

**Southeast Alaska, Southcentral Alaska, Kodiak/Aleutians, Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim
Delta, Western Interior Alaska, Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic, Eastern Interior
Alaska, and North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils**

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
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In Reply Refer To:
R26076

Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
1011 East Tudor Rd., MS 121
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Chair Christianson,

We write on behalf of the ten Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) to request that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) elevate to the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) a joint request from all Councils for adequate funding and staffing of critical federal fisheries and wildlife monitoring programs in Alaska.

In August 2026, Council Chairs or their representatives met with the Board to discuss issues raised by the ten Councils in their FY-2025 Annual Reports to the Board. Several Councils highlighted shortcomings in resource monitoring and research that are necessary for effective management of subsistence fish and wildlife populations across the state and all Council Chairs agreed that this is a major issue, whether or not it was included in their Annual Report. They requested that this topic be brought to each Council during the fall 2026 meeting cycle for discussion and concurrence. During this cycle, all Councils voted to sign onto this joint letter.

Rural Alaskans depend on fish and wildlife for food security, cultural traditions, and overall well-being. Many wild food resources are in decline from historic levels, and resource managers often lack the timely, comprehensive data needed to make well-informed decisions for management or hunting and fishing opportunities. In a state as large and diverse as Alaska, research and monitoring program needs are equally extensive and varied. Recent federal funding cuts and hiring freezes have further weakened existing federal fisheries programs that were

already struggling to meet the needs of those who depend on and manage the associated resources. Meanwhile, long-needed wildlife monitoring programs have yet to be established.

To help remedy these issues, the Councils request the following:

1. Restore funding to the Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program to at least FY2025 levels (adjusted for current inflation) and ensure that funding also includes dedicated staff to manage the program.
2. Establish an equivalent Wildlife Resources Monitoring Program with staff to manage the program.
3. Lift the hiring freeze and adequately staff Alaskan resource management agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service) and the Office of Subsistence Management so that effective research, monitoring, management, and support to subsistence users can be achieved.

The Councils emphasize that stable, long-term appropriations for fish and wildlife monitoring programs and associated agency staffing are crucial components for making sure that rural Alaskans can continue to hunt, fish, and fill our freezers in the future. Resource managers require robust biological and harvest datasets at both local and ecosystem scales to properly balance conservation while also providing harvest opportunities necessary for the continuation of subsistence uses. Additionally, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) requires the Councils and the Federal Subsistence Board to base their recommendations and actions on substantial evidence, which research and monitoring data helps to provide. Further, ANILCA Title VIII Section 812 states the following as it relates to research for subsistence management:

The Secretary, in cooperation with the State and other appropriate Federal agencies, shall undertake research on fish and wildlife and subsistence uses on the public lands; seek data from, consult with and make use of, the special knowledge of local residents engaged in subsistence uses; and make the results of such research available to the State, the local and regional councils established by the Secretary or State pursuant to section 3115 of this title, and other appropriate persons and organizations.

The Councils appreciate the Board's continued commitment to supporting subsistence hunting and fishing needs of rural Alaskans and we thank the Board in advance for elevating our request to the Secretaries. We look forward to their response. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact us through Katerina Wessels, Council Coordination Division Supervisor, at (907) 786-3885 or katerina_wessels@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

Donald Hernandez, Chair
Southeast Alaska
Regional Advisory Council

Richard Encelewski, Chair
Southcentral Alaska
Regional Advisory Council

Rebecca Skinner, Chair
Kodiak/Aleutians
Regional Advisory Council

Nanci Morris Lyon, Chair
Bristol Bay
Regional Advisory Council

Jacqueline Cleveland, Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
Regional Advisory Council

Jack Reakoff, Chair
Western Interior Alaska
Regional Advisory Council

Louis Green, Chair
Seward Peninsula
Regional Advisory Council

Thomas Baker, Chair
Northwest Arctic
Regional Advisory Council

Robert Wright Sr., Chair
Eastern Interior Alaska
Regional Advisory Council

Brower Frantz, Chair
North Slope
Regional Advisory Council

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Interagency Staff Committee
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
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Office of Subsistence Management

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

Aaron Poetter, Federal Subsistence Liaison, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Administrative Record