

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

ALASKA INDIAN REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1934 (IRA)

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

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Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center

University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Kuskokwim Campus

420 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway

Bethel, Alaska 99559

12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Reported by: Annette Romero, AS-IA, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action  
Elizabeth K. Appel, AS-IA, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action  
Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

DATE OF PROCEEDINGS: March 5, 2019

1 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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3 OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY – INDIAN AFFAIRS:

4 John Tahsuda, III, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

5 Elizabeth K. Appel, Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaborative Action

6  
7 BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS:

8 Gene Peltola, Regional Director – Alaska

9  
10 OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR – DIVISION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS:

11 Matthew Kelly, Attorney-Advisor

12  
13 TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES SPEAKING

14  
15 Vivian Korthuis, Association of Village Council Presidents

16 Raymond Watson, Association of Village Council Presidents

17 Ivan M. Ivan, Akiak Native Community

18 Charlie R. Charlie, Tuntutuliak Traditional Council

19 Moses Owen, Akiak Native Community

20 James Paul, Association of Village Council Presidents

21 Robert Hoffman, Association of Village Council Presidents

22 Mike James, Alakanuk Native Village

23 (The session opened at approximately 10:15 a.m.)

24 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Good afternoon. I think we'll get started here. Thank you for coming and I think,

25 hopefully, we'll have other folks maybe keep coming in and we obviously will leave the door open. So

26 this afternoon, we have this first consultation session is part of a round of both public meetings and tribal

27 consultations for on the issue of the Alaska portion of the Indian Reorganization Act as it applies to tribal

28 recognition, uh, in the tribal recognition context. And just as a reminder, following this we will have a

29 session on the fee to trust part of the Reorganization Act as it applies to Alaska Tribes. So, I will note this

30 is a formal consultation so there will be a transcript of this meeting and we'll be sure to have the

31 comments submitted here today as part of the collection of records that we keep so we have as part of this

32 discussion going forward. We don't have a court reporter here, but we have both a recording of it and, uh,

33 our staff is going to take notes as well so to try to get the best record we can from this. I want to start us

1 off as we normally do with an invocation so we can get off on the right foot, so Mr. Charlie, if you can do  
2 so.

3 (Mr. Charlie gave the invocation in his Native language.)

4 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you, sir. So I want to make sure to introduce my staff here, my name is John  
5 TAHSUDA, I'm the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the  
6 Interior, from our staff and I'm sure a lot of you know, Gene Peltola, who is our Alaska Regional Director  
7 and also provides a lot of great background and context for us for the lower 48 on these issues and all  
8 your issues. And also with us over here is Elizabeth Appel, she's part of our RACA staff. I always forget  
9 what that exactly stands for, but it's both for records and for collaboration. In particular in this context the  
10 record that we keep, she puts that together and makes sure that we abide by the regulations that apply to  
11 us holding these type of meetings, etc. And, I will add, if you have written comments to be submitted as  
12 part of the record you can provide both oral and written comments. You can leave them with Liz over  
13 there or you can leave on the table if you want. But we'll pick those up from you and she'll make them  
14 part of the record. And then last, but not least, with me up here also is Matt Kelly, from the Office of the  
15 Solicitor, at the Department of the Interior. Matt has been a part of the team, working on the legal aspects  
16 of these issues as well. I'd also add a couple of technical points, so we moved the microphone over there,  
17 if you wouldn't mind when you come to speak if you can go to the microphone so we can try to get the  
18 best recording that we can and we can hear you clearly. And again, this is part of the record that we're  
19 keeping, so that we can try to be faithful to that. When you do come to the mic, also please clearly state  
20 your name and your tribe or village that you are representing and uh, that way we can make sure to have  
21 that part of the record for us as well. This consultation began last year. You should have received a Dear  
22 Tribal leader letter that accompanied a withdrawal of an opinion from the Solicitor's office about the  
23 application of the Alaska amendments to the Indian Reorganization Act, uh, the Alaska amendments from  
24 1936 to the Reorganization Act of 1934. Of particular interest in withdrawing that to us was the  
25 application of these provisions in Alaska and part of that is the historical record. Certainly there is a

1 different history here than there was in the lower 48 and for the provisions of the IRA that applied down  
2 there and we want to be cognizant of that. And as an introduction, I wanted to also share with you what I  
3 think is helpful, to give the perspective that I have and what our office has on these matters and it's really  
4 the same we have on everything that we deal with. And that's to say that we have a responsibility to you  
5 and to the tribes, to the Native people in Alaska and across this country and that's both a trust  
6 responsibility and a statutory responsibility or statutory responsibilities. Through all that our goal is to be  
7 the best advocate for you that we can be. So there are a lot of decisions that we engage on your behalf  
8 and that we make for you and the tribes. It's always our goal that those decisions be the best decision  
9 possible. When I say best I mean not necessarily the one that you want or we want. At the end of the day  
10 it's a decision that fits the needs of all of us but above all it's a decision that we can defend. It's  
11 something that we have to do in following the law. We often say in the Department that we try to follow  
12 the law and the facts. If we do that, then the decisions that we make can stand. So that's part of what  
13 we're hoping to do through these series of consultations. Is to develop the factual record, we have the law  
14 in hand but it's not, uh, it's been some time since it has been applied in a consistent manner I think. And  
15 at the end of the day, if we're going to make decisions on this provision of the law, we want to do those  
16 again as I said in a manner that we can defend on your behalf. If we don't do that, I think we have failed  
17 our trust responsibility to you and to the tribes up here. So, taking a look at these decisions, they've been  
18 unsettled for a long time. I know on this first point of discussion about recognition, a number of tribal  
19 groups up here have been asking for decisions from the Department for a long time sometimes going back  
20 several decades. It is also our hope that we can reach a point where we can move forward with those  
21 decisions. It's not fair in our eyes that the tribal groups be left hanging out there and whatever the  
22 decision is we think it's fair that they get something from us and then we can all move forward. So having  
23 said that, I want to open it up to the floor now. As we said there's a lot of legal issues that get entangled  
24 with this but in building up this record we believe that it's very important to build the history and factual  
25 record to go along with it so that the policies that we make don't stand simply on legal grounds but also

1 with the policy that goes behind it so that the law will hopefully and the application of it will be useful to  
2 you and to us. I would encourage you to talk to your fellow tribal leaders. Express to us what you think is  
3 important for us to know as a matter of policy in addition to legal issues on this matter, what is important  
4 to you and the tribal groups in Alaska in formal recognition as a tribe under the Indian Reorganization  
5 Act. And what that means to you that is different from the villages, from the ANCSA record that has been  
6 developed in this state and give us some insight on that. I think it's important for guidance and again as  
7 we move forward to have a sound policy basis for where we move forward from here as well as the legal  
8 side of it. It's very important for us to have in the record. So I thank you and I'll open it up to the floor.

9 **VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** Would you like us to go over there or stay where we are?

10 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Actually as long as you have the mic in your hand, you help us make the recording.  
11 That is fine.

12 **VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** OK, I think it would be easier if we pass the mic around. I have prepared  
13 comments and I am going to go ahead and share them with you. Good afternoon, thank you for the  
14 opportunity to provide testimony. First I would like to thank you for traveling to Bethel, Alaska.

15 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** I'm sorry mam, could you introduce yourself first and the village you're from.

16 **VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** My name is Vivian Korthuis. I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the  
17 Association of Village Council Presidents. AVCP is the regional native non-profit consortium for 56  
18 tribes along the Yukon River, Kuskokwim River and the Bering Sea coast. I'd like to recognize in the  
19 audience members of our AVCP executive board. They are here to witness this hearing and provide any  
20 input that they wish. So we have members here from our region sitting in the audience. I'd like to thank  
21 them for traveling to Bethel to witness this hearing. Today I will provide brief testimony on the Alaska  
22 IRA and land into trust in Alaska. I know that the hearings are in two separate sections but I'd like to  
23 combine my comments for both in my testimony if that is ok. In November of 2018 we prepared written  
24 testimony and we have copies of those if you need them, two different letters on behalf of AVCP  
25 regarding these topics. And I believe they are up in your website so I am not going to belabor the letters

1 themselves I'm just going to summarize today the highlights of that testimony we provided in writing.  
2 First topic, the Alaska IRA. The AVCP submitted written comments on November 27, 2018 responding  
3 to the questions the Department of the Interior asked about the Alaska IRA. I will summarize those  
4 comments in two points. 1) The Alaska IRA is still relevant. Alaska native tribes who are federally  
5 recognized under the Alaska IRA have the same sovereignty and authority as any other federally  
6 recognized tribe. Alaska Native groups who want to become federally recognized under the Alaska IRA  
7 should have that option to become federally recognized. 2) The Department of the Interior needs to  
8 consult with the Alaska native groups that have had pending requests for years. So we encourage the  
9 Department of the Interior to follow through with the process and complete those tasks. Land in to trust in  
10 Alaska, the Secretary of Interior's legal authority to take land in to trust in Alaska is clearly established  
11 law. Two of our member tribes, Akiachak and Tuluksak sued the Department of the Interior to resolve  
12 this issue. The DOI agreed that it had the authority and obligation to take land in to trust for Alaska tribes  
13 as a result of that court decision in the Solicitor's memorandum opinion. This opinion was withdrawn last  
14 summer before consultations began. The agency is required to consult with tribes before taking actions  
15 that directly effects them; affects the tribes directly. Only one Alaska Native Tribe, Craig, has taken land  
16 in to trust to date. AVCP recommends that the Department focus on processing current applications and  
17 providing technical and financial assistance to Alaska Tribes seeking to go through this process. Again,  
18 thank you for traveling to Bethel to consult with Tribes on the YK Delta and if there are any questions,  
19 we will be happy to answer them.

20 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you.

21 **RAYMOND WATSON:** Good afternoon. My name is Raymond Watson, I am the Chairman for the  
22 Association of Village Council Presidents. I'd like to provide testimony on both topics I guess the trust  
23 and the IRA if that's okay. Okay, so first of all, the IRA's, you know I have done some research and when  
24 the IRA's were first established in 1936, Alaska was a very big state with small, small populations. In  
25 some areas, there was a large population. I was trying to think in 1936, so I'd have to go back to my

1 grandfather and my great-grandfather who never spoke a word of English nor read English. They never  
2 did, they never understood it nor did they understand the laws that had been passed. You know, what  
3 came through the territory. Bethel had a territorial police officer from what the stories have been passed  
4 on to me. They had a territorial officer on first and main there in the early days. It was a very different  
5 culture back then, very different than what it is today. Today it's much different. When I think of the  
6 IRA's, the IRA's have a lot of sovereignty and I want to use that word. That's really important because it  
7 defines the community, the families, and the individuals that make up that community. And there are  
8 powers within their community, with their relatives, with their friends, and that's how prior to the  
9 reorganization act that we survived. Those rules, those unspoken laws were already there. The one thing  
10 that was missing that did not exist was the concept of jurisdiction. In this case, governmental powers,  
11 jurisdiction over land. Even my dad disagreed with the land claim settlement act, he didn't go with the  
12 168 acres. He didn't get one. But he was one of the enactors of that. His wisdom behind that was, he was  
13 following his mother's beliefs. But he had a lot to teach us about that. That you cannot own something  
14 that's already there, you see. So all this was changing you know with the ANCSA coming along and  
15 everything else but it really changed as a Native people, our frame of mind to where it is today. That's  
16 why I said our IRA's, uh, really I advocate for their sovereignty and they should always be given, any  
17 village that chooses to, should be given that option to go ahead and do that should their community vote  
18 on that. The other item that we are discussing is the land in to trust. And again, the big issue if we look at  
19 it to our friends and relatives down South to the reservations. They have many powers that we do not have  
20 here because of this shift in culture over the years. A lot of it has been assumed by the State and now the  
21 State is even straining to where in this, in our region here in the 56 villages, we have minimal police  
22 protection. I think the last I heard we had seven, seven police officers for 56 villages. If you had seven  
23 police officers in Washington, DC you know there'd be a national, oh President Trump would probably  
24 be doing a national emergency declaration. But that's what's happening out here. So we have things  
25 happening up here, we have violence, we have the alcoholism, we have drug abuse, the heroin epidemic –

1 it's all happening up here. But what we're missing as a people, is the jurisdiction to govern, to govern our  
2 people. And I really think that's at the forefront when we really think about it because we see all the  
3 symptoms that are happening here. We see the homeless shifting migration to Anchorage. You know the  
4 alcoholism and drug abuse, dysfunction of families – we see all these things. And we wonder what we  
5 should do. So I think this is a good point for all of us to meet and at least provide the input. That's really  
6 essential to what this culture should look like after we are gone. That's about all I have to say. Thanks.

7 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you Mr. Watson. For those folks who just arrived, we are in the midst of the  
8 session on recognition of tribes under the Indian Reorganization Act and specifically the Alaska  
9 amendments of 1936.

10 **IVAN M. IVAN:** May I speak? If I am able to speak, thank you very much for the opportunity for  
11 coming here and listening to us on the Y2 Delta. My comments are not to offend anyone in this room,  
12 especially you folks up there working for us. I just wanted to define who we are and my name is Ivan, I-  
13 V-A-N, middle initial M., last name, same as the first, I-V-A-N. Please don't laugh at that because we  
14 were given these names without us knowing what's going on but I'm named after my Grandfather. First  
15 of all, I was born August 17, 1945 and I believe I'm 73 years old and I have seen the life that we have  
16 here and challenges that we have here and the transformation that I am observing today. I'd like to bring  
17 those out so that hopefully I may clarify some question that you may have regarding us. How we  
18 governed ourselves and how we survived this harshest land out there. Bearing snow and ice. I watched  
19 my, the village of Akiak, is the first village that established, the BIA established an office up there, plus  
20 Indian Health Service combined, both set up in my community. We had an eight bed hospital at Indian  
21 Health Service, they provided health service. Our graveyard didn't discriminate again with anyone, some  
22 perished, some lived and go back to their communities. I was born a free man in 1945. I hunted anywhere  
23 I want, any direction as far as my body can take me or my dog team. That was who we are. We lived from  
24 the land that provided us animals and fish. Our village was organized by Mr. Killabuck of Delaware. I  
25 believe from that state. He came up to help us organize into an Alaska IRA in the 1930's. When we were



1 told this, we were a territory. And those folks, our elders were so interested the responsibility given to the  
2 higher being to take care of their people. To make sure they survived, that they did for thousands and  
3 thousands of years. They didn't leave anybody behind but they also governed themselves to be able to  
4 live. There's been transformation occurring in my lifetime. In 1971, I heard that the Alaska Native Claim  
5 Settlement Act was passed. President Nixon I believe signed it into law. That is now a barrier between  
6 you and I, I don't want point, your office and us, right? There's so many regulations, if you look at  
7 section 4(b) of Alaska Claims Act, section 4(b) says our rights, our aboriginal rights are hereby  
8 extinguished. We need to work hard to change that. The only one that can extinguish any of us or our  
9 rights, is the higher powers. We need to fix that somehow. That's a bad public policy. We are people who  
10 lived from the land; fish, caribou, moose, real health foods and birds, geese, ducks, swans. Our journey  
11 from 1950's to here, is a hard journey to take care of ourselves, to provide food for us and I'm so glad that  
12 you're still trying to figure out. I know the 1936 law was passed for the entirety of the nation, I believe, if  
13 I'm not mistaken. In 1934, they are still trying to figure us out, who we are, how to deal with us. So I  
14 believe the amended act law, our people took that very seriously at the trust responsibility and trust  
15 obligation of the United States of America provided to our elders, then. They believe that truly. In 1971,  
16 like I say, changes occurred to challenge our sovereignty and our right to eat from the God-given  
17 resources. That's what the complications are about, it's more complicated to us than to you. I believe,  
18 how to take care of us. In 1975, the world, the United Nations, that's formed from other countries, its self-  
19 determination US passed a law in 1975 that recognized Alaska Native tribes to participate in government  
20 contracts which is all current today. The fog before us started/brought on by 1971 the aboriginal  
21 hunting/fishing right deletion was bad. They tried to fix it with the ANILCA amendment to ANSCA to  
22 allow us native preference but we're a minority in this state and you couldn't get the native preference.  
23 And that's we're living with today. The state of Alaska, it's the most challenging, I served six years in the  
24 Alaska legislature, State House of Representatives. I did what I can to represent these folks. I had dual  
25 representation, the native people and the legislators. But it's confusing now when state of Alaska with the

1 Alaska Department of Fish and Games. Prior to that you wouldn't even recognize us as native community  
2 council. So we look to you to make sure that state understands I believe they've not been challenging very  
3 much anymore right there but at the beginning they would just invite us for participation and I'm glad that  
4 it's happening because of the money that's challenging the state today that impacts the education, that  
5 impacts our public safety, we turn to you and US Department of Justice, to provide community-oriented  
6 policing services that allowed us to get grants to provide public safety. It works well but like a prior  
7 person that testified, BPSO state of Alaska tried to provide one for them but today I understand they only  
8 have eight serving 48 populated villages. Our history is no different from our southern brothers and sisters  
9 that are organized under a federal IRA. There is no difference our lifestyle is the same. But our authority  
10 has been challenged. I equate the United States of America and small village government they're equal  
11 before our Creator and that job is to take care of their people. As our job here is to take care of the people,  
12 make sure they have enough hunting, fishing and try to conserve what resources we have since time  
13 immemorial in conservation that's what they always did. I'm speaking too long but I want to clarify the  
14 obstacles before us. Number one is the State of Alaska, number two is all this federal legislation that are  
15 coming after the ANSCA and 1934 law. We need recognition to and we get scared there's so many  
16 lawyers that coming in and they're experts, they know everything. And if you have money, yeah, they'll  
17 come fast but if you don't, they'll ignore you. But anyway, we need to keep that string attached, no matter  
18 what happens. Our population is growing and it's affecting our, like fishery resources. We are not  
19 discriminating against anybody who needs that – should have that. We don't discriminate. Uh, but we  
20 need clearer, it got so confusing about 15 years ago everybody was in charge. The state of Alaska, Fish  
21 and Game, state troopers, all of those guys with fish managing, supposedly managing it but we started a  
22 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission in hope of working with the Secretary of Interior and  
23 our native-ness being recognized. We haven't changed, you see all these people here. The only things that  
24 are changing is papers being erased, deleted, or whatever on policy decisions. We need your help more  
25 than ever and what I saw a question "bond." That word, we're all the same race, we look together with

1 anybody in our community. Anybody married through the community, be they from Laplanders or  
2 anybody. Norwegians, whoever, they're a part of our community. And your boss used to try to scold our  
3 Tribal Council, telling them to go back to your job that's in DC. That is what I mostly wanted to say. We  
4 are still who we are and we are trying to survive. Everything we need to do is against the law in most  
5 cases, state law especially. But gentleman to your far right and his staff, when he was refuge manager,  
6 recognized who we are and what our efforts are. We need more clarity, I know you got Solicitors' and  
7 regulations that might be a challenge but know who we are, help us out. We're not trying to do anything  
8 bad but we're trying to survive. And all these regulations, I can't stand them anymore. I know I'm adding  
9 fuel to the state legislator to help people do what's good for themselves. If you have any questions I  
10 would like to answer if I may. IRA act is very pure and simple. It's to recognize who we are and what's in  
11 our constitution and bylaws at home. We got two of them in Akiak. 1) Akiak council is a non-profit social  
12 organization, 2) Akiak native community is a federal native corporation with articles and bylaws and  
13 could go into any business it desires under federal treasury laws that are available for tribes within the  
14 United States. I learned all these things from hearsay, I didn't go to law school, from all these good  
15 attorneys. They are all good attorneys anyway. If you have questions, I'd like to try and answer them,  
16 please. Uh, I'm sorry, the other one, when the act became law and amendments made to it, our  
17 recognition started to fade. These regional native corporations wanted to become tribes but they're profit  
18 oriented. I don't mind them but go make money somewhere else. Let us take care of ourselves. Uh, keep  
19 that, we were confused and lost here, and just a couple days ago I signed a letter to all of you folks  
20 including federal subsistence for to federalize the river so that we may be able to participate in  
21 government-to-government work with fish and wildlife services to allow our people to fish as much as  
22 they can. We don't throw it overboard here, not like the ocean. We preserve. If you don't have any  
23 questions, I believe that's all I have.

24 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** I'm sorry, Mr. Davis. Is that your last name?

1 **IVAN M. IVAN:** Ivan M. Ivan from Akiak.

2 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Let me ask you if I can, this question, so there is clearly a difference, can you hear  
3 me ok? So there is clearly a difference in intent when the federal government passed the Indian  
4 Reorganization Act to allow tribes to organize in a sort of western governmental style of government as  
5 opposed to the traditional forms. But clearly the intent was to be a recognition of and a way to work with  
6 the existing tribal entity, the government in a way. ANCSA had a different intent clearly and the  
7 corporations that are created under that would seem to have a different purpose. So I think one of the  
8 questions, maybe it's not so much a question but it's something that I think is important to understand in  
9 the record is your views, the views of Alaska Natives on what is the difference in those and why it's  
10 important that there be a difference and both are clearly entities that have vitality right there. They're both  
11 existing and so for us to understand what the important elements are for one. So that if we are going to  
12 recognize new tribal groups under the IRA how are is this new group different than an ANCSA  
13 corporation whether it's a village corporation or a regional and important for us to express that on a legal  
14 and policy level so that we can make a determination under the older law. I don't know if I am making  
15 myself clear but if you could share some of that I think it would be really good for us to have.

16 **IVAN M. IVAN:** Yes, in my opinion, we haven't changed since 1945 or prior to that. They call us Alaska  
17 Natives yes, every village has their and some of them that were not organized under the IRA are called  
18 traditional councils. In my opinion more authority than us because we're organized under federal law. It  
19 gives us the strength to work with the government one-on-one basis. The trust obligations that the United  
20 States has for us. We need to hold out to a trust obligations and the governance we provide in villages to  
21 help. We do it anyway, we help each other work together. And try to keep our people safe as much as we  
22 can but today's world we need salaried officers and that's what we'd like to see more of. I'm not trying to  
23 get away from your question. But we're impacted by the last thing that's knocking on our village that is  
24 opioids and we have a greatest concern for that. But alcohol and drug abuse and the drama that our people  
25 face throughout the years, we need to begin to be allowed to start healing ourselves and not lose our

1 language, our way of life. That should be respected by other nations throughout the world to do what's  
2 necessary for us. As far as the corporations are concerned, their job is to make money, money, and they're  
3 doing well. And I hope they do better to move forward. Whatever you can help them to make money for  
4 us. Even if it's a little when it comes down to each one of us. That would be good. But our sovereignty  
5 and our governance should never be questioned - at all. Whether they're IRA organized or traditional  
6 council we live in these villages, if you call for state troopers today they can't make. So we have to do  
7 that among ourselves and we need that help from you folks to keep governing ourselves. We call it "du-  
8 wai" (native words spoken) translated to "the way of our people". It doesn't change, it will never change.  
9 We care for each other through all what's happening to us, we stick together. Help us out, we need that  
10 help more than ever. Once we get a jump start on healing and wellness our elders take charge and it is  
11 going to the rightful place of governing us. I'm limited to English, I wish I could talk to you in my native  
12 language. Thank you for this opportunity, for coming here and whatever decision you make, try to do it  
13 on our side. If you make a mistake on our side, help us. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

14 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you sir.

15 **CHARLIE R. CHARLIE:** Good afternoon, my name is Mr. Charlie R. Charlie. I am presently a member  
16 of which we call Tuntutuliak Traditional Council and I really don't, uh, like to introduce myself as an  
17 IRA individual because I'm not an Indian. I'm not part of an Indian Reorganization Act because up here  
18 in our villages we are very traditional in our areas and based on that we didn't incept this IRA concept  
19 where the federal government interpreted as us because we're very traditional in our area and based on  
20 that information, my people are very traditional in their areas and before IRA was incepted by another  
21 culture, um, I'm going to take that gum out. Before that IRA was incepted to us by another culture our  
22 people were already traditional in their areas. And traditionally all our concept was traditionally  
23 conceptually in our communities, in every community in rural villages and each village had their own  
24 traditional laws. In your tradition and all this is the inceptions that we have, uh, that was introduced by the  
25 outside culture. First of all, I'd like to incept this as when the first uh, (word in native language) which

1 were the Russians before the Europeans, before they came here. The depiction on the Kuskokwim which  
2 was the first contacts, were the villages of [unintelligible] which is near Quinhagak, which you guys have  
3 all known is part of an agriculture site now that people are digging to understand all that past of our  
4 history. Another was [unintelligible] which was at the mouth of Eek River and then the village of  
5 Tuntululiak. That is my descendants. Those three were depicted in the 1900 century before they probably  
6 before white man came further up the Kuskokwim River. So based on that information I think before any  
7 inception of these what we can the Indian Reorganization Act or traditional councils, villages already had  
8 their government and already recognized the way they could take care of their own villages based on their  
9 jurisdiction. And another thing that I'll touch on is jurisdiction. Those were already incepted by the first,  
10 my forefathers, those were the type that were already practiced and after this 1936 act was interpreted to  
11 us in Alaska. Then we came to this governmental entity where each village was to call themselves a  
12 native village of whatsoever. And then some of them called themselves traditional council. Which, of  
13 course we are in Tuntululiak Traditional Council because we want to be in that tradition. In that area, we  
14 have carried that since inception of this act of 1936 or 37 IRA and part of that was, my dad was one of  
15 them and within that village they didn't have no office. They didn't have no building, they didn't have no  
16 laws of what the federal government asked them to do but we already had that law already in our  
17 traditional ways. But we didn't have these in written forms. So in light of that, uh, we were given a  
18 federal town site. Just a piece of land that we had only jurisdiction of. And that was the only jurisdiction  
19 we had incepted at that time. And right now that federal town site is like depleting because of we're in a  
20 river community and all that erosion is probably eroding all that jurisdiction but that's something that I  
21 wanted to further talk about. About our jurisdiction and that's too small. The jurisdiction that we have is  
22 within each village is not as big as the federal government took from this great land of America. And we  
23 all, every one of us in here we all understand that jurisdiction is vast within our area. But under the  
24 written rules that's really like a piece of, uh, you know, land. And again, and based on that each  
25 community or individuals was given a portion of that which is what I call 160 acres. I didn't get it

1 because my parents didn't understand that I was qualified at that time. I didn't get that either. I don't have  
2 no native allotment based on that inception which I was required or was eligible at that time. Only my  
3 parents and my older brothers' have land which I don't have. The jurisdiction that we have in our villages  
4 it's just small. Too small for us to probably be recognized by the state and the federal government. Under  
5 that inception right now we are not recognized by anybody, even the state. Based on that, uh, I think since  
6 we don't written regulations or whatever is put on a piece of paper, and what you guys, what the federal  
7 government put on this, the definition is not based on that piece of paper. The definition is not even, I  
8 don't even recognize that definition that we are band. We're not a band of people. We're not even a tribe.  
9 We are a group of people that were already here. And right now, the Interior is trying to understand and  
10 describe and put in writing, uh, what kind of individuals we are and what type of individuals we are to be  
11 in our own property, in our area. And that's something that I think the Interior should be traveling to  
12 every village and try to understand then put that in writing from our point and not from their point. I think  
13 that's more important for us to see. For you guys to understand, for the Interior to understand, where we  
14 are from and where we are at. And we already had these traditional values but the only that thing we don't  
15 have, we don't have in writing. And I think it's better if you guys would travel to all 256 villages in this  
16 state and you will have an idea to have that understanding from each community and I think the whole  
17 village of Alaska has the same inception from this jurisdiction that we are all given and I think the  
18 jurisdiction is more larger than what is in writing. And let me tell you guys a story of when the village  
19 Tuntutuliak became a council under this 1937. Their first grant was to make outhouses. And that was a  
20 big thing for that village. And every household had an outhouse. And I think you'll have that  
21 understanding if you guys go to every village and get that concept. And you'll have more understanding  
22 what you need to write and understand where traditional council is derived from. And I think its best  
23 instead of having a group, I don't see all the 56 villages here that is under the association president's that  
24 is being represented. And I think they should all be here and you probably would be hearing what I am  
25 talking about. And I think based, someone was saying about jurisdiction, that the piece of jurisdiction is

1 too small to incept and recognize by us. And I think, uh, that should be more broader, you know, but  
2 based on our values. Based on our values, all of these, if we had a written concept of laws it would be as  
3 big as the constitution of this United States. We already have that but it's only, but when you guys, when  
4 the Interior came here to understand more and put it into their concept because what I'm talking about is  
5 not written. And there is one time when there was a crash on the Chinooks. My village acted up and  
6 regulated their own village to have our people fish at the mouth of the Kuskokwim. We had our people  
7 guarding whoever was coming to bother those fishermen. We stopped them and we did our course. And if  
8 you guys, if the Interior doesn't have any written regulations, I think our part is to write our own  
9 regulations and I think that is the inception that I think our people should be more recognized of. Putting  
10 their own regulations within their jurisdiction instead of Interior making that kind of regulation. Because  
11 based on that a lot of people do not recognize and do not want to recognize that conception because we  
12 had that already. With that I want to thank you guys for being here and hearing our, what we have. And  
13 all of this is based on the traditional law that I was told about. But I think later on it'll be more, it'll be a  
14 corporate incorporated works later on based on our government and state of Alaska, quyana.

15 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you Mr. Charlie.

16 **MR. KELLY:** Mr. Charlie, I just wanted to say you made a point that is important. The federal  
17 government is based on records. It's written and so we try and put things, that is how we work. And that  
18 changes things it sometimes doesn't account for things that are not written. Or places in the world where  
19 writing is less important than other values or other forms of relating to people other forms of doing  
20 business. With that in mind, it would be very valuable for the exercise that we're now undertaking to have  
21 that kind of information given to us so that we can incorporate it into our written record. To the extent it's  
22 possible to describe and explain the traditional forms of government. How they work understanding that it  
23 can't be done the same everywhere for everyone. Understanding too that as much I personally might like  
24 to go to each of the 256 villages to get that information, I can't do that. It's not realistic. But also  
25 understanding that if that information is provided to us, even if it's partial, it can go a long to making



1 people understand and making them aware of exactly the points that you raised. Because those are people  
2 who deal with written records all the time. And so they're not familiar with how to deal without written  
3 records in the way that many other places in the world that have done for quite a long time and can do  
4 quite easily. And so part of the value of what we are doing here for these consultations, in addition to  
5 asking, we sent out a certain questions that we'd like further information on. But all the points you raised  
6 touch on those questions that were presented and could be valuable. So to the extent that you and others,  
7 other members of the association can put that information provided to us in the very least it can give us a  
8 better understanding and could possibly open the door for further discussions. I just wanted to say that.

9 **MOSES OWEN:** Good afternoon. My name is Moses Owen. I am from Akiak and on behalf of my  
10 community and my Chief, Ivan Ivan. I'd like to express my concerns and this is not my first time in a  
11 consultation or a testimony before BIA or the organizations that were created for our people, our First  
12 Nations people. And this, uh, this came up as a question a couple of years ago. And it came from the, uh,  
13 one of the agencies from BIA. What they wanted to know, how we understood what a meaningful  
14 consultation is. And at that time and I did this in Fairbanks also in the consultation there. If it's going to  
15 be meaningful, this young man mentioned this already you need to go to each of one these villages out  
16 there to get a proper information and get some word from those villages. Our Chairman for AVCP and or  
17 even Vivian there can't think on behalf of those villages out there. They may have some word, a couple of  
18 words from them and but that's it. You don't hear it directly from them. And they don't have the money  
19 to travel here. I'm from Akiak. I'm about 19 miles up-river, air miles from Bethel here. It's about 37-40  
20 miles on the river. But if I were to charter a plane from Akiak, it's \$350.00 just one way, \$700.00 round  
21 trip if I'm going to take that same charter. Can you imagine, uh, this old man comes from Emonuk, when  
22 they have to travel, they take a seat fare on one of the mail runs and it costs \$300-\$400 dollars maybe up  
23 to \$700 dollars for one individual. We don't have that kind of money and the people that I am talking  
24 about in the outlying villages don't have that kind of money to travel. If AVCP got in a delegate from  
25 each one of the 56 villages they'll go broke; to house them here; to pay for their travel. They don't have

1 the money to do that. And I hope you guys aren't lawyers. Cause I haven't mentioned, you know, all the  
2 lawyers don't get offended please. [laughter] We don't have that kind of money, uh, but we appreciate the  
3 work you guys do. But that was one of the things that I wanted to express that if you are going to do a  
4 meaningful consultation, we got 56 and maybe more, 56 villages out here within our region here. And  
5 those 56 villages don't have the money to travel. And if it's going to be meaningful, you gotta go out  
6 there and face them. Face-to-face like this in their community. Uh, the IRA, uh, law in my community is  
7 the only viable organization that we have. We have a city council but they don't get money from the  
8 State. They just hold that position by title only. They don't have the money to provide public safety. They  
9 don't have the money to provide health services. They can't even provide road services. And yet they  
10 passed laws that are not good for our community because we don't have the money to provide services  
11 under the city government. The IRA in itself is the only form of government that I would have every  
12 village have in their community. Because under that law you know with the responsibility of the federal  
13 government to make sure that these people are taken care is covered in there. Outside of that the state is  
14 not going to come out here and help us. They don't have the money anyway. And, uh, I just assume do  
15 away with the State because they're not good for us, they don't help us. The only thing they do is pass  
16 laws that against us, our way of life. And within the statutes if you take a look at it they're not supposed to  
17 bother our way of life at all. In fact, they're supposed to promote our way of life and help us to subsistent  
18 make a living out here off the land. Instead they pass laws that are against us. So I'd like to, and I  
19 mentioned this before, I'd like each and every village to have an IRA council or an IRA organization  
20 within their community because that's the only one that's gonna work right now in providing services for  
21 the people. The small villages, we're a small village in Akiak. We have about 360-370 maybe, including  
22 the teachers within the community. We're a small community but we contract BIA for our services,  
23 directly from the Bureau and that's how we survive. I don't know how the other villages do that. But  
24 whatever services we need, we go through that 25 CFR for all the programs that we need that BIA  
25 provides. I encourage all the villages to go become part of our organization here. Thank you very much. I

1 hope you guys enjoy your stay here. Don't point fingers at yourself, saying you want to be with the  
2 lawyer there. [Laughter]

3 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you sir.

4 **JAMES PAUL:** My name is James Paul, I'm a Napaskiak Tribal council member and also I serve as  
5 Executive Board for Unit 5 serving Napaskiak, Oscarville and Napakiak. I believe Napaskiak and  
6 Oscarville are traditional council and I believe Napakiak is under IRA. I'm not very familiar with IRA  
7 laws but from my understanding IRA I think they have to go through the congress to get some type of an  
8 act or a needs. Public safety type of courts are at the local level are the main issues and the jurisdiction.  
9 We are the landless tribes and I believe that jurisdiction has to come from at the local level. And we also  
10 have natural resources and education, you know, right now state of Alaska with a new governor there's  
11 going to be major cuts especially. My main concern is education. Education for our children and schools  
12 for the local villages. I know State of Alaska is under PL 280 and I'm not very familiar with that public  
13 law 280 but if there's a way that BIA could fund the schools, tribal courts, public safety. You know, have  
14 them available, that would really help the communities and another thing is drugs, alcohol and all that  
15 stuff that's is our main problem. Thank you.

16 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you Mr. Paul.

17 **ROBERT HOFFMAN:** I am Robert Hoffman, I'm from Bethel along with AVCP. You know, I'm 67  
18 years old and I've been coming to these meetings for 50 years. No offense to you, but my first question  
19 would be, you know, instead of wasting my time up here explaining things of the problems that we're in  
20 our tribes up here in the region. I just want to know like if in the past, that's all that come here are  
21 messengers, messengers and a check off list that you did attend something here in Bethel and allowed us  
22 to speak our testimony. What I would like to know is, if there is, instead of wasting my time, can you  
23 really help us or are you just messengers to go back to another board or whatever? You know, we need  
24 help here. You heard all the testimony about problems that we're having in our region. And to come here  
25 to testify for nothing, if you are not going to help us but are messengers to bring back our messages back

1 to whomever. Well anyway, no offense to the board. I'm just glad you guys are here at least to bring back  
2 our messages. First of all, I believe the State of Alaska was purchased from Russia by the federal  
3 government or whomever and we the tribes, we're seeing now for 50 years, we're just villages who  
4 happen to be under the State of Alaska. We don't have no say-so, we don't have much. Correct me if I'm  
5 wrong, the federal government and all the problems you heard in testimony is about who gave the  
6 authority. The authority. I believe that the federal government gave the State of Alaska the authority to  
7 regulate by accountability of everything that we do, the fish, the game; the everything. The tribes got no  
8 part of the accountability of process. Without the accountability of process, we have no say so. We would  
9 like to be a part of this accountability process because we like to have some say so in the resources that  
10 the tribes we call subsistence have been taken away from us. You heard the testimony. You can't do  
11 nothing. You can't hunt, you can't fish until you are told to do so. Not only that because of accountability  
12 that they have been given, the State of Alaska. They even regulate when we fish, when we hunt, what we  
13 hunt with and what size of nets that we use to fish with. That all boils down to accountability, we the  
14 tribes, would like to have a piece of the action. We need help somehow informing the federal government  
15 to find funding for the tribes to have our own accountability in the resources of Alaska. And just because  
16 we are tribes and happen to be under the State of Alaska is not good enough. And because they bought  
17 Alaska, apparently the tribes got no say so they just happen to live here, wherever they live. The State of  
18 Alaska, the federal government considers the State of Alaska some sort of vacation for wildlife and fish  
19 and that. Not for the tribes though, the tribes are here like you heard the testimony here for survivability.  
20 We try what we call unite, unite the 56 villages. I ask you guys, how can unite? You just heard the cost of  
21 travel. To the island of Mekoryuk and back is five hundred dollars. Why go to Mekoryuk when I can go  
22 to Anchorage for much cheaper than that and have a good time. These are problems that we would like  
23 help on and it's all done because what I think is accountability. The tribes are not being used for nothing  
24 anymore. I see but a bank account for somebody. Big wages here and big wages there. We get our money  
25 from the federal government. From President Nixon, or what's his name, Trump? You know we have

1 people here that make more money than him, yet we get our money from him. Only a very, very, very  
2 handful benefit out of the whole process while the tribes suffer. Because of what they were told they  
3 would have sovereignty and subsistence and everything. What we would like to have and bring back to  
4 whomever you got the information, bring back that we want a piece of that accountability process so we  
5 can have some say so. Apparently the accountability process tells you how, what, and when you can do  
6 things. The federal government passed that down to the State of Alaska. They do the accounting and they  
7 do the monitoring. They do, what they call that, the census. They do everything. They're the ones with all  
8 the money, the power, the authority and yet they don't help the tribes of the region. Apparently they just  
9 give them more pressure. What we would like is to send back a message, to wherever that is, that we  
10 would like a piece of the action. We would like a piece of the accountability system. And if there is  
11 funding out there for that to happen. Take for instance, fishing, we're regulated because the State of  
12 Alaska has the authority and they're the only ones that count the fish. Escapement, they call that  
13 escapement, burying of the eggs. All we would like to have a piece of the action so we the tribes can also  
14 count fish to verify, to verify the harm that they're doing to the people of the region. We just want  
15 verification. And if our own tribes were to get into the accountability process, we could tell them  
16 whoever, yes they're right, yes we can't fish, yes we can, the numbers are low; we can't hunt. Because of  
17 the process the state had over on the northern hemisphere the moose are getting so abundant there.  
18 They're eating up the land. Pretty soon they're eating each other's food with the same mouth. That's why  
19 they're gonna get sick pretty soon. They're migrating. We even found a moose in Island of Mekoryuk.  
20 Way out there so hungry he swam across the Bering Sea. Wow, it's the accountability process for their  
21 employment has gone overboard. Where they can't manage them anymore. That's a part of the  
22 accountability process. Management, we would like a piece of the action but we have no funding if  
23 there's a way to find funding or ask for funding to have a piece of this action to help our tribes. As small  
24 as even subsistence, to verify the State's count to say if you have a piece of the action we too would  
25 justify what types of fishing nets to use, what size and all that which is done by the State of Alaska now.

1 That's all they're asking for, a piece of the action. And I believe the piece of the action evolves all around  
2 accountability and the mission that the federal government passed down to the State of Alaska to do these  
3 things. And now that it's coming to the end all it seems to be was employment and if that's the case, we  
4 would like some employment too. Instead of sitting home watching TV and only go out to hunt and fish  
5 when they tell us we can. Build roads up here village to village so we can get united. So we can go visit  
6 our relatives and kin when they pass on. Or just make communication to get to know one another to really  
7 unite. You know I talk too much, I think. But I think that's what I really wanted to say to whomever. And  
8 I'm just hoping with my heart and soul that you're just not messengers, to put out a report for somebody  
9 else to read, but are here to gather information to really help us somehow, someday. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 **GENE PELTOLA:** If I may, a couple of points you raised here, I would like to address a little bit. When  
12 you ask are any of us here messengers, with regards to the consultations today we have recognition of the  
13 IRA and then we have fee-to-trust. If you look at 25 CFR a lot times it'll say secretarial action or  
14 Secretary of the Interior. That's action based on the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary has to deal  
15 with over 500 tribes throughout the nation. The Secretary engaged with 229 in Alaska. So part of these  
16 consultations, we're very fortunate to have John here. John's the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
17 Indian Affairs. That's the number two person in Indian Affairs who deals with everything the BIA does.  
18 Then we have Matt with us from the Solicitor's office. A lot that he does relies on legal opinion so what  
19 the Bureau and the Indian Affairs is charged to do is make a recommendation to the Secretary and these  
20 are the people that are gonna be structuring that recommendation. This is the significance of these  
21 consultations. And earlier on you were talking about just general comments about I've been in this  
22 position since July of last summer. I can't speak to what any other regional director for the Bureau of  
23 Indian Affairs has done up until this point. All I can do is speak to what my intentions are. I would have  
24 never taken this job unless I felt I could strengthen tribe's positions and by doing that, strengthening the  
25 position of each and every tribal member. You talked about natural resources, here in the last three or four

1 months with regards to Alaska, I started using a phrase of “the power of 229”. The power of 229 tribes in  
2 Alaska. That is a very strong voice - if we unify the voice. Similarly to like the AVCP region here. The  
3 power of 56. We don’t have any other region in the State of Alaska that has as much tribal representation  
4 as we do within AVCP region. The voice in regards to natural resources. We have pretty much three  
5 entities in the State of Alaska right now that are engaged in cooperative management, collaborative  
6 management. However you want to term it, depending on whether you’re the State, the Fed or the tribe.  
7 One of the most active and one of the proactive occurs on the Kuskokwim and that’s the fish commission.  
8 We do not have the funding to fund each and every tribe to engage in natural resource management. But  
9 we do have the opportunity to where tribes’ band together to have a larger voice, to try to put funding in  
10 that direction to get exactly to what you said we need, is more of a say. The regional \$257,000 that came  
11 to the Kuskokwim with regard to the natural resources specifically fisheries management came from year-  
12 end funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs because they saw potential in that. Since then our  
13 delegation has funneled two-million dollars through BIA to go onto tribes and tribal quasi organizations.  
14 The reason I say “quasi” is because tribes have banded together to try to speak with a more common  
15 voice. Two-million dollars, is that a lot? Not it’s not but it’s a start. And if you look at whether it be social  
16 services, you know, ICWA, we all had to start somewhere. And with those areas where we have tribal  
17 engagement that’s quote incepted by others natural resources where we are underrepresented. We’re  
18 trying to make leeway and try to get a larger voice in the future.

19 **ROBERT HOFFMAN:** Yeah, that’s why my first sentence was to you. Meaning no offense to any of  
20 you whatsoever. And that is what I wanted to hear was information to us, to make us feel better from the  
21 harm that we have been going through all these years. That you’re trying, at least you’re trying. Not a  
22 challenge like the money that you’re getting is a mere small piece of what we call a piece of the action.  
23 I’m a mathematician a little bit myself. If you figure it out mathematically with the money you got they’re  
24 starting to come up with small words like co-management. Co-management. And the people are agreeing  
25 I’m saying we don’t want co-management because every time I hear about co-management they’re doing

1 the work and our people are sweeping the floor. Hauling up the gas, chopping the wood, checking the  
2 nets, checking the sonars. That's not what I want is because I witness co-management, we want a piece of  
3 the action. So if there's way somehow that we can further find funding to help us we would really  
4 appreciate. You know, it scares me because I've been the only one that has been answered, scarily. And  
5 I'm sorry. I didn't mean no offense to anything but thank you for replying and satisfying us a little bit  
6 about the process that's going on. Thank you.

7 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you Mr. Hoffman. I think we're in the wrong room. [Laughter]

8 **MIKE JAMES:** Good afternoon, my name is Mike James and I am from Alakanuk, near Yukon. I just  
9 got in today from Alakanuk. I'm one of the fellow executive board members for AVCP. AVCP in turn  
10 made me their Treasurer and they made me chairman of their internal committee. I represent several  
11 villages on the lower Yukon. I was also the tribal council president for three years. I was on tribal council  
12 'til my respective seat expired. I also sit on the rural cap board of directors. We just came back from  
13 Juneau recently to advocate for rural cap and we talked to several legislators at the State Capital regarding  
14 water resources for the villages, public safety, and power cost equalizations. Stuff like that, that's really  
15 important to us out in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta. I got trained on critical stress management suicide  
16 by the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation Behavioral Health. And they in turn sent me to eleven  
17 different villages to debrief all of the first responders and families. And most of those villages I been to  
18 mostly here on the Kuskokwim, they've had no running water, no flushing toilet in their respective  
19 homes. When I went to their bathrooms, I washed my hands in basins. Several years ago we had this  
20 governor. Governor Knowles, he told Alaskans, all Alaskans, I will put your honey bucket in a museum.  
21 Without due respect to Mr. Knowles, we still have honey bucket in people's homes and this man in  
22 Anchorage he was doing a social service to kitchen in the city and they shut him down all because of  
23 running water. They called his situation dangerous. I'm glad that the city of Anchorage is going to  
24 recognize him this week because of his social work with kids. Several years ago I went to Anchorage for  
25 a meeting and I had one-on-one with Anchorage mayor. I told him sir, we have a predicament out in rural



1 Alaska regarding law enforcement shortcomings. I told him we don't have a lot of communities, we don't  
2 have cops. A lot of communities we don't have city cops. Most of the state troopers, their numbers are  
3 being cut down as you just heard with our village public safety officers. I told the mayor, I'd love to see a  
4 pilot program for your Anchorage police union come to rural Alaska. Two weeks on, two weeks off. His  
5 answer to me was that's a good idea but, #1) his concerns, 2) we don't have the money. When I was the  
6 city administrator at Alakanuk, I had state troopers come see me in my office and this one time they came  
7 to my village with US Marshals and they did a pilot project. It worked out so well in my village, that they  
8 mirrored it. They went to several other communities and they did make felony arrests. They went  
9 unarmed into people's homes to take away home brewed buckets and other arrests like that. I would love  
10 to see more public safety out in rural Alaska as you've just heard. We need public safety officers in all  
11 our communities because like I said there's lot of communities that don't have tribal cops. They don't  
12 have city cops and, uh, almost 60 villages, 7 BPSO's, that's not enough. You know, I wish, without due  
13 respect to Mr. Trump, I wish he wouldn't try use this build a wall in Mexico and take away other social  
14 service funding. Here in Alaska, we made a plea to new the Governor of Alaska and to the legislators  
15 regarding funding for running water, flushing toilets in all the villages, the University funding because we  
16 have program here in this building. A matter of fact, last April I graduated from this place. Rural human  
17 services class part of University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Kuskokwim campus. I'd love to come back here  
18 again. This coming summer I have an opportunity to apply for FAFSA funding so that I could come back  
19 to this University of Fairbanks, Kuskokwim campus to pursue this human services. And if I pursue that  
20 for two years, then I'll graduate with an AA. I really like this university system because it not only  
21 allowed me to graduate with rural human services but it'll open the door after I get that human services  
22 class. Then I could go for a doctorate and a BA degree or a Masters. So that kind of University of Alaska  
23 funding is great for all of rural Alaska. I sure don't want to see our current Governor here in Alaska  
24 cutting the funding because that's gonna impact lot of rural Alaska people from high school on up to  
25 young adults like myself to go to school and further their education, attain higher education. I'm glad I

1 had the opportunity to travel lower 48 to serve some time as a military person. And I'm glad that I sit on  
2 the rural AVCP's Executive board so we could bring up issues that are pertinent to almost 60 tribal  
3 villages, tribes. One thing that I would like you to bring back to your respective offices in the lower 48 is  
4 water/sewer. I know some of you sitting up there, may have not seen a honey bucket and you wouldn't  
5 want a honey bucket in your respective house with no flushing toilet or running water. That's how it is in  
6 lots of these communities. There is a lot of communities where we've had a very high turnover of health  
7 aides. It's a very stressful job even the police it's a stressful job. Even the VPSO, I had a VPSO for our  
8 village. He quit because he had no moral support and he wouldn't want to arrest his own brother, his own  
9 first cousin, people in his own community. So my village has almost 800 people and for that size we need  
10 two VPSO's. As a matter of fact, when I was city administrator, we had two VPSO's come to our village  
11 because of threat of flooding. I just got Anchorage Daily News (KTU.com) news and Alakanuk news  
12 lately, recently. And back in November, we've had two communities flooded because of these unusual  
13 weather storms we've been having. I'm glad I was able to make it here from lower Yukon today. The  
14 incoming weather has prevented some of our fellow board members to not make it in. So I'm glad that  
15 you guys up here are giving us ample opportunity to discuss what matters in our respective towns. My  
16 area of lower Yukon, it used to be called Wade Hampton. Now the federal government changed its name  
17 to Kusilvak. That area composed of six/seven villages is the most economically deprived villages in all of  
18 lower 48 combined in Alaska villages. So I'm glad that we have an opportunity to go to several  
19 organizations to fight for our resources. I went to North Pacific fish and management cultural in Nome to  
20 fight against the highest seas inception of the king salmon and some salmon out in the high seas. I asked  
21 them to put a directive on those boats to put escape mechanism for king salmon to escape and to put  
22 federal observers. I'm really glad the Mr. late Ted Stevens with the moratorium and the Magnuson-  
23 Stevens Act. He put 20 mile zone out there in the Bering Sea or so whatever current mileage to prevent  
24 countries from Russia, China and Japan coming out there depleting our natural resources. When I was 11  
25 years old, me and my late dad we went out commercial fishing on the lower Yukon and we saw a ship out

1 there. We went to go check, it was a Japanese boat fishing. We didn't know that at the time you know, it  
2 was illegal fishing. I'm a commercial fisherman. I got my fishing permit for this coming summer. We  
3 began our cumbersome fishing season on the Yukon with deep nets and beaching. We have two different  
4 types of gillnets; the drifters and the set-netters. I am a set-netter. I sit on the Yukon River Drainage  
5 Fisheries Association (YRDFA). As a matter of fact, I'm supposed to go Fairbanks at the end of this  
6 month but they moved it to end of next month. I look forward to that because Alaska Department of Fish  
7 and Game, Alaska Fish and Wildlife will give us a report as to how many king salmon will go in the  
8 Yukon River and make it to Canada. How much will be available for harvest and how much may be  
9 available to catch. This one year we were fortunate to fish for king salmon. We were getting over five  
10 dollars a pound. This one year the Yurok board sent me to Canada on a Chinook salmon educational  
11 exchange. I saw king salmon this big, with the red color of the draperies below you. I was, that evening  
12 we met with Canadian First Nations people. I was really humbled by them. They cried. They said we  
13 can't go to our fish camps no more, we can't fish no more like you guys. Once upon a time we used to  
14 have a war. Upriver vs. downriver. Now days, we have common ground. We want less interception of  
15 some salmon and king salmon out in the high seas. It's easy to say that but there's some companies,  
16 countries like Russia, Japan, Thailand, whatever countries they are. They don't have to have written  
17 regulations of having too many observers in their respective boats or have escape mechanisms for king  
18 salmon. Thank you sir. Welcome to Bethel and welcome to Alaska.

19 **PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you. So, um, I think unless there is somebody else who would like to speak  
20 on this topic, we can close this out session and take a fifteen minute break and then we can open the  
21 second session. There is a lot of interplay between the two so I certainly encourage you to, if you have  
22 more thoughts to speak again. So we'll close out the first section, session, I'm sorry on our consultation  
23 on Alaska recognition under the Alaska Indian Reorganization Act and take a short break. Thank you.

24 [End of Transcript]