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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD  
RURAL DETERMINATION PROCESS PUBLIC COMMENT  
BEFORE HEARING OFFICER  
CARL JOHNSON

Pike's Landing  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
March 4, 2015  
7:00 o'clock p.m.

Presenter: Palma Ingles, Facilitator  
Office of Subsistence Management

Recorded and transcribed by:  
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2  
3 (Fairbanks, Alaska - 3/4/2015)

4  
5 (On record)

6  
7 MR. JOHNSON: Okay, everyone. I think  
8 that I'm going to go ahead and get this meeting started.

9  
10 First I'd like to welcome everyone here  
11 in the room. And for those of you on the phone, we are  
12 in the Pikes Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks.

13  
14 Earlier today we had a joint meeting of  
15 the Western Interior and Eastern Interior Regional  
16 Advisory Councils. And this evening we're having this  
17 public meeting to discuss the Secretarial proposed rule  
18 on the rural determination process.

19  
20 I'd like to welcome everyone in the room,  
21 and thank everyone for attending this meeting tonight.  
22 This is an opportunity for you to provide input to the  
23 Federal Subsistence Board on the rural determination  
24 process. Specifically the Board right now is seeking at  
25 the direction of the Secretaries your comment on a  
26 proposed rule on how the Board will make rural  
27 determinations in the future.

28  
29 And the Board is not currently seeking  
30 comments on which communities are rural or nonrural.  
31 That part of the process will not come until after this  
32 rulemaking is completed.

33  
34 The Board is accepting comments on this  
35 proposal until April 1st, 2013. Tonight will be an  
36 opportunity for you to provides comments. You can either  
37 provide them orally by coming up and speaking into the  
38 microphone, or you can provide written comments and  
39 provide them to any of the Staff here.

40  
41 And so let's start with letting you know  
42 who you can provide your written comments to. First, my  
43 name is Carl Johnson. I'm the Council Coordination  
44 Division chief at the Office of Subsistence Management.  
45 What that means is I supervise the Council coordinators  
46 who are our main liaison at the office between everyone  
47 else and the Regional Advisory Councils.

48  
49 Then I would like to identify our Council  
50 coordinators that we do have in the room. First there's

1 Eva Patton. She's the Council coordinator for Eastern  
2 Interior/North Slope Councils.

3  
4 Then we have Melinda Burke, there you are  
5 Melinda, who is the coordinator for the Northwest Arctic  
6 and Western Interior Council.

7  
8 We also had Adrienne Fleek. There she  
9 is. I couldn't see you. Adrienne is the coordinator for  
10 the Y-K Delta and Seward Peninsula Council.

11  
12 Then to my right is Palma Ingles. She is  
13 an anthropologist with our Anthropology Division.

14  
15 And there we go, there's Orville.  
16 Orville Lind is our Native liaison. So Orville is our  
17 primary point of contact for doing tribal consultation  
18 and reaching out to tribes and ANCSA corporations for  
19 anything that we're doing in subsistence management.

20  
21 Then I would also like to see if we have  
22 the ISC member. Is it Trevor? Are you here? There you  
23 are, Trevor. Thank you. There's Trevor Fox, he's the  
24 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative to the  
25 InterAgency Staff Committee. And that is the body of  
26 Staff who advise directly the Federal Subsistence Board  
27 members on their decisionmaking process.

28  
29 And I think that's it for the Staff in  
30 the room. So any of those folks that I just introduced  
31 to you, if you have any written comments you would like  
32 to get to the Federal Subsistence Board tonight, you can  
33 give them to them.

34  
35 Now, my job tonight is going to be the  
36 meeting facilitator, and that is just to make sure that  
37 everybody who is here has an opportunity to provide  
38 public comment if they want to. This meeting has been  
39 scheduled to last until 9:00 o'clock; and that is, of  
40 course, if we need to go that late. If we don't, then  
41 we'll leave. But if we do, we have this time available  
42 for you to provide comments.

43  
44 We also have with us tonight our court  
45 reporter, Tina Hile, and she is going to be recording  
46 everything that is said tonight.

47  
48 During the comment period of this  
49 meeting, so once I open it up to your public comments,  
50 we'll not be answering any questions, which will allow us

1 just the time to listen to what you have to say. After  
2 Palma is done providing her presentation to you, you'll  
3 have an opportunity to ask her questions or me questions  
4 about whatever her presentation was.

5  
6 But your comments will be transcribed by  
7 the court reporter, and they will be transmitted to the  
8 Board, so the Board gets word for word everything you say  
9 tonight.

10  
11 Now, in addition to this, there's still  
12 three more public meetings that will be held. Next week  
13 there's going to be one in Kotzebue in connection with  
14 the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. The week  
15 after that there will be one in Barrow in connection with  
16 the North Slope Regional Advisory Council meeting. Also  
17 that same week there will be meetings in the Southeast in  
18 Saxman and in Sitka to provide public comment  
19 opportunities on the rural determination process.

20  
21 Because of the importance of your  
22 comments, it's necessary that we follow certain  
23 procedures. Now, as you came into the room, you saw a  
24 little table over there. There's a sign-in sheet, so  
25 it's very important that we get your name so we know who  
26 attended so we can say, you know, X number of people  
27 attended this meeting. And if you want to make any  
28 comments on the microphone, you also saw over there by  
29 the sign-sheet these gold cards. Now, if you could fill  
30 one of these out and bring them up to me, then that lets  
31 me know that you want to provide an oral comment that  
32 will be recorded in the transcripts.

33  
34 It's important, too, that if you are  
35 commenting on behalf of a particular organization like  
36 your tribe or your corporation, make sure to write that  
37 in there, too, so that we know that it's also an official  
38 comment from that organization.

39  
40 Now, let me emphasize that the principal  
41 purpose of this public meeting is to provide comments and  
42 receive information. Now, unless we get a whole  
43 truckload more of yellow cards up here, right now I'm not  
44 going to put a time limit on this. If we had 20 cards,  
45 I'd have to put a time limit, but right now we only have  
46 four. Even if we get a few more, I won't put a specific  
47 time limit on it. I'll just ask that everybody be  
48 respectful of other people's time, given that we are only  
49 here until 9:00 o'clock.

50

1                   If, however, we do manage to run out of  
2 time, you can still provide a written comment to the  
3 Board directly, and again the deadline for those comments  
4 is April 1st. There will be information provided.  
5 You'll see over by the table by the sign-in sheet there's  
6 this news release that has the schedule. That has  
7 information on how you can provide your written comments.  
8 In addition to that, there's the Federal Register notice  
9 that also provides information on how you can provide  
10 your written comments. But essentially there's three  
11 ways: (1) handing it in here; (2) either hand-delivery  
12 or mailing to the Region VII headquarters for Fish and  
13 Wildlife Service, to our office; or, third, there's an  
14 on-line option at regulations.gov.

15  
16                   And with that information, what I would  
17 like to do is then pass this over to Palma so she can  
18 give you her presentation on this proposed rule on rural  
19 determination.

20  
21                   Thank you.

22  
23                   MS. INGLES: Thank you, Carl.

24  
25                   Once again for the record, my name is  
26 Palma Ingles. I'm an anthropologist for Fish and  
27 Wildlife Service in Anchorage at the Office of  
28 Subsistence Management.

29  
30                   I'm going to give you just a quick  
31 background for the students especially that are in this  
32 class, and for people who aren't familiar with rural  
33 determination.

34  
35                   The rural determination is really  
36 important for residents, because only people that have --  
37 that live in rural communities are eligible to harvest  
38 under the Federal subsistence regulations on Federal  
39 public lands in Alaska. So in October 2009 the Secretary  
40 of Interior Salazar announced the initiation of a  
41 departmental review of the Federal Subsistence Management  
42 Program in Alaska. The review focused on how the program  
43 is meeting the purposes of subsistence and provisions for  
44 Title VIII of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation  
45 Act, and how the program is serving rural subsistence  
46 users as envisioned when it began in the early 90s.

47  
48                   On August 31st, 2010, the Secretaries  
49 announced the findings of the review, which include  
50 several proposed and administrative and regulatory

1 reviews and revisions to strengthen the program, and make  
2 it more responsive to those who rely on it for their  
3 subsistence uses.

4  
5           One proposal called for a review with the  
6 Regional Advisory Councils' input of the rural  
7 determination process, and, if needed, recommendations  
8 from regulatory changes. The Subsistence Regional  
9 Advisory Councils were briefed on the Federal Register  
10 notice during the winter 2013 meetings. At their fall  
11 2013 meetings, the Councils provided a public forum to  
12 hear from residents of their regions deliberate on the  
13 Board -- based on the rural determination process, and to  
14 provide recommendations for changing, if they wanted to  
15 make changes, to the Board.

16  
17           Testimonies from members of the public  
18 were also recorded during separate public meetings held  
19 to solicit comments on the rural determination process.  
20 The Board held public meetings in Barrow, Ketchikan,  
21 Sitka, Kodiak, Bethel, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue,  
22 Nome and Dillingham.

23  
24           So that's why we're here tonight, just to  
25 give you a background of what happened, and to tell you  
26 the next step. So we're going to go over the who, what,  
27 where and when of this process.

28  
29           So who. The who is you. The Board  
30 received 475 substantive comments from various sources,  
31 including individual citizens, members of the Regional  
32 Advisory Councils, tribes, Alaska Native corporations,  
33 and other entities or organizations such as Borough and  
34 city governments.

35  
36           The what of this process is what we're  
37 asking you tonight is do you agree or disagree with  
38 changing the current regulations on rural determinations  
39 as proposed by the Secretaries.

40  
41           The where would be this rule would be  
42 effective statewide. So what we're looking for is a  
43 ruling that would apply throughout the State.

44  
45           The when is after the Board meets in June  
46 or July of 2015 and makes its recommendations to the  
47 Secretaries, a final rule will be published which may or  
48 may not differ from the proposed rule.

49  
50           So the reason we're doing this proposed

1 -- this whole process, is because the proposed rule was  
2 initiated based on the findings of the Secretarial review  
3 of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. Rural  
4 determinations are important, as I said earlier, because  
5 only residents of areas identified as rural are eligible  
6 to harvest under Federal subsistence regulations on  
7 Federal public lands in Alaska.

8

9                   So right now, under the current  
10 regulations, the Board aggregates communities or areas  
11 that are economically, socially, and communally  
12 integrated. And they evaluate a communities rural or  
13 nonrural status using guidelines defined by the  
14 Secretaries, such as population thresholds, and economic  
15 development.

16

17                   So under the proposed regulations the  
18 Board would evaluate a community's nonrural status using  
19 a broad array of relevant information, and they would  
20 rely heavily on the recommendations of Regional Advisory  
21 Councils. They would also recognize regional  
22 differences. The proposed regulatory change would  
23 increase flexibility in the decisionmaking process and  
24 recognize the unique nature of Alaskan communities.

25

26                   So what we're trying to do is come up  
27 with something that would allow us to say, you know,  
28 Western Interior is different than the Southeast, and,  
29 you know, work with those differences.

30

31                   You're not supposed to be able to read  
32 this slide, but it's jut showing you under the old  
33 criteria on the left, we have the list of criteria that  
34 we were deciding rural or nonrural status. And under the  
35 new regulations, it would be a shorter process.

36

37                   So instead of using population  
38 thresholds, rural characteristics, aggregation of  
39 communities, and varying information sources and  
40 attempting to apply these standards statewide, the Board  
41 would rely on the Councils and the public to provide  
42 information to the Board and make rural determinations on  
43 a regional level.

44

45                   The proposed rule would eliminate the  
46 mandatory 10-year rural review cycle, and instead changes  
47 to the rural status would be based on proposals submitted  
48 to the Board.

49

50                   So this is why we're here tonight. This

1 is the new regulation proposed by the Secretaries. If  
2 this were to go forth, it would read, space-15, the rural  
3 determination process: (a) would say the Board  
4 determines which areas or communities in Alaska are  
5 nonrural. Current determinations are listed at. And  
6 then (b) all other communities and areas are therefore  
7 rural.

8

9 So what we're asking you tonight is do  
10 you agree with these changes? If so, why? Do you  
11 disagree with these changes? And if so, why?

12

13 So we're encouraging your comments, and  
14 as Carl mentioned earlier, you can come up and speak and  
15 put your comments on the record, but you can also -- some  
16 people do not like to speak in public. If you don't want  
17 to speak in public, please fill out a card and leave it  
18 with us. And we also have opportunities for you to send  
19 us the comments directly.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Palma.

24

25 And as I mentioned at the introduction,  
26 now that she's completed her presentation, we'll have a  
27 Q&A period if you have any questions. And then once  
28 everybody's had a chance to ask any questions, we'll  
29 happily answer them; then we'll open the public comment  
30 period. So right now it's for Q&A if anybody has any  
31 questions. And if you do have a question, if you could  
32 just come up here and push the button on the microphone,  
33 and just speak into the mic so we have a good record for  
34 our court reporter.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 MR. BASSICH: For the record, my name is  
39 Andy Bassich from Eagle, Alaska.

40

41 I guess what I'm kind of confused about  
42 is under (a) it says the Board determines which areas or  
43 communities in Alaska are nonrural, but under what  
44 criteria? What criteria are they going to use to make  
45 that determination? Is it just going to be public  
46 comment? People are going to say, well, we don't feel  
47 we're rural, or we don't feel we're nonrural any more.  
48 What are the criteria?

49

50 That's important, and that's -- you know,



1 you showed your slide that showed the two pieces that we  
2 couldn't read. My understanding is the one on the left  
3 had the criteria. The one on the right no longer has any  
4 criteria.

5  
6 My fear with this is that it's basically  
7 going to turn the Federal program into just exactly what  
8 the State program is right now. All citizens of Alaska  
9 with the exception of maybe Anchorage and Fairbanks and  
10 maybe Wasilla will be recognized as a rural community,  
11 and therefore it dilutes the whole separation between the  
12 Federal and the State program to protect people who live  
13 in remote areas.

14  
15 MR. JOHNSON: I think, Andy, that's an  
16 excellent question. It's one we have actually received  
17 at pretty much every public meeting on this issue.

18  
19 So there's two points I want to highlight  
20 in response to your question. First, I want to note that  
21 all the criteria were in the Secretarial regulation,  
22 which meant the Board had to follow them in every  
23 instance. And what they're doing now is eliminating  
24 those criteria from Secretarial regulation to allow for  
25 greater flexibility. So, for example, if people were  
26 those criteria, they could still be guiding principles.

27  
28 But if they weren't -- I'm going to read  
29 from the Federal Register notice, the very last  
30 paragraph. The Board would make nonrural determinations  
31 using a comprehensive approach that takes into  
32 consideration population size and density, economic  
33 indicators, military presence, industrial facilities, use  
34 of fish and wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation,  
35 any other relevant material and information provided by  
36 the public.

37  
38 So it's going to be kind of anything  
39 that's relevant. That's the first part. The second  
40 point I want to make, and another slide you saw up there,  
41 too, the Board would give considerable weight to the  
42 recommendations of the Regional Advisory Councils.

43  
44 So the current vision is that through  
45 this process, by eliminating the rigid Secretarial  
46 criteria that everybody has to follow, the Councils  
47 themselves could choose to follow or not follow those  
48 criteria, and identify criteria that were more  
49 appropriate for their region. The important thing is  
50 they would just have to develop a good record and explain

1 their decision so that when the Board is considering it,  
2 they would understand what the basis was for the  
3 Council's recommendation.

4  
5 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: I'm kind of -- what I'm  
6 trying to figure out is, what do you mean by rural. Is  
7 that like someone that -- someone from out of town could  
8 stay in your village for like one year, and they would be  
9 able to hunt and do anything they want? Is that the  
10 understanding of that?

11  
12 MR. JOHNSON: That's a good question.  
13 And what that relates to is not necessarily the rural  
14 issue, but how residency is defined in the regulations  
15 that currently exists. And having been there for one  
16 year is part of -- there's a several factor test they  
17 look at to determine whether or not you're a resident of  
18 a community. And one of the things you have to comply  
19 with is you have to have been there for a year, but there  
20 are other things, other factors they look at to determine  
21 whether or not you really are a resident there.

22  
23 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

24  
25 MR. DAVID: Yeah, to ask this question,  
26 meaning rural. Like say a family member moved to a city.  
27 He becomes rural, non-user of the tradition and practice  
28 at the village?

29  
30 MR. JOHNSON: That is correct. It goes  
31 back to the previous question about residency, now the  
32 regulations define where you're residing. So if they  
33 move there permanently, they picked up home from the  
34 village and they moved to either Anchorage or Fairbanks,  
35 and they weren't going back to their home village, they  
36 would now no longer be rural under the regulations.

37  
38 And it's a common problem, and even one  
39 that our director for the program, Gene Peltola, who  
40 moved to Anchorage from Bethel, that's one of the first  
41 things he recognized. You know, he said, I have to give  
42 up being a rural subsistence user by moving to Anchorage.

43  
44 MR. DAVID: And also at least another  
45 one, does he still have -- can get his permit to have  
46 someone hunt for him there, but that doesn't mean that  
47 you can't transport it to him? That's unclear to me.

48  
49 MR. JOHNSON: That would depend on what  
50 the activity is. For example, some of the customary

1 trade regulations prohibit engaging in customary trade  
2 with somebody who is not a resident of the region. But  
3 it wouldn't apply I don't think to gifting.

4  
5 That would definitely be a question you  
6 would want to consult with law enforcement on before  
7 doing anything.

8  
9 I guess it really depends on the  
10 circumstances and the activity and who's living where,  
11 and I really can't give you an answer to that question.

12  
13 MR. DAVID: Another one is, you know, our  
14 mothers and grandparents is worried about the person  
15 living in Fairbanks like, and we're living out in the  
16 village. And being a mother or a father, you know, we're  
17 always concerned about our people living other places.  
18 What are we getting at through that, you know. Is that  
19 one of the things we're going to talk about tonight?

20  
21 MR. JOHNSON: No, that again gets to the  
22 issue of -- what this process deals with is how the Board  
23 will determines which communities are rural and nonrural.  
24 And the issue you're getting into really is the issue of  
25 residency.

26  
27 MR. DAVID: Yeah, it's a different one.

28  
29 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah.

30  
31 MR. DAVID: I understand that. Thanks.

32  
33 MR. JOHNSON: Well, certainly.

34  
35 MR. BASSICH: Andy Bassich again.

36  
37 So you said that under the new  
38 determination or process RACs, if I understood you  
39 correctly, you said that RACs would make recommendations  
40 as to who would be considered rural and nonrural as well.  
41 The problem with that, and I guess I'd wonder how much  
42 weight do they carry in making that decision, or making  
43 that recommendation to the Board, how much weight does  
44 that carry.

45  
46 The problem that I see with that is most  
47 of these communities that are going to be asking to go  
48 potentially -- or who through population growth would  
49 possibly lose their rural status due to population growth  
50 within their communities, what one in their right mind

1 wouldn't say, we are still a rural community. We are no  
2 longer -- or, you know, and would fight that.

3  
4                   So basically they're going to be  
5 recommending that they retain their rights. Who would go  
6 against that, even though the populations are growing?  
7 You just heard today at this meeting every single person  
8 in this room was testifying about the impacts of  
9 intrusions and competition. That's the crux of the  
10 problem. And I see this change as a way to open the  
11 floodgates. There is absolutely no way that a community  
12 or a Regional Advisory Committee is going to say, our  
13 community wants to give up our rural rights.

14  
15                   So I guess what I'm concerned about is,  
16 if that's the process, how much weight does that RAC  
17 carry, and who's going to stop that, if there's no set  
18 criteria written down, hard criteria.

19  
20                   MR. JOHNSON: I'll make two points, and  
21 then if Palma wants to add anything.

22  
23                   So again, the way we've got to look at  
24 this is how it's being flipped on the head. Communities  
25 are not -- under this approach would not have to defend  
26 their rural status. It would actually being up to  
27 somebody to prove that a community is nonrural. So one  
28 of the things we heard in Kodiak was, you know, we got  
29 tired of every 10 years having to defend our rural  
30 status. Again, the idea with this approach, would be  
31 we're going to identify what communities are nonrural.  
32 And then everything else will automatically be rural  
33 without having to determine whether or not that community  
34 is rural. If we make a determination a community is  
35 nonrural, then everything else is automatically going to  
36 be rural for that -- if we're looking at it say on a  
37 region-by-region basis.

38  
39                   And it was -- at this point in time, the  
40 Secretary -- or the proposed regulation does not  
41 contemplate giving deference to the Councils, which is  
42 the standard we currently apply for fish and wildlife  
43 harvest regulations, but as the slide indicates, the  
44 Councils will be given considerable weight. So, for  
45 example, if the Eastern Interior Council were to receive  
46 a proposal to say that Tanana is a nonrural community, I  
47 think it would probably be easy for the Eastern Interior  
48 Council to say, no, it's not. It's not nonrural. It's  
49 still rural.

50

1                   So I think another thing to think about  
2 this, too, it's easier to say, yeah, that place is  
3 definitely not rural than it is sometimes when we're  
4 looking at all these different factors to identify which  
5 communities are rural.

6  
7                   So anything to add, Palma.

8  
9                   MS. INGLES: Andy, one of the ways that  
10 we imagined it might happen is if you're in an area where  
11 the competition is getting stronger. If you look at a  
12 place that the population has really, really increased,  
13 you might come to the Board, if you're from another  
14 community that has stayed smaller, and your population is  
15 still under a certain threshold, or however they're going  
16 to evaluate it, and so you might propose to the Board to  
17 say, wait a minute, that community, because of all the  
18 improvements and development they have, they shouldn't be  
19 listed as rural any more. And so it may not come from  
20 that community itself to say, oh, we don't want to be  
21 rural any more. It might come from a competing  
22 community.

23  
24                   MR. BASSICH: I can see that, but I also,  
25 just from what I've heard from people who have gone  
26 through the previous rural determination processes, that  
27 there still was some people being set against each other  
28 in that process as well. I mean, a good example right  
29 now is the Saxman versus Ketchikan issue.

30  
31                   MR. JOHNSON: And I think it's important  
32 to note we're not going to have a perfect process, but at  
33 least with this, it eliminates the rigidity of the  
34 previous process and allows for more flexibility to  
35 acknowledge these regional differences.

36  
37                   MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Yes. Let me get this  
38 now, like the 42 tribes in the TCC region, we're going to  
39 have to -- you've going to have to say, okay, we're going  
40 to check if you guys are rural, or is this for certain,  
41 like Anchorage or Fairbanks or Kenai? Or does this  
42 pertain to the villages or is that to the cities,  
43 because as I understand it, all the villages in the TCC  
44 region are rural, you know. So I'm trying to see where  
45 you guys are getting at. Do we have to reapply every  
46 year or.....

47  
48                   MS. INGLES: As of right now, Fairbanks  
49 is considered nonrural. And so all of your other  
50 communities would be rural, until somebody made a motion

1 to change one of the communities to not have a rural  
2 status any longer.

3  
4 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Okay. And then if that  
5 happened, then like you're saying that -- like if  
6 somebody from the village moves away to Fairbanks for,  
7 you know, illnesses, they couldn't -- they've got to be  
8 in the hospital all the time, then they can't come back  
9 and be considered rural, because of their illness if they  
10 stay over a year? That would change or they wouldn't be  
11 able to come back after they got fixed up or something.  
12 For medical reasons leaving, you know.

13  
14 MR. JOHNSON: Well, again that gets into  
15 the issue of how residency is defined in regulations.

16  
17 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

18  
19 MR. JOHNSON: But a lot of the factors  
20 that they look at, I don't have the regulation in front  
21 of me, but some of the factors are like where are they  
22 registered to vote, where is their address on their  
23 permanent fund dividend application, where are they  
24 getting their permits for hunting and fishing. Do they  
25 own property there. How long have they lived there, et  
26 cetera. So let's say if you have somebody who comes in  
27 for six months for medical treatment, but they still --  
28 everything else is still back in the village, their  
29 property, their mailing address, their permit address,  
30 everything and all that, then, you know, it could be a  
31 good argument made that they're not -- they haven't  
32 changed residency. And they wouldn't have to go back and  
33 -- even if they were here for a year, you know, again  
34 that gets into the residency versus rural issue.

35  
36 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Okay. Thank you.

37  
38 MR. JOHNSON: Certainly. And before we  
39 go with any more questions here in the room, I just want  
40 to check on the telephone and see if there's anybody on  
41 the teleconference who would like to ask any questions.  
42 We're still in the Q&A period, and shortly we'll wrap  
43 this up and then proceed with public comment. Anybody  
44 on the phone would like to ask any questions.

45  
46 (No comments)

47  
48 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Hearing none, go  
49 ahead.

50

1 MR. ESMALKA: Good evening. My name's  
2 Tom Esmalka from Ruby/Nulato. I'm here with the Interior  
3 Aleutians Campus.

4  
5 I have a question for all the Native  
6 villages that live along the road system close by. The  
7 roads are maintained by State and it's a public road. So  
8 how do you define, I mean, the boundaries between rural  
9 nonrural on the road system.

10  
11 MR. JOHNSON: Well, right now under the  
12 current -- there's a current list that already defines  
13 what communities are nonrural. So that's the only  
14 determination as to what communities are not rural.  
15 That's how it is.

16  
17 Under the old, when Palma was talking  
18 about these aggregation of communities, what they used to  
19 look at under the current regulations will be, let's say  
20 if you have several communities that are connected on a  
21 road system. That might be one factor they would look at  
22 to possibly group them for the purposes of population.

23  
24 But under this approach, that would not  
25 have to be followed. You wouldn't have to do that in  
26 order to evaluate a community's nonrural status.

27  
28 MR. ESMALKA: How about non-Native  
29 communities like around here like Two Rivers, Ester and  
30 those cases? I mean, they've got large population.

31  
32 MR. JOHNSON: Well, again I don't have  
33 the regulation in front of me as to whether or not the  
34 communities of Ester or those others that are really  
35 close to Fairbanks are included in Fairbanks.

36  
37 MR. ESMALKA: They're in the borough.

38  
39 MR. JOHNSON: They're in the borough, but  
40 it doesn't automatically include all communities in the  
41 borough I don't think. It does? Okay. It does. So in  
42 this area they are not rural because of their affiliation  
43 with Fairbanks.

44  
45 MR. ESMALKA: Okay.

46  
47 MR. REAKOFF: Hey, Carl. In the front of  
48 the Federal subsistence management book, it shows the  
49 rural and nonrural areas. The area around Fairbanks  
50 here is the North Star Borough, and it goes like up there

1 to the Wickersham Dome; it goes way over to the east; it  
2 goes way to the west. So this area is nonrural, so the  
3 areas you're naming off are not. So you can look in  
4 this.

5  
6 MR. ESMALKA: Yeah. I see. I didn't know  
7 the question -- the book. Sorry about that.

8  
9 MR. REAKOFF: I just wanted to point that  
10 out. It's easy to find what is rural and what's not rural  
11 currently by just looking in the Federal subsistence  
12 book.

13  
14 Thank you.

15  
16 MR. ESMALKA: Yeah, I was just thinking  
17 about it, because I think it would be a big issues.

18  
19 Thank you.

20  
21 MR. JOHNSON: Certainly.

22  
23 MR. REAKOFF: Carl.

24  
25 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

26  
27 MR. REAKOFF: I attended the Federal  
28 Subsistence Board as the Chair of the WI RAC last April  
29 and listened to the Federal Board deliberate this  
30 rural/nonrural issue.

31  
32 The aggregation problem with Saxman was  
33 a driving force on trying to get rid of the aggregation.  
34 They wanted to go to looking at a community -- they used  
35 to have levels, like when it got to 2500 people, then  
36 they would start setting off yellow lights. And when it  
37 got to 7,000 people, it got into they had to evaluate.  
38 Well, they wanted to get rid of that. There was talk  
39 about increasing the numbers for Bethel, moving it up to  
40 20,000 people. And the Board decided, well, we don't  
41 want to go there. They were going to have to -- they  
42 decided that they wanted to evaluate each community on  
43 its characteristics: Do they -- are they primarily a  
44 traditional subsistence user community. Do they still  
45 rely on the wild renewable resources, fish and wildlife  
46 resources, et cetera. So they decided that they were  
47 going to go towards evaluating each community on its  
48 rural characteristics.

49  
50 For Andy's question of designating, I



1 foresee in the Western Interior we have a mine that's  
2 going to be developed at Donlin Creek, and so here comes  
3 like 2,000 people working at this mine. Well, that's a  
4 rural place. But they're all going to want to go out and  
5 hunt moose and recreate and catch all the fish and shoot  
6 all the game around there. And the Western Interior  
7 Regional Advisory Council should have the ability to go  
8 like, wait a minute. That's a non-traditional community,  
9 that is strictly a work camp. They have year round  
10 gather -- live there year round, but they're making lots  
11 of money, and they're not actually subsistence -- they  
12 don't have the criteria. There's eight criteria: Direct  
13 dependence on the resource, handed down knowledge, and  
14 all these kinds of things.

15  
16 I feel that this -- that the Councils or  
17 the public, maybe Aniak goes, hey, these people are like  
18 really competing with us heavily. We think that they're  
19 not rural. They can submit a proposal that they're not  
20 rural. The Board would evaluate that, whether they have  
21 rural characteristics, and they can deny or support their  
22 subsistence use.

23  
24 They could delineate them, just like  
25 Prudhoe Bay, it's nonrural. It's an industrial place.  
26 There's no private land. Nobody lives in Prudhoe Bay;  
27 they work there. So Prudhoe Bay is a prime example of  
28 how -- Alaska has a lot of big mineral sites, like down  
29 in Pebble and all these places. You start thinking about  
30 it. If they start developing these places and they have  
31 these huge work populations that move there, like Prudhoe  
32 Bay, we could have a big problem with competing with  
33 local rural placed people that actually really do live  
34 there.

35  
36 Thanks. I just wanted to clarify that.  
37 Thank you.

38  
39 MR. JOHNSON: And that's a good  
40 illustration of how this process will be used in the  
41 future. If you have an area that communities want to  
42 designate as nonrural, like a new mining site, then you  
43 would identify, explain why that area is not rural, and  
44 the people, and the people who are working at the mine  
45 aren't entitled to that rural priority.

46  
47 All right. A couple more questions and  
48 then hopefully we can wrap up the question and answer so  
49 we can get on to public testimony. Thank you.  
50

1 Next and then if you want to speak.  
2  
3 MR. LORD: Hi. I'm getting kind of  
4 tired. I was up since 3:00 o'clock this morning with my  
5 water troubles in Nenana. I drove in.  
6  
7 (Laughter)  
8  
9 MR. LORD: I just want to than you, Jack  
10 is it?  
11  
12 MR. REAKOFF: Jack.  
13  
14 MR. LORD: Jack. He talked about non-  
15 traditional villages or whatever, you know, like a mining  
16 camp. And that kind of contrasts with Nenana which is --  
17 the people moved there, they came there for a hunting  
18 camp. It was a good place to fish. They fished there  
19 for I don't know how many years, a thousand maybe. And  
20 they hunted the caribou. Caribou used to come over the  
21 hill there, so they came in from four different villages  
22 that I know of. Kantishna, Toklet. And there's still  
23 people there that, you know, they moved there. But it  
24 was a summer hunting camp, and it was big time  
25 subsistence. There was a fish clan and a caribou clan.  
26 I'm the caribou clan.  
27  
28 To steal something from Malcolm X here  
29 about we didn't land on the Parks Highway, it landed on  
30 us.  
31  
32 (Laughter)  
33  
34 MR. LORD: So I just wanted to get that  
35 out for you guys before I have to go here. I'm getting  
36 kind of tired.  
37  
38 Thank you. Thank you, Jack.  
39  
40 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you.  
41  
42 MR. JOHNSON: And the next question.  
43  
44 MR. KELLY: Okay. The question I've got,  
45 with this new proposed regulation, you took one page,  
46 narrowed it down to one paragraph. And I'm hearing that  
47 the RAC would have a lot of authority on the  
48 determination of whether a community is rural or  
49 nonrural.  
50

1 I think a situation we find ourselves in  
2 a lot of times is, and this is a follow up to what Alfred  
3 just mentioned about people coming in sick. There are  
4 situations where a lot of elders coming in from our  
5 communities are under doctor's orders to move, or they  
6 probably wouldn't last long in the villages. They're  
7 going to lose their status as a rural resident with that  
8 preference.

9  
10 Would it fall to the RACs to make special  
11 considerations in those cases to say that in these  
12 special circumstances, that these individuals could  
13 retain some of the benefits which came with being --  
14 having that rural reference, because I know from the  
15 Yukon Flats that if we were to send in during the spring  
16 migratory birds and stuff into Fairbanks, we were told  
17 that that's violating regulations. And a lot of our  
18 Native elders, you heard it earlier today, basically  
19 saying that they are starving. They're not starving  
20 because there's no food; they're starving because they  
21 don't have their native food which is something that, you  
22 know, their body is accustomed to. And they just  
23 basically, you know, don't have that interest in eating  
24 store-bought food or, you know, microwavable stuff.

25  
26 And I'm wondering if this is something  
27 that could be addressed by the RACs if this proposed  
28 regulation is approved and adopted into regulation is  
29 approved and adopted into regulation.

30  
31 MR. REAKOFF: I can answer that, Carl, if  
32 you would like.

33  
34 MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

35  
36 MR. REAKOFF: Currently the waterfowl  
37 regulations preclude sharing to the urban areas, the non-  
38 harvest areas. But the Federal regulations allow sharing  
39 of fish and wildlife with family members. And so a sick  
40 person could come here and family members could send them  
41 a box of meat or something. That happens all the time.  
42 Practically every RAC member here comes to town, they  
43 bring a little meat for some of their friends or  
44 relatives or whatever.

45  
46 The person that comes here that's sick,  
47 unless they move all their stuff here and basically lose  
48 all their -- and buy a house -- they buy a house here,  
49 move all their stuff here, and they move here, they're  
50 urban. They lost their rural residency. But if they're

1 sick and they come here to stay to get chemotherapy of  
2 whatever, and they've still got their house and  
3 everything at home, no, they can go home. They haven't  
4 lost their residency at all, because they haven't  
5 actually moved here. They're just here for medical  
6 reasons, and there's nothing in the rural residency  
7 criteria that would preclude them from going back home  
8 again, because that's already there. No enforcement  
9 officer would touch them, because they haven't moved.  
10 They haven't moved their primary belongings. And there's  
11 a list of criteria in the reg book there.

12  
13 MR. KELLY: Yeah. And I think that's  
14 good to hear, because a lot of people are really  
15 unfamiliar with the regs. And I think like what I'm  
16 hearing from you is that if they had property, like in  
17 even Fort Yukon, and they had to move here because of  
18 doctor's orders, because they had property and didn't  
19 dispose of it, they still retain their rural preference  
20 designation that came prior to them moving to Fairbanks.

21  
22 MR. REAKOFF: Their primary home.

23  
24 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, there are many  
25 factors to consider in the definition of primary  
26 residence. That's one of them.

27  
28 And to answer the other part of your  
29 question, these changes to the rural determination  
30 process will not at all be involved -- won't affect the  
31 other issue, the residency. So it will not empower the  
32 RACs to change somebody's residency.

33  
34 So again, primary residence is different  
35 from rural determination.

36  
37 MR. KELLY: Okay. That clarifies that.  
38 Appreciate it. Thank you.

39  
40 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I think that should  
41 do it for questions and answers. Hopefully -- I mean,  
42 this has been some really good discussion, and thanks to  
43 Jack Reakoff, who is, for those who don't know him, the  
44 Chair of the Western Interior Subsistence Regional  
45 Advisory Council, for providing some expertise to help  
46 answer your questions.

47  
48 Now what I would like to do is open up  
49 for the public comment period. So from this point on it  
50 will just be hearing your comments and recording them for

1 the benefit of the Federal Subsistence Board. And I'm  
2 going to go in order of these cards.

3  
4 Again, a reminder. If you would like to  
5 provide oral public, the yellow slips are over there on  
6 the table just inside the entrance. If you're shy and  
7 you don't want to get in front of a microphone, that's  
8 fine. You can provide a written comment tonight or in  
9 the news release over there next to the sign-sheet, you  
10 can provide written comments through other methods that  
11 are identified there, too.

12  
13 So our first public comment will come  
14 from Shirley Fields. Shirley.

15  
16 MS. FIELDS: Hi. I'd like to give  
17 testimony on the rural/nonrural determination process.  
18 Good evening, everyone. My name is Shirley Fields. I'm  
19 a life long subsistence user living in Fort Yukon,  
20 Alaska. I was raised on the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers,  
21 growing up in a subsistence lifestyle most of my life.

22  
23 I believe AFN and NTI supports the rural  
24 determination process. I'm providing this testimony in  
25 support of the rural determination process. It simplifies  
26 the process to meet traditional subsistence user needs as  
27 ANILCA intended, Section VIII ANILCA intended. This will  
28 ensure Native people living in their communities will be  
29 afforded rural priority.

30  
31 Rural determinations are important,  
32 because only residents of areas identified as rural are  
33 able to harvest under the Federal subsistence regulations  
34 and on Federal public lands in Alaska.

35  
36 Thank you.

37  
38 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

39  
40 Next we have Doreen Mailer.

41  
42 MS. MAILER: Good evening. My name is  
43 Doreen Mailer. I live in Fort Yukon where I'm raising my  
44 children on subsistence lifestyle.

45  
46 I am providing this testimony in support  
47 of changing the rural and nonrural determination process  
48 as recommended by the Federal Subsistence Board, because  
49 it simplifies the process to meet our traditional users'  
50 need as ANILCA Title VIII intended.

1 Changing the rural and nonrural  
2 determination process will insure that people who live in  
3 rural communities are afforded rural priorities. Also,  
4 the Federal Subsistence Board proposed amendments would  
5 restore Alaska Native communities to their rightful rural  
6 community status.

7  
8 Thank you for your time in listening to  
9 my testimony.

10  
11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

12  
13 Next we have James Kelly.

14  
15 MR. KELLY: Good evening, Board members  
16 from the East and Western RAC. And good evening, Mr.  
17 Chair. My name is James Kelly, Sr., born and raised in  
18 Fort Yukon and the Yukon Flats region, and a life-long  
19 resident of that region.

20  
21 I have always considered myself a  
22 traditional and a customary user of the land and its  
23 resources which sustains my way of life. I don't use or  
24 agree with the term subsistence user for a lot of  
25 reasons.

26  
27 This evening I'm here to support the  
28 recommendation that was put forth by the Office of  
29 Subsistence Management on the rural determination  
30 process. This recommendation will correct a bad  
31 regulation that was imposed on communities for a number  
32 of years since ANILCA became law.

33  
34 The current rural determination process  
35 requires an evaluation of communities every 10 years to  
36 see if they met the criteria to retain this rural  
37 preference designation. To have communities that have  
38 not changed in the past 50 to 100 years prove that they  
39 are indeed rural is wrong. A lot of our villages still  
40 use outhouses, have no indoor plumbing, and operate with  
41 limited services. This recommended change will reverse  
42 this process and recognize the rights of our rural  
43 communities.

44  
45 Once this change is approved and adopted  
46 into regulation, the burden will then fall on outside  
47 parties to prove whether a community in rural Alaska is  
48 indeed rural or urban. And I really support that as it  
49 is written today.

50

1 I'd like to close by conveying my  
2 appreciation to both Boards, Eastern and Western, for the  
3 work they've done for our people in these rural villages,  
4 and recognize the sacrifice that they make as board  
5 members, you know, having to work to make sure that  
6 they're making regulations that would protect our land  
7 and resource which provides for a large number of  
8 families in rural Alaska.

9  
10 Thank you.

11  
12 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

13  
14 Next we have Charles Wright.

15  
16 (No comment)

17  
18 MS. BURKE: He will be back.

19  
20 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I'll put him aside.  
21 All right. So next, I'm hoping I'm getting this right,  
22 is it Kelda Britton?

23  
24 MS. BRITTON: Good evening. Thank you  
25 for the opportunity to be here. My name is Kelda  
26 Britton. I'm an enrolled member of the Round Valley  
27 Indian Tribes, born and raised on the reservation, and  
28 the daughter of a long line of Native fishermen, hunters,  
29 and basket weavers.

30  
31 My roots are indigenous to Northern  
32 California, but I have lived and worked in Fort Yukon for  
33 nearly two years now where I've had the opportunity to  
34 participate in traditional customary use and become  
35 educated on issues affecting Alaska Native people.

36  
37 I am providing testimony in support of  
38 changing the rural/nonrural determination process.  
39 Changing the rural determination process will insure that  
40 subsistence resource harvest priorities are meeting  
41 traditional subsistence use as ANILCA Title VIII  
42 intended. Alaska Native subsistence rights are a Federal  
43 trust responsibility, and a sound subsistence policy is  
44 vital to the health and cultural survival of Alaska  
45 Natives.

46  
47 The proposed amendments by the Federal  
48 Subsistence Board would act in restoring Alaska Native  
49 communities to their rightful rural tribal community  
50 status, to insure that people living in rural communities

1 are afforded rural priorities.

2

3                   Because of these reasons, I'm providing  
4 this testimony. I believe that success, wealth, and a  
5 rich life should be measured by money. Should not be  
6 measured by money, excuse me.

7

8                   (Laughter)

9

10                   MS. BRITTON: Take that off the record.  
11 They should be measured by resources. And for many of us  
12 Native people, those resources are our relatives, and  
13 they deserve to be honored and protected.

14

15                   Thank you.

16

17                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

18

19                   All right. Next we have, and I'm going  
20 to apologize for mispronouncing your last name. We have  
21 Thomas Esmalka?

22

23                   MR. ESMALKA: Yes, that's right.

24

25                   MR. JOHNSON: Excellent.

26

27                   MR. ESMALKA: Good evening. Thanks for  
28 hearing me.

29

30                   I'd like to thank the two Eastern and  
31 Western Boards for doing all the hard work they do.

32

33                   My name is Thomas Esmalka. I'm from the  
34 Native Village of Ruby, originally from Nulato. I was  
35 born on the bank in Nulato in a small little log cabin.

36

37                   I am providing testimony to the Federal  
38 Subsistence Board in support of rural determination. I  
39 live on the border of three different game management  
40 units. You can see it on the map. I'm just right there.  
41 I'm surrounded by State land. I'm backed up against the  
42 wall to feed my family. I need to give my people a  
43 chance to harvest fish and game. I need my children plus  
44 everybody else's kids to have this opportunity to harvest  
45 fish and game in the future. With this determination  
46 change, our people will become stronger, our kids' future  
47 will look brighter.

48

49                   Thank you.

50



1 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.  
2  
3 Do we have anybody on the teleconference  
4 who would like to provide any public comments for the  
5 record at this time.  
6  
7 (No comments)  
8  
9 MR. JOHNSON: Hearing none, is there  
10 anybody else who has not yet filled out one of these that  
11 would like to provide comments.  
12  
13 MR. LORD: I'll fill it out real quick  
14 here.  
15  
16 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Great. And if you'd  
17 like, you can provide your comments and then just get  
18 that to me before you leave.  
19  
20 MR. LORD: Yeah. I am from Nenana, which  
21 is -- the first time I had a good place to camp. And  
22 it's also -- it's older name is Tagateeli (ph). Like I  
23 was explaining to you earlier, it's Floating Hill. All  
24 the villages out on the flats out there, out in the  
25 valley, Tanana Valley, they look over the hill, that's  
26 how they know where to get Nenana or Tagateeli is a  
27 floating hill. And that's how they migrated there from  
28 the Wood River, all the way from Kantishna.  
29  
30 And I am a great-great-great grandson of  
31 Chief Thomas, and if I didn't get up here and say  
32 something, he'd probably boot me out of the tribe.  
33  
34 (Laughter)  
35  
36 MR. LORD: So here I am.  
37  
38 Anyway, it's just kind of we're on the  
39 other side of the borough border we were talking about  
40 earlier. I try to pay attention to this rural  
41 determination, and I'm glad we're addressing it because  
42 it probably has to be addressed, you know, with the  
43 military and all that and everything, and we're sharing  
44 our resources the best we can. Education is a big thing  
45 for those people. That's another story.  
46  
47 Anyway, I just wanted to testify that I  
48 don't know what I'd do without Nenana rural  
49 determination.  
50

1                   In 1999 me and Mitch Demientieff and a  
2 bunch of boys from Tanana Chiefs, we went out to D.C.,  
3 Washington, D.C. to protect Nenana's rights for rural  
4 determination. And we're ahead on that one with them.

5  
6                   I'm just awful concerned. I'm a life-  
7 long fisherman, born in a fish camp, and trapped.  
8 Everything, you know. Came to town and worked for a  
9 while. Built a boat and went back to Nenana. And have --  
10 potlatches. I lead a lot of potlatches, and we have --  
11 everybody that's buried, every Native down there, we go  
12 through the routines of the ceremonial deal, and we  
13 practice it. And the subsistence lifestyle is to me, I  
14 believe it's healthy food for my people. And a lot of  
15 non-Natives live in Nenana, too, and they participate  
16 right along with us, a lot of them, you know, the life-  
17 long ones,

18  
19                   We fish, you know. We fish with our  
20 wheels and our nets and we cut fish and we smoke fish.  
21 And last night a friend of mine cooked moose that was for  
22 me, and then today another friend called me up and said  
23 he's cutting up liver and kidney for me. So I love the  
24 life. And I just wanted to get that on record for you  
25 guys.

26  
27                   Thank you.

28  
29                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. And if you just  
30 state your name for the recording

31  
32                   MR. LORD: Oh, Victor Lord, Nenana,  
33 Native. I am the second chief at this time.

34  
35                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

36  
37                   MR. LORD: Thank you.

38  
39                   And is there anybody else who has not  
40 provided a public comment yet who would like to. Again,  
41 if you want to come up to the microphone, if you could  
42 just fill out one of these. Otherwise, you can provide  
43 a written comment to me or any of the Federal Staff.  
44 And, Staff, if you could just raise your hands again for  
45 those who might have come in later.

46  
47                   Yeah. Here you go. Here you go. Great.

48  
49                   Yeah. So, again, Federal Staff, hands  
50 up. So if anybody missed the introductions at the

1 beginning. Great. You can get one of those yellow slips  
2 -- or you can get your written comments to them and  
3 yellow slips to me.

4  
5                   Go ahead, and if you could state your  
6 name.

7  
8                   MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Hello. My name is  
9 Alfred Demientieff, Jr. I'm a Holy Cross tribal member.

10  
11                   I'm providing testimony in favor of rural  
12 determination. And I know it would be good for Western  
13 Interior to oversee the operation with confidence.

14  
15                   Thank you.

16  
17                   MS. INGLES: Thank you.

18  
19                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

20  
21                   I'll put it out to the teleconference  
22 again. If there's anybody on the teleconference who  
23 would like to provide any public comments at this time,  
24 please state your name and where you're from. And if  
25 you're representing a particular organization, identify  
26 that organization and your position.

27  
28                   (No comments)

29  
30                   MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Hearing no one on  
31 the teleconference, anyone else here in the room who  
32 would like to provide public comment.

33  
34                   Go ahead and please state your name on  
35 the record.

36  
37                   MR. FIRMIN: This is Andrew Firmin. I'm  
38 here from Fort Yukon, and I'm also here on the EIRAC, but  
39 I'm just kind of here with my own opinion tonight.

40  
41                   And I kind of think that it would be  
42 great to have the RACs have some weight behind the  
43 decisionmaking on the rural determinations, but I also  
44 think that the population thresholds needs to be highly  
45 considered, and it shouldn't be raised any, because how  
46 much -- there has to be a threshold limit for, you know,  
47 how much game is out there to support them. A village or  
48 a town of five, 7,000 people. And I know going from a  
49 rural to a nonrural perspective would probably put some  
50 people out in the cold. And as Victor always says, you

1 know, we didn't land on the Parks Highway; the Parks  
2 Highway landed on Nenana, you know. So that's kind of  
3 one way you have to look at things.

4  
5                   And there's people in Nenana, like for  
6 example, that don't own cars and trucks, they own boats  
7 and Sno-Go's and dog teams and stuff. That's the way  
8 they live and I think having the RACs and local input  
9 should weigh in heavily on those instead of -- they  
10 should have a lot of weight behind the decisions that the  
11 Board makes. And I know they've good in the past, but I  
12 do see some small changes that should be made. But I'm  
13 probably not read up on the whole process as much as I  
14 should be.

15  
16                   Thank you.

17  
18                   MR. JOHNSON: All right. Thank you, and  
19 if you could also remember to fill out one of these  
20 before you leave tonight.

21  
22                   Okay. Any other individuals who would  
23 like to provide a public comment at this time who are  
24 here in the room. Going once. There we go.

25  
26                   MR. PETER: I'll give you a little slip  
27 after.

28  
29                   Hello. My name is Walter Peter. I  
30 currently live in Fort Yukon. I've lived there all my  
31 life. I'm 38 years old.

32  
33                   And the rural determination process, it's  
34 a very important process to the rural people that survive  
35 off the land, that subsist off the land. And by  
36 subsistence I mean by our customary and traditional uses  
37 that provide food on the table for our families. And  
38 that's a very important lifestyle to Native people, you  
39 know, and through the ages and still today. That's what  
40 I feed my family on, moose, ducks, geese fish, king  
41 salmon if I could get it. And that's all I want to state  
42 today.

43  
44                   Thank you for taking my comments.

45  
46                   MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

47  
48                   Any one else in the room who would like  
49 to provide public comment.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 MR. JOHNSON: Is there anyone else on the  
4 teleconference who would like to provide public comment.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Hearing none, I  
9 would just like to remind everybody that there's still --  
10 the public comment period is still open until April 1st.  
11 And again back on the table over there by the sign-in  
12 sheet there's a news release. It has the remaining  
13 schedule for your opportunities to provide in-person,  
14 written public comment -- or in-person oral comment. It  
15 also provides the addresses, and the websites, and all  
16 that good stuff on how you can provide your written  
17 public comments.

18

19 And it seems like I've now called on  
20 everybody who would like to provide oral comments. I'm  
21 just going to ask one last time if there's anybody I  
22 missed, because again the reason I'm doing this again and  
23 again is I want to make sure that we give everybody a  
24 chance to speak who wants to speak.

25

26 (No comments)

27

28 MR. JOHNSON: And if there are no further  
29 comments, I'll go ahead and close the meeting. Remember,  
30 April 1st is the deadline for public comments, and feel  
31 free to not only take one of these news releases and the  
32 Federal Register notice for yourself, but grab a stack of  
33 them. Take them back to your community, spread the word,  
34 let everybody know that there is this opportunity to  
35 provide comment on this proposed rule, on the rural  
36 determination process.

37

38 I would like to really thank everybody  
39 for coming out here tonight. It is a real pleasure to  
40 hear, you know, people coming in from as far away as they  
41 did.

42

43 The Federal Subsistence Board is also  
44 going to be looking forward to doing consultation with  
45 tribes and ANCSA corporations on this issue. The  
46 consultation sessions are March 23rd, and is it March  
47 24th? So March 23rd for tribes consultation, and March  
48 24th for ANCSA corporation consultation. And Orville,  
49 our Native liaison, he has information on how you can do  
50 that, but also all the Council coordinators will be

1 putting out that information to let everybody else know  
2 how they can participate in those consultation  
3 opportunities.

4  
5                   After all comments have been received and  
6 evaluated, a final rule on the rural determination  
7 process will be adopted by the Secretaries of the  
8 Interior and Agriculture. And the next step after that  
9 will be where the Federal Subsistence Board makes the  
10 rural determinations based on that final rule.

11  
12                   So thank you all for coming out tonight  
13 and have a good evening.

14  
15                   (Off record)

16  
17                   (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

