

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

The intent of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) correspondence policy is to ensure that Councils can correspond appropriately with the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) and other entities. In addition, the correspondence policy will assist Councils in directing their concerns in an effective manner.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Title VIII required the creation of the Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to provide meaningful local participation in the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigned specific powers and duties to the Councils. These are also reflected in the Councils' charters. (*Reference: ANILCA Title VIII §805, §808, and §810; Implementing regulations for Title VIII, 50 CFR 100 .11 and 36 CFR 242 .11; Implementing regulations for FACA, 41 CFR Part 102-3.70 and 3.75*)

The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture created the Board and delegated responsibility for implementing the Title VIII rural subsistence priority regarding fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Councils in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) was established to facilitate the work of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Policy

1. **Council correspondence shall be limited to subsistence-related matters, including matters related to the operation of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, and issues relevant to the subsistence way of life.**
2. Councils may and are encouraged to correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are **advisory bodies** to the Board.
3. Councils are urged to make use of the annual report process to bring matters to the Board's attention.
4. Types of communication encompassed by this policy include but are not limited to the following: letters of support, resolutions, letters offering comment or recommendations, **ANILCA §810 comments (subsistence and land use decisions)**, and any other correspondence to any government agency or any tribal or private organization or individual.
5. The correspondence process is as follows:
 - **Councils shall discuss and agree upon the contents of proposed correspondence during a public meeting.**
 - Council Coordinators draft the correspondence in accordance with the Council's position.
 - Council Coordinators will transmit all draft correspondence to the Assistant Regional

Director (ARD) of OSM for review prior to mailing, except as noted in items 6, 7, and 8 of this policy.

- Recognizing that such correspondence is the result of an official Council action and may be urgent, the ARD will complete this review in a timely manner.
 - Modifications identified as necessary by the ARD will be discussed with the Council Chair. **Council Chairs have the final authority to approve letters.**
6. Councils may submit notification of appointment directly to Subsistence Resource Commissions under §808 without review by the ARD of OSM.
 7. **Councils may submit comments regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting subsistence uses within their regions to the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Board of Game without review by the ARD of OSM. The comments will be channeled through the appropriate OSM division(s) supervisors for review. A copy of comments or proposals will be forwarded to the ARD when the original is submitted.**
 8. Administrative correspondence such as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports at Council meetings, and cover letters for meeting agendas will be channeled through the Council Coordinator to the appropriate OSM division(s) supervisor for review.
 9. **Due to Hatch Act restrictions, Councils may not communicate with elected officials political appointees in other Federal agencies. Councils further may not write Secretaries of Federal agencies or their offices, and instead may write to the Board to request that the Board relay correspondence on relevant subject matters of interest to the Secretaries of the Interior or Agriculture or to other Federal agencies at the Secretarial level.** This does not prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity as private citizens or through other organizations with which they are affiliated.
 10. Councils will submit copies of all correspondence generated and received by them to OSM to be filed in the administrative record system.

Approved by the Federal Subsistence Board on June 15, 2004.

Revised by the Federal Subsistence Board on XXXXXXXX.