project will study the effects of expanding beaver populations on subsistence fisheries in the Northern Alaska region. Are there any questions or comments from the Council on this project?

MR. GREEN: This is Louis. I have a question.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead, Louis.

MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jarred, is there any signs of like, coho numbers increasing?

MR. STONE: Through the Chair.

MR. GREEN: Or benefit -- or benefiting, I should say.

MR. STONE: Yeah, through the Chair. Council Member -- Mr. Green, that's a great question. There's kind of a mixed bag right now of research that suggests that having additional woody debris and rivers actually enhances or decreases salmon habitat. And coho, you know, off the top of my head, I couldn't say whether or not yes or no if there is a definitive answer on that front, it seems that some of the research is kind of conflicting in some areas, it's a yes. And then in some areas it's a no. And it's likely one of those things that maybe there's a threshold and when there's too much beaver activity and too much dams, too much woody debris in rivers, you get to a saturation point where maybe adding more debris to the river, more woody debris and more habitat doesn't have an added benefit for coho productivity. So, I think I know what you're getting at. And so, and I think this project intends to, you know, look at exactly that, you know, what happens. Because what we've heard from some of the Councils in the

1 northwest Arctic is that they're seeing and they're
2 experiencing a lot more beaver activity on the rivers.
3 And so, there's some curiosity as to what kinds of
4 effects does that have with salmon production.

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6 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Jarred. I have
7 nothing else, Mr. Chair.

8
9 MS. IVANOFF: This is Kelsi. I just want
10 to comment that I know this is -- one of the -- ones
11 asking for more money than the others. But I do see the
12 benefit in this. Being in a warmer river than these
13 ones, we do see the effects of beavers and what they
14 have on our salmon. So, I think it's a good -- I just
15 want to note that I do think it's a good project that I
16 think will benefit the region that -- regions that this
17 will happen.

18
19 MR. STONE: Thank you. Okay, Mr. Chair,
20 if you're ready, I can present the next project?

21
22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yep, go for
23 it.

24
25 MR. STONE: Project 26-102: Selawik
26 Northern Pike Population Dynamics, Movement, and Habitat
27 Use. This project will provide baseline information
28 about Northern pike and Selawik National Wildlife Refuge
29 using radio telemetry. Are there any comments from the
30 Council on this project?

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32 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Kelsi.

33
34 MS. IVANOFF: This is Kelsi. I -- I'm
35 wondering if this is going to look at the pikes effect
36 on salmon, as I know they do prey on them.

37
38 MR. STONE: Through the Chair. To get at
39 that question, let me see if I can pull up the IP on
40 that. I -- right off the top of my head, I think it
41 wasn't so much focused on what the pike were eating but
42 more so kind of their distribution and where they're
43 located at in the drainage and where they go throughout
44 the year. I'm just pulling up their investigative plan
45 now and looking at their objectives. Objective one, to
46 track the movement of pike to discover how pike habitat
47 use varies seasonally and according to pike life
48 history. And then objective 2, to identify the extent
49 to which pike in the area exhibit high site fidelity and
50 thus provide evidence for whether there may be multiple

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1 distinct subpopulations or whether all pike in the area
2 are part of a single larger population. And so, to answer
3 your question, I don't believe that this project was
4 really about addressing the diet of pike and the effects
5 that they might have on salmon, on the salmon
6 productivity.

7

8 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you.

9

10 MR. STONE: Okay, If the Council is
11 ready, I'll go on to the next project.

12

13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Yep.

14

15 MR. STONE: All right. We've got Project
16 26-103: this is the Kobuk River Sheefish Spawning
17 Abundance. This project aims to enumerate sheefish
18 migrating to their spawning grounds in the Kobuk River
19 using sonar techniques. Are there any questions or
20 comments from the Council on this project?

21

22 MR. GREEN: This is Louis, Mr. Chair.

23

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
25 Louis.

26

27 MR. GREEN: Jarred, is this have
28 anything -- does this show anything on their feed?
29 Primary food source.

30

31 MR. STONE: Oh, through the Chair.
32 Council Member Green. I don't believe it's doing that
33 so much as just a very simple look at their abundance.
34 And so, they're going to use the (indiscernible) sonar
35 to try and just like salmon, count how many sheefish are
36 passing the spawning grounds in the Kobuk River.

37

38 MR. GREEN: Okay, thank you. Nothing
39 more. Thank you.

40

41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
42 Kelsi.

43

44 MS. IVANOFF: This is Kelsi. I just want
45 to note that at the Board of Fish AYK meeting, that
46 there was some concern regarding sheefish. Not
47 necessarily the management, but that it's becoming more
48 popular. So, I do -- I just want to note I do see the
49 benefit in this, seeing that there has been concern
50 brought up in other spaces.

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2 MR. STONE: Through the Chair. That's a
3 great note, I appreciate that comment. Thank you. Okay.
4 If the Council is ready, I can move on to Project 26-
5 150. The Harvest and Use of Sheefish and Other Nonsalmon
6 Fishes in Hotham Inlet. This project will update harvest
7 estimates and document local and traditional ecological
8 knowledge of sheefish and other non-salmon fishes and
9 Hotham Inlet for the Kotzebue -- for Kotzebue and
10 Noorvik. Are there any comments from the Council on this
11 project?

12

13 (Pause)

14

15 MS. IVANOFF: Just to expand on what I
16 said before, this is Kelsi in at the Board of Fish AYK.
17 There was a document passed around when we were
18 discussing sheefish and possibly stricter management on
19 it to conserve. But it was pretty outdated. So, I think
20 gathering new information will definitely be beneficial
21 to that area.

22

23 MR. STONE: Through the Chair, thank you.
24 Okay. And then I've got Projects 26-151: This is the
25 Kawerak Tribal Fisheries Stewardship Program Awatipta
26 Ecosystem Monitoring Project. This project will use a
27 co-production of knowledge framework to implement an
28 indigenous sentinel monitoring program for salmon and
29 their habitat in the Seward Peninsula region. Are there
30 any comments -- or any comments from the Council on this
31 project?

32

33 (Pause)

34

35 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah. This is Kelsi, I just
36 -- I'm just trying to read through right now, but I --
37 just with my comments before, when we were talking about
38 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council how
39 indigenous knowledge is the best science we can get out
40 there. So, anything we can do, any studies, anything to
41 actually document indigenous knowledge I think works in
42 our benefit because that is something that's not heavily
43 documented. It's often thrown to the side. We hear it
44 in public testimony, but there's, yeah, like I said,
45 there's not much as far as documentation. So, getting
46 it into an actual -- getting it into something like this
47 sounds great for not just the region, but the state.

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49 MR. STONE: Perfect, through the Chair,
50 appreciate your comments, Council Member Kelsi. Thank you.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Roy.

MR. ASHENFELTER: The question I have is where.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GREEN: (Indiscernible) cutting up.

MR. ASHENFELTER: Where is this (indiscernible) going to take place? And that's critical.....

MR. STONE: Thank you. Through the Chair. I didn't catch all of the question, but what I did hear is where the -- where will this project take place. And, and we're talking about Project 26-151 through the Kawerak proposal.

MR. ASHENFELTER: Where are -- what place in Alaska are they doing the study?

DS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair, this is Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist with OSM. I believe I can address that question.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

DR. VOORHEES: So, this Kawerak Tribal Fishery Stewardship program is based in the Seward Peninsula region. However, the actual monitoring sites were not described in the proposal and would be somewhat dependent on which individuals were hired you know, which communities they live in and areas that need to be monitored near their communities. So unfortunately, I can't give you any more information than that. Well, I would actually just add that it wasn't limited just to federal lands. The project was intended to cover different kinds of land across the Seward Peninsula region.

DR. VICKERS: It wouldn't just be limited to those communities or sites on federal lands. She said that the sites could be anywhere in the Seward Peninsula region, state managed or federally managed, or even, I don't know any lands I suppose they haven't decided yet. It would depend on who they were able to hire and what connections they have. If that's the way I interpreted what you said, Hannah.

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DR. VOORHEES: That's perfect, thank you, Brent.

MR. ASHENFELTER: Just a follow up. One of the things you might want to consider in this study, since you're doing one, is where has salmon had the most difficult time in our region? So, your study would benefit the idea if you're going to go to the North Pacific Management Council and make a comment that for example, using the Nome Subdistrict here, there was a chum crash that occurred in the late 70s through the 80s and all our efforts to try to address that through the different management, either through the Area M fishery or to the pollock fishery. And so, a lot of discussion from the Board of Fish and from the Council, not so much from the pollock fishery, but mostly from the Board of Fish, since we were making this statement, we the subsistence fisher was making the statement in trying to address the low numbers of return and the reason for that was to try to get the bycatch for chum reduced in Area M and the interception of chum in the pollock fishery.

So, if you go do a study in, let's say, in Koyuk River as an example, I'm not putting them down or anything and there are fish run is very good. But then you just -- you then that report goes to the Council and goes to the Area M people and they're going to look at this data and say, this river provides enough resource for these people living in this part of Alaska in Seward Peninsula. So, why are you saying there's no chum or why are you asking for a reduction in salmon? So, it is important to try to target your work in an area that has made these statements like we've done for quite a few years. I'm hoping that that part of your work will be included in your -- in the future work for addressing how -- what's going on with salmon in our region. And the ultimate goal is to try to get a report to both Area M and pollock fishery to reduce their salmon catch, because the results will yield this information based on our input. So, thank you.

DR. VOORHEES: Through the Chair this is Hannah Voorhees again.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

DR. VOORHEES: I just wanted to thank you for that comment. And also, to note that Kawerak will

1 be the one doing this study if it is funded. OSM just
2 provides the funds. But those were very valuable
3 comments. So, thank you.

4

5 MS. HUGHES: So, Letty Hughes, biologist
6 here with Bering Land Bridge based in Nome. Question for
7 either Jarred or Hannah. Could you clarify, I guess for
8 the group, I guess in -- does the FRMP require the
9 federal nexus and exactly what does that federal nexus
10 mean or involve when it involves these proposals?

11

12 DR. VICKERS: Do you want me to take
13 that, you guys or.....

14

15 (Simultaneous speech)

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17 DR. VORHEES: Sure, go for it, Brent.

18

19 MR. STONE: Stab at it or else, Brent,
20 if you like to, that's fine.

21

22 MR. VICKERS: Go for it, Jarred.

23

24 MR. STONE: Yeah. So, our program to be
25 deemed eligible for funding, the project has to
26 demonstrate that the fish species that you're requesting
27 for funding for, passes through or resides in areas where
28 there's federal public waters. And that gets a little
29 confusing sometimes, because much of the state is kind
30 of a patchwork of different types of land ownership. And
31 so really, when an investigator submits a proposal, we
32 look really closely at, where are they putting the sonar?
33 Where are they putting the fish wheel? Where are they
34 doing the subsistence harvest surveys, what communities?
35 And then we look directly at are those communities in,
36 or on federal public lands? And so, it gets kind of
37 confusing and kind of complex sometimes when you have
38 various land patchworks that are made up of state, tribal
39 lands and small patchworks of federal lands. And so, I
40 hope that answers your question if or if I didn't confuse
41 you more.

42

43 MS. HUGHES: That answers it. Thank you
44 very much. Okay, thanks.

45

46 MR. STONE: Thank you.

47

48 MR. GREEN: Mr. Chair, Louis.

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1 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead,
2 Louis.

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4 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, if
5 we're talking about -- are we talking about navigable
6 waters or through the federal management, or are we
7 talking about federal lands on both sides of the river?
8 Let's use the Agiapuk for instance or the Serpentine
9 River. Do those qualify, or which one would and which
10 one wouldn't?

11
12 MR. STONE: Through the Chair. Council
13 Member Council Greens question. That's a good one. And
14 it's really kind of -- we look at these case by case for
15 every project. And, you know, we have had projects in
16 the past that were submitted and they were not planning
17 to do any work at all on federal land. And so, we had
18 to notify them that the proposal was deemed ineligible.
19 And so, it's a case-by-case instance. And, and in regards
20 to navigability, I won't go down that rabbit hole too
21 far, but there are federal lands that are both navigable
22 and non-navigable and so projects that are submitted for
23 funding are considered for both of those types of
24 navigability. And I don't know if that answers your
25 question.

26
27 MR. GEEN: Well, thank you, Jarred.
28 Through the Chair. That kind of answers. But I guess to
29 be more specific and Kawerak is going to need to know
30 this anyway. Where on the Seward Peninsula can they do
31 this study? I know there's salmon in the Serpentine
32 River. There's salmon in the Agiapuk River, but do they
33 hold up to the test of what you're -- you just pointed
34 out?

35
36 MR. STONE: Through the Chair. Council
37 Member Green, if there are folks there in the room that
38 could speak to that, I would offer up the mic for them,
39 to address that. I know in the past, Council Member Gray
40 had brought up rivers that were sort of head scratchers
41 for our staff, and we were wondering whether or not
42 there was a federal nexus there or not. And after digging
43 more into those we found that there indeed there was.
44 And I'd have to go back and look through some of those
45 older emails. There were some exchanges with our
46 solicitor just to kind of gather more information and
47 understand the land status of some of those rivers up
48 there. And so, yeah, again, it would have to be a case-
49 by-case basis. And if there's folks there in the
50 room that know of those 2 rivers that you mentioned, Mr.

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1 Green, that would be most wonderful.

2

3 MR. GREEN: All right. Jarred, thank you.
4 Yeah, I know Tommy and I both hammered on that a few
5 years ago, so we're trying to find somewhere to have a
6 study done that pertains to the use of those fish by
7 people in our area there. So, thanks.

8

9 MR. STONE: Yeah.

10

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Hey
12 Jarred, we got Roy.

13

14 MR. ASHENFELTER: Yeah, thank you for the
15 conversation, it's really important. You mentioned Tom
16 Gray and I know where you mentioned a few seconds ago
17 that you talked, or you mentioned his name. He's talking
18 about studies in the Fish River Flats and I just asked
19 the gentleman if Fish River Flats is that the
20 (indiscernible) and it's BLM land, and I'm assuming that
21 he may have wanted study on the Boston River, which has
22 a king run. And it would be really important to consider
23 that it is -- does meet the federal qualifications, if
24 you will. The king salmon run into the Boston River is
25 very limited, but it is a very valuable resource for the
26 villages of White Mountain and Council and Golovin. And
27 so, you know, if that would be of consideration, that
28 would be really helpful. And I -- as soon as you brought
29 up his name, I knew where he was asking just these
30 studies to take place. Again, I know these funds are --
31 you're funded or, you know, you have to go through the
32 process of determining qualification and all that, but
33 I'm just emphasizing that it if it's in a Fish River
34 Flats, they're BLM lands and they would qualify if the
35 opportunity were here. Thank you.

36

37 MR. STONE: Through the Chair, thank you,
38 I appreciate those comments.

39

40 MR. GREEN: And Jarred keep your
41 checkbook open and keep that check blank.

42

43 MR. GREEN: Hey, Mr. Chair.

44

45 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead.

46

47 MR. GREEN: I guess it's kind of a
48 question for Roy real quick. On those lands Roy -- yeah,
49 I identified that, too, with what Tommy was after. What
50 are those lands just surrounding the river system? And

1 the river, whose river is it?

2

3 MR. ASHENFELTER: Okay, so the Fish River
4 Flats are -- the location above the north end of Fish
5 River. So, where the drainage is at is at Golovin. The
6 next village up from -- on the Fish River is White
7 Mountain. And then you go up above White Mountain, about
8 8 miles, then it forks off, the fork to the left is a
9 Niukluk River, and that goes to Council. The Fish River
10 Flats continue on up about another 15 miles. And they -
11 - and then you all of a sudden, when you get to the top
12 end of that, you'll see like a huge flat land and it's
13 surrounded by mountains. There are 6 or 7 drainages that
14 flow into or excuse me, flow through the Fish River
15 Flats into Fish River. For example, (indiscernible),
16 Cache Creek, Paragon, Boston, Fish River, Windy Creek.
17 I know I'm missing a couple others, but there are a
18 bunch of drainages that flow out of these hills that
19 eventually accumulate to where the Fish River is very,
20 very navigable. But of those drainages, Boston, because
21 of its what they call rocky bottom, believe it or not,
22 bouldery or large sized rock which king salmon like to
23 spawn in as opposed to like, pinks in the more shallower
24 sandy or smaller rock where they can move their bodies
25 and, and create a spawning bed. King salmon you prefer
26 a larger rock size to spawn in. Boston has that type of
27 surface, and hence the reason why there's a king run
28 from that river. So, I just wanted to help explain that,
29 Louis

30

31 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Roy. Yeah, and I
32 -- I'm pretty familiar with all those too. And the Boston
33 Creek deal being -- or Boston being the river of choice
34 for those kings. What I was -- I guess the other question
35 I would have is where's the federal lands on those? I
36 can't remember, I don't have a chart.

37

38 MR. ASHENFELTER: Yeah. It just shows a
39 yellow blob around Fish River Flats, which is cool.

40

41 DR. VICKERS: That would be BLM land if
42 we're looking at the same map.

43

44 MR. ASHENFELTER: The whole Fish River
45 flats, it looks like the yellow encompasses the whole
46 thing.

47

48 MR. STONE: We're sending you an email
49 right now Louis.

50

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1 MR. GREEN: Okay. So, because BLM lands
2 is around the river, then the application has basis to
3 be able to get a approved study there, right?

4
5 DR. VICKERS: Yes, this is Brent Vickers
6 from OSM. Yes, it is. And I'll -- yeah, we'll just leave
7 it there. I won't muddy the water.

8
9 MR. GREEN: Okay, I just.....

10
11 (Simultaneous speech)

12
13 MR. STONE: Yep [sic], to add to that
14 through the Chair. There were the big 3 rivers, I
15 remember Council Member, Mr. Gray, bringing up was the
16 Boston, Fish, Wagon Wheel, I believe, and Paragon --
17 Paragon River. And though that that priority information
18 need was actually in the last, I think, 2 or 3 cycles,
19 he was fairly adamant about keeping those on the list.
20 And, and so, we've kept them on the list, and we haven't
21 had any investigators apply for research on those
22 rivers. But from our digging and from what we can tell,
23 there's enough federal nexus on those rivers that
24 warrants keeping that information need on the list. And
25 then hopefully having an investigator someday consider
26 addressing those research needs.

27
28 MR. GREEN: Okay. Well, thank you,
29 Jarred. And because it's BLM land, I see that with
30 Kuzitrin, and I see that with the Agiapuk River and the
31 Imuruk Basin area. So, okay.

32
33 MR. STONE: Mr. Chair and members of the
34 Council. So, that concludes my presentation for the
35 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Are there any
36 other questions perhaps on projects or the process?

37
38 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: We've got
39 one more, Jarred.

40
41 MS. IVANOFF: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair.
42 This is Kelsi. I was wondering if the funding, if the
43 funding is allocated per region or if they're all
44 considered as from one whole pot, I guess?

45
46 Mr. STONE: Sure, through the Chair,
47 Council Member Kelsi. So, there is a loose kind of
48 recommendation or allocation for regions. And I'd have
49 to double check, I think in the northern region it's
50 something like 17%. The other regions that have larger

1 kind of allocations are the Yukon and Kuskokwim, but
2 those allocations are kind of loose, in that we try to
3 kind of follow them, but sometimes some years there's
4 just more projects in a certain region or less projects
5 in a certain region. And so, the ultimate discretion on
6 that allocation rests with the Regional Director of OSM.

7

8 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you.

9

10 DR. VICKERS: Yeah, I'll just add that
11 we currently don't have a budget. We don't know what we
12 would be able to allocate to FRMP at this point as well.
13 But if he answered your question correctly, there's an
14 overall budget. And then, as I said, we try to loosely
15 or wouldn't say too loose but try to follow those --
16 splitting it up into those yeah, 17 percentage. And then
17 each within the region, the projects are competing for
18 that amount of funding within that region.

19

20 MS. IVANOFF: Okay, yeah.

21

22 DR. VICKERS: We try to at least, you
23 know, go through all the regions and then whatever's
24 left over, maybe the second project on all the regions,
25 something like that.

26

27 MS. IVANOFF: Thank you.

28

29 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right,
30 anymore?

31

32 (No response)

33

34 All right, hearing none, thank you,
35 Jarred.

36

37 MR. STONE: Thank you.

38

39 MS. CHAPA: Hey, Jarred. This is Gisela.
40 Did you have an update to the Council on the Partners
41 for Fisheries Monitoring Program?

42

43 MR. STONE: Yes, and it's very brief.

44

45 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Okay. Go
46 ahead.

47

48 MR. STONE: Alright. Again, for the
49 record, Jarred Stone, Fish Biologist with the Office of
50 Subsistence Management. I'll give you a quick update on

1 our Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program that we
2 collectively call the Partners Program. The Office of
3 Subsistence Management posted a notice of funding
4 opportunity for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring
5 Program this last spring. This is a competitive grant
6 for Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations. The
7 intent of the program is to strengthen Alaska Native and
8 rural involvement in Federal Subsistence Management
9 Program by providing salary funds to organizations so
10 that they can hire a professional biologist, social
11 scientist, or an educator. The grant also provides funds
12 for science and culture camps and paid student
13 internships. There was a total of 8 applicants for new
14 funding beginning in 2026. This funding lasts for up to
15 4 years in total.

16
17 The Partners Program Review Panel, made
18 up of subject matter experts across various Department
19 of Interior agencies, have reviewed the proposals, and
20 the Office of Subsistence Management Regional Director
21 has approved funding for 3 new partners. That includes
22 the Bristol Bay Native Association, the Native Village
23 of Eyak and the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission.
24 The next notice of funding opportunity will be sometime
25 in the spring of 2027, for funding to begin in 2028. If
26 you'd like to learn more about this program, you may
27 contact myself or Liz Williams via email or phone. Our
28 contact information can be found on our Partner's
29 webpage at www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners. Or if
30 anyone here is interested, just please ask after this
31 presentation, I can help address any questions that you
32 might have about the program. And thank you, Mr. Chair.
33 And that concludes my update for the Partners for
34 Fisheries Monitoring program.

35
36 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Anything
37 else, Louis?

38
39 MR. GREEN: No sir, Mr. Chair, thank you.

40
41 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right.
42 Jarred, thank you. Too bad you're not here.

43
44 MR. STONE: I wish I could be there.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 MS. CHAPA: Mr. Chair. I think that we are
49 now moving on to item 15 reports and we do have a report
50 from ADF&G Division of Subsistence. That's Mariana.

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ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You've got three minutes.

MS. MALLORY: Okay, I'll be fast. I only have 3 slides, so I think I can do it. Good afternoon. My name is Mariana Mallory. I work for the Division of Subsistence. I actually grew up here in Nome, so I haven't been back here in a while since -- except for (indiscernible). So, it's really, really neat to be back up here to work. And I'm really honored to be able to talk to you guys today. We are seeking approval from the city or sought approval and have gotten approval from the city to do a comprehensive survey project in an ethnographic interview project in Nome that has to do with subsistence. And we do similar work all around the state and all sorts of different communities. We've been doing that since we started. Next slide please.

And this project is kind of unusual in the sense that it's funded by the State of Alaska Legislature. Typically, it's -- we don't really get funding from the state legislature for comps, but the state of Alaska, Nome is a priority community for a subsistence harvest survey and a project like this, because there's never been something like this done in Nome. And in advance of Graphite One and pending development projects, establishing a baseline of what subsistence harvest and use patterns look like now and what areas are important to folks and how things look before is important. That was one of the main bases that and that there's never been one conducted here, those 2 are the main ones. Municipalities can use the results from this type of research to comment on proposed development projects, on environmental impact statements and other land planning items and then individuals, and RAC members or AC members could also use these results to comment on Board of Fish and Board of Game Proposals. Next slide.

As far as methods we'll be doing -- we'll be conducting household surveys. And we'll be doing a couple of trips up to Nome before we do the survey project to do kind of recon and make sure, we know the -- know how to get around and there'll be a mapping component where we map search and harvest areas. So, we don't map exactly where somebody is saying they're going for something, but kind of general use areas. And then we aggregate it out at the community level, so it's broad, so, there's not identifiable information there.

1 And then the survey timeline, we're hoping tentatively
2 planning for April. And we're planning to meet with
3 tribal entities in Nome like Kawerak, Nome Eskimo
4 Community, (indiscernible) and then possibly, I think
5 also Solomon and (indiscernible), I believe. and then
6 there's still that -- once that wraps up. I believe
7 we've got an extra trip scheduled to do some more
8 interviews. And the neat part about this project is it
9 combines basically qualitative people's voices and
10 qualitative data, survey data, weaves them together in
11 a way that works really well together to contextualize
12 the survey results. Because just numbers don't really
13 tell you very much about what's going on in the
14 community. You can like, say that, you can say, oh,
15 people aren't harvesting a moose, and you can't really
16 draw a lot of conclusions from that without hearing from
17 people about why maybe they're not harvesting a lot of
18 moose. It could be -- in some communities, it could be
19 people just don't like moose that much. In other
20 communities, it could be -- there's not a lot of
21 abundance of moose, or there could be other factors
22 influencing harvest. Or if people are having a hard time
23 getting to those resources. Next. And that's it. It's
24 not 3 minutes. But do you have any questions for me on
25 anything.

26
27 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You
28 brought up, Graphite One, I think if you look at the Red
29 Dog Mine and see what worked for them and what didn't
30 work. You know, probably give you more insight of what
31 to look for.

32
33 MS. MALLORY: Yeah. And I guess the
34 thought with this is, I like -- I'm not one way or the
35 other -- it would be impartial. But I understand that
36 some of the impetus behind the funding was knowing that
37 that's coming down the pipe and may or may not be
38 approved, so.

39
40 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Got
41 anything, Louis?

42
43 MR. GREEN: No, sir. When's -- how old
44 are those reindeer now? They're probably pretty old,
45 they probably ain't [sic] alive anymore. Couldn't pass
46 that up.

47
48 MS. MALLORT: I think they're pretty old,
49 but I found that photo our photo drive, I thought it was
50 a good background photo.

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MR. GREEN: Thank you.

MS. MALLORY: I thought tree ptarmigan would be too much. Thanks, guys.

MS. IVANOFF: One question.

MS. MALLORY: Yeah.

MS. IVANOFF: I saw it was a CIP.

MS. MALLORY: Yes, (indiscernible).

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. IVANOFF: And that's the Capital Improvement Program.

MS. MALLORY: Yes, yeah.

MS. IVANOFF: Okay, when you guys applied for that, was there -- you said you had approval from the city of Nome?

MS. MALLORY: Yeah, we just got approval officially, like, a couple weeks ago, to go ahead with the research.

MS. IVANOFF: When you guys were applying for funding, were you asking for, like, letters of support?

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. MALLORY: I honestly -- I have to be completely honest and say that I wasn't -- I'm not the principal investigator, so I wasn't part of seeking the funding initially, I'm a (indiscernible).

MS. IVANOFF: Yeah.

MS. MALLORY: So, I actually don't know, but I can find out, if you want.

MS. IVANOFF: Just curious where that -- which entities or groups might have supported.

MS. MALLORY: Yeah.

1 MS. IVANOFF: Because I'm familiar with
2 the process of applying for (indiscernible).

3
4 MS. MALLORY: Yeah, and I can find out
5 for you if you want.

6
7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You come
8 back when you got a checkbook. Roy.

9
10 MR. ASHENFELTER: Yeah, I have a
11 question. So, you mentioned Graphite One and you
12 mentioned a lot of organizations here in Nome.

13
14 MS. MALLORY: Yes. Yeah, we're planning
15 on making sure we are in touch with them and like, not
16 necessarily consult but definitely inform. There's a lot
17 of entities to be fully, fully consulting perfectly with
18 everyone and it's just so many. So, we're going through
19 the city but we're -- we want to hear feedback from all
20 the entities on the project as well.

21
22 MR. ASHENFELTER: Okay so, I think those
23 of us that understand where Graphite is in relation to
24 the -- but by the way, go ahead and do your study. I do
25 have a -- he reason why I'm asking is one, because
26 Graphite is located in an area and it has a drainage.
27 The drainage doesn't affect our part of the world,
28 doesn't affect Nome, doesn't affect any of the villages
29 that you've mentioned or the tribes that you mentioned.

30
31 MS. MALLORY: Yeah.

32
33 MR. ASHENFELTER: And the reason for that
34 is because our resource comes from El Dorado, Solomon,
35 Snake River, Nome River and that's -- the reason for
36 that is because the range that's north of us creates a
37 barrier that on the south side of the mountains, all
38 those resources come, all the water, and that kind of
39 activity goes to our part of the world.

40
41 MS. MALLORY: Yeah, I believe
42 we're focusing mainly on the tribal entities that are Nome
43 proper.....

44
45 MR. ASHENFELTER: Okay. So, the reason I
46 bring up Graphite One is because Graphite One is on the
47 northern side of the hill range, and so all the water
48 that when you go up to what we call Nugget divide
49 literally, it's about 35 miles north of here. It's a
50 range and anything on the south side comes to Nome,

1 anything on the north side goes that way. And I just ask
2 that if you're going to be mentioning Graphite One in
3 this project, it's going to be hard for those that depend
4 on their resources here to relate the effects of
5 Graphite.

6

7

MS. MALLORY: For sure.

8

9

10 MR. ASHENFELTER: And so, the -- where
11 graphite will have an effect is on the villages of Mary's
12 Iglu, Teller and Brevig. Yeah, and that's the reason for
13 that is because the graphite mine is located on their
14 side of the mountain ridge. So, if you asked me, from
15 White Mountain, what graphite is going to do to me, not
16 going to do much.

16

17

MS. MALLORY. Yeah.

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MR. ASHENFELTER: No, down Pilgrim River.
There's a seating area south of the bridge, about 4
miles down. Now, if you ask your question in your survey,
which is important, where do you get reds? Doesn't matter
if it's at Solomon, (indiscernible) all the tribes here,
if they want red, we all have to go up to the totem
drainage. You're either going to snag them illegally or
you're going to go down the river and seine. Those are
the two ways people get any (indiscernible). Okay. And,
and I say that because the people with the least means
(indiscernible). They don't have boats and motors, they
don't have nets, but they are trying to put food on the
table. And I've argued and I've said to the managers
that want to investigate, I really appreciate the
subsistence opportunity here, is that the snaggers are
the ones that in my opinion should be left alone. That's
just my opinion, because they're the ones putting food
on the table. By the way, the snaggers, if you look at
a graph in your study on this meeting, you look at a
graph of all the red salmon taken in the Pilgrim
drainage, you'll see, 80% to 90%, maybe even 95% taken
by us that have boat, motors and seines. Okay. Because
you're seining the river, you gobble up all the fish in

1 that particular you set your net. A snagger has to have
2 skill, will get maybe 2 or maybe 4 fish out of a pulse
3 of 10 going by. So, I'm glad you're doing this study.
4 And I hope that you're going to include Graphite One
5 that it includes the red salmon run, too. And I think
6 you'll get a quality response in your might -- you
7 mentioned moose, too.

8
9 MS. MALLORY: Yeah.

10
11 MR. ASHENFELTER: And that's important.
12 If you do the moose component, that's really, really
13 important. Whatever your study is on moose, it's going
14 to yield some data that, again, it's based on people
15 with the most means have the greatest opportunity, to
16 people with the least means have the worst opportunity.
17 And they're basically road hunters, four wheelers, if
18 they could afford it. So, I'm glad you're doing this
19 study. And I really hope that at the time, that you're
20 going to yield some I think the important data for all
21 of us to consider.

22
23 MS. MALLORY: For sure and you know, what
24 you're what you're saying now is exactly why we do
25 interviews along with the survey data. Because without
26 that information, we -- it's impossible to know that
27 that's a really important area for people in Nome is up
28 north there in the Pilgrim. Thank you.

29
30 MR. ASHENFELTER: Thank you.

31
32 MS. BRAEM: Thank you. For the record,
33 I'm Nikki Braem, Park Service here in Nome. I'm glad to
34 hear the studies being done, this is the only regional
35 hub that hasn't had -- Barrows, had multiple, Bethell's
36 had them done, Kotzebue had them done. It's a huge
37 missing data set for understanding patterns of use in
38 this uses area. Never, first time ever. It's going to
39 ask about everything, Roy. Every single thing you catch
40 in a year, they're going to capture that in your survey.
41 I really welcome the mapping component because here in
42 Nome, not everyone, but we do have people who have good
43 jobs and they have every piece of equipment you need.
44 They have the boat, they have the ATV, the side by side,
45 all of it. They can range pretty darn far. So,
46 understanding the spatial dimension of subsistence
47 patterns here is really important, because we'll
48 understand our people going up into (indiscernible) now
49 get moose, you know, understanding some changes in the
50 use patterns. In 1990, way back in the day, gosh, you

1 might not have been born yet, Jim Magdanz and I think
2 Kawerak did a land use study for Nome. But that
3 information is now, if I do my math right, 35 years old
4 and technology has changed. Patterns of use may have
5 changed in response to species abundance. So, while you
6 know the study isn't about Graphite One, it is about
7 people's patterns of use in this area, including where
8 they go and do things. So, I think it's pretty important.
9

10 MS. MALLORY: It's more -- it's largely
11 about the fact that it's a hub community that's never
12 been surveyed. But from my understanding, part of the
13 impetus is also in advance of pending development.
14

15 MS. BRAEM: So, it will help land
16 managers like BLM and NPS understand Nome's use of far
17 distant land (indiscernible) very far distant from them,
18 just because of the ability of some people who really
19 don't like water as much. Okay, thank you.
20

21 MS. MALLORY: Thanks, Nikki.
22

23 MR. ASHENFELTER: So, thank you for that,
24 Nicole. I appreciate the study that's going to happen,
25 I really do. And she brought up Jim Magdanz and what he
26 did is he did a very, very comprehensive study on our
27 youth that needs to be relooked at because it's changed
28 quite a bit and a lot of resource, a lot of things have
29 changed. Our use of both motors and snowmobiles have
30 changed because they're much more efficient, much more
31 reliable than 30-35 years ago. Our access to those
32 resources have improved significantly because of that.
33 And so, you know, the one thing he included was taking
34 a whale and the abundance of sharing that particular
35 resource throughout the whole region, and how much that
36 adds to the food value of the whole region. You know,
37 even though it's a (indiscernible) or a bowhead whale,
38 the whales that we were -- that Tom Gray catches a lot
39 of us catching [sic] down in Unalakleet area, St. Michael
40 area right there in the beluga resource there too. So,
41 I'm now understanding what your goal is, which is a
42 comprehensive study, and I really, really appreciate
43 it's long overdue. It is long overdue. You know, a lot
44 of things that aren't (distortion) bird hunting. You
45 know, I went down there to get (indiscernible) eggs. You
46 know, these are resources that you spend a whole winter
47 on and then you go out and go get eggs and additional
48 protein and that kind of resource that really adds to
49 the to the value and improving people's lives. You know,
50 understand where to get the variety of greens that exist,

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1 berries that exist. So, now I understand what your goal
2 is, do it the best you can and it's an invaluable study
3 that's long overdue. Thank you.

4
5 MS. MALLORY: Yeah, I'm really excited.

6
7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: All right.

8
9 MS. MALLORY: Thank you, guys.

10
11 (Talking)

12
13 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Who's at
14 BIA? Nobody? (Indiscernible).

15
16 MS. CHAPA: Glenn, did you have a report
17 for the Council?

18
19 MR. CHEN: (Indiscernible).

20
21 MS. CHAPA: Okay, thank you.

22
23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK:
24 (Indiscernible). You don't have a checkbook?

25
26 MS. CHAPA: And now, next is Bering Land
27 Bridge National Park and Preserve.

28
29 MS. KOELSCH: Good afternoon.

30
31 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: You have 4
32 minutes.

33
34 MS. KOELSCH: all right. Have a brief
35 report for the Council. My name is Jeanette Koelsch, I'm
36 the Superintendent of Bering Land Bridge National
37 Preserve. In 2024 and 2025 the Preserve received funds
38 through the Inflation Reduction Act to work with
39 associated tribes on subsistence preservation
40 activities. The National Park Service went to the
41 communities of Brevig Mission, Wales, Shishmaref and
42 Deering and discussed with them the funds that they had
43 received to do subsistence preservation activities. And
44 by and large, those communities wanted assistance or
45 funding to do youth cultural camps and subsistence
46 camps. So, after we did government to government tribal
47 consultation with these communities, we entered into a
48 PL93-638 multi-year funding agreement with Kawerak for
49 \$148,000. Kawerak worked with the Native Village of
50 Shishmaref to plan for a subsistence summer youth camp,

1 which was held outside of Shishmaref the week of July
2 28th. The Brevig Mission Tribal Council is continuing
3 to work with Kawerak on a camp, and Kawerak is also
4 planning a similar activity in Wales. Because the Native
5 Village of Deering resides just outside of the preserve
6 but is on -- considered to be Unit 23 or (indiscernible).
7 We worked directly with the Native Village of Deering
8 to provide them cultural, camp and food preservation
9 supplies so they can conduct their own camp and canning
10 workshop. And they plan to do a camp with Buckland at
11 some point.

12
13 The other thing that happened this last
14 year was a lot of folks know Ken Adkisson, he's worked
15 for the National Park Service and the federal government
16 for about 56 years. Last year, park staff nominated Ken
17 for his many years of service and Ken received the Alaska
18 Region Director's Award for Excellence in Natural
19 Resource Stewardship. As many of you know, Ken began his
20 career in the Preserve in 1985, and then later became
21 the Western Arctic National Parklands Assistance Program
22 Manager. He's played a crucial role in balancing
23 subsistence needs with conservation efforts, notably
24 establishing the Seward Peninsula, Muskox and Co-
25 operators Group and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
26 Working Group. He -- for years and still does, his work
27 involves navigating complex federal, state and local
28 interests, ensuring local communities were involved in
29 co-stewardship. Kens worked for the National Park
30 Service, in particular for over 4 decades. And we were
31 so happy that he was nominated mainly by Letty for the
32 award and that he received it this last year. He still
33 works for us. He's just not here today.

34
35 The other notable thing that happened
36 was the National Park Service, if you haven't come down
37 to our office completed a multi-year visitor center
38 project in cooperation with Sitnasuak Native
39 Corporation, Kawerak, Manilak, the Native Village of
40 Shishmaref, Deering and Wales. We had our grand opening
41 at the end of September. During this time, we had a
42 tribal work group, and they wanted to name our new
43 meeting room that used to be named the Beringia Room to
44 the Fred (In Native) Meeting Room. Fred passed away
45 unexpectedly in 2016. He was the Subsistence Coordinator
46 for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve beginning in
47 1992. He -- his main role was ensuring that traditional
48 subsistence practices are maintained and that the
49 National Park Service ensured that we worked with local
50 communities and tribes. He contributed to many projects,

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1 including those that related to traditional knowledge
2 and food security and his efforts were instrumental in
3 preserving the cultural heritage and practices of the
4 indigenous people of our area.

5
6 The last thing that we found notable
7 this last year was that we moved the outhouse at
8 Serpentine Hot Springs. It was a huge effort for the
9 last of the 5 staff that we have at the Park Service,
10 the outhouse was likely vandalized. There was trash in
11 the outhouse and so we had to make a new spot for it.
12 And it was -- and we also, due to some runoff issues,
13 had to work on the airstrip. So, we had to do that in
14 very quick time as the summer construction season, as
15 you know, is very short. We had volunteers come that
16 helped us brush and drag the airstrip and dig a new
17 outhouse hole and move the outhouse. We will be doing
18 some outreach to let remind folks that trash should not
19 be put in an outhouse. It damages it, as all you know,
20 and it makes it unusable for other people and the
21 National Park Service, because we had to do this so
22 quickly, we'll have to go back out and dig that hole and
23 take the trash out because we weren't able to take the
24 trash out during this -- our main objective was getting
25 a new hole built at that time. And that is our brief,
26 brief report.

27
28 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Alright.
29 Questions. Kelsi? Louis?

30
31 MR. GREEN: No questions, Mr. Chair.
32 Thank you.

33
34 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Alright,
35 Brent. On to your housekeeping. You got 2 minutes
36 (indiscernible).

37
38 DR. VICKERS: What am I doing?

39
40 MS. CHAPA: OSM report.

41
42 DR. VICKERS: I do not have the agenda
43 in front of me. Give me a second, (indiscernible).

44
45 (Talking)

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47 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Let's take
48 a 5 minute break while he get's ready.

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50 (Off record)

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(On record)

(Talking)

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Go ahead, Brent.

DR. VICKERS: Okay. Brent Vickers, OSM. Sorry, I'm used to like doing it -- being the closer and doing this at the end, I was totally spaced out that I had something to do today. But alright. Since we last reported to you at your winter 2025 meeting, OSM has continued to ensure rural federally qualified subsistence users have opportunity to meet, meaningfully engage in our public process implementing Federal Subsistence Program mandated by ANILCA. We have also been busy bringing the leadership within the Office of Policy Management and Budget in the Office of Secretary up to speed on the program and any current issues that require their attention. On February 7th, 2025, last year, the Board's call for proposals to change federal wildlife regulations open. During this regulatory cycle, the Board received 78 Wildlife Proposals across the state and OSM staff developed in-depth analyses of the proposed changes. Additionally, OSM staff analyzed 17 Wildlife Closures that will be reviewed by the Councils and the Board.

Regulation updates. On July 21st, federal subsistence regulations were moved from one part of the Code of Federal Regulation specific to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 50 CFR part 100, to a new location specific to the Department of Interior at 43 CFR part 51. This change in the location of our subsistence regulation reflects OSM administrative move to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. Regulations did not change just their location. The same day, OSM published a final rule codifying the Federal Subsistence Regulation amendments made by the Board in February. The rule primarily amends federal regulations for the take of fish and shellfish for the 2025-2027 regulation period. This rule also removes Ketchikan area from the list of non-rural areas. Updates to the regulations for subsistence taking of caribou in Units 11, 12 and 13, and corrects an error from a recent final rule regarding the take of wolf and wolverine in Unit 17.

1 The Board of Work session. On July 23rd
2 to 24th, the Board held -- the Federal Subsistence Board
3 held their annual summer work session. The Board
4 reviewed and approved replies to fiscal year 2024 annual
5 reports from the 10 Regional Advisory Councils. They
6 also adopted Deferred Wildlife Proposal 24-01, as
7 modified by OSM, to allow the sale of brown bear hides
8 harvested by federally qualified subsistence users,
9 which was supported by 9 Councils. Implementation of
10 that regulation to be able to sell brown bear hides will
11 proceed once the regulations are published in the CFR
12 as part of the Wildlife Final Rule in the summer of
13 2026. Additionally, the Board reviewed recommendations
14 for Council charter changes and received briefings on
15 the recent Council correspondence.

16
17 Council appointments. During the 2025
18 appointment cycle, the Board received 50 applications
19 from incumbents and new applicants to fill 48 seats,
20 which are vacant or are expiring. The Board also received
21 8 letters of interest from young leaders that are
22 interested in the non-voting positions on the Councils.
23 Oh shoot, I didn't look at this. Gisela, any knowledge
24 of how many membership applications were received for
25 this region?

26
27 MS. CHAPA: Overall?

28
29 DR. VICKERS: Last year.

30
31 MS. CHAPA: I Believe we only received
32 an incumbent application -- 2 incumbent applications and
33 1 new application overall, but no new leader.

34
35 DR. VICKERS: Okay, thank you. The Board
36 held their executive session on July 24th, 2025, and
37 developed their recommendations on the appointments to
38 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. The new
39 application period will open sometime January 2026,
40 after the Secretaries announced their 2025 appointments
41 and will close on March 26th, 2026. We are requesting
42 your help in soliciting applications in your region,
43 including for the non-voting young leader seats in
44 several regions, including this region.

45
46 The new permit app. In 2024, OSM
47 initiated the modernization of the Federal Assistance
48 Permitting Application. Part of this modernization was
49 to make permits more readily available to users through
50 an option to obtain permits online. The new system was

1 released for agency use on September 30th. However, the
2 permit portal is not functioning at this time, so users
3 are unable to request profiles and permits online. Users
4 should continue to obtain permits by contacting local
5 issuing office until the portal is ready. When the online
6 portal option is available, we will broadcast a news
7 release and the link to the online permit portal will
8 appear on the program website. It's a lot of Ps.
9

10 OSM staffing updates. Roughly 25% of OSM
11 positions are vacant, and many employees are doing
12 double or more to cover these vacancies. It was announced
13 in early December that the government-wide hiring freeze
14 was going to be lifted. We are awaiting further guidance
15 on how to proceed with filling our vacancies. Several
16 OSM employees opted to retire earlier this year through
17 the deferred retirement program offered to federal
18 employees. Including -- this included OSM Fisheries
19 Biologist Karen Hayer, who is a specialist for the
20 Northwest Arctic region for many years and heavily
21 involved in the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring
22 program. OSM Council Coordinator Lisa Hutchinson, who
23 coordinated Kodiak/Aleutians, Northwest Councils. OSM
24 Cultural Anthropologist Pippa Kenner, covered Bristol
25 Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim probably covered this region at
26 some point in her long career, and OSM specialist Derek
27 Hildreth, who was responsible for the permitting
28 database. We've worked with some of or all of these
29 retired employees and I'm sure you'll miss them. Almost
30 nearly as much as we do. 2 weeks -- 2 lateral staffing
31 moves from other agencies in the OSM were recently
32 approved. Caron McKee came back to OSM as a Subsistence
33 Outreach Specialist and Anna Senechal has joined OSM
34 Fisheries Division to fill one of the 3 vacant fisheries
35 positions, related to welcome them both. Additionally,
36 Katya, well -- Katya Wessels was officially acting as a
37 deputy director for operations. She recently was able
38 to step away from that acting position. She did an
39 excellent job over the last 3 months or 4 months. And
40 now we have another of our staff, Keri Crowe, taking on
41 that position.
42

43 Let's see, strengthening collaboration
44 with the state of Alaska, OSM director and deputy
45 directors have been conducting monthly in-person
46 meetings with Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy
47 Commissioner and Federal Subsistence Board Liaison.
48 These meetings are helping to ensure strong
49 communication and collaboration, especially with data
50 sharing and analysis reviews. In addition, OSM and

1 Interagency Staff Committee held a workshop earlier this
2 year to identify opportunities for strengthening the
3 agency's relationship with the state, which has produced
4 several action-oriented results.

5
6 Meeting dates for the winter -- for the
7 fall 8 out of the 10 had to be rescheduled. I'd tell
8 you, the new -- all the new dates. But it doesn't matter
9 to this point because this is now -- we're finally
10 finishing fall 2025 and winter starts next week, I think.
11 Let's see, tribal and ANCSA consultations on wildlife
12 regulations proposals and closure reviews took place on
13 August 19th and 21st, 2025, in person and via
14 teleconference. Several tribes and corporate --
15 corporation representatives participated in these. There
16 will be 2 more opportunities for tribes in ANCSA to --
17 corporation -- consult with the Board on these proposals
18 and closure reviews. First on February 19th and 20th,
19 and then just before the April 2026 Board regulatory
20 meeting. As an in the days before that meeting, there
21 will be enough opportunity. Council Chairs are welcome
22 to encourage -- and encourage to attend these
23 consultations. We would like to remind tribes and ANCSA
24 corporations that if the scheduled dates for
25 consultations don't work for you, you can always request
26 a separate date and time for your consultation by
27 emailing or walking up and talking to this guy right
28 here, OSM Tribal Liaison Orville Lind at
29 subsistence@ios.doi.gov.

30
31 Federal Subsistence Board will hold a
32 FRMP work session on February 5th, 2026, to review the
33 Draft Resource Monitoring Plan, which we already talked
34 about here and to accept additional oral comments and
35 to make a recommendation to the selecting official the
36 OSM director on the projects to include in the final
37 2026 resource -- Fisheries Resource Monitoring plan. The
38 Board will hold the Wildlife Regulatory Meeting on April
39 20th to 24th, to consider Wildlife Closure Review and
40 proposals, to change federal wildlife regulations for
41 the 2026 through 2028 regulatory years, to accept public
42 testimony on these closures and proposals and to engage
43 in regulatory rulemaking.

44
45 Good. Let's see. We have some updates
46 on the U.S. versus Alaska, some litigation, we already
47 discussed a bit today that U.S. -- that the Supreme
48 Court declined to take on the State of Alaska's petition
49 on the Kuskokwim River, we expect to find -- and so that
50 pretty much closes that case. That was started in 2022,

1 the U.S. brought the action to the State of Alaska to
2 resolve dispute over the regulations of subsistence
3 fishing under Kuskokwim, within the Yukon Delta National
4 Wildlife Refuge. And also on 20 -- June 2nd, 2025, the
5 State of Alaska -- ADF&G versus Federal Subsistence
6 Board, a Ninth Circuit panel ruled in favor of the U.S.
7 and this lawsuit filed by the State of Alaska after the
8 Board authorized an emergency special subsistence hunt
9 in 2020 for moose and deer on federal public lands and
10 vicinity of Kake, Alaska. That was also brought up
11 earlier today. I can talk more -- a little bit more
12 about this, if you like. Otherwise, I would say thank
13 you very much, sincere thank you for getting together
14 on these -- on short notice. Thank you, Gisela. Thank
15 you everyone. I know it's really hard to get everyone
16 together with lots of time for planning, much less a few
17 weeks, so really appreciate it. Appreciate everyone for
18 the agencies. From ADF&G showing up and from the public.
19 We value your expertise. Everyone here and volunteering
20 your contributions from your knowledge, experience and
21 time to the regulatory process. Thank you.

22
23 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you.
24 Louis.

25
26 MR. GREEN: I'm good, Mr. Chair. Thank
27 you.

28
29 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you.

30
31 DR. VICKERS: Thank you.

32
33 MS. CHAPA: Next item on the report --
34 this is Gisela Chapa, is Other Business and I'm going
35 to provide the Council a summary of a 805 -- the 805(c)
36 report. A copy of the report is in your meeting materials
37 on page 367, and this is not an action item. And
38 basically, the 805(c) report provides a summary of the
39 action that was taken by the Board on proposals and
40 closure reviews that impacts residents of the Seward
41 Peninsula region. The Board met on February 4th through
42 the 7th, 2025, to consider Fisheries Closure Review and
43 proposed changes to the federal regulations for the
44 Harvest of fish, shellfish, and federal public lands --
45 sorry, and public waters in Alaska. And the Board also
46 met on July 24th, 2025, to take action on a deferred
47 Wildlife Proposal WP24 -- on page 369, you have a summary
48 of the fisheries closure reviews and that the Council
49 considered for your fall 2024 meeting and the deferred
50 Wildlife Proposal, WP24-01, that was considered at the

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1 winter 2025 meeting. And the summary is that the Board
2 took action in line with the Council's recommendations,
3 and that is the end of the report.

4

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Cool.

6

7 MS. CHAPA: And if I may move on to the
8 next item. That is a Correspondence Update. At the winter
9 2025 meeting that was through teleconference. The
10 Council voted to submit a letter of support to Proposal
11 32 of the AYK Board of Fisheries meeting. And the Council
12 had intended to discuss other proposals at the meeting
13 that was scheduled on October that was unable to happen.
14 But I was still able to submit a copy -- sorry to submit
15 a letter in support of Proposal 32 as a Council intended
16 at the winter meeting. And I can provide, actually, the
17 copies are on the table, I will give you a copy for you
18 for reference. But ultimately the proposal failed to
19 pass. And that is the end of the report.

20

21 MS. IVANOFF: Which proposal?

22

23 MS. CHAPA: It was 32, repeal the
24 subsistence schedule west of Cape.

25

26 MS. IVANOFF: Oh, I'm sorry, I was
27 reading the report and not paying attention.

28

29 MS. CHAPA: It is - yeah that -- the AC
30 didn't -- was not in favor of that. So, the fishing
31 seasons and periods and it was to repeal the subsistence
32 schedule on waters west of (indiscernible) Subdistrict
33 1.

34

35 MS. IVANOFF: Yeah, I wrote that one.

36

37 MS. CHAPA: Yeah. The AC didn't support
38 it when I presented it, so I didn't even testify on
39 behalf of the Board of Fish meeting, because it wouldn't
40 be appropriate to review the AC.

41

42 (Talking)

43

44 MS. CHAPA: Yes. And if I may, Mr. Chair.
45 So, all of the -- actually most of the items left for
46 us in our agenda or are all action items and since we
47 don't have a quorum, we can resume those items tomorrow.

48

49 ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: And we'll
50 recess and we'll meet in the morning at 9:00, everybody.

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MS. CHAPA: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON AUKONGAK: Thank you
everyone. Thank you, Louis.

(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 87 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 120th day of January;

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 11th day of February 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager