

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

ALASKA SUBSISTENCE CONSULTATION

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1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Before:

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (3:03 p.m.)

3 MR. NEWLAND: Good morning, everybody,
4 welcome. Hello. My name is Bryan Newland. I am
5 the assistant secretary for the Department of the
6 Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and I want to
7 welcome you all today to our listening session
8 between the Department of the Interior and the
9 Department of Agriculture regarding protection of
10 subsistence rates in our general subsistence
11 policy in Alaska.

12 Before we begin today, I want to just
13 make sure that we provide a space to begin our
14 discussion in the right way. And we don't have
15 somebody with us today to offer a prayer, so I'll
16 just ask everybody to take a moment of silence
17 here and reflect and pray in your own way that
18 this is a good meeting and everybody comes here
19 with good intentions and that everybody's minds
20 and ears are open.

21 (Moment of silence)

22 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you so much. So,

1 just very briefly, again, my name's Bryan Newland.
2 I'm from the Department of the Interior, joined by
3 Rose Petoskey, who is a counselor here in our
4 office. And we're here to listen. This is not a
5 government-to-government consultation. This is a
6 listening session. And we want to make sure that
7 we're hearing from everybody who can help us
8 better inform our subsistence policy in Alaska.
9 That includes Tribal leaders, ANC leadership,
10 inter-Tribal organizations and consortia, as well
11 as subsistence users who live with the daily
12 impacts of federal policy on subsistence rights.

13 And we're going to make sure that we
14 have a presentation for you all, and we're going
15 to have introductions from some of our federal
16 team members. But we're here to listen, and this
17 is going to inform our work as we go forward. And
18 I want to thank you all very much for taking time
19 out of your day, out of your schedule.

20 I hope that you and your families and
21 your communities are healthy and safe during this
22 pandemic, during the wintertime, as we start a new

1 year. And I will turn it over now to my colleague
2 from USDA, Heather Dawn Thompson.

3 MS. THOMPSON: There we go. Can you
4 guys hear me?

5 MR. NEWLAND: I gotcha.

6 MS. THOMPSON: Sorry, the transcription
7 was right over my mute button. Good morning.
8 Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Heather
9 Dawn Thompson. (Speaks Native language). I'm a
10 citizen of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South
11 Dakota. I live half-year in South Dakota and
12 half-year in Sitka, Alaska. So, I'm excited to be
13 joining you here today. I am an appointee as
14 well. I'm within the office of the Secretary at
15 the United States Department of Agriculture. Am I
16 doing my full opening remarks right now, Bryan, or
17 just hello?

18 MR. NEWLAND: The whole thing, Heather.

19 MS. THOMPSON: All right, we're going to
20 knock it out here. Secretary Vilsack and
21 Secretary Holland are both professional colleagues
22 and good friends, and we are just delighted that

1 they are working together so closely on so many
2 different issues, including subsistence. Many of
3 you may have seen that Secretary Vilsack announced
4 the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative in
5 November at the Tribal Nation Summit at the White
6 House.

7 And subsistence is a very important part
8 of that initiative at U.S.C.A., which includes, of
9 course, the U.S. Forest Service as well. And I
10 think, you know, COVID highlighted a lot of issues
11 we have with our food sources, and I think brought
12 the lower 48 up to speed with what many Alaskans
13 have known for a long time: how important it is to
14 protect our Indigenous food ways and to strengthen
15 them. And so, we are delighted to be partners
16 with the Department of Interior and thinking
17 through these important subsistence issues.

18 Many of you in Alaska have been working
19 with the U.S. Forest Service for quite some time
20 on these topics. And then, most recently, of
21 course, the leadership all came out to Southeast
22 Alaska to think through the Tongass National

1 Forest conservation efforts and what subsistence
2 might issues need to be addressed there.

3 In addition, the Secretary announced the
4 Southeast Alaska Economic Development efforts.
5 So, we are happy to see all of these conversations
6 converge in Alaska and to be able to support and
7 work together with the Department of Interior. As
8 Bryan said, today is a listening session to help
9 us prepare for the official consultations that
10 will be upcoming. And I think we all look forward
11 to hearing the framing for those consultations, as
12 well as to begin to hear your input.

13 But we will have formal Tribal
14 governmental consultations to be able to formally
15 have a government-to-government conversation for
16 Tribes, Tribal Consortia, and Alaska Native
17 organizations. Those are scheduled on the 20th
18 and the 21st of this month, or the Alaska Native
19 Regional and Village Corporation. Those will be
20 on the 28th, and all three of those will begin
21 from 11 Alaska time to 01:00 p.m. Alaska time.

22 And if you're not able to make any of

1 those consultations, you, of course, can also
2 supplement your words with written comments, and
3 we will be open for written comments until
4 February 15th. I look forward to listening to you
5 today and hearing more on your perspective on
6 subsistence, and I'm delighted to turn it over to
7 my colleague at Department of Interior, who works
8 directly with Secretary Holland, her senior
9 advisor, Raina Thiele.

10 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Dawn, I
11 appreciate that. (Speaks Native language). Thank
12 you, everyone, for being here today. My name is
13 Raina Thiele, and I serve as Secretary Holland's
14 senior advisor for Alaska Affairs and Strategic
15 Priorities. I'm from Bristol Bay, Alaska, and I'm
16 an enrolled member of Teacher Bay Village and also
17 an A.N.C. Shareholder. I was raised in both
18 rural and urban Alaska, on a mostly subsistence
19 diet, and understand the importance of today's
20 topic. Thank you so much for making time to join
21 us today, the Department of the Interior as well
22 as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for today's

1 kick-off session.

2 As mentioned by my colleagues, today's
3 session on Alaska Native subsistence is an
4 information session, but it's also a listening
5 session, so, we'll be providing information to you
6 about what we hope to do with the consultation
7 sessions taking place later this month.

8 And we'll begin today's session with an
9 overview of the Federal Subsistence Program by
10 Eugene Peltola, who's our B.I.A. Alaska Regional
11 Director. And then, we will proceed into Q and A,
12 and we hope to welcome not just, you know, if you
13 have your formal comments ready on Alaska Native
14 subsistence on federal land. We would welcome
15 that input today.

16 However, Heather Dawn mentioned we do
17 have three formal consultations coming up later in
18 the month on the 20th, the 21st, and the 28th.
19 And we also have a comment period for formal
20 comments by February 15th, which, if you have the
21 Alaskan Native Leader letter that was circulated,
22 the email address for those comments is included

1 in that document, and we very much encourage folks
2 to engage in whichever manner makes the most sense
3 for them.

4 But today, really, is an opportunity to
5 ask questions to clarify the "two departments"
6 approach on Alaska Native subsistence. But
7 really, today's session is directed toward a
8 variety of self-Tribal leadership, Alaska Native
9 inter-Tribal organizations and consortia, Alaskan
10 Native non-profit organizations, Alaska Native
11 corporations, and Alaska Native subsistence users.
12 Today's session is closed press. So, if you are a
13 member of the press, we ask that you please
14 disconnect now.

15 And our opening session was to, as I
16 mentioned, really clarify the details of these
17 upcoming formal consultations and to answer any
18 questions you have. What we typically see with
19 some of our formal consultations is that a
20 significant portion of those end up being
21 questions and clarifications. And so, we're
22 having today's session as a space for folks to ask

1 those questions. Again, if you do have your
2 formal comments ready, we will also accept those,
3 and we'll be recording those, as we will with
4 these formal consultations.

5 Regarding the upcoming consultations, we
6 all have questions about those. We welcome, any
7 and all, input on how to strengthen those and
8 ensure that you're collecting the proper
9 information and recommendations about Alaska
10 Native subsistence on federal lands. That
11 includes, you know, policy, law, regulation, etc.
12 And we'll have as open a discussion as possible
13 today.

14 We also welcome Alaska Native
15 co-management organizations to provide input
16 today, as part of our wholesome discussion. If
17 you have any recommendations or if you have
18 questions about the session. The department's
19 goal with the consultations is to build on some of
20 the work that was done back in 2010 during the
21 Alaska Native subsistence interview that took
22 place under our previous administration, and that

1 would also compile all the eligible consultation
2 input, and to build on the work of that previous
3 office.

4 So, with that, I just want to then say
5 thank you and welcome and thank you for
6 participating today. And I will go ahead and hand
7 the floor over to Eugene Peltola, Alaska B.I.A.
8 Director, will provide an overview of the Federal
9 Subsistence Programs before we get into questions,
10 answers, and comments. So, over to Eugene.

11 MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Raina. Welcome
12 and thank you for your pursuit. My name is Eugene
13 Peltola, Jr. I'm raised in Bethel, currently
14 living in Anchorage, where my duties have taken me
15 to. I'm in my 38th year with the Department of
16 Interior, first 34 with the Fish and Wildlife
17 Service, all those years within Alaska. Now, I'm
18 going to share my PowerPoint presentation with
19 you. Please be patient with me. I'm not
20 expertise at this, but I'll try to proceed from
21 there. Did the screen come up okay? Okay.

22 First off, I'd like to thank the Alaska

1 Solicitor's Office, specifically Ken Lord. He
2 provided the background and basis for this
3 presentation this morning, or this afternoon,
4 depending on where you're located. As you're all
5 aware, the Federal Subsistence Program was created
6 by the passage of ANILCA (phonetic) in 1980. It
7 has 14 different titles. And if it was to be
8 printed out, double-sided, it would be over 12
9 inches thick.

10 Volumes and volumes of published
11 legislative history take up entire bookshelves in
12 some law offices, including our Solicitor's Office
13 here in Alaska. But what convinced Congress to
14 act? Congress listened to the Native peoples,
15 non-Native rural residents, and others from
16 throughout the state of Alaska and try to do
17 something and help to preserve the unique
18 cultures, lifestyles, and opportunities that exist
19 here. Did everyone get what they wanted out of
20 Congress's solution? No.

21 Was everybody happy with Congress's
22 solution? No. But it was an unprecedented effort

1 that resulted in a unique program that brings us
2 all together, including our discussion here today.
3 But what convinced Congress to act? Congress
4 didn't just hear about the preservation costs.
5 You also heard about food and food security.
6 (inaudible) originally included a provision to
7 protect subsistence, but it was deleted in favor
8 of a stern warning about the Secretary of the
9 state of Alaska as the subsistence needs of Native
10 Alaskans must be protected. Nine years later,
11 Morris Udall, one of the key drafters of ANILCA,
12 lamented that neither the Secretary nor the state
13 had either this morning.

14 What did Congress conclude? Although
15 ANILCA is predominantly a lands bill, it created
16 new parks that we could use and so on. Congress
17 also finally cleared that. A continuation of
18 subsistence by rural residents of Alaska,
19 including both Native and non-Native, is essential
20 to the fiscal, economic, financial, and cultural
21 existence. In most cases, both practical and
22 alternative means are available to replace them

1 with food supplies. Why did Congress pass Title
2 8? Congress, over the past (inaudible), has
3 established with their policy for subsistence.

4 And that policy is stipulated. One,
5 that is consistent with the concentration of
6 healthy populations of fish and wildlife, and the
7 utilization of public grounds Alaska, is to cause
8 the least adverse impact possible on the rural
9 residents who are dependent on subsistence. And
10 non-wasteful subsistence uses shall be the
11 priority consumptive use when it is necessary to
12 restrict the taking in order to ensure the
13 continued viability of the fish or wildlife
14 populations or for the continuation of subsistence
15 use.

16 Most that do not agree with a
17 subsistence priority forget to take into account
18 this last sentence involved here is the board can,
19 the program can take action for the continuation
20 of subsistence use. The heart and the soul of
21 Title 8, which is considered to be Section 804,
22 the first sentence reads, "Except as otherwise

1 provided in this Act and other federal laws, the
2 taking on public grounds of fish and wildlife for
3 non-wasteful subsistence uses shall be accorded
4 priority over the taking on such lands of fish and
5 wildlife for other purposes".

6 So, one, it told us what. And that's
7 the priority for subsistence use. Two, it also
8 told us where, on public lands. What does Section
9 804 mean by "subsistence uses"? Well, in order to
10 completely understand that, we have to step back
11 to Section 803, which defines the term,
12 "subsistence use". And that is defined as the
13 customary (inaudible) use by rural Alaska
14 residents of wild renewable resources for personal
15 or family consumption is food, shelter, fuel,
16 clothing, tools, or transportation. Whether
17 they're making and selling a hand-crafted article
18 out of non-edible byproducts of fish and wildlife
19 resources taken for personal or family consumption
20 or the barter or sharing of personal or family
21 consumption and for customary trade.

22 We could spend all day talking about the

1 definitions as stipulated and its implications for
2 the program. But for now, we mainly want to point
3 out that this definition informs us as to the next
4 fundamental elements of the program. We'll get to
5 the priority under Section 804, and that being
6 rural Alaskan residents. Title 8 was originally
7 drafted with a Native priority but ultimately
8 being replaced with a rural priority. Can this be
9 changed in the future? Only Congress can change
10 that. It is not up to the boards, regional
11 bodies, councils, or anybody else in order to make
12 such a change. So, who are rural Alaskan
13 residents?

14 We have to look back (inaudible) in
15 1988. The court rejected the state's definition
16 of rural, which required the area's economy to be
17 dominated by subsistence fishing and hunting, and
18 it excluded areas characterized primarily by a
19 cash economy. Congress didn't help us much in
20 distinguishing rural areas from non-rural areas or
21 in how to draw the boundaries around the non-rural
22 areas, but the courts have helped out a bit in

1 this sense.

2 Instead, in this particular case, the
3 court ruled that rural is a standard word in the
4 English common language, understood and referred
5 to areas of the country that are sparsely
6 populated. What is the significance of the phrase
7 "customary and traditional"? What does "C&T"
8 refer to? C&T is used in reference to uses more
9 recently areas, not about the method of means or
10 means of transportation. What does that mean when
11 it refers to public lands? In order to better
12 understand this, we have to look at Section 802.
13 The term "public lands" means land situated in
14 Alaska, which, after the date of the enactment of
15 this act, ANILCA, our federal lands, except lands
16 (inaudible) by the state of Alaska or Native
17 corporations.

18 And, of note here, Title 8 of ANILCA
19 stipulates, "Unencumbered lands will be inclusive
20 in the Federal Subsistence program". That means
21 that if there is a selection, and since we are so
22 far past things, that if a corporation of those

1 original in the state of Alaska is over- selected,
2 until those over-selections are finalized, the
3 state still manages those lands. If you look at
4 the map, Federal Subsistence Program refers to
5 land held and titled by the federal government,
6 that is depicted by the dark green on the map.
7 It's about 220 million acres or about 60 percent
8 of the state by area.

9 The term "land" means lands, waters, or
10 interest variant. Which waters are included in
11 this public lands definition? Includes all
12 non-navigable waters located on federal lands.
13 All waters subject to a pre-statehood federal
14 withdrawal. Katie John litigation further defined
15 the definition as all navigable waters within,
16 near, or adjacent to federal lands where there's a
17 Federal Reserve Water Right. This was cemented by
18 Alaska vs. Babbitt in 1995, commonly referred to
19 as Katie John 1. John v. U.S. (inaudible) in
20 2009, commonly referred to as Katie John 2, and
21 other credible (inaudible) litigation, which came
22 about from the southeast Alaska, where all

1 maritime waters located in Southeast Alaska, where
2 there was a pre-statehood federal withdrawal, are
3 inclusive. In addition to, there is the Waters
4 Doctrine from 1908 (inaudible) Montana, concerning
5 Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, although you may
6 note that there may be some implications from the
7 Sturgeon case, although the Supreme Court in the
8 U.S., they didn't put those in that decision, and
9 nothing in this decision has been impacted the
10 Federal Subsistence Program in Alaska.

11 But what does "priority" mean in Section
12 804? The word "priority" does not mean that
13 subsistence absolutely grants everything else.
14 Rather, the Federal Subsistence Board, hence the
15 Federal Subsistence Program, must provide
16 subsistence users with a meaningful preference
17 while balancing subsistence and conservation or
18 other uses.

19 In the example given above, the
20 (inaudible) Provincial Council vs. U.S. in 2000,
21 the Federal Subsistence Board has not shown in the
22 record that to the early start date on the

1 (inaudible) in year 15 for subsistence use, it
2 providing a meaningful preference. Of note, it
3 has been 41 years now since the passage of ANILCA,
4 and as the program has evolved over time, we've
5 gotten better answers in some cases, and it raised
6 more questions in other cases or situations or the
7 brain of Title 8. Section 805 requires,
8 appreciatively, at least six subsistence regions
9 with a Regional Advisory Council for each.

10 The problematic E.I.S for this Federal
11 Subsistence Program, when it was completed, at the
12 creation of program, further defined that the
13 creation of Henry Hughes would better describe the
14 traditional and customary subsistence harvest
15 practices. Hence, we have 10 regions within the
16 Federal Subsistence Program and 10 Regional
17 Advisory Councils. The Regional Advisory Councils
18 provide input from local users in the subsistence
19 decision-making process.

20 This is one of the main reasons that
21 this program is unique throughout the world. It
22 statutorily required input and dependence on

1 knowledge from local residents in the
2 decision-making process is imperative.

3 As you can see in the slide, we
4 reference the 60/40 split. The 60/40 split came
5 up, came about, to fend off potential litigation,
6 which is brought forth by, I believe, an SDI.
7 That 60/40 split refers to that there, if at all
8 practicable, there has to be 40 percent
9 representation on the Advisory Council to
10 represent commercial and other interests rather
11 than subsistence. At times, the program via the
12 application process cannot make this, but we are
13 close to it as we can be based on those that apply
14 for the positions. Our brief notes here, national
15 parks are treated just a little bit different.

16 Section 808, the Park and Monuments
17 Subsistence Resource Commissions. (inaudible)
18 S.R.C. for each park or monument, where
19 subsistence uses are permitted. Like the Regional
20 Advisory Councils, each S.R.C. provides a forum
21 for input by local residents and making
22 recommendations regarding the parks' program for

1 subsistence use.

2 Each park in (inaudible) has one
3 regulation, that are adopted by the National Park
4 Service, not the Federal Subsistence Board. So,
5 essentially, in 14 regulations. Subsistence
6 regulations are 50 C.F.R. 100 divided into four
7 subparts.

8 The parts A and B include general
9 provisions and address the structure of the
10 program. And these are certainly commonly
11 referred to as the secretarial subparts. Subpart
12 C sets out more determination, including role
13 designations and customary and traditional use
14 determinations. And subpart D is kind of the meat
15 of the program, where the federal subsistence for
16 determination for the subsistence taking of fish
17 and wildlife; this includes the methods and means,
18 harvest limits, openings and closings, etc.

19 By breaking up the program in this
20 structure, Congress, you know, they can't do it
21 all. They don't have the time, they don't have
22 the expertise, and, really, they don't have the

1 time to get that deep into the woods. Although,
2 they provide the framework to address subsistence
3 in Alaska and expected the Departments of
4 Agriculture and Interior and their bureaus to
5 implement statutes, as (inaudible) urban
6 regulations, to execute the program effectively.
7 So, if you want 14 regulations -- allows the
8 Secretary to prescribe regulation as necessary and
9 appropriately (inaudible) the Bureaus. By
10 regulation, the Secretary established the Federal
11 Subsistence Board and delegated to the board much
12 of the decision-making or even taking official
13 license on public lands in Alaska. This could be
14 on 50 C.F.R. 110. Of note, based on some comments
15 and concerns expressed by travelers and throughout
16 the state, 50 C.F.R. 110 D9 accept that the U.S.
17 Fish and Wildlife Service shall provide the
18 appropriate administrative support for the board.

19 This regulation places the Office of
20 Subsistence Management within the U.S. Fish and
21 Wildlife Service, where they aim to recruits,
22 selects, and supervises its leadership and has

1 oversights over its annual operating budget. The
2 Secretary also required the creation of the
3 Inter-agency Staff Committee. The I.S.C. provides
4 analytical and administrative support to the
5 Federal Subsistence Board.

6 Industry members have one to two I.S.C.
7 support staff, while the public members and the
8 Chair share one I.S.C. Member. What are the
9 members of the Federal Subsistence Board? The
10 Federal Subsistence Board is comprised of the
11 Chairman, which is appointed by the Secretaries,
12 who happens to be a Tribal member, two
13 representatives of a rural subsistence users, also
14 appointed by the Secretaries, both of which happen
15 to be Tribal members.

16 Then, within the Department of Interior,
17 the Regional or State Directors, the Bureau of
18 Indian Affairs and Free Land Management Agencies,
19 this includes the Regional Director of the Bureau
20 of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, the
21 Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and
22 Wildlife Service. Also included is the Department

1 of Agriculture, the Regional Courts, and the U.S.
2 Forest Service.

3 Of interesting note is that the
4 Secretary of Agriculture has delegated direct
5 authority with regard to subsistence issues to the
6 regional courts here in Alaska. Subsistence
7 program structure has sources of input. As I
8 mentioned earlier, the Office of Subsistence
9 Management always (inaudible) an analysis for each
10 proposal in a Special Action Proposal Board and
11 coordinate council and board meetings, draft
12 regulations, Federal Registry notices, and press
13 releases. O.S.M. has up to 50 employees,
14 including social scientists, wildlife and
15 fisheries biologists, in hopes to manage of
16 contracting the administrative support of the
17 regulatory recommendations of the Federal
18 Subsistence Board.

19 The Regional Advisory Councils, which a
20 lot referred to as the heart of the program,
21 allows for meaningful input in the management of
22 subsistence resources, reviews and evaluates

1 proposals for regulations, policies, and
2 management plans. F.S.B. gives deference or take
3 regulations and customary provincial
4 determinations. Just as our Resource Commission,
5 as I mentioned earlier, didn't get into very deep
6 with the National Park Service, they formed a
7 similar function within the National Park Service
8 to make recommendations directly to each
9 (inaudible) issue match. (inaudible) corporations
10 are consulted with on the decision-making process
11 with regard to the Federal Subsistence Program, of
12 which, obviously, the session today is an integral
13 part of that. An Agency Staff Committee, to
14 review technical merits of analyses and try to
15 identify any areas of concern.

16 Oh, one thing I should note, that the
17 I.S.C. is composed of biologists and other experts
18 provided by the various federal agencies. At
19 times, it brings a new perspective to the
20 decision-making process, highlights issues, and
21 potential problem-solving before a proposal or
22 regulation is presented before the Federal

1 Subsistence Board.

2 You hear I.S.C comments at every
3 regulatory board meeting. Due to the effort of
4 the O.S.M. and I.S.C. members, the effort that is
5 put forth, board meetings are generally effective
6 and efficient. And then, we have the state of
7 Alaska. The state of Alaska, I think, we'll stand
8 as Regional Advisory Council shares in the
9 regulatory process, with regard to the Federal
10 Subsistence Board execution.

11 The state of Alaska has, the department
12 has expertise and has expressed in their
13 biologists, that means that all other meaningful
14 insights and the other comments and perspectives,
15 and the department holds the same standard as the
16 Regional Budget Council chairs, regulatory need,
17 and the Federal Subsistence Board. All the
18 comments and testimony, both written and verbal,
19 of the comments and testimony I received, the
20 Regional Advisory Council meetings and Federal
21 Subsistence Board meetings as well. All these
22 layers within the Federal Subsistence Program

1 provide input directly to the Federal Subsistence
2 Board, which executes a delegation of authority
3 from the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior,
4 and the decision-making processes of the Federal
5 Subsistence Program. And that's all I have today,
6 folks.

7 MS. THIELE: Great. Thank you so much,
8 Eugene. A lot of content there, and for folks'
9 information, we'll be posting Eugene's
10 presentation on the B.I.A. website, I believe.
11 But also, happy to share that through email or
12 whatever makes sense. Before we get into opening
13 this up and asking for input, questions, comments,
14 whatever you'd like, I did want to just cover one
15 quick piece of the Alaska Fearless Native letter
16 that went out, which (inaudible) to register for a
17 session.

18 There were five different questions,
19 which were included in that letter. And I believe
20 there's one, it's a small one that was included in
21 the Federal Register Notice that went out. It was
22 published recently, but I wanted to invite you to

1 review the questions and just let folks know that
2 these are not meant to be restrictive in any way.
3 We are open to any and all input about the
4 Subsistence Program and Alaskan subsistence access
5 on federal land and state of Alaska.

6 But I did want to ensure that folks are
7 aware that these questions are out there as a
8 guidepost. In case you have questions about where
9 you should be focused. The first question is: How
10 has climate change affected subsistence? What
11 changes have been made to subsistence policies,
12 regulations, or laws to help you adapt to those
13 changes? Question 2: How can federal agencies
14 better cooperate with Alaska Native Tribes, Alaska
15 Native (inaudible), Alaska Native Organizations,
16 and Alaska Native Corporations (inaudible)?
17 Question 3: How does the state management regime
18 affect implementation of the federal priority for
19 rural residents? Question number 4: How can the
20 Federal Subsistence Board and the Federal
21 Subsistence Program be changed to better
22 accommodate a last-needed subsistence needs? And

1 question 5: What difficulties have you
2 experienced in accessing subsistence resources?
3 And one additional question that's included with
4 the Federal Register Notice speaks in particular
5 to any obstacles you face or others face when it
6 comes to designation of rural versus non-rural.

7 So, those are sort of guiding questions
8 that, if you're looking for kind of where to
9 start, when it comes to your input, we're hoping
10 it would be helpful. Again, that they're not
11 restricted to the input that you want to provide.
12 And so, with that, again, this is a listening
13 session and an information session. And if you're
14 interested (inaudible) our really wonderful
15 overview of the Federal Subsistence Program in
16 Alaska. At this time, I believe, we do want to go
17 ahead and open that up for any input, comments,
18 questions that you all may have, especially in
19 regards to the three consultations, formal
20 consultations, that will be occurring later on
21 this month.

22 So, with that, I believe we'll ask folks

1 to please, if you have the option, use the
2 raise-hand button. But if you don't, we'll figure
3 out how to do that, you can go ahead and unmute
4 and ask your questions. I'll try to make sure
5 this is in order so we can make it.

6 SPEAKER: Hello.

7 MS. GILBERT: Yes. This is Regina. If
8 you would like to make a verbal comment, please
9 raise your virtual hand by going to your reactions
10 and raise-hand option. For those who, and we will
11 call on you. And when you are called upon, if you
12 could please let us know your name, title, and
13 Tribe, for those joining by phone, if you can hit
14 star 9 to raise your virtual hand and star 6 to
15 unmute yourself, and we will call on you in the
16 order your raised hand was received.

17 And just to quickly clarify, and I think
18 I did mention this before, but this call is not
19 for press purposes and not for attribution. And
20 this, of course, this call, it's open to the
21 public call, and we can talk through all
22 (inaudible). Thank you. So, we have a raised

1 hand from caller with the last four numbers of
2 2090. If you click, go ahead and star 6 to unmute
3 yourself and introduce yourself, please.

4 MS. CHINGSHAF: Hi, good morning. It's
5 Kristina Chingshaf (phonetic) from (inaudible).
6 I'm on the Yukon, and I had a question about our
7 subsistence. You know, last summer, we didn't get
8 to fish, and this was the first time, this year.
9 None of my family have drive to shore, salmon that
10 we put away for the winter. And it's kind of
11 hard, you know, that's our subsistence way of
12 life. And I had a question for the mesh, you
13 know, the foreign mesh that we're allowed to use
14 on the water out here.

15 I know a lot of people are complaining
16 that every time they use that mesh protection,
17 some things and, you know, were caught and
18 released. But when people go and check their
19 shipment, the things that they catch, they're dead
20 on the net, when they're pulling in the net. The
21 fish comes off the net. So, you know, in the
22 future, I think, maybe use a little bigger mesh

1 for the Yukon because we're killing off the fish
2 by using the foreign net.

3 They're getting stuck by putting them in
4 the net, and the fish are caught on there, and
5 then, before we get to them, and that they die.
6 And we couldn't even catch and release because the
7 net is too small, and they're only snagging them
8 and killing them. So, a lot of people on the
9 Yukon, we're thinking we need bigger size, less
10 for catching fish. Thank you. Ma'am?

11 MS. GILBERT: Raina, you're on mute.

12 MS. THIELE: Sorry, Kristina. I just
13 wanted to say, thank you for your comments.
14 Certainly (inaudible) situation out there. I
15 believe somebody had shared their screen. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. CHINGSHAF: Thank you.

18 MS. GILBERT: The next person, we have
19 their hand raised, is from Ms. Vivian. Vivian, if
20 you could please introduce yourself; name, title,
21 and where you're coming from. Thank you.

22 MS. KORTHUIS: Hi. Good morning. Can

1 you hear me?

2 SPEAKER: Yes, we can.

3 MS. KORTHUIS: Thank you. I'm going to
4 use my phone. I'm on Zoom, but the audio likes to
5 go in and out. So, I called in just so I'm
6 connected by phone. If I get disconnected, I will
7 call back in.

8 Thank you and good morning, everyone.
9 My name is Vivian Korthuis. I am the Chief
10 Executive Officer for the Association of Village
11 Council President. I'm calling in from Bethel.
12 I'm Yup'ik and a member of the Emmonak Tribe. I
13 do have a prepared statement. So, I'm going to go
14 forward with that. Thank you for holding this
15 listening session on protecting subsistence and
16 the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

17 I want to thank and recognize many of
18 our Tribal consortium members who are online for
19 this listening session, and, like Kristina, thank
20 you so much for calling in. Regarding our region,
21 just the overview, A.B.C.P. is the largest Tribal
22 consortium in the nation, with 56 federally

1 recognized Tribes. As our members, we are located
2 on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, with the Yukon River
3 and the Kuskokwim River bordering (inaudible).

4 And our Bering seafront. In front of
5 our region. Our region is many times described as
6 rural America. In the larger context, I like to
7 describe our region as extreme rural America
8 because of the extreme conditions. And, more
9 importantly, the extreme issues, including
10 subsistence, that we have to work with on a daily
11 basis.

12 Our region is about the size of the
13 state of Washington. There are no roads in or out
14 of our community to the rest of the state.
15 Subsistence is our way of life. 70 percent of our
16 households in our region harvest game. 98 percent
17 harvest fish. That's salmon, coming up all far
18 rivers. Households in our region produce an
19 average of 370 pounds of wild food per person
20 every year. This regional harvest is valued
21 between, depending on the season, 36 to 86 million
22 dollars each year. Regarding the impact of

1 climate change, I admit change is happening, and
2 it is threatening our way of life. The salmon
3 crash in our region that Christina spoke about, we
4 have experienced for the last season, last summer.

5 And it's just an example in our region
6 of an eco- wide decline, not only in salmon, but
7 seals, birds, crabs, and other Bering Sea species.
8 The effect of climate change, combined with
9 over-fishing and bycatch, increased shipping,
10 pollution and oil spills, and a lack of solid
11 stewardship, have brought us to this crisis point.

12 This crisis is impacting over 100
13 federally recognized Tribes and Tribal communities
14 on the Kuskokwim, the Yukon, and Norton Sound
15 region. Those three equal more than 40% of
16 Alaska. This summer, households on the Kuskokwim
17 harvested less than five percent of historical
18 subsistence harvest. On the Yukon, families
19 harvested zero percent.

20 The impact of state and federal
21 management on subsistence is critical. Alaska
22 laws require state agencies to provide a

1 reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses first,
2 before providing for other uses on fish and game
3 populations. However, in times of food insecurity
4 and declining and unstable subsistence population,
5 this subsistence priority does not benefit rural
6 communities; our access to food is limited, and
7 the cost of living is several times that of
8 communities on the road system or in the lower 48.

9 Further, due to climate change, the
10 timing of animals being available or unsafe
11 hunting conditions make it difficult or impossible
12 to subsist during regulation, open windows. We
13 have some recommendations to bring forward. I
14 will give four of them.

15 These recommendations illustrate how
16 honoring the government-to-government relationship
17 between the federal government and Tribes can
18 improve subsistence, conservation, and management.
19 First recommendation: prioritize Tribal
20 participation in ecosystem conservation and
21 cooperative management of subsistence resources
22 and habitats. This can be accomplished by

1 implementing a Tribal co-management of species
2 important to all Tribes. Meaningfully integrate
3 Indigenous knowledge into the Federal Subsistence
4 Monitoring Research Management and regulatory
5 decision-making processes.

6 To continue, part number two. Mandate
7 Tribal participation in federal fisheries,
8 decision-making bodies. By the following:
9 directing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
10 Administration to initiate Tribal consultation and
11 all decisions regarding subsistence resources
12 traditionally used by Tribes. Support adding two
13 voting Tribal seats appointed by Tribes through
14 the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council by
15 a reauthorization of the Magnuson- Stevens Act.

16 Ensure Alaska Native Tribal
17 representation on all North Pacific Fisheries
18 Management Council bodies and committees. Expand
19 Tribal representation on the Federal Subsistence
20 Board to rulemaking and increasing the number of
21 staff available to support Tribal representatives.
22 Move the Office of Subsistence Management out from

1 under the administrative supervision of the U.S.
2 Fish and Wildlife Service and under direct
3 supervision of the Office of the Secretary of
4 Interior. Third, identify and designate
5 Indigenous protected areas, ecological, marine
6 conservation areas to protect traditional and
7 Tribal values and resources in line with the
8 Tribal leader statement on 30 by 30. And last,
9 prioritize implementation and participation in the
10 Northern Bering Sea climate resilience area.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to share
12 these recommendations for improving subsistence
13 management and protecting our resources across the
14 state and in the Y-K Delta. On a note ending,
15 recently, we had an executive board meeting here,
16 I believe the C.P., and one of our elders made the
17 statements at our board meetings. And this was
18 really, it synthesizes everything that we believe.
19 He said, "We are one people, and we are
20 subsistence users. Common is our way of life, and
21 we need to protect our way of life". Thank you.

22 MR. NEWLAND: This is Bryan Newland,

1 from Department of the Interior. Thank you for
2 sharing your very clear recommendations. I was
3 wearing out my wrist trying to keep up, taking
4 notes as I was following you. And I would ask
5 that you share your recommendations with us in
6 writing as well. I think, between all of our team
7 members, we were able to capture everything that
8 you said, but it also helps when you present very
9 clear recommendations, as you just did, that you
10 shared them in writing with us.

11 So, thank you so much.

12 MS. KORTHUIS: Thank you for listening.

13 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. All right.

14 MS. GILBERT: On the phone, if you are
15 joining us by phone, press star 9 to raise your
16 virtual hand. And then, star 67, mute, and we are
17 all on mute. And next on our list, we have
18 Jaeleen. Thank you.

19 MS. KOOKESH: Thank you so much for this
20 opportunity. My name is Jaeleen Kookesh. I'm the
21 Vice President for Policy and Legal Affairs with
22 Sealaska Corporation. I have been in this

1 position for 13 years and much time on this
2 subsistence issue. We represent over 23,000
3 shareholders, predominantly of Tlingit, Haida, and
4 (inaudible) descent.

5 We also have many allies within our
6 ranks. I'm going to keep it pretty general
7 because we will be submitting written comments
8 during the inter-consultation, because we'll also
9 participate there. And I am mindful that the
10 agency can only do so much because much of the
11 protections are in federal law. At the same time,
12 I do want to highlight the importance to us of
13 amending things that (inaudible), or ANILCA, to
14 recognize needed subsistence rights.

15 We need a broader protection and
16 recognition of Native or Native pastoral presence.
17 And while you don't have any say in that directly,
18 I know if those of us in the Alaska Native
19 community pursue legislation, the department, when
20 we asked for comments, and we do hope that you
21 will support some strengthening and changes to the
22 protection of Alaska Native subsistence.

1 I would also like to see, or we would
2 also like to see, a different regulatory
3 management system, at least on (inaudible) lands.
4 We have 44 million acres that belong to the Alaska
5 Native Corporation, and unfortunately, right now,
6 they're treated as under strict state regulation
7 of private land. And we all know that the state
8 regulations is not protective of the subsistence
9 priority, and it is our thinking that these 44
10 million acres should be treated as either under
11 the federal regime or preferably under
12 self-management or co- management by us using the
13 corporations in coordination with our Tribes.

14 I also find it very problematic that
15 those lands that have been selected but not yet
16 conveyed are treated as private lands already.
17 And then, under state management. I think that's
18 odd because they're selected but not yet conveyed,
19 which means they're still in federal ownership.
20 So, they should remain under the federal
21 management regime until actually conveyed into
22 corporations.

1 And it wouldn't be such a big deal, as
2 conveniences are happening quickly. A lot of them
3 don't happen that quickly unfortunately. I also
4 highly recommend that the D.O.I. review A.S.M.
5 resolutions under consideration right now, and
6 even in the past, that have addressed subsistence,
7 generally or related to an M.P.A.,
8 Magnuson-Stevens, and we have a particular concern
9 about the management for subsistence in Glacier
10 Bay National Park.

11 And I'm sure it's an issue across the
12 state in terms of management across the national
13 parks in Alaska. And we certainly want to make
14 sure that our residents who have a tie to the
15 national parks have an ability to continue to
16 practice subsistence in those parks. Subsistence
17 and Native representation on the boards that
18 regulate subsistence is critical.

19 We feel like the management doesn't, the
20 representation doesn't adequately represent the
21 importance of subsistence to our Native people in
22 Alaska. We need more seats so that our people can

1 participate. Right. Also, this past summer, we
2 had, or this past year, we had a case in Alaska
3 where the state of Alaska challenged the Federal
4 Subsistence Board's ability to act on an emergency
5 basis during the pandemic. But we do want to make
6 sure that we can clarify that the board has that
7 authority. I know that the (inaudible) Tribe won,
8 but it was essentially on the grounds of neatness.

9 And I know that the state will likely
10 challenge again. So, we want to be clear that the
11 subsistence board can act in cases of emergency
12 for our communities so that there can be an
13 emergency hunts and fishing that can occur. I do
14 also want to recommend that the agency holds
15 subsistence hearings throughout the state. I'm
16 glad that so many of us can participate on these
17 calls, but I think, when it's safe, that there
18 should be in-person meetings throughout the state
19 to hear from our subsistence users and
20 communities. Two more, real quick ones.

21 We do want to support any efforts to
22 have research agencies on the impacts of climate

1 change on our subsistence resources. And we would
2 strongly support the establishment of a
3 Subsistence Disaster Relief Fund. So, I'll leave
4 it at that for now. But we'll certainly
5 participate in the inter-consultation. We work
6 closely with our Tribes also in addressing some of
7 these important issues, and we will submit written
8 comments for the record. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify today.

10 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Jaeleen.
11 I really appreciate those comments, and we are
12 certainly excited that you will be submitting
13 written comments as well. Those are a great
14 addition which allow for detail and the full
15 extent of your comments. Thank you so much.

16 MS. GILBERT: Before we wait for the
17 next comment, I would just mention, if you would
18 like to make a comment, you can raise your virtual
19 hand. That's found under the reaction button at
20 the bottom of the Zoom screen. If you are joining
21 us by phone, you can press "star nine" to raise
22 your virtual hand, and then, it will be "star six"

1 to unmute once we call on you. Our next comment
2 is from John Chase. Go ahead and unmute and
3 please state your name and title and Tribal
4 affiliation.

5 MR. CHASE: Yes, good afternoon. Can
6 you hear me? Okay, first of all, (Speaks Native
7 language) for this opportunity to provide comments
8 to the OC session. I don't have anything
9 prepared, but I did want to provide comments to
10 the OC session. Here at the Northwest Arctic
11 Borough, we represent 11 communities here at the
12 Northwest Arctic Borough, and those communities
13 are Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina,
14 Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and
15 Shungnak. Again, the 11 communities in the
16 Northwest Arctic Borough are the communities of
17 Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk,
18 Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and Shungnak.

19 And all of our communities depend on
20 subsistence. All of our communities depend on a
21 healthy environment to harvest subsistence foods.
22 And I want to make a note that nine out of the

1 eleven communities are above the Arctic Circle.
2 So, basically, we're like the canary in the mine
3 when it comes to climate change and subsistence.
4 Here in the planning departments, one thing here
5 in the planning department for over 15 years, and
6 as a planning administrator, and we have the
7 Borough Code Title 9. We have a Borough Code
8 Title 9 is our land use code. Land use code. And
9 subsistence is given the highest priority of any
10 land use. And (Speaking Native language) for
11 Buzzy Peltola for providing some information about
12 land use. But our Borough Code Title 9 gives
13 subsistence the highest priority of any land use.
14 And one of our goals of Title 9 is to promote
15 responsible development for economic and community
16 growth while ensuring the protection of
17 subsistence resources. And we do have 11
18 communities, 11 Tribes, and 11 city governments
19 that can provide specifics on comments on how
20 subsistence is geared to them. And yes, we do
21 have subsistence resource committees. (Speaking
22 Native language) Buzzy Peltola for the reminder

1 there.

2 We have subsistence resource committees
3 at the state level for the fish and game. We also
4 have subsistence resource commissions at the
5 federal level at the National Park Service. So,
6 again, I just wanted to say that here in the
7 Northwest Arctic Borough, we're roughly the size
8 of the state of Indiana. And there's about, you
9 know, the population varies, but there is about
10 7,300 people. About 7,300 people. 7,300 people
11 in 11 communities across the Northwest Arctic
12 Borough. And again, those are the communities of
13 Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk,
14 Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and Shungnak.
15 And all of our communities depend on subsistence.
16 (Speaking Native language) for the opportunity.
17 I'll be on there, listening. Have a good day.
18 Happy Monday.

19 MS. THOMPSON: John, thanks for the
20 comment. That was very informative. You have
21 some unique issues up there, and I think it's
22 really important for us to put some more thought

1 into that. And I wanted to sort of weave in some
2 of the previous comments. I know Jaeleen really
3 appreciated your comments as well. And this
4 co-management conversation, many of you have
5 probably seen, you know, the Secretary of U.S.D.A.
6 And the Secretary of the Department of Interior
7 issued that joint secretarial order in November
8 about how we can do this better together, Tribal
9 Nations and the United States government, and it
10 presents some real challenges, right, in Alaska.
11 The statutes haven't really thought through how
12 this could work in Alaska. And it's causing us
13 some challenges in thinking through that joint
14 secretarial order in doing right by the Alaskan
15 Tribes in the (inaudible) land. And we're asking
16 you guys for your help too. Help us think this
17 through. And today's perfect. Just been writing
18 some excellent comments. So, thank you so much
19 for that.

20 MS. BROWN: Thank you, and the next hand
21 up is Eva Burk. Go ahead, Eva, with your unmute
22 and give me your name, title, and an affiliation,

1 that would be great.

2 MS. BURK: Linda Eva Brown Burk. I am
3 from Nenana Hot Springs. I'm a Nenana Tribal
4 member. And I work at the University of Alaska
5 Fairbanks for the Alaska Center for Climate
6 Assessment & Policy. And I really appreciate the
7 comments made previously by other people,
8 especially for recommendations about
9 representation on the advisory board, especially
10 the North Pacific Marine Fisheries Council.
11 Really needing to have a Tribal voice on that
12 board. And then, working in the climate change
13 realm, you know, our regulatory structures are so
14 inflexible to respond to climate change and
15 respond to emergencies and receive that the state
16 of Alaska does not want support, pride in the
17 Federal Subsistence Board were working together to
18 make, to feed people during times of emergency. I
19 think really what we're seeing in Alaska is like a
20 gentrification of our subsistence resources, and I
21 mean that in the sense that, instead of people who
22 need the food, that rely on these foods because

1 they're close to them, because they can afford
2 them, because it's part of their culture, their
3 health and wellness depends on it. You know,
4 that's one part. But it's not okay that we are
5 just managing for numbers and that we're just
6 managing for, really, economics. That's really
7 obvious. The state just put out two studies in
8 Alaska, prepared by the McGallow Group. One is
9 The Value of Fisheries to The State and the other
10 is The Value of Big Game Hunts to the State. So,
11 that, it prioritizes the economics over climate
12 change. So, we're in a position right now where,
13 in science, we are not able to collect data that's
14 going to help with the regulation. The way that
15 the science is being collected is really in house
16 with the agencies, and that needs to change. We
17 need to have our Indigenous knowledge recognized
18 as part of the scientific analysis. And the idea
19 that to sustain yield management, and I know the
20 state of Alaska considers managing fisheries by
21 meeting a certain dollar amount. But what's not
22 left in there and what's not considered in the

1 predictions and the forecast for the runs of
2 salmon is how climate change is affecting that.
3 There's no room for real analysis and response to
4 climate change. The regulations don't allow for
5 emergency mitigation to climate change, and when
6 we're seeing low numbers the way that we are
7 today, what I saw this summer was, I was not
8 allowed to run my wheel on the Yukon, and so, I
9 tried to go take my hand at being, there's
10 personal use sport fishing down on the Kenai
11 Peninsula. And there's hundreds of people wind up
12 there in these areas, and then, I get back in the
13 airport, and fish boxes are being sent out, just
14 cart after cart of fish boxes, being sent out of
15 the state, because I did go up, and I looked at
16 the addresses on the box, and I could see that
17 they were not for the state of Alaska.

18 So, my recommendations are similar to
19 what other people are saying about having
20 representation, about looking at how Native lands
21 are managed. But also looking at the science, and
22 how is science, how is climate change being

1 included in predicting the numbers of fish and
2 wildlife that we have to harvest? So, with that,
3 I'd like to say thank you, and I will be preparing
4 written comments. (Speaks Native language).

5 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much. We
6 really appreciate those comments, and in
7 particular for your comments on climate and
8 climate impact. How those are or are not taken
9 into account. And, obviously, the importance of
10 traditional ecological knowledge and meta
11 decisions and processes. We certainly really
12 appreciate your words, and we do hope to
13 (inaudible) to see your written comments after the
14 session. Thank you so much.

15 MS. BROWN: Thank you. The next raised
16 hand is from Casey Ferguson. Casey, if you'd like
17 to unmute and introduce yourself. Please go
18 ahead.

19 MR. FERGUSON: Hello, everybody. My
20 name is Casey Ferguson. I am originally from
21 Chevak, but I live here in Anchorage right now,
22 and I work at the Alaska Pacific University at the

1 committee engagement and stewardship coordinator
2 for Tribal conservation districts. I work with
3 five Tribal conservation districts. And
4 subsistence management and subsistence food
5 security.

6 I don't have a written statement or
7 anything like that, but as I was listening to Mr.
8 Peltola talk and just looking at the fish and game
9 reports, with real subsisters (phonetic) being a
10 top priority, and these people living out in rural
11 Alaska, with the high cost of living, I'm just
12 curious why fishing was shut down for pretty much
13 the whole state of Alaska. When the commercial
14 fishery was able to bring in \$643.9 million in
15 fish last year, and that's an increase from 2020.
16 In 2020, the estimated value was at 295.2 million.
17 And then, when we talk about Chinook, for the
18 people who live on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers,
19 whose lives really do depend on that, the
20 estimated Chinook harvest for Alaska was 265,000
21 fish. And that's pretty astonishing, considering
22 that many people along the Yukon and Kuskokwim

1 River weren't able to go out and catch the fish.
2 Given the fact that they were using four-inch
3 mesh, there's been some like subsisters in rural
4 Alaska are a top priority. It sounds like the
5 commercial industry is the top priority. And this
6 is something that I've heard many times. You
7 know, I'm an active fisherman. I'm an active
8 hunter. I grew up hunting out in Chevak. And
9 this year was the first year that I can remember
10 where fishing shut down in Chevak. It's not on
11 the Yukon or Kuskokwim River. We're on a little
12 tiny river. And many of the people in Chevak,
13 they go out to fish, cast about anywhere from
14 thirty minutes to two hours outside of town, and
15 then those small rivers. We get what many people
16 consider dog food. We get chum salmon. That's
17 what we lived off of when I was growing up.
18 That's what we got. There was some years where we
19 had really bad years, where we'd be pulling three
20 or four fish in our nets, and the way that we
21 checked our nets was that we checked them every
22 day at high tide, so, the nets were literally

1 soaking for a day. And then, there were other
2 years where we'd pull in 150 to 200 fish every
3 day. And this year was the very first year that
4 they weren't allowed to set their nets. And for
5 chum salmon, last year, that brought in about
6 \$62.7 million worth, and for it to be considered
7 dog food, but the commercial industry is still
8 pulling in that much money. That just doesn't
9 make sense to a lot of people who rely on that
10 fish. For any fish, for that matter. So, I don't
11 have a recommendation, but I am curious if there
12 is something going on or if there are talks about
13 maybe capping the commercial salmon industry so
14 that in emergency years, like we had since 2019,
15 the commercial industry is not, fish and
16 commercial industries is not increasing, and
17 subsistence users are being excluded from their
18 right to be able to go out and fish for their
19 food, for their culture, and then, on top of the
20 insanely high cost of living out there, with the
21 lack of jobs, the lack of economy, and some of
22 those communities who solely rely on fishing and

1 hunting. I'm just wondering if there are any, if
2 in the future there'll be any adjustments so that
3 these communities are really the top priority.
4 I'm looking at the fish and game website, and
5 isn't it subsistence in Alaska in this page, right
6 under "What is Subsistence Use?" Subsistence
7 fishing and subsistence hunting are important for
8 the economies and cultures of many families and
9 communities in Alaska. Even those two words,
10 "economies" and "cultures", "culture" comes
11 second. So, I'm just curious if there's any
12 discussion about whether or not, in the future,
13 when things like this arise, fish and game ensures
14 that these people in rural Alaska are able to
15 fish, because this year, a lot of those people,
16 they had no fish. So, that's kind of my comment.
17 Thank you guys. Thank you for this opportunity.

18 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Casey. This is
19 Bryan Newland. I can hear the frustration in your
20 voice, and I share it from the standpoint of, you
21 know, it seems whenever resources are scarce, the
22 First People are often pinned with the

1 responsibility of making sure that we're the first
2 stop at making sure that scarcity of resources
3 doesn't boil over. It's very frustrating to hear
4 that we've got crises in fish, salmon stock. So,
5 we've got to put limits on subsistence users and
6 the First People who depend on the fish to feed
7 their families. So, I appreciate you sharing
8 that, and one of the things that we're trying to
9 do with the Department of the Interior and
10 Department of Agriculture is find ways to better
11 balance our federal approach here and integrate
12 traditional knowledge and management practices
13 into our decision-making processes, so, what
14 you're describing doesn't happen. And that's the
15 soliciting session today is a step toward that.
16 So, thank you for taking some time to share that
17 with us.

18 MS. BROWN: Next comment. Our next hand
19 up is Evon Waska. Evon, if you'd like to unmute
20 and go ahead.

21 MR. WASKA: Hello. Thanks for having me
22 and giving me this opportunity too. We're in

1 Alaska. They say the heart of Alaska. (inaudible)
2 2020 salmon. Smoked salmon. King salmon.
3 Strips. I'm holding 2021 king salmon. No dry
4 fish. With heavy heart, most of rural Alaska
5 (inaudible). The Yukon people. Up north, going
6 up, all the tributaries to rivers, they are
7 missing a vital food source. It's missing from
8 (inaudible) right now. It's a part of our
9 everyday diet. And my heart's heavy for all the
10 people that don't have it right now. All the way
11 to north and south. All of rural Alaska. I ain't
12 gonna beat around the bush. I'm gonna go straight
13 for the patient point. Pacific Ocean, last week
14 (inaudible) the little people. I see (inaudible).
15 Five hundred thousand tons continue king salmon
16 bycatch. (inaudible) bound for Alaskan waters.
17 Especially to my (inaudible) in chains.
18 Overfishing. And they have to go through the Gulf
19 of Alaska. Commercial fishing. No interception,
20 false pass. (inaudible), and they start heading
21 up here. Up north. Along the western Bering Sea,
22 (inaudible) Kuskokwim River and Yukon and

1 (inaudible). This summer, I only caught two
2 chums. With the heaviest heart, I think of the
3 Yukon (inaudible). There's three mouths to the
4 Yukon River. And these coastal communities were
5 taken from (inaudible). We, two million, they're
6 nomadic-way Indians. They settled down. Close to
7 the rivers. Why? They knew the king salmon were
8 coming this summer. The salmon, the king salmon
9 are first. Four million passed down (inaudible).
10 They smoke salmon. Salted salmon. Put it in
11 their food. Why? (inaudible) long winter months.
12 Presently, it's seven below here in Bethel. And
13 maybe a windchill that's twenty to thirty. And
14 this food, passed down from generations, it
15 sustains us through these long winter months. And
16 that, I'm back to the restrictions. You guys
17 (inaudible) politicians. And rape it is,
18 (inaudible) protecting them. And (inaudible) top
19 priority. Does commercial fishing happen in
20 (inaudible) Alaska? Interception in high speed
21 (inaudible). Intercepting our king salmon, chum
22 salmon. Dumping them back to sea. Those are

1 (inaudible) for us. That didn't happen. I'm sure
2 me and my people here on the Kuskokwim and Yukon
3 Rivers. That's where we look for whitefish at.
4 Whitefish are them little whitefish. I got a
5 (inaudible) underneath the river right now, in the
6 Kuskokwim River, frozen. I've got an ice net.
7 But what do you do? You federal restrict fish and
8 game. Restrict me and my people on the Kuskokwim
9 and Yukon Rivers. You guys did that to the Yukon
10 River. There are longer restrictions than up here
11 on the Kuskokwim. That's what I call undue
12 hardship. And I also call it discriminatory. Oy!
13 Lower restrictions for all. (inaudible)
14 commercial fishermen in the Gulf of Alaska.
15 (inaudible) Copper River. There's a thousand
16 pins. (inaudible). That's not right. Protection.
17 (inaudible) brought up high cost of living, yeah.
18 In Bethel, nine dollars a gallon of milk. Eight
19 dollars a stick of butter. (inaudible) cost over a
20 hundred bucks. Steaks was over 75 bucks. The
21 further north you go, the higher it is.
22 (inaudible) community, Bethel is one of them.

1 (inaudible). Supposed to represent 56 villages.
2 The way I see that, the (inaudible), like Bethel.
3 These groceries have to be shipped to the
4 villages. Be they by barge and freight. It
5 triples the price. (inaudible) high cost of
6 living. That's why me and my people are going to
7 go subsistence. And you guys haven't, these
8 politicians put restrictions in place. Enforce
9 them. I recommend (inaudible) on the last
10 paragraph. On management. On subsistence
11 resource (inaudible) Alaska Native. And the
12 continued commercial fishing in the Gulf of
13 Alaska. Oy! There's chums and king, and in order
14 to stir up the claims, shiver. All I know, I'm
15 out there with my people, fishing. Poor. It
16 doesn't have to stop. Furthermore, here at the
17 Kuskokwim, (inaudible) golden mine, further up the
18 Kuskokwim. Up Crooked Creek, that's maybe about
19 600 miles. Open pit mine. Why am I saying no to
20 that? I believe (inaudible). They're gonna name
21 it there. The Canadian. It's just gonna sit
22 there. After they got rich and put their pockets

1 in their money. But who's got shiny ports and
2 high river traffic? That's gonna be all. That's
3 familiar. The Kuskokwim River. (inaudible) an
4 accident will happen. On our front porch, the
5 salmon, they're gonna be gone. But yeah, rain.
6 (inaudible). It rained for a week. It was hard
7 for me and my people to (inaudible). It got
8 dangerous. (inaudible), and I hope they send a
9 moose (inaudible). I hope the High Chief
10 intercepts and makes it stop. I hope (inaudible)
11 your policies and rules (inaudible). Me and my
12 people are based on restrictions every summer.
13 (inaudible) fish and game officers, state troopers
14 who run restrictions. And then, they put in a
15 record in my people's background. That's not
16 right. When did the people, when did commercial
17 fishing become priority over the fishing? We're
18 just trying to get our food. But the officials
19 and state troopers, they're obliterating our
20 rights. They harass us. (inaudible). Restaurants
21 who cook king salmon. I can't wait. That's our
22 right. I've been lied to. Eat king salmon. And

1 the (inaudible) has to stop. And I thank you for
2 giving me this opportunity to speak. Thank you
3 very much, and happy new year.

4 MS. THOMPSON: Mr. Waska, I just really
5 wanted to thank you for your passion, and, like
6 Bryan said earlier, we hear your frustration as
7 Indigenous people in our own land. You know, we
8 experience a lot of your same frustrations with
9 both our state and our federal government. We
10 wanted to acknowledge that you brought up bycatch
11 fishing, and that's regulated by NOAA, which is in
12 the federal family. That's been raised several
13 times by others as well, so, we've taken note of
14 that. I wanted to also acknowledge Indigenous
15 traditional ecological knowledge theme that you
16 touched on as well as a few of the previous
17 speakers, including Mr. Ferguson be.

18 The White House issued in November a
19 directive to all federal agencies, requiring us to
20 incorporate Indigenous traditional knowledge into
21 our scientific work. And so, I wanted to
22 highlight that for you in your advocacy to hold us

1 accountable for that. One of the things that
2 we're thinking through that we would appreciate
3 your guidance on is what does that look like when
4 we hire people to come and do the science,
5 Indigenous ecological science work with us? And
6 one of the challenges, as you can imagine, is the
7 federal government historically is very
8 Western-oriented in the types of job requirements.
9 This degree, this amount of job experience, et
10 cetera. And we want to rethink that with you.
11 What does bringing on people that have Indigenous
12 knowledge look like? And what should those job
13 descriptions and those job requirements look like,
14 and how should they be different? So, just put
15 that out there for your consideration, and, again,
16 thank you for your heartfelt comments. And then,
17 I just point out for the moderators, President
18 Jackson put in the chat that he was not able to
19 raise his hand.

20 MS. BROWN: For folks, this is a
21 reminder, if you are joining by phone, and you
22 would like to make a comment, you can press "star

1 nine" to raise your hand and "star six" to unmute
2 when we call on you. If you are joining, and you
3 would like to raise your virtual hand, that can be
4 done by, through the reaction button at the bottom
5 of the Zoom meeting. Our next raised hand is
6 Wanda Culp. Go ahead, please unmute yourself and
7 introduce yourself and organization, please.

8 MS. CULP: Hello, thank you. My name is
9 Kasha Buham (phonetic). I think its name
10 originates from the main root of Glacier Bay and
11 also an elder of that house. I'm also, my English
12 name is Wanda Culp. I'm original shareholder for
13 (inaudible) Alaska. And on and on. So, I'll be
14 very short. I want to say that our culture is
15 natural (inaudible). And this is where we come
16 from as Women for Forests, within the Women's
17 Earth and Action Climate Network. So, this is how
18 we're speaking now. I'd like to bring up very
19 quickly, because we'll put forward written
20 comments, but just to toss this out there that the
21 state of Alaska can never be in compliance of the
22 subsistence law as it is now because it takes a

1 constitutional agreement under the law because of
2 a lawsuit of McDowell vs. whatever, the state, so,
3 everybody is equal to us, which diminishes Alaska
4 Native voices under the state of Alaska, thinking
5 state of Alaska doesn't recognize federally
6 recognized Tribes, so, why are they in partnership
7 with the Federal Subsistence Board? Or managing
8 so-called subsistence? Now, the Women for the
9 Forests in the Tongass, we're bringing forward a
10 concept to replace subsistence, which is, we're
11 created by Congress in the last decade under
12 AMELTA (phonetic). Now, what has to be
13 recognized, and I'm gonna say it here, is AMELTA
14 wouldn't even be on the books if it wasn't for our
15 Alaska Native claim settlement, which Congress put
16 in the hands of the state of Alaska. Now, AMELTA
17 is a federal law, belongs to the federal
18 government, and the Federal Subsistence Board is
19 made up of five federal agencies that has been
20 literally inept to provide for subsistence under
21 the terms of intent.

22 So, to make a long story short, we are

1 bringing forth a concept where it is called Food
2 First Food Sovereignty. Which is Indigenous-led
3 management of natural resources, starting with the
4 Tongass. This is all of Alaska's Natives, of
5 Alaska. The first concept under AMELTA as it
6 stands now is that 10 regions. This is an example
7 of what our Food First Food Sovereignty
8 reinterpretation of subsistence is all about. We
9 need to scrap the 10 regions that under Federal
10 Subsistence Board AMELTA right now. And reinstate
11 the 12 regions under AMSTAP (phonetic) so that two
12 board members that are under the Federal
13 Subsistence Vote now could be converted to
14 regional advisory councils. So that this would
15 more appropriately address Alaska Native issues
16 under AMELTA Title 8. Which, again, is just the
17 spawn of AMSTAP. Now, AMELTA is two parts. The
18 first part had been very successful, where the
19 state of Alaska has been provided federal lands
20 free, freely, to explore and exploit natural
21 resources on federal lands. And this also
22 includes state of Alaska corporate lands which,

1 guess what, includes Alaska Native corporations.
2 So, that takes it out of our hands, so, we've
3 basically become illegal within our own midst. We
4 cannot freely go on our own ancestral settlement
5 lands under state realm. Because people that are
6 food, because it's illegal under state fish and
7 game law. Fish and game? Really? So, we're not
8 sports fishermen or hunters? So, AMELTA Title 8
9 has effectively eliminated Alaska Native villages.
10 The primary beneficiaries of AMSTA and AMELTA has
11 eliminated some simple terminology. Rural, urban,
12 these things, I still can't figure out whether
13 we're urban or rural. Does not matter. We're
14 Alaska Native villages, and we are counted
15 federally through recognition. Alaska Native
16 villages are recognized through federal
17 recognition as Tribes. We see the flaws, so, our
18 concept we'll be bringing forward will be to
19 examine the elimination of Alaska Natives, which
20 is, federally under AMSTA, is an extermination
21 law. So, AMSTA and AMELTA needs to be
22 reinterpreted from the ground up, from the inside

1 out. From Indigenous and grassroots on up to
2 Congress, not the other way around. So, that's
3 make a long story short. That's our Food First
4 Food Sovereignty concept that we're bringing
5 forward from the Tongass Forest. Thank you for
6 listening to me, and I'm so appreciative of all
7 that's going on. (Speaks Native language).

8 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Wanda.
9 Those are really important comments and that
10 powerful commentary. I just wanted to make sure
11 that ongoing conversation and thought processes
12 along what changes would be the right, the
13 appropriate ones to take. So, we take what you
14 said to heart and really appreciate you speaking
15 up and letting us know your thoughts on this.
16 Conversations and discussions that you have been a
17 part of. Thank you.

18 MS. BROWN: Thank you for your comments.
19 Next presenter, next person is Joel Jackson. I
20 believe he has something to say.

21 MR. JACKSON: Yes, thank you for
22 allowing me to make comment. I've been the Tribal

1 president going on four years now. It's been our
2 priority to make sure that our community has
3 adequate food supply. And when the COVID first
4 struck, it impacted our ability to get meat and
5 produce and, of course, tissue paper, like
6 everybody experienced. But, at that point, I put
7 in a request to our Alaska Fish and Game for
8 out-of- season moose and deer hunts, and that
9 didn't go very well. They said, "Absolutely not."
10 I went to Forest Service district ranger, and he
11 didn't have the powers to do anything, so, I went
12 to the regional director in Juneau, the Forest
13 Service, and he said he'd work with me. And so,
14 he backed down (inaudible) subsistence person in
15 the Forest Service, and the next day, I got a call
16 from the subsistence person in Anchorage with the
17 Forest Service. And they've asked me on to the
18 Federal Subsistence Board there and had discussion
19 about it. In the end, they okayed the
20 out-of-season moose and deer hunt (inaudible) and
21 then a couple other special acts and requests from
22 a few Tribes up in the north there. But he's had

1 to go to Department of the Interior, and they've
2 passed it back down to the district ranger in
3 Petersburg. Of course, he had to contact the mass
4 carry unit, which is enacted when there's
5 emergency across our state. They're made up of
6 different agencies, and they said they tried to
7 contact Kate about our disruption in meat and
8 other supplies. But everybody I talked to said
9 they never got any calls. So, they send a
10 rejection notice to our district ranger in
11 Petersburg, so, he send it back up to the Board of
12 Subsistence. Federal Subsistence Board. And they
13 turn around, and they okayed it. So, it was
14 passed back down to district ranger, and I talked
15 with him. He asked me what I was thinking about.
16 How many moose? How many deer? I told him,
17 "Well, I don't want to go overboard." Might be a
18 temporary disruption, so, I said, "Two moose and
19 five buck deer." And so, we did it. They gave us
20 actually two hunts, 30-day hunts. On the first
21 hunt, we killed our two moose and five deer.
22 After that, we learned that the state of Alaska

1 was suing our Federal Subsistence Board and since
2 I was named in that complaint as well (inaudible)
3 my village of Kake. I brought it to our council,
4 and I told them, "Well, since we're named in it,
5 we might as well sue in support of the Federal
6 Subsistence Board." And the judge in that case
7 found in our favor as well as the Federal
8 Subsistence Board. The state appealed, and the
9 same thing happened. So, I agree with everybody
10 on our frustration with Alaska Fish and Game and,
11 up north, their Fish and Wildlife Services. It
12 seems like they just want to criminalize our
13 people. We've had people that had one fish over
14 their limit. Anybody that knows our people, we do
15 not waste our resources. So, it's hard for us to
16 throw back that one fish. Even 10 fish. Because
17 we know we can give it to somebody that's
18 deserving of that; an elder or a single mother.
19 So, you know, it's frustrating to have to deal
20 with these things when our personal use permits,
21 I've seen them over there. They're snagging
22 sockeye, and they're allowed six a day. It don't

1 matter. They can stay there as long as they want,
2 snagging six fish a day. We're allowed 10 from
3 one area and 25 from another. And if you've been
4 in the airports in the summertime, you would see
5 those thousands and thousands of boxes leaving our
6 state by sport fishermen. And I'm not against
7 sport fishing, but they're not regulated as we
8 are. Across the board, you guys all seen the pie
9 chart? We have 1% of all the resources in Alaska.
10 Everybody else has more. Commercial. Sport
11 fishing. You know, it's all about the profit and
12 not about the First Peoples of Alaska, who's been
13 stewards and everything of our waters and lands,
14 have never overfished anything. Yet we're the
15 first ones to get cut whenever there's a shortage
16 of something. And we're made criminals of taking
17 one or two fish over, and I hope that we can get
18 this issue straightened out where our Tribes
19 across Alaska will get our hunting and fishing
20 rights back. And gosh, I gotta (inaudible) that
21 person before that brought up the bycatch out in
22 Bering Sea by the prowlers. It's sickening to see

1 how many millions of pounds are wasted. Halibut,
2 salmon, everything, crab, is wasted. And it needs
3 to be dealt with. And okay. Thank you for your
4 time. Bye.

5 SPEAKER: One word of support, Joel.
6 Shame on you.

7 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Joel. I
8 appreciate your comments. This is Bryan Newland.
9 I just want to note, as a housekeeping item, we
10 were scheduled to go until 5:00 p.m. Eastern,
11 which is seven minutes from now. Some of us are
12 able to stay on the line to hear from the three
13 individuals who have their hands raised at the
14 moment. Unfortunately, we won't be able to add
15 any additional speakers to the queue. And I will
16 apologize in advance, as I have a schedule
17 conflict at 5:00 p.m. Eastern for another meeting.
18 So, I won't be able to stay on beyond that. We do
19 have three Tribal consultation sessions coming up
20 in the next two weeks on this very topic, and I
21 look forward to participating in those
22 consultation sessions, hearing from many of you at

1 those sessions and reviewing your written
2 submissions during this process and coordinating
3 with our friends at Department of Agriculture as
4 well. So, I will stop there. I'll flip it back
5 to Raina, and just, on behalf of myself, I want to
6 thank you all for educating me today and sharing
7 your knowledge with me, and I look forward to
8 speaking with you soon.

9 MS. THIELE: Thanks, Bryan. And we do
10 have our three additional speakers on the line. I
11 just want to mention, we do have three additional
12 consultation sessions coming up. We're just so
13 happy to have everybody on this call today. We
14 have a really great turnout. We just really
15 appreciate all of the input and recommendations
16 that you brought forward, which is really going to
17 help inform our process and how we fix the deep
18 issues. We'll go ahead and let Heather, do you
19 have anything to add? We'll just go ahead and
20 (inaudible).

21 MS. THOMPSON: Thanks so much, Raina. I
22 don't want to take up too much time. I have a

1 hard stop as well. But we'll all be on the next
2 three consultations from USDA and the U.S. Forest
3 Service. We look forward to it.

4 I wanted to echo Raina and Bryan. Just
5 really excellent comments. Very specific
6 recommendations that are actionable. We
7 appreciate the amount of thought that you've put
8 into them. So, Raina will be talking.

9 MS. BROWN: Thank you. It's been said
10 that the sessions are going to be on January 20th,
11 January 21st, and January 28th. Additional
12 information can be found on the DOY consultation
13 website as well as on the DIA consultation
14 website. And registration for all the sessions,
15 the notes are available on both of those sites.
16 So, the next hand I see is Brooke Woods. Brooke,
17 if you'd like to go ahead and unmute.

18 MS. WOODS: Good afternoon, everyone.
19 Can you hear me okay? Great. Before I begin, I
20 wanted to share a photo of my two children here
21 learning how to process king salmon fish with
22 their grandmother. On this day, we had five

1 generations together, and that our children are
2 advancing and far surpassing myself in learning
3 our traditional ways of life. And that our king
4 salmon are not here to support them and the
5 teachings that they need from their grandparents.
6 I wanted to just have a few personal statements
7 today. I really appreciate the time to meet and
8 to have discussions with the Department of
9 Interior. I wanted to start out by saying that
10 the current state and federal subsistence
11 priorities and laws do not support our Tribes. We
12 are in a salmon crisis throughout the state, and I
13 am from the Yukon River, and I cannot express to
14 you how difficult and traumatic last year was for
15 our people. Salmon are central to our way of
16 life, our wellness, and our wellbeing. So, when
17 our Tribal members along the Yukon, 20,000 people,
18 expect some subsistence opportunities for salmon
19 and do not get it, it greatly impacts our wellness
20 as Alaska Native people. And, as you all are
21 aware, salmon is the healthiest protein available
22 for our people. We are going on year two of

1 COVID, and it does not seem like it's going to get
2 any better. And currently, we are having these
3 crucial food supply issues right now in urban
4 Alaska, and, as you're aware, our Tribes, our
5 villages, are at the end of these food supply
6 chains. So, we can't depend on commercial foods
7 for survival and for healthy protein for our
8 families. Currently, I'm unable to find eggs,
9 milk, some meat products, and I'm in an urban
10 setting, and I just feel very worried for my
11 family and friends out in the villages.

12 Recently, in my capacity, I work for the
13 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and I
14 invited our management for the Yukon, both federal
15 and state, and there were comments made that we
16 hope things are better next year. We can't depend
17 on hope when it comes to our elders, our children,
18 and our families. We need our king salmon. We
19 need our chum. Right now, I know that the pollock
20 industry is ramping up for their million-dollar
21 fishery. And there is no cap on chum salmon. We
22 depend on chum salmon when king salmon numbers are

1 very low. Last year, we were told that we would
2 have some subsistence opportunities for chum,
3 which is a very valuable species for us. But they
4 came in at such low numbers, we weren't even able
5 to harvest chum salmon. And that is unprecedented.
6 So, you typically don't see a king run crash and a
7 chum run crash at the same time. And again, I'll
8 remind you, we are in the second year of COVID,
9 and we're seeing food shortages.

10 I wanted to express the exhaustive
11 amount of work and request that Tribes and Tribal
12 organizations have put into the decision-making
13 process, with no actions from any agencies. And
14 what we request is an eco-based approach to
15 management decisions, and I will say that we work
16 so tirelessly at the North Pacific Fisheries
17 Management Council, asking for a reduction of
18 salmon bycatch and for a chum salmon cap.
19 Currently, you can have 500 chum harvested as
20 bycatch. When on the Yukon, there was no
21 subsistence fishing opportunities for salmon. So,
22 we were asked to take zero out in the Bering Sea.

1 They can take 500,000 chum, and there is the
2 opportunity for 42,000 king salmon to be caught as
3 bycatch.

4 There has been no meaningful way for
5 Tribes to be a part of the subsistence policy and
6 management in Alaska. And I wanted to let Bryan
7 know that Tribal recommendations have been
8 submitted and that some of those recommendations
9 are still the same from 2010. So, I just feel
10 like we're a broken record, trying to get these
11 recommendations into place. And the other thing I
12 really want to reiterate today is that Alaska
13 Native people on the Yukon are criminalized, even
14 for being on the Yukon, for having the four-inch
15 mesh net. I witnessed boats, the authority in
16 their boats, every single day. I actually, from
17 Fairbanks, it's a five-hour trek and boat ride. I
18 actually saw a state trooper leaving Fairbanks,
19 driving all the way to the Yukon, getting in a
20 boat, and checking nets. Like, exhaustive amounts
21 of work to make sure our people are not fishing.
22 And there is not a strong, good relationship, even

1 though I'm a Tribal leader, I'm working to
2 maintain a strong working relationship with
3 agencies. And currently, with the (inaudible)
4 Kuskokwim Regional Office, I'm seeing screened
5 calls from Tribal organization leadership. Very
6 important meetings with Tribes being delayed and
7 criticism of our only collective Yukon-wide
8 teleconference, with management being criticized.
9 And no forward thinking. No creative ways to
10 improve relationships, management, salmon runs.
11 The other issue is, the state governor was a
12 keynote for the Alaska Outdoor Council, and if you
13 look at their priorities, Tribes are listed as a
14 threat. They oppose any federal recognition of
15 Indian country in Alaska.

16 The other thing that's what I
17 experience, what I would like to express is that
18 most recently, the Northeast Subsistence Regional
19 Advisory Council submitted a wildlife special
20 action request to close caribou and moose hunting
21 in the federal public lands of Unit 23 and 26A for
22 one month. And there has been several public

1 testimony opportunities, and you will not believe
2 it, but hunters from Arkansas, Florida, Utah, you
3 name it, they're calling and testifying that their
4 rights are not being met and that their \$10,000
5 hunting trip is going to be impacted and that this
6 should move forward when the local people are
7 seeing a change in the migration, and they are 100
8 dependent on these resources. So, the inequities
9 are paramount, they're across the state. These
10 are very much issues that you should be aware of,
11 and we really need the Department of Interior to
12 help Tribes review our recommendations and
13 especially pay attention to what Tribal leaders,
14 elders, and Tribal members share with you during
15 this Tribal consultation process. And how do we
16 get to Tribal people to be a part of the
17 decision-making process out in the Bering Sea, on
18 the Yukon, on the Kuskokwim, in the Arctic, and
19 how do we get to co-management right now, because
20 co-management is only meant to be the beginning
21 of this work. And with that, I just wanted to
22 thank you for allowing me to speak today. This

1 work is very difficult, and the current situation
2 that our Tribe's in is much more difficult. Our
3 people need our king salmon, and the state and
4 federal managers believe that the salmon runs are
5 going to be the worst this year, and I do not know
6 what that means, because last year was one of the
7 most difficult years I've experienced. (Speaking
8 Native language). Thank you for your time.

9 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Brooke.
10 We appreciate your comments and your experience.
11 And we're kind of echoed by other speakers as
12 well. We really take those comments to heart, and
13 we really appreciate you taking the time to
14 articulate those to us and letting us know what's
15 happening in your region, and we have two
16 additional speakers, and I know that Rachel called
17 off the next one, but I'm worried that we don't
18 have enough time today to hear from everyone,
19 which is a bummer, but we'll hear from our last
20 two speakers who are already in our queue, in our
21 line-up. And then, just a reminder again to
22 everybody on this call, that today's listening

1 session is just a starting point, we have three
2 additional consultation sessions, if you'd like,
3 later this month on January 20th, January 21st,
4 and January 28th.

5 MS. BROWN: Thank you. So, the next two
6 speakers are calling in on the phone. I'm going
7 to read off the last four digits of the phone
8 number. First, we have 0564. If you'd like to
9 unmute yourself and provide your comment, and this
10 is a reminder, "star six" is unmute. If you're
11 calling in, and your last four digits of your
12 phone number are 0564, then go ahead and unmute.
13 It looks like you're unmuted. If you want to go
14 ahead and speak and give your comment, please.

15 MR. GILLIKIN: Sure. Hello. Can
16 everybody hear me now? Hi, my name is Dan
17 Gillikin. I've been a fisheries biologist for 30
18 years in Alaska. I spent the last 17 years of
19 that here on the Kuskokwim River. I live in Aniak
20 (phonetic), and I'm the environmental director for
21 the Native village of Napaimute.

22 I just wanted to kind of reiterate the

1 last speaker's comments. She had a lot of really
2 great comments. And talk a little bit about the
3 conditions that we're facing out here. I have
4 some grave concerns about the trends that we're
5 seeing in the fisheries here on the Kuskokwim and
6 the Yukon and in other parts around the state. We
7 all know that freshwater and ocean temperatures
8 are changing dramatically throughout our region
9 out here, faster than anywhere else in the
10 country. The result of that is going to be a
11 restructuring of ecosystems that support our
12 fisheries out here. It's interesting that,
13 despite the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region being the
14 most expansive wetland in North America, it's one
15 of the least studied districts of the U.S., which
16 is greatly impacting our knowledge of what is
17 driving these lower numbers in our salmon
18 fisheries.

19 Currently, in the YKD, there's no
20 comprehensive or coordinated effort to collect the
21 necessary data or local Indigenous knowledge that
22 will allow us to evaluate the potential effects

1 from climate change and how that's going to manage
2 or shape the management of the fisheries in the
3 future. And I'd highly recommend that we make
4 every effort to collect that information.
5 Specifically, what I'd like to see with federal
6 fisheries managers is to develop fishery
7 escapement objectives that are based on an
8 integrated ecological approach that incorporates
9 the environmental conditions, traditional/local
10 knowledge, that will allow for the sustainability
11 of subsistence harvest opportunities that also
12 integrates potential impacts from climate change.
13 This needs to be a concerted effort, focused on
14 the driving fundamental factors for productivity
15 of salmon out here because there's a thousand cuts
16 that are occurring to our fisheries out here. We
17 don't know which ones are the deepest and which
18 ones we have potential control over. But I think
19 taking an ecosystems approach to our management
20 will preserve the long-term sustainability and
21 opportunity for subsistence harvest, so, that's
22 all I wanted to pass on, and I thank you very much

1 for your time.

2 MS. THIELE: Thank you, Mr. Gillikin,
3 for your comments today. And for our last
4 speaker, I believe, Rachel (phonetic).

5 MS. BROWN: Yes, the last speaker is
6 phone number 0418, are the last four digits, it
7 looks like you're unmuted already, so, if you'd
8 like to go ahead and make your comments?

9 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, ma'am, can you hear
10 me? This is Robert Hoffman. I'm affiliated with
11 the Association of Village Council (inaudible)
12 here in Bethel, Alaska, and I just wanted to make
13 a couple comments on the good meeting and the good
14 information that we're gathering here today.
15 First of all, this meeting was about the climate
16 change, what effects does it have with our
17 subsistence. They forgot to put in there not only
18 the climate change, but the high seas
19 commercialing (phonetic) fishing and trolling
20 that's going on down there. Wherever. Climate
21 change is, you know, I believe that all human
22 beings, that the women that are having babies,

1 they still have babies no matter what. They're
2 going to swim whether it's warm or cold. I
3 believe that. That's what I believe. What I did
4 not hear was that since the state of Alaska has
5 been obligated by the federal government to do a
6 job, and that's to manage a statement. And what
7 is left out on that, since we are the most
8 affected in the area of Alaska, we would like to
9 somehow have the Congress allow us to have
10 verification of the statement account. We heard
11 that the state of Alaska, as you all heard, that
12 the Tribes up here are not recognized. Yet they
13 have the ability to manage and monitor and
14 regulate the subsistence that we are having today.
15 What would be a good idea is if the federal
16 government fund a verification counted by the
17 Tribes, just to verify that their statement
18 account, not to blame anybody, just to verify
19 whether the statement accounts are true or untrue.
20 And until that happens, I believe we will have no
21 (inaudible) whatsoever. We heard them talking
22 about, since 2010, the state of Alaska has been

1 managing the statement. Well, like I said, the
2 Tribes here are not recognized. So, seems to me,
3 in my own mind, they could count as many as they
4 want in that fashion. All we want to do is have
5 the federal government or Congress recognize that
6 we the people of the Western Hemisphere of Alaska
7 would like a verification. We seem to be the only
8 people on the state of Alaska that don't get to
9 verify nothing. We're just being told how, when,
10 when, and what to use and stop when they tell us
11 to because of their count. And all we want is a
12 verification of that count. Of a statement.
13 Whether it be fish or game. That's all I got
14 right now, thank you, ma'am.

15 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much, Mr.
16 Hoffman. Really appreciate that statement. We'll
17 certainly take that back with us. I believe we do
18 have one additional speaker, phone number ending
19 2082 will be our last speaker for these sessions,
20 but a reminder to everyone, there will be three
21 additional sessions later this month, on January
22 20th, January 21st, and January 28th, and so, this

1 is certainly not the last chance to interact with
2 all of us, so, let's go ahead and go over to our
3 last speaker. Rachel, can you reiterate how the
4 speaker unmutes, mutes on their cellphone?

5 MS. BROWN: Yes. 2082, if you'd like to
6 unmute, you can do that by pressing "star six."

7 MR. DOANEY: Yes, good afternoon, my
8 name is Raymond Doaney, I come from the village of
9 (inaudible). I want to thank the Department of
10 Interior for providing this listing system for all
11 the Tribes in Alaska. I think this has been a
12 long time coming, and I thank you for giving us
13 the opportunity to testify before you on this
14 important issue of subsistence. As you know, the
15 Tribes in Alaska have been going before all the
16 organizations that deal with our way of living,
17 from harvesting salmon to harvesting moose to
18 getting birds in the spring, and over the years,
19 we've provided these testimonies year after year
20 and don't seem to be getting anywhere. And I
21 appreciate the comment that the young lady had
22 from the Interior, and that's what it's all about.

1 Seventeen years of public testimony has gotten us
2 nowhere other than to see and witness our precious
3 resources disappear before our very own eyes. And
4 we've been coming before North Pacific Fishes
5 Management Council and the Alaska Department of
6 Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife Service,
7 saying the same thing over and over and over
8 again, and no one's been listening to us. And if
9 we had taken action 17 years ago, we probably
10 would still be able to get our Chinook salmon
11 today. But ignoring this problem and finally the
12 Department of Interior coming before us, and
13 hopefully, we'll be able to get something done.
14 And you're the last hope we have in listening to
15 our concerns relating to our food security, so,
16 we're asking you, by all means, that subsistence
17 uses in Alaska must be protected, as the young man
18 mentioned at the beginning. Subsistence use in
19 Alaska must be protected by all means, we need
20 someone there that can listen to us and relate to
21 our concerns, especially with the Chinook and chum
22 bycatch. Seventeen years of public testimony has

1 gotten us nowhere. Seventeen years of public
2 testimony has deteriorated all the resources that
3 we depend on. Year after year. So, I'm hoping
4 that the department in Cherrywood takes seriously
5 the comments that we're saying today and make it a
6 reality and to be able to be here when we deal
7 with subsisting issues. And I'm hoping that from
8 here on out, whether it be the (inaudible), will
9 be able to get comments from these organizations
10 straight to the Department of Interior because
11 we're going to be saying the same thing again if
12 the Department of the Interior don't take any
13 action relating to our food security here in
14 Alaska, and I thank everyone for your comments,
15 and I support all them. So, thank you again for
16 giving me the opportunity to testify before you.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. THIELE: Thank you, thank you so
19 much, Mr. Doaney. I really appreciate that, and
20 I also appreciate your comment to underline the
21 gravity of the situation and the urgency that
22 folks are experiencing. I've heard that from a

1 number of speakers today, and we are certainly
2 taking that to heart, and that is part of the
3 reason why we are hosting these sessions, and
4 we're hosting them in pretty quick succession, so
5 that we can do as much to support these
6 recommendations and to help some of the issues
7 that were on today's call. And that we are just
8 incredibly, incredibly lucky that all of you
9 decided to join and really grateful that you all
10 took time out of your busy schedules to be here
11 with us. And to communicate what we've been
12 hearing over time, but in one stable space.
13 Before we wrap up, I did want to, just one more
14 time, let folks know that we will have three
15 consultation sessions that will take place later
16 this month, and I might sound like a broken
17 record, I apologize for repeating myself, but I
18 just want to make sure folks have the information
19 that they need to continue to engage in this
20 process, and whether that's giving your verbal
21 recommendations and feedback to us in future
22 consultation sessions or whether it's to submit

1 written comments, we want to ensure that you have
2 full information about when those will be
3 happening. So, every consultation, we will have
4 Tribal slash Tribal consortia, an inter-Tribal
5 consultation on January 20th, we'll also have one
6 on January 21st, which should be in the letter
7 that most of you all used to register for this
8 session, and there will be a third session on
9 January 28th, which is specifically for Alaskan
10 Natives Corporation, both regional as well as
11 village, and today's session was a joint session
12 with many different Tribes, agencies, and others,
13 and so, again, we are incredibly appreciative of
14 all of you for being here today, for sharing your
15 perspective and your recommendations with us, and
16 we look forward very much to hosting you all for
17 our next three consultations, and if you have any
18 questions, please feel free to reach out and leave
19 a message, I believe the contact information is in
20 the letter that you used to register also. With
21 that, I just want to say thank you so much for
22 spending so much time with us, and we will

1 hopefully see all of you again on the session on
2 the 20th or on the 21st or the 28th of this month.
3 Thank you so much and take care.

4 (Whereupon, at 5:25 p.m., the
5 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I, Mark Mahoney, notary public in and for the District of Columbia, do hereby certify that the forgoing PROCEEDING was duly recorded and thereafter reduced to print under my direction; that the witnesses were sworn to tell the truth under penalty of perjury; that said transcript is a true record of the testimony given by witnesses; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding was called; and, furthermore, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public, in and for the District of Columbia

My Commission Expires: May 31, 2022

