

**Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
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APRIL 22 2026

Anthony Christianson, Chair  
Federal Subsistence Board  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit its FY2025 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805(a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meetings held on January 20 – 22, 2026, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council approved this annual report at its March 30 – 31, 2026, meeting. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Seward Peninsula Region.

**1. Natural Disaster Response to Address the Impacts on Subsistence Communities**

The Council discussed the increasing frequency and severity of storms that have affected coastal communities such as Golovin and Kipnuk. These adverse weather events have caused notable disruptions for subsistence users, as seen most recently with the remnants of Typhoon Halong that swept across the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in 2025 and the remnants of Typhoon Merbok in 2022. Subsistence users suffered substantial losses, including damage or destruction of property, loss of freezers and their contents due to storm surges, power outages, and other storm-related disruptions. After Merbok, the community of Golovin lost its entire winter food supply and required additional harvest opportunities to restock its freezers.

For several years, the Council has reported the increased frequency of extreme weather events, particularly the unseasonable warm temperatures and late-fall storms that now occur before the ground freezes. These conditions have heightened erosion risks that leave coastal communities in the Norton Sound region vulnerable to storm surges and severe flooding. The Council considers that, given the increasing frequency and severity of these events, it is imperative that the Federal Subsistence Management Program is prepared to support subsistence users during natural disasters without delay. The Council emphasized that temporary adjustments to fishing

and hunting harvest regulations on federal lands and waters, such as emergency Special Action Requests, will be necessary to ensure continued access to critical resources when storms or other disasters compromise the food security of these communities.

As these storms become more frequent, the Council emphasized the importance of monitoring these events more closely and ensuring timely and effective responses from agencies to support subsistence users and protect their food security.

#### Request to the Board

The Council respectfully requests that the Board and Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies provide a report to Regional Advisory Councils outlining the actions they can take to support subsistence users during State-declared disasters. The Council would greatly appreciate updates on the agencies' response to such events.

### **2. Prioritization of Subsistence Uses in Light of Caribou Declines**

The Council remains deeply concerned about the continued decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH). At the fall 2025 meeting, the Council received an update on the status of the herd and the proposed regulatory changes intended to support its recovery. The Council urges the Board to ensure subsistence users retain meaningful harvest opportunities as necessary conservation measures are implemented. The Council also recognizes that the decline of the herd is one of the most significant issues that subsistence users face today and believes it is important to take additional actions to assist in the recovery of the herd. In the absence of predator control, both State and Federal agencies need to conduct hunter awareness and education about the decline of the herd and measures individuals can take to protect its long-term viability.

#### Recommendations

The Council recommends DOI agencies implement educational initiatives to bridge informational gaps that may support the recovery of the herd. More specifically, hunters may benefit from education efforts that focus on accurately distinguishing bulls from cows, thereby promoting sustainable harvest practices.

### **3. Documenting the Ambler Road Project Impacts on Caribou Migration**

The Seward Peninsula has not seen large numbers of the WACH in quite some time and remains concerned about the impact of the Ambler Road project on the movement of the herd. Through its migration to wintering grounds, the herd previously accessed the Seward Peninsula region near the corridor of the proposed project, and the Council considers it necessary to study the movement of collared animals to determine if road development alters the herd's migration route into our region. The Council believes this is particularly important based on previous observations that heavy traffic from exploration efforts in our region along the Kougurok Road may influence herd movement patterns, thus highlighting the sensitivity of caribou responses to human activity.

### Recommendation

The Council requests the National Park Service to continue to share updates about caribou studies on the northern Seward Peninsula and on the WACH. Additionally, the Council recommends that studies be conducted to evaluate the impacts of the Ambler Road project on the movements of collared caribou and its potential impacts on the migration of the WACH.

### **4. Elevating Ongoing Salmon Concerns**

The Council continues to be concerned about the ongoing salmon crisis across Alaska, exacerbated by the Bering Sea trawl fleet fishery and other commercial intercept fisheries on the Alaska Peninsula and Gulf of Alaska. The continued declines of King and Chum Salmon are now widespread across multiple regions of Western Alaska, including Kotzebue, Bristol Bay, the Yukon and Kuskokwim, and Seward Peninsula. People are witnessing the heartbreaking declines of salmon runs on the rivers and tributaries they have stewarded and depended on for millennia. Meanwhile, commercial fisheries continue to harvest indiscriminately with minimal oversight. The siloed management of Alaskan fisheries across multiple jurisdictions is unintentionally punishing in-river users who continue to suffer through the hardships and the burden of conservation. Because marine fisheries management spans both Federal and State jurisdictions, the Council believes the Department of Commerce must be engaged in discussions to collectively address the declines of salmon in Western Alaska.

### Request to the Board

The Council requests the Board to elevate these concerns to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to request that the Department of Commerce become directly involved in addressing cross jurisdictional fisheries management issues that impact subsistence users, such as salmon bycatch.

The Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appreciates the Board's attention to these matters and the opportunity to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. The Council looks forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users in the Seward Peninsula Region. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me via Gisela Chapa, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at [gisela\\_chapa@ios.doi.gov](mailto:gisela_chapa@ios.doi.gov), or 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 310-6129.

Sincerely,



Louis Green, Jr.  
Chair

Cc: Federal Subsistence Board

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Interagency Staff Committee

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Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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Administrative Record