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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

YUPIIT PICIRYARAIT CULTURAL CENTER  
Bethel, Alaska  
January 21, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jacqueline Cleveland, Chair  
Henry Parks  
John Andrew  
Walter Morgan, Sr.  
Francis Prince, Jr.  
Phillip Peter, Sr.  
Tiffany Agayar  
Norma Evan

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

Recorded and transcribed by:

Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp  
787-239-0462  
Info@lighthouseonline.com

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 1/21/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good morning and welcome to day two of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. It's a little after 9 am, so we're going to get started and we'll start with roll call with Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning everyone, this is Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator and I will do the roll call now. Member Henry Parks

MR. PARKS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

(No response)

Was Norma able to join us online yet this morning?

(No response)

I don't see her name, but I think she'll be joining us later. John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: John is present. Walter Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

MR. PRINCE: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

(No response)

Member Rogers may be joining us later. Phillip Peter.

MR. PETER: Here.

1 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

2  
3 MS. AGAYAR: Here.

4  
5 MS. MCDAVID: Jacqueline Cleveland.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Here.

8  
9 MS. MCDAVID: We have seven members  
10 present, so we have quorum. And if it's okay, Madam  
11 Chair, I'll give a couple quick reminders. Yeah, thanks,  
12 everyone, for coming back for or joining us for the  
13 first time for day two of the rescheduled fall 2025  
14 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory  
15 Council meeting. Council had a nice full day yesterday,  
16 going over wildlife proposals. This morning we will,  
17 after -- we'll start with public comments on non-agenda  
18 items. So, if anyone would like to comment that's here  
19 in the room, there are some green comment cards at the  
20 back. We just ask you to fill those out and you can pass  
21 them to any of the staff and we'll put you in line to  
22 comment. And if you're online, if you're joining us on  
23 the phone, you can press star five to raise your hand.  
24 Or you can, if you're on Teams, raise your hand or put  
25 a note in the chat and we'll call on you. We do have one  
26 person that's let us know online already that they would  
27 like to comment. Also, if you could remember to please  
28 sign in on the sheet at the back if you haven't done so  
29 yet, we appreciate that. It helps us make sure we have  
30 a record of attendance and spell folks names correctly.  
31 And lastly, just a reminder, we do have Mr. Pat Sampson  
32 here helping us with interpretation so, if you want to  
33 grab the transmitter headsets that are over by the  
34 coffee, it's channel 1, and you can just turn that on  
35 when he's doing the translation and, and turn it off to  
36 save battery when it's not in use. After public comments  
37 today, we will move into talking about North Pacific  
38 Fishery Management Council Chum Bycatch DEIS, and we  
39 have Terese Vicente here from Kuskokwim River Inter-  
40 Tribal Fish Commission to give us an overview on that.  
41 And then we can talk about what the other Yukon RACs  
42 supported. And then you guys could talk about which  
43 alternatives you want to support. And after that, we'll  
44 move back in and try to finish up our wildlife proposals  
45 and go back through the rest of the agenda. So, thank  
46 you all and good morning.

47  
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
49 Brooke. So, as Brooke mentioned, we are on the part  
50 where there's public and tribal comments on non-agenda

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1 items, and we have one person who signed in by the name  
2 of Grant Copeland. Grant, you have the floor.

3

4 MR. COPELAND: Hi, there. Can everybody  
5 hear me okay?

6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

8

9 MR. COPELAND: Okay, awesome. Yeah,  
10 thanks for letting me call in and give you some comment.  
11 I'm on my drive home from work right now, so I'll try  
12 to stay focused here and make this as quick as I can,  
13 and I only have a few minutes but. My name is Grant  
14 Copeland. I live in Palmer, Alaska with my wife and two  
15 daughters. I've -- for the last several years been coming  
16 out to the Lower Yukon River, where my family has caught  
17 their moose for the winter the last several years and  
18 made some good friends out there and connections and  
19 I've really enjoyed getting to visit the area. One of  
20 the things that I've noticed over the last few years,  
21 since I've been coming out there and having talked with  
22 a lot of the locals and people that I know out there  
23 now, is the increase in non-resident hunting pressure,  
24 like from people from out of state. And this is -- I'm  
25 talking about putting together a proposal through the  
26 Alaska State Board of Game for the next meeting that  
27 Unit 18 comes up, which I believe is next winter. So,  
28 winter of like 2026-2027. So, we're still over a year  
29 away from, you know, this meeting happening or this  
30 proposal being discussed formally with the Board of  
31 Game. But I've been talking to locals that I know the  
32 State Advisory Council or committee is one that I've  
33 been trying to get a hold of and I wanted to talk to the  
34 federal RAC., you guys as well, to just kind of let you  
35 know my idea and maybe drum up some support ahead of  
36 time to just try to get as much local support from people  
37 as -- that I can for the proposal. So, my idea is to  
38 put, is to basically create a new management area along  
39 the Lower Yukon River from the Unit 18 border above  
40 Russian Mission, down all the way past Kotlik and into  
41 the Delta, basically encompassing all waters on the  
42 Lower Yukon River that can be accessed by a motor driven  
43 boat. The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge already  
44 prohibits air charters or hunting guides from taking  
45 clients into areas that can be reached by a motor driven  
46 boat, but it seems that a lot of non-residents are  
47 figuring out ways to still access the area in these  
48 lands and hunt moose. And it's created quite a bit of  
49 user conflict, it sounds like an increased pressure into  
50 the area. Talking with Fish and Game, just some real

1 quick numbers. The easiest way that we found to see who  
2 all or how many non-residents are hunting moose along  
3 the Lower Yukon River in these waters and areas was to  
4 see who -- what non-residents used a motor or a boat as  
5 their primary means of access in Unit 18 remainder. And  
6 in 2018 that number was 11 non-residents. And in 2024  
7 it was up to 193. And we suspect that 2025 had higher  
8 numbers than that. And we suspect that 2026 will be  
9 higher numbers than that as well. It just seems like  
10 every year it's gotten steadily more popular.

11  
12 So, my proposal is to create a new Lower  
13 Yukon River management area that would be divided up  
14 into four different zones that would basically encompass  
15 all the sloughs, lakes and tributaries that are readily  
16 used by local hunters to, basically, put a draw permit  
17 system that would allow potentially up to 50 draw permits  
18 for non-resident hunters, and it would be 10 permits per  
19 zone, spread out amongst the five different zones that  
20 the management area would be broken up into. So, my  
21 thought is that this would put a reasonable cap on the  
22 amount of non-resident hunters that can come into the  
23 area and hunt, while still allowing some opportunity for  
24 them as well. And also, evenly distribute that pressure  
25 along the Lower Yukon River so not one certain area has  
26 a higher influx of non-resident hunting pressure than  
27 the other. Talking with Fish and Game, the Unit 18 moose  
28 population is still very robust and doing well,  
29 potentially even above carrying capacity and they would,  
30 you know, potentially worried about like overgrazing,  
31 so it sounds like there's enough moose to be harvested  
32 and there's harvestable surplus. But it sounds like the  
33 user conflicts are becoming kind of an issue. Maybe  
34 trophy hunters are becoming kind of an issue. And I'm  
35 just thinking that this would be a good way to help  
36 alleviate some of that non-resident pressure and take  
37 some of that off of the locals' plates in the Lower  
38 Yukon River area and just kind of help preserve  
39 opportunity for people in the future, as well, so.

40  
41 Obviously, I'm not a rurally qualified  
42 subsistence user, I live in Palmer, Alaska, but I do  
43 enjoy getting to visit the Lower Yukon area and look for  
44 moose, as well. The area is beautiful, I really enjoy  
45 getting to come and be a part of that, and I worry that  
46 if this non-resident pressure is left unchecked, then  
47 potentially a full closure to non-federally qualified  
48 subsistence users may come in from -- in the future and  
49 just trying to help alleviate that potential conflict  
50 down the road. And I believe this would be a good chance

1 for the Board of Game with the state to do something  
2 ahead of time, to get in front of this potential rising  
3 problem. So yeah, that was kind of a quick synopsis of  
4 what my proposal is going to be to the Board of Game  
5 next winter. I've kind of already made some rough  
6 outlines and maps and have more details of this kind of  
7 already that I'm working on and putting together, and  
8 I'd be happy to send it to Brooke or somebody who might  
9 be able to disseminate that to you guys if you want. Or  
10 obviously you guys should see it in the State of Alaska  
11 Board of Game proposals next winter as well, so. I know  
12 I'm kind of getting on this pretty early but again, I  
13 just wanted to let you guys know that this is in the  
14 works and see if I can't get your guys' support for this  
15 and just let you know that that's going to be coming in  
16 the future. So, yes, thank you very much for your time.  
17 If you guys have any questions or anything, I'm happy  
18 to answer them as well but I just wanted to bring that  
19 up to you guys well in advance. So, thank you again for  
20 your time and allowing me to comment.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for  
23 your comments, Grant. Does anyone want to give some  
24 feedback in the room? Francis.

25  
26 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is  
27 Francis. I got a -- actually, I got a call from Grant,  
28 too, about this proposal, and it sounds really like a  
29 really good deal to have this proposal in to limit the  
30 outside hunters to come in our region to stop the sports  
31 hunting, because recently I've been seeing more and more  
32 planes flying around the Lower Yukon and they're flying  
33 really low. And you can tell they're looking for moose,  
34 and it's during the moose hunting season time.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
37 Francis. Anyone else? Tiffany.

38  
39 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you, Grant, for the  
40 idea. I think it's a really good one that you're  
41 bringing.....

42  
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44  
45 MS. EVAN: Madam Chair, can I make a  
46 comment? This is Norma Evan.

47  
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hold on, Norma.  
49 Tiffany is next, and then you can go.

50

1 MS. AGAYAR: Your comment lines up with  
2 a lot of what has been going on in the past few years,  
3 and even though you are not from the lower part of the  
4 area -- Yukon River you, everything you've stated has  
5 been true and observed by many people from the area.  
6 Thank you.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.  
9 Tiffany. Anyone else? Oh, Norma. Sorry, Norma. Your  
10 turn.

11  
12 MS. EVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good  
13 morning everybody. There was a bigger increase in  
14 Renfro Air this year in our region. If you look on the  
15 FlightAware, they bypass our village and go to like 20  
16 or 30 miles back and you could just see them on the  
17 FlightAware flying around and I know the locals only  
18 use, you know, the boating systems during that time. And  
19 I appreciate your help and thank you.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
22 Norma.

23  
24 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, I got a  
25 question.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Walter.

28  
29 MR. MORGAN: Okay. He said 50 right now.  
30 What's the current number of people hunting down there  
31 right now? Anybody knows? How many out-of-state people  
32 hunt in the mouth? Does anybody got a number? Thank you.

33  
34 MR. COPELAND: Madam Chair, this is Grant  
35 again, I might be able to answer Walter's question.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, Grant,  
38 you're up.

39  
40 MR. COPELAND: Yeah, Walter so, from the  
41 numbers that I was able to gather with the Alaska  
42 Department of Fish and Game, again, that was, we were  
43 looking at how many non-resident hunters, out of state  
44 hunters were using a boat as their primary means of  
45 transportation to harvest a moose in Unit 18 remainder,  
46 which we assumed primarily encompassed all of the waters  
47 along the Lower Yukon River that we're talking about.  
48 And the most accurate number that we have right now is  
49 from 2024, it was 193 out of state hunters harvested  
50 moose along the Lower Yukon River in 2024. There was

1 also several more that were unsuccessful so, probably  
2 like 220-230 non-resident hunters, but there was 193  
3 successful ones. We assume that 2025 -- I think they're,  
4 the biologists at Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
5 couldn't give me a real accurate number for 2025 yet,  
6 because they're still waiting for harvest reports to be  
7 collected and turned in, but I imagine I'll have that  
8 information before I complete writing this proposal.  
9 Yeah, so I guess in 2024, there was 193. And the reason  
10 I settled on, you know -- and this number is up for, you  
11 know, interpretation, could be more, could be less. It's  
12 whatever, I guess the Board of Game or the public  
13 decides. But I thought 50 was kind of a reasonable cap  
14 that would still allow some opportunity since the moose  
15 population is high, and then when the management area  
16 is broken up into five different zones, and there's only  
17 ten permits per zone then that would be pretty minimal  
18 outside pressure that local users would feel, so. Like,  
19 for example, from Mountain Village down to the coast  
20 would be one of the hunt units and all of those sloughs  
21 and lakes that that encompasses. And there would only  
22 be ten non-resident hunters allowed in that entire area,  
23 which was, you know, I think when I was charting it out  
24 on Google Earth was well over 1000 square miles of area,  
25 so. That's kind of how we, I came up with those numbers.  
26 And again, that's something that could be discussed if  
27 people wanted it to be more or less. That could all be  
28 decided at the Board of Game meeting.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again.

31  
32 (Simultaneous speech)

33  
34 MR. MORGAN: Thank you.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you  
37 again, Grant. I had a question, and then Tiffany will  
38 have a question after me. Would your proposal idea  
39 address fly-ing hunting at all?

40  
41 MR. COPELAND: Was the question about  
42 fly-ing hunting?

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, will the  
45 proposal idea address that by any chance?

46  
47 MR. COPELAND: So, what the management  
48 area would -- my idea is basically from, like the  
49 outermost slough or lake would be, there would be a two-  
50 mile buffer between that area, so. And that would

1 include, like all the forks of the Andraefsky River, the  
2 clearwater by Mountain Village, some of the clearwater  
3 tributaries by Pilot Station. I tried to include a lot  
4 of tributaries that flow into the Yukon that are also  
5 heavily used by local hunters. So, like for example, if  
6 like the East fork of the Andraefsky River would  
7 essentially have a four-mile corridor almost all the way  
8 to its headwaters, where non-resident hunters would not  
9 be allowed to hunt without a draw permit, so. Now,  
10 outside of that corridor there could still be, like non-  
11 resident hunters that are dropped via plane on, like,  
12 some of the ridge tops, which I know (distortion). But  
13 they wouldn't be allowed to -- there wouldn't -- a non-  
14 resident hunter couldn't hunt within that four-mile  
15 corridor. And for example, like, Driftwood Slough across  
16 from Saint Marys, like, there would be a two-mile  
17 corridor extension from, like, the outer bank of that  
18 as well, or whatever slough goes further into the, like,  
19 furthest away, like, basically as far as a motorboat  
20 could get, there would be a two-mile extension past that  
21 point where non-resident hunters would not be allowed  
22 to hunt without a draw permit. So, while this doesn't  
23 necessarily affect a person's ability to use planes,  
24 like, if a guy or an individual from, who's an Alaska  
25 resident wanted to fly their own plane and land, I guess  
26 on a lake within the Lower Yukon management area, that,  
27 you know, they would still have the right to do that,  
28 but it doesn't seem like there's a whole lot of plane  
29 operators that are landing in these waters where people  
30 can reach with a powerboat anyways, at least from what  
31 I've been told and from, and understand, so. This doesn't  
32 directly affect or limit anybody's ability to use a  
33 plane. It just creates a system that basically  
34 encompasses all the waters that could be reached with a  
35 motorboat to limit the amount of non-resident hunters.  
36 So, if a non-resident hunter wanted to fly in with a  
37 plane and get dropped off within two or a four-mile  
38 corridor of the East fork of the Andraefsky, they would  
39 have to have one of the ten draw permits that was allowed  
40 for that area. But -- from everything I've gathered and  
41 the people I've talked to, I think most of the air  
42 charters are operating pretty well without that, like,  
43 pretty well outside of where motor driven boats can reach  
44 anyways but, I could be wrong. So yeah, this was mainly  
45 just a focus to help limit the out-of-state hunters that  
46 are coming and utilizing boats in all the same areas  
47 that local hunters are primarily going as well.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again for  
50 your response. Tiffany.

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MS. AGAYAR: Thank you. What do your four zones look like in your head?

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MR. COPELAND: Yeah, so I think that's going to be the biggest challenge with this whole idea is basically the mapping that would go into creating this Lower Yukon management area that encompasses basically all waters that can be reached with a motor driven boat. I've gone through -- so, that's going to require some pretty significant computer work with the GIS Office, with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And I reached out to them to help me assist making maps for the proposal but they're pretty overwhelmed already. And they said they can't take a request from the public but if this passes in the Board of Game, then they will obviously make the map area and the units and they'll iron all that out. But I went ahead myself and went on Google Earth and laid out a rough outline of what I think the entire Lower Yukon management area might look like in the five separate zones, just based off my knowledge of the -- of the area. And kind of created like, some rough outlines on Google Earth. And like I said, if Brooke's or if somebody is willing to like, have me email those files from Google Earth and screenshots of what I've kind of made and they want to send them to you guys like, I'd be happy to send those over. And it just kind of gives you a rough outline of what all might be included but it's basically like, a upper portion from the boundary to below Russian Mission and in between Marshall and then an area around Marshall that encompasses like, the Owl Slough and Reindeer River area. And then the third zone is primarily like Pilot Station and all the sloughs and lakes and tributaries north and east of Pilot Station. And then the zone closest to Saint Marys encompasses Driftwood Slough and both forks of the Andreafsky River, close to their headwaters. And then the fifth zone is from close to Mountain Village down, encompassing the 30 Mile Slough area, (In Native) Lake and all the other lakes on the other side of the river, all the way down through the Yukon. Or like, all, yeah, all the way down through the Yukon Delta. And it also encompasses the clearwater tributaries, right by Mountain Village, as well. So, from all the local information I've gathered and just my knowledge of the area, I tried to encompass all of the areas that were primarily used. And I think if the language is written correctly, that basically includes any waters that can be accessed with a motor driven boat. And with this rough outline I've laid out, I think

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1 they'll do a pretty good job of making some pretty  
2 official encompassing maps of the area if this passes.  
3 Does that answer your question?

4

5 MS. AGAYAR: Yes. Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again.  
8 Brooke has a follow up.

9

10 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thank  
11 you so much, Grant, for calling in and letting the  
12 Council know about your proposal idea. In terms of, I  
13 guess, sort of like, looking forward, next steps. It  
14 sounds like, here in the room, folks would love to see  
15 any of those screenshots or Google Earth images you have  
16 or anything else you'd like to send, perhaps before their  
17 next meeting, which will be in late March. I think you  
18 told me you had a conflict and wouldn't be able to attend  
19 that one, but we could, as the Council, look over stuff  
20 at that meeting, and I could always get you their  
21 feedback on any of that prior to the May 1 submission  
22 deadline if you wanted to proceed in that manner.

23

24 MR. COPELAND: Yep. That sounds great. I  
25 will email you all those screenshots and KMZ files that  
26 I made on Google Earth and allow you to pass them around.  
27 And yeah, thank you so much for your guys' time and  
28 support. And yeah, I have to have this submitted by May  
29 1st, I think you said, so I'll be typing up. Maybe I'll  
30 have the official proposal done and ready to go by then  
31 too, that I'll email to you and everybody can review  
32 but, yeah. So, I'll hopefully get that submitted before  
33 May. So, I appreciate all your guys' support and allowing  
34 me to take time out of your meeting to talk to you guys.  
35 Thank you so much.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
38 Grant. Is there anyone else?

39

40 (No response)

41

42 Hearing, seeing none. Actually, we have  
43 someone online who has a question?

44

45 MS. MCDAVID: Stanislaus Sheppard, go  
46 ahead. This is Brooke.

47

48 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Brooke, Madam  
49 Chair, through the Chair. This is Stanislaus Sheppard  
50 speaking personally. Not as a RIT. My main concern is

1 that, Grant, that if there's language in there that  
2 doesn't pertain to local hunters only, specifically to  
3 the sports hunters. And one of the -- I know I write  
4 [sic] couple proposals before. In the proposal, there's  
5 gotta be language in there, reasoning behind the  
6 proposal. And one of the most important reasoning Grant,  
7 would be, over the past three years, I get calls from  
8 Russian Mission, Marshall, Pilot Station, mostly Saint  
9 Marys, and I seen a (indiscernible) myself, at our local  
10 dump that the amount of spoiled moose meat increasing.  
11 If outside hunter passes through here and decides to  
12 distribute their moose meat, their moose meat is under  
13 the qualification of not edible. They don't know how to  
14 take care of the meat when they catch it, spoils, so  
15 they end up -- locals that that get meat from the sports  
16 hunters and they're thrown to the dump or they offloaded  
17 at Saint Marys dump. So in one of the reasonings behind  
18 that would be lessen the amount of moose meat being  
19 thrown at the dump. Thank you very much, Grant.

20  
21 MR. COPELAND: Yeah, you make a great  
22 point, sir. And in the years that I've been coming I've  
23 seen some of that firsthand. I've seen non-resident  
24 hunters out in the field with their moose meat getting  
25 rained on and just not taking very good care of it,  
26 you're right. They just are ignorant and don't know how  
27 to take care of it, I don't think they realize the work  
28 that goes into taking care of a 1,000 pound animal that  
29 you harvest in the field. And that's not to say they're  
30 all doing it, but it does seem like there's been an  
31 increase in that, I've heard that from my friends in  
32 Saint Marys, as well and it's extremely sad, so. I'm  
33 hoping -- I'll include some language about that in the  
34 proposal, absolutely. And then, obviously, the State  
35 Board of Game is going to allow for public testimony and  
36 written comments and I feel like that kind of testimony  
37 coming from somebody like yourself and all the members  
38 of the Board here, would go a long way with them, as  
39 well, so. Yeah, thank you for your support and  
40 absolutely, I totally agree with you.

41  
42 MR. SHEPPARD: Madam Chair, a follow up  
43 question or.....

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, Stan.

46  
47 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
48 Yes. Grant, I have a fish camp down in (In Native).  
49 There's two fish camps, one below me, Matt Waski and  
50 myself. We've been there for over 15 years. He's got

1 more years than me because -- and the amount of sports  
2 hunters coming in are increasing. I see local hunters  
3 coming in there either to pick berries or moose hunt but  
4 they don't camp in there. So the amount of sports hunters  
5 that are coming in under the (In Native) River are  
6 increasing. Thank you.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again,  
9 Stan and Grant. Is there anyone else online who would  
10 like to speak?

11  
12 (No response)

13  
14 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. And  
15 that's just a reminder. This is the time for any public  
16 comments on non-agenda items related to subsistence.

17  
18 (No comment)

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, hearing and  
21 seeing none, for this morning. We're going to move on  
22 to the agenda then and start with c: North Pacific  
23 Fishery Management Council Chum Salmon Bycatch DEIS. And  
24 the first presenter will be with Kuskokwim River Inter-  
25 Tribal Fish Commission and TCC. Is it? Terese. Thanks.

26  
27 MS. VICENTE: Okay, good morning, Madam  
28 Chair. Good morning, members of the Council. And thanks,  
29 Brooke, for getting the slides up on the screen. My name  
30 is Terese Vicente, for the record. I'm the Policy and  
31 Programs Director with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal  
32 Fish Commission. Our Fish Commission has been one of the  
33 tribal cooperating agencies working with the National  
34 Marine Fisheries Service on the ongoing chum salmon  
35 bycatch NEPA or EIS, environmental impact statement  
36 process that's ongoing. So, we wanted to provide you  
37 with this presentation about just some background on the  
38 North Pacific Council and chum bycatch in the Bering  
39 Sea. Some information about what we and the other tribal  
40 cooperating agency in this process, the Tanana Chiefs  
41 Conference, have been doing and then a kind of deep dive  
42 into the alternatives that are on the table that the  
43 Council is getting ready to choose from in a couple of  
44 weeks, when they meet. My photo is on this first slide  
45 as well as Krystal Lapp, she's the Natural Resources  
46 Policy Analyst with Tanana Chiefs Conference. I don't  
47 know if she could be on today. But just to let you all  
48 know, we co-presented this with the Eastern Interior RAC  
49 and the Western Interior RAC in December so, I'll be  
50 sharing the same information with you guys.

1  
2                   Okay, Brooke, you could go to the next  
3 slide, thanks. So, first, a background on the North  
4 Pacific Fishery Management Council which we sometimes  
5 call the NPFMC. The North Pacific Council is one of  
6 eight regional fishery management councils across the  
7 country that were established in 1976 by the Magnuson-  
8 Stevens Act, or the MSA. The North Pacific Council  
9 debates and develops management measures for federal  
10 fisheries in the North Pacific. So, those fisheries  
11 offshore of Alaska from 3 to 200 nautical miles in the  
12 ocean. The management recommendations developed by the  
13 North Pacific Council are reviewed by the Department of  
14 Commerce, specifically the agency, the National Marine  
15 Fisheries Service, or NMFS. NMFS is also sometimes  
16 called NOAA Fisheries. So, in other words, the Council  
17 is a -- an advisory body to the federal agency, which  
18 is NMFS. If NOAA Fisheries or NMFS approves the  
19 recommendations of the Council, it is then NMFS, the  
20 agency that's responsible for implementing them as  
21 regulations. There are 15 seats on the North Pacific  
22 Council. Eleven of these are voting seats, so five of  
23 those voting seats are held by Alaskan fishery  
24 representatives. And most often they're representatives  
25 of the trawl industry or charter fisheries, as well as  
26 processing communities. Two are held by Washington State  
27 fishery representatives, usually from the trawl or  
28 processing sector. And then three are held by  
29 representatives of the three states with interest in  
30 Alaskan marine commercial fisheries. So, the State of  
31 Alaska, the State of Washington, and the State of Oregon.  
32 There are also four non-voting seats on the North Pacific  
33 Council. And these are held by different federal bodies,  
34 including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And there  
35 are currently no designated Alaska Native tribal seats  
36 on the Council itself. There is one designated tribal  
37 seat on its advisory panel, which is called the AP. The  
38 North Pacific Council is very clear that it is not  
39 responsible for managing salmon from the Kusko, from the  
40 Yukon or other rivers in Western and Interior Alaska.  
41 However, it is responsible for managing salmon bycatch  
42 that happens in federal fisheries in the Bering Sea,  
43 Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. Next slide,  
44 please.

45  
46                   So, now some background on chum salmon  
47 bycatch in the Bering Sea, this is the focus of the  
48 issue at hand. So, I think most of you are aware that  
49 bycatch is when a fishery catches a fish that is not  
50 targeted. In federal offshore fisheries, like trawl

1 fisheries in the Bering Sea, fish caught as bycatch  
2 cannot be kept or sold. They can sometimes be donated  
3 if their quality is good. In the Bering Sea, 99% of all  
4 chum salmon bycatch is caught by pollock trawl vessels.  
5 And trawlers are large boats that drag nets behind them  
6 to scoop up fish. Pollock trawl nets are midwater or  
7 pelagic nets, but they often touch the sea floor when  
8 they're being used. There's three sectors in the Bering  
9 Sea pollock industry. There's first the catcher vessels,  
10 also known as the CV, V, as in Victor, Fleet. These  
11 vessels are usually the smallest and inshore or  
12 shoreside catcher vessels must deliver their hauls to  
13 onshore processing plants down in the Aleutian chain.  
14 Because of where they fish, close to the Alaska  
15 Peninsula, those inshore CVs catch the majority of chum  
16 salmon bycatch. Another sector are the catcher  
17 processors. These are also known as CPs. These vessels  
18 have processing equipment on board, so they can process  
19 all their fish they catch at sea. And then the third  
20 sector are the motherships. These vessels are the  
21 largest and they don't fish themselves, but they have  
22 processing equipment on board, so they have catcher  
23 vessels and other catcher processors sometimes in their  
24 cooperatives that deliver their hauls to them for at-  
25 sea processing.

26  
27                   There are two seasons for federal  
28 fisheries, like the pollock trawl fishery in the Bering  
29 Sea. So, there's the A Season, which just began  
30 yesterday, it runs from January 20th until June 10th.  
31 And then the B Season runs from June 10th to November  
32 1st. Chum salmon are typically caught as bycatch from  
33 June to August or in the early B Season, and the graphic  
34 on the bottom right shows annual chum salmon bycatch  
35 split by A Season in that orange and then the B Season  
36 in black, and those data are from 1991 to 2023. So, you  
37 can see, you know, the big black spikes. That's the B  
38 Season chum bycatch, that's when most chum salmon are  
39 caught. The dashed line on that figure is the average  
40 from 1991 to 2023, the average chum bycatch each year,  
41 which comes out to about 186,000. Bering Sea pollock  
42 vessels are required to have two on board observers that  
43 report every salmon that is caught as bycatch, those  
44 numbers are publicly available. And it's important to  
45 note that not every salmon caught as bycatch is from a  
46 river in Western and Interior Alaska. On average, about  
47 19% of each year's total chum bycatch are from Western  
48 Alaska and Upper Middle Yukon genetic reporting groups.  
49 So, those two groups, which are genetically distinct,  
50 we often loop them together and call them WAK chum. W,

1 A, K, WAK for Western Alaska. And that graphic on the  
2 bottom left shows you the different genetic reporting  
3 groups of the chum that are caught as bycatch in the  
4 Bering Sea. So, that one that's circled in red. The map  
5 on the top right has the yellow Western Alaska stocks  
6 from Kotzebue down to Bristol Bay, and then the  
7 genetically distinct light blue Upper Middle Yukon,  
8 those are the fall chum that go up to the Yukon. So, we  
9 group those together as WAK chum.

10

11 Currently, there are no caps on chum  
12 salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea. Since 2016, chum salmon  
13 bycatch has been managed through the pollock industries'  
14 contracts, which are known as incentive plan agreements  
15 or IPAs. There's also a rolling hot spot system program  
16 that issues in-season closures of statistical areas or  
17 stat areas, basically small areas of the ocean. If you  
18 put kind of like a grid on the Bering Sea, this rolling  
19 hot spot system program will close down stat areas that  
20 have high rates of chum bycatch to pollock harvest. The  
21 rolling hot spot system is set in regulation, but it's  
22 monitored and managed by the pollock industry. So,  
23 what's happening now is that the Council is re-  
24 evaluating this chum salmon bycatch management system  
25 by looking at new ways to manage bycatch, particularly  
26 to reduce Western Alaska chum salmon bycatch. You could  
27 go to the next slide, please, Brooke. Thanks.

28

29 So, this slide 4, just has a map of kind  
30 of the areas we're talking about. And it comes from a  
31 presentation by the pollock industry in 2024. But I find  
32 it really helpful to visualize the areas we're talking  
33 about and the areas that the pollock industry often talks  
34 about. So, on the left you see, there's four areas,  
35 numbered one through four. These are the genetic cluster  
36 areas that the federal agencies labs and the states'  
37 labs use to group the genetic clusters and their genetic  
38 sampling program of salmon bycatch. So, we most often  
39 find Western and Interior Alaska chum caught in genetic  
40 clusters one and two, where that red circle is. And if  
41 you know about the Western Alaska chum migratory  
42 pathway, you know, that makes sense because they're  
43 coming from, you know, through Area M, the South Alaska  
44 Peninsula, right through that area, as they migrate into  
45 the Bering Sea to continue to grow or to come back to  
46 our rivers to spawn. Then on the right-hand side, it's  
47 those same areas, just with the names of the different  
48 fishing zones that the pollock fishery uses. So, that  
49 genetic cluster one and two is roughly the areas known  
50 as the Unimak area, the shelf and the shelf edge. So,

1 there's a lot of trawling that happens in those areas.  
2 They're really productive for pollock. It's also, you  
3 know really good feeding grounds and migratory grounds  
4 for chum salmon, so that's why we see a lot of chum  
5 bycatch happening there. So, that's just the kind of  
6 place you were, we're talking about. Next slide, please,  
7 Brooke.

8  
9 So, now some numbers on chum bycatch.  
10 Chum salmon bycatch has increased in recent years. As I  
11 said, long term, since 1991, the pollock fishery has  
12 caught about 186,000 chum each year. But more recently,  
13 in the last 10-15 years or so, from 2011 to 2023, this  
14 has increased to about 268,000 chum each year. And again,  
15 not all of those are from Western Alaska. The all-time  
16 high chum salmon bycatch happened in 2005, with about  
17 710,800 chum taken as bycatch. And then, the second  
18 highest chum salmon bycatch happened more recently in  
19 2021, with nearly 550,000 chum salmon taken. Genetic  
20 research estimates that about 50,800 of those were WAK  
21 chum, so about 10% of the total catch. However, with the  
22 large number of chum taken, there is a big outcry from  
23 tribes, from the public and that's really what spurred  
24 this current management reevaluation. This slide also  
25 has some recent years overall and, in parentheses,  
26 Western Alaska specific chum bycatch. And the figure at  
27 the right shows chum bycatch from 2011 to 2024. You can  
28 maybe see that the bars have two colors. So, the bar  
29 itself is the total chum salmon bycatch in each year.  
30 And then the dark blue part on the top of the bar, that's  
31 the Western Alaska chum portion, according to the  
32 genetic research. So, that portion may seem small, but  
33 when you add it up across that time span, it tells us  
34 that over 615,000 Western Alaska chum salmon have been  
35 caught and discarded by the pollock fishery since 2011,  
36 so in the last 15 years. Next slide, please.

37  
38 So, that was some background on the  
39 North Pacific Council and chum bycatch. And here's some  
40 background about the management reevaluation that's  
41 ongoing. So, the Council and National Marine Fisheries  
42 Service have been conducting an Environmental Impact  
43 Statement or EIS process. This is a requirement for  
44 proposed actions or projects by federal agencies. EISs  
45 are documents that assess environmental, economic, and  
46 social impacts of different pathways or alternatives for  
47 the federal agency's proposals, and each EIS has a lead  
48 federal agency, in this case it's NOAA Fisheries. But  
49 lead agencies may invite or accept cooperating agencies  
50 who have special expertise about the subject matter to

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1 help them with their analysis. So, the Kuskokwim Fish  
2 Commission requested and was accepted to be a  
3 cooperating agency on this Chum Bycatch EIS in October  
4 of 2023. And then, in April of 2024, Tanana Chiefs  
5 Conference did the same thing, they were accepted to be  
6 a cooperating agency. And then the Alaska Department of  
7 Fish and Game is the third cooperating agency in this  
8 process. Thanks, Brooke.

9  
10 So, as cooperating agencies, the  
11 Kuskokwim Fish Commission and Tanana Chiefs Conference  
12 have helped write, review and add to parts of the EIS  
13 that fall within our special expertise about chum salmon  
14 in our regions. This slide just shows a summary of some  
15 of the information we've provided. It includes  
16 traditional knowledge from our regions as well as  
17 scientific data. We've provided it to help enhance the  
18 analysis. And if you want to, there's a green QR code  
19 at the bottom left. And then that red one, kind of in  
20 the center, you can scan those to see presentations that  
21 each of our organizations gave to the Council last  
22 February. Those presentations were about some of the  
23 contributions we gave as cooperating agencies. Next  
24 slide please.

25  
26 Okay so into the alternatives on the  
27 table. Last February the North Pacific Council took up  
28 this chum bycatch issue, and they passed a motion to  
29 revise five alternatives on the table for chum salmon  
30 bycatch management in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery B  
31 Season. At that meeting, the Council also recommended  
32 that NMFS publish the draft EIS, so that happened this  
33 past September. And in about two weeks, starting  
34 February 6th, the Council will next talk about chum  
35 salmon bycatch and they've indicated they're going to  
36 take final action at this meeting, which means they're  
37 aiming to choose an alternative or a couple alternatives  
38 for approval and implementation by the National Marine  
39 Fisheries Service. So, this slide has a summary of these  
40 alternatives, and I'll walk through them one by one.  
41 But, just to keep in mind as we go through this, a couple  
42 things. So first, the Council and the National Marine  
43 Fisheries Service can choose to do a combination of  
44 alternatives, so they don't have to choose just one.  
45 However, they cannot choose Alternative 1, which is no  
46 action, with Alternatives 2, 3, 4 or 5, which are all  
47 action alternatives. Also, Alternatives 2 and 3 cannot  
48 be combined because they both propose a cap, they just  
49 have different ways to get to that cap. And then this  
50 is a little in the weeds, it'll make sense later, I

1 hope, but Alternative 3, and then Option 3 of Alternative  
2 5 cannot be chosen together because they both use chum  
3 salmon abundance to set caps so, I'll explain all of  
4 that more in a moment but Brooke, you could go to the  
5 next slide.

6  
7           Okay so, first one is Alternative 1.  
8 Alternative 1 is status quo or no action. It's required  
9 to have this in the suite of alternatives by law. And  
10 if the Council were to choose Alternative 1, this would  
11 create no change from the current chum salmon bycatch  
12 management measures. So again, the industry's incentive  
13 plan agreements, their IPAs and the rolling hotspot  
14 system that closes down areas with high chum salmon  
15 bycatch rates. Both of those are led and managed by the  
16 pollock trawl industry. Next slide.

17  
18           Alternative 2 would put a chum salmon  
19 bycatch cap in place on all pollock vessels across the  
20 Bering Sea. This cap would be one number between 100,000  
21 chum at the lowest, and up to 550,000 chum at the lowest.  
22 It would be in place every year starting in the B Season,  
23 so starting June 10th. And if the cap was reached, all  
24 pollock trawling would close for the rest of the B  
25 Season, regardless of how much pollock quota is left.  
26 The chosen total cap number would be divided up among  
27 the different pollock sectors. They call this  
28 apportionment. There's four different options for that  
29 apportionment that the Council could choose from. And  
30 all of those different sector caps would add up to the  
31 total cap. The sector managers have also indicated they  
32 divvy up that that cap down to the vessel level. So  
33 basically, every single trawl vessel out there would  
34 have a certain chum cap it could reach before it'd likely  
35 be shut down from fishing. There's also a sub option in  
36 Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 for a community  
37 development quota or CDQ reserve pool. This would allow  
38 CDQ groups like Coastal Villages Region Fund and the  
39 Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, those are  
40 the two in our Y-K Delta region. It would allow CDQ  
41 groups like those to have, basically, an extra buffer  
42 of chum salmon they could catch if they notify the  
43 federal agency in advance that they plan to fish with  
44 the catcher vessel sector or the mothership sector.  
45 Typically, CDQs have leased their quota for pollock to  
46 catcher processors, but this basically gives them an  
47 extra buffer if they decide to go and fish their quota  
48 with vessels in other sectors. Go to the next slide,  
49 Brooke.

50

1                   Okay so, Alternative 3, this alternative  
2 is really similar to Alternative 2 in that it would put  
3 a chum bycatch cap on all vessels across the Bering Sea  
4 and the cap would be one number between 100,000 chum and  
5 550,000 chum. However, Alternative 3 links this cap to  
6 chum abundance in our rivers. And it would basically put  
7 a cap in place in years only after it's determined that  
8 there was low chum abundance in Norton Sound, Yukon  
9 and/or Kuskokwim rivers. So, in other words, there may  
10 not always be a chum salmon bycatch in place if  
11 Alternative 3 is selected. There's two options for this  
12 sort of abundance link. So, Option 1 is described on  
13 this slide. Option 1 would make a three-area index by  
14 looking at Norton Sound escapement and harvest data,  
15 Yukon summer and fall chum run reconstructions and  
16 Kuskokwim sonar data. So, each of those regions would  
17 have a threshold, a line set to determine high chum  
18 abundance above the threshold, or low chum abundance  
19 below the threshold. So, if all three of those areas had  
20 chum salmon returns in one year above the threshold or  
21 at high abundance, there would be no cap on the pollock  
22 industry the next year. If one of the areas was below  
23 their threshold, there would be a cap in place the  
24 following year, and I like to think of it as the base  
25 cap. So, that would be, you know, one number between  
26 100,000 and 550,000 chum.

27  
28                   If two of the areas or all three of the  
29 areas had chum abundance below their threshold, there  
30 would be a cap that is 75% of the base cap in place the  
31 following year. So, to illustrate that, because I have  
32 to, it took me a while to digest this, let's say that  
33 the Council selected Alternative 3, Option 1, and they  
34 chose a base cap of 100,000 chum salmon. If this year,  
35 say, in 2026, the Yukon, Kusko and Norton Sound all had  
36 chum abundance above their respective threshold limits,  
37 there would be no cap next year in 2027. If in this  
38 year, the Yukon-Kuskokwim regions had some abundance  
39 above our threshold limits, but Norton Sound was at low  
40 abundance, below its threshold, next year, in 2027,  
41 there would be a cap of 100,000 chum across the Bering  
42 Sea. If this year the Yukon had chum abundance above its  
43 threshold, but Norton Sound in the Kusko didn't, or if  
44 all three of us were at low abundance below our  
45 thresholds, there would be a cap of 75,000 chum, or 75%  
46 of that base cap in place, next year, 2027. Next slide,  
47 please, Brooke. Thanks.

48  
49                   Okay, this one is still Alternative 3,  
50 but now this is a second option for doing that abundance

1 link. So, Option 2 of Alternative 3 would only use Yukon  
2 data. The Council did an analysis a couple years back  
3 that showed that, while there's, you know, differences  
4 in chum abundance among all of our regions, the Yukon  
5 can serve as a proxy for what's going on across Western  
6 and Interior Alaska so likely if Yukon chum are low,  
7 other regions are low, if they're high, other regions  
8 are high. So, this Option 2 would simplify the abundance  
9 link by just looking at the Yukon. So, in that case, if  
10 summer and fall chum are at high abundance in one year,  
11 like in 2026, there'd be no cap the following year,  
12 under this option. And if either summer or fall chum  
13 runs on the Yukon were low, or if both of them were at  
14 low abundance, there would be a cap in place the next  
15 year, and that would just be one number between 100,000  
16 and 550,000 chum. So, there's no third step down at 75%  
17 under Option 2. Alternative 3 also has those other  
18 options for dividing up, apportioning the total cap  
19 amount amongst all the sectors and vessels and it also  
20 has that CDQ group reserve pool that I described under  
21 Alternative 2. Next slide, please.

22  
23 So, Alternative 4 would require the  
24 pollock industry to follow six additional regulations  
25 in their incentive plan agreement, their IPA contracts.  
26 There's a summary of each of these six requirements on  
27 this slide and a couple big ones to flag. Number 1, the  
28 IPAs would have to describe and use genetic data to  
29 avoid Western Alaska chum in particular. Number 3, all  
30 trawl vessels would have to use salmon excluder devices  
31 in their nets. Those are, basically like, trap doors in  
32 their trawl nets that research has found salmon can swim  
33 out of, but pollock cannot, so it allows salmon to be  
34 excluded from the catch or escape from their catch. And  
35 then Number 5 would require the IPAs to provide  
36 transparent weekly salmon bycatch reports to Western and  
37 Interior Alaska salmon users. So, you should note that  
38 the pollock industry has largely been following all six  
39 of these requirements since 2022, when the Council asked  
40 them to do more to reduce bycatch. These were some of  
41 the things they proposed in response to that and started  
42 implementing. That makes this alternative pretty similar  
43 to status quo, because these things are already in  
44 practice. However, the big difference is that, if the  
45 Council chooses this, these six regulations would be --  
46 become mandatory, whereas right now they're currently  
47 optional. The Council -- or the industry is opting to  
48 do these in response to the Council. But if Alternative  
49 4 is selected, these would be written into the Code of  
50 Federal Regulations, making them mandatory for the IPAs

1 to follow. Next slide, please, Brooke.

2  
3 Okay, Alternative 5 is fairly  
4 complicated. But it has some good intent here. So,  
5 Alternative 5 aims to create an in-season corridor for  
6 Western Alaska chum, by implementing closures in times  
7 and areas of the highest historical Western Alaska chum  
8 salmon bycatch. So, you might remember from that earlier  
9 slide, slide 4 with the maps, most Western and Interior  
10 Alaska chum, so chum headed back to rivers between  
11 Kotzebue and Bristol Bay, are caught just north of the  
12 Alaska Peninsula, in those Clusters 1 and 2. So, this  
13 Alternative 5 aims to set a corridor in that area. And  
14 then, also, it aims to set a corridor during the time  
15 period of June 10th to August 31, that early B Season  
16 period when we see most Western and Interior Alaska fish,  
17 the WAK chum, swimming through that region. So, this  
18 Alternative 5 is different from Alternative 2 and 3,  
19 because it's just focused on a certain time and area,  
20 whereas 2 and 3 cover the whole Bering Sea, for the  
21 whole B Season, from June 10th through November 1.

22  
23 There are several different options and  
24 sub options for Alternative 5. So, Option 1 would be the  
25 most conservation based. It would take one number  
26 between 50,000 chum and 350,000 chum to be a cap. If  
27 that cap was hit in the full Cluster 1 and Cluster 2  
28 area, there's 40 statistical areas in there. If that cap  
29 number was met from chum caught in that area, the entire  
30 Cluster 1 plus Cluster 2 area of 40 statistical area,  
31 region of the Bering Sea would close to pollock trawling  
32 until September 1st. Sub-option 1 would, you know, also  
33 choose a cap between 50,000 and 350,000 chum, but if it  
34 was reached in the corridor area, only 29 of the 40 stat  
35 areas across Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 would close down.  
36 The stat areas there, as well as in Sub-option 1 and  
37 Option 1 would be set in regulation by the federal  
38 agency, National Marine Fisheries Service. In Option 2,  
39 there'd still be that same cap range, 50,000 at the  
40 lowest at 350,000 at the highest. If it was met 19 of  
41 40 stat areas, or 29 of 40 stat areas would close until  
42 September 1st. And the industry -- pollock industry  
43 would be responsible for choosing which stat areas are  
44 in or out of the corridor and which -- so which ones  
45 would close. The industry would have to select those  
46 ahead of the season. And they'd be approved by the  
47 federal agency, but again, selected by the pollock  
48 industry itself.

49  
50

1                   Option 3 of Alternative 5 would link the  
2 in-season corridor to Yukon River chum abundance. So,  
3 kind of similar to Alternative 3, Option 2. This one  
4 cannot be chosen with Alternative 3 like I said in an  
5 earlier slide, because it both, like they both use Yukon  
6 River chum abundance. So, the way this would work is,  
7 if summer and fall chum abundance in the Yukon River was  
8 above its threshold, there would not be this sort of cap  
9 to close a corridor in place, the following year. So,  
10 it, basically, would turn off the corridor option. If  
11 Yukon River summer and/or fall chum were below a  
12 threshold, so they had low abundance, the cap for this  
13 corridor would be in place the following year.

14  
15                   Option 4 is actually about herring  
16 bycatch, not chum bycatch. There is a potential for  
17 herring bycatch as well as chinook salmon bycatch to  
18 increase, if the migratory corridor closes and then  
19 pushes the trawlers to fish later in September, when  
20 they catch more herring and king salmon. So, this option  
21 is basically giving flexibility to the pollock fleet to  
22 shift the start date of a winter herring savings area  
23 from September 1st to September 30th. The industry has  
24 been saying they can't keep bycatch for all these  
25 different species low so, this is their way of trying  
26 to build in more flexibility for themselves. So, a  
27 critical thing to note before we leave this slide, in  
28 none of these options in Alternative 5 is there  
29 automatically, like, a closed area in the Bering Sea for  
30 a migratory corridor for WAK chum, there would be a cap  
31 in place and if that cap was hit, it would trigger the  
32 corridor to close, if that makes sense. Okay, Brooke,  
33 next slide. We're almost done.

34  
35                   So, these are clearly very complicated  
36 and nuanced. I've been working with a bunch of colleagues  
37 across Western Alaska to try to decipher these for a  
38 couple months so, it's a lot of information, all at  
39 once. But here's just some kind of high-level takeaways  
40 from the analysis and thinking about what this RAC might  
41 want to comment on or what maybe you as an individual  
42 or your tribe might want to comment on. So first, the  
43 analysis very clearly says that the alternatives that  
44 are the most likely to reduce chum salmon bycatch and  
45 Western Alaska chum bycatch specifically are  
46 Alternatives 2 or 3 plus Alternative 5 at the lowest cap  
47 options. Note that these ones are also likely to be the  
48 most restrictive for the pollock trawl industry so,  
49 they're pushing back really hard on putting any sort of  
50 cap in place. Second, the analysis also says that

1 combining two, Alternative 2 or 3 with Alternative 5,  
2 could reduce chum bycatch even more by creating a  
3 migratory corridor for western Alaska chum and then  
4 coupling it with a backstop cap across the Bering Sea.  
5 So, in this way, if there are stat area closures for  
6 that in-season corridor under Alternative 5, and then  
7 trawl vessels go outside of that corridor to keep  
8 fishing, those vessels will still have a cap on them for  
9 the number of chum that can be taken as bycatch. Third,  
10 the analysis does note that under Alternative 5, there's  
11 a possibility for an increase in king salmon bycatch as  
12 well as herring bycatch if the industry is closed in  
13 some areas until September, potentially causing them to  
14 fish longer into the fall to meet their quota. But I do  
15 want to note that the pollock industry, in regulation,  
16 is required to prioritize keeping king salmon bycatch  
17 low so, even if they're trying to fish longer to meet  
18 their quota, they still have a statutory obligation to  
19 keep king bycatch low. And there is a cap on king salmon  
20 bycatch already, it's been in place for over ten years.  
21 And, finally, I mentioned this earlier, but just to  
22 repeat, the new requirements proposed in Alternative 4  
23 are already in practice so, they're like, status quo.  
24 But selecting Alternative 4 would make these  
25 requirements regulatory and mandatory, and also, these  
26 new practices may have been helping to reduce chum salmon  
27 bycatch since 2022. So, they may be helpful in selecting  
28 Alternative 4, would make them mandatory. Okay, next  
29 slide, Brooke.

30  
31 So, this slide just has some ways that,  
32 you as an individual or you all together as a RAC or you  
33 with your tribe back home, could engage. And this is a  
34 little outdated at this point because the first one to  
35 submit a comment on the draft EIS to the Federal  
36 Register, that deadline unfortunately closed January  
37 5th. But there are more opportunities to submit  
38 comments. So, the next one coming up, and this is an  
39 important one, is submitting a comment on the draft EIS  
40 on these alternatives directly to the North Pacific  
41 Council. It would be a good idea to include a  
42 recommendation for a preferred alternative or  
43 combination of alternatives. That deadline is Friday,  
44 January 30th, at 12:00 pm. Alaska. They have a pretty  
45 strict cut off there. So, I think that's like a week and  
46 a half from today. And that opportunity is open to  
47 tribes, to RACs and to individual members of the public.  
48 Another thing you can do to engage is participate with  
49 your tribe in tribal consultation. When we put these  
50 slides together, we were still requesting this with NOAA

1 Fisheries, the federal agency, but there is now a tribal  
2 consultation set for next Monday, the 26th, from 1 to 4  
3 pm. It's virtual, on a Google Meet link. And any  
4 federally recognized tribe, Alaska Native corporations  
5 and tribal organizations or consortia with tribal  
6 authorization, are eligible to participate in that  
7 consultation. There's also a tribal engagement session  
8 set up on Tuesday, January 27th from 10 am to noon. So  
9 if -- you can participate in both of them with your  
10 tribe or if maybe you're not eligible to participate in  
11 the consultation, you can come to the engagement session  
12 on Tuesday the 27th, from 10 to noon. And that's also  
13 online. There's a call-in number and a computer or phone  
14 link.

15  
16 And then another really important way  
17 to engage is to actually go to the Council meeting and  
18 testify and talk with Council members, talk with me and  
19 other tribal org staff that will be there to help you  
20 prepare your comments. The full meeting dates are  
21 February 2nd through 11th, but the schedule's been  
22 updated a bit, and it's likely that the advisory panel  
23 to the Council is going to be talking about this February  
24 2nd through 5th, and then the Council itself, which is  
25 the one that makes the recommendations, will be talking  
26 about this February 6th through 10th. And then, if you  
27 have any questions, my email and direct cell are on this  
28 slide, as well as the contact info for Krystal Lapp, my  
29 counterpart at TCC. And I'm really happy to take any  
30 questions and share any more info you guys might want.  
31 Quyana.

32  
33 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, it's Walter, I  
34 had a question.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead.

37  
38 MR. MORGAN: What alternatives did the  
39 Fish Commission think would work best for us? And also,  
40 seemed like this, all these alternatives pretty much  
41 protect pollock fishermen and not us. It addressed them,  
42 and, you know, it -- either way they ain't gonna [sic]  
43 lose. I mean, the way it looks, either way you go,  
44 they're going to keep fishing. And another thing I wanted  
45 to know is the chum salmon, they say Western Alaska  
46 bound and Yukon. Okay. Salmon -- all -- I know, all  
47 salmon will probably follow each other. Do we -- did any  
48 studies in the river saying that we have Asian salmon  
49 with chum salmon with our Western Alaska salmon? It --  
50 that was my question. Thank you.

1

2

MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Walter. Through the Chair. Maybe I'll take your questions in reverse order. So, I don't, at this time, know of any studies that show we've got Asian origin hatchery chum strain into our rivers here. But our Kuskokwim Fish Commission is currently working with UAF and NOAA Fisheries and some other agencies to improve the genetic baseline for chum salmon in our river so, maybe we could separate out some of our rivers, not lump them all together as Coastal Western Alaska. So, maybe some of that work might tell us if we have hatchery strays coming into our rivers. But I don't have an answer for you on that right now. To your comment, the Council and the federal agency are like, their interest is in keeping the pollock fishery fishing. And the pollock industry is interested in keeping themselves fishing so, none of these alternatives are likely to shut down the pollock fishery. It may cost them more money to operate or they may lose a little bit of their quota but part of the analysis showed that the -- it's really unlikely that any of the alternatives, even the most restrictive caps, will prevent them from -- prevent all fisheries across the Bering Sea from meeting their quota in, like, consecutive years. So, these fisheries are going to continue but we do think there's some alternatives in here that could provide a little bit more safety, a little bit more conservation for our chum salmon that really, really need it.

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So, what our Fish Commission, Kusko Fish Commission has recommended, this is in our public comment to the Federal Register that we submitted on January 5th, is to combine Alternative 2 at a cap of 100,000 chum, the lowest option, plus Alternative 4, plus Alternative 5, Option 1, at a cap of 50,000. And, basically, what that would do, in our mind, is -- so first Alternative 4 it, would make those new regulations that the pollock industry has been practicing, those new practices, it would make them mandatory. We think that's a good thing. And then it would set kind of a, a double header cap on the pollock industry. So, Alternative 5, Option 1, at a cap of 50,000, if met, would close the biggest corridor area between June 10th and August 31st. But then, if you have Alternative 2 on top of it, if there's vessels still fishing outside that corridor, there's still this cap in place, of up to 100,000 chum. So, there could be no more than 100,000 chum taken from the Bering Sea, in any year. And we don't have real time genetic analysis at this point. You know, we find out a

1 year or more later what, how many chum that were taken  
2 were from Western and Interior Alaska rivers. So, in our  
3 mind, you know, the most precautionary and salmon  
4 conservation approach is to assume that any fish out  
5 there could be coming back to the Kuskokwim or to the  
6 Yukon or to the Unalakleet. So, we want to protect as  
7 many chum as possible but we know in that corridor areas,  
8 where we find the most Western Alaska chum. So, that's  
9 -- yeah, so, we're supporting that Alternative 2, Bering  
10 Sea wide cap at 100,000 chum, plus Alternative 4, to  
11 make those six practices regulatory, plus Alternative  
12 5, Option 1, for the widest corridor option possible,  
13 at a cap of 50,000 chum. And that's -- the same  
14 combination approach has been adopted by or is supported  
15 by the Tanana Chiefs Conference, also by Kawerak  
16 Incorporated, the tribal nonprofit in Norton Sound  
17 region, and also by the Western Interior RAC and the  
18 Eastern Interior RAC, if that's helpful.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
21 Terese. You do so well explaining all this crazy data,  
22 by the way. I had -- Walter asked one of my questions,  
23 of course, but then I have another one. And it's based  
24 off of the map in the genetic areas in Clusters 1 and  
25 2. Is there data of the percentage of chum bycatch  
26 heading to WAK?

27  
28 MS. VICENTE: Yes, and I'm trying to  
29 recall it off the top of my head. There is a table in  
30 the analysis that shows that in that corridor area, so  
31 Clusters 1 and 2, between June 10 and August 31st, about  
32 60% of all the Western Alaska chum that are taken every  
33 year, it happens there and then, if that helps. So, that  
34 means, you know, the other 40% of the annual average  
35 Western Alaska chum are caught either in another area  
36 of the Bering Sea or after August 31st. It's really --  
37 there's not a lot of chum bycatch that happens in the E  
38 seasons, so, like, right now through June 10, this is  
39 mostly when we see king salmon bycatch happening. But  
40 yeah, that that Cluster 1 and 2 area, plus June through  
41 August, really does target the majority of Western  
42 Alaska chum, but not all of it. Does that answer your  
43 question? Okay.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, thank you.  
46 Does anyone else have questions in the room? Henry.

47  
48 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I  
49 don't exactly have a question, but I just kind of wonder  
50 why we -- you got -- those Council members don't have

1 any seats for -- currently seats for no Alaska tribal  
2 members. Should -- I think it would be a lot better for,  
3 you know, if they give us an opportunity to have one  
4 seat open for the Council. And then, on 2024, of last  
5 year, I mean, '25 of last year, this past, last summer,  
6 I noticed there, according to your bycatch chart here,  
7 if I'm correct, correct me if I'm wrong. We had a  
8 increased returns on chum salmon, which is a good sign  
9 for us up here in our region, Kuskokwim river systems.  
10 And then, I want to ask, why are -- why aren't the  
11 chinook bycatch included on these reports here? Thank  
12 you.

13  
14 MS. VICENTE: Quyana, Mr. Parks. Through  
15 the Chair. Your second question. So, this action that  
16 the Council is considering is only about chum bycatch.  
17 So, we wanted to focus on chum bycatch for you. I'm very  
18 happy to take questions about king salmon bycatch. We  
19 did see an uptick in king bycatch last year. So, yeah,  
20 happy to talk about that now or at another time. Trying  
21 to think if I had anything more on that. Okay, yeah, I  
22 think that's my answer there. But very happy to talk  
23 more about chinook bycatch. And then a note on the tribal  
24 seats to the Council. A couple years back, when Mary  
25 Peltola was in Congress for Alaska, she was working with  
26 a representative from California, Jared Huffman, to  
27 reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Basically, it  
28 would take an update to that, that act of Congress,  
29 National Congress, to add tribal seats to the Council.  
30 We were trying to do that. The Pacific Fishery Management  
31 Council, which is down in like Washington, Oregon and  
32 the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council out in  
33 Hawaii, they have tribal and indigenous seats on their  
34 Council, so it wouldn't be new to do it in the North  
35 Pacific. And there's a lot of interest from tribes to  
36 add two Alaska Native Tribal seats to the Council,  
37 because we have so many federally recognized tribes up  
38 here in Alaska. It's just, it -- maybe you've seen what's  
39 happening in D.C. and in our Congress, it did not make  
40 headway. So, there's a lot of interest there. We'll keep  
41 trying to pass that Act so we can get some tribal  
42 representation on the on the Council.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Chair  
45 Cleveland had to step out for a minute. Does anyone else  
46 have questions for Terese?

47  
48 (No response)

49  
50

1                   So, just sort of process, next steps.  
2 We do have one person that wants to give a public comment  
3 about the bycatch, and then we can open up the floor for  
4 you guys to decide if you want to submit a comment letter  
5 to North Pacific Fishery Management Council supporting  
6 some of these alternatives. You could, you know, support  
7 the ones that Terese mentioned, that the Fish Commission  
8 and the other RACs and other groups have been supporting,  
9 or you could support whichever combination that you  
10 want. But perhaps we'll go ahead and take our public  
11 comment and then we can move in to the Council  
12 discussion. And we have Mr. Timothy Andrew on deck. If  
13 you want to come up, Tim. And we just ask, keep comments  
14 to five minutes. Thank you.

15  
16                   MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Madam Chair and  
17 members of the Council for allowing me to testify today.  
18 I -- my -- I'm originally from the community of Marshall  
19 on the Yukon River. I'm a former commercial fisherman,  
20 subsistence fisherman. Lived there up until 1996 and  
21 currently living here in Bethel. I have a lot of family  
22 all up and down the Yukon River, all the way into Canada,  
23 primarily the (indiscernible) and, Terese, thank you so  
24 much for a comprehensive review of the alternatives. It  
25 really helped me a lot to understand the current Council  
26 process. But I just noticed in the review of the minutes  
27 of the Council that there are many, many Council members  
28 in the past, present and likely in the future that try  
29 to address these salmon bycatch issues that we face  
30 every, every year. It's always an uphill battle for  
31 subsistence and commercial fisheries of the Yukon-  
32 Kuskokwim rivers. It seems like nobody listens. Nobody  
33 gives a darn. All they want is the pollock fishery to  
34 thrive, to continue at our cost. When I see my relatives  
35 on the Yukon River going to fish camp, to celebrate  
36 birthdays and whatnot, they take a picture in there,  
37 take a picture of themselves in front of their former  
38 smokehouses. Bright green, trees, grass growing green,  
39 all indications that there should be something hanging  
40 in them smokehouses, and there's nothing back there.  
41 It's heartbreaking. It's very demoralizing. The once  
42 thriving subsistence commercial fishery, the lifeblood  
43 of people, of tribal people on the Yukon River, has gone  
44 down to nothing for the last seven years. It's been  
45 decreasing since 1996, when we had that, the crash. And  
46 we're to the point of panic mode, a very much panic mode  
47 because there's a whole generation of young people that  
48 don't know how to cut salmon, how to dry salmon, how to  
49 respect salmon like we used to teach our children in the  
50 past. It's not only the starvation of salmon, it's also

1 starvation of our culture and tradition. If we allow  
2 that to continue to happen, it's going to happen  
3 anywhere, everywhere else. You know, the State of Alaska  
4 always say that, for the environmental factors we have,  
5 we cannot do anything about it, we can't do anything  
6 about the Bering Sea, what's happening in the Bering  
7 Sea. Environmentally, we cannot do anything about the  
8 spawning grounds. But they always tell us, whenever  
9 they're going to restrict us, only the human factor or  
10 the human harvest can be curbed to conserve salmon. But  
11 yet they vote for the least of -- the least alternative  
12 impact on the pollock fishery. You know, that's telling  
13 us to do something, and then they do something completely  
14 different. I mean, it just does not make sense.

15  
16 I was participating in -- or not  
17 participating but listening to a litigation that  
18 happened here at the Bethel Courts and where the State  
19 of Alaska Department of Fish and Game was being sued.  
20 The counsel for the State of Fish -- Department of Fish  
21 and Game said that the Alaska Department of Fish Game  
22 [sic] is a premier management agency. What is so premier  
23 about the failure of the Yukon River? That's not premier.  
24 That's absolute failure. Failure to manage for sustained  
25 yield. You know, I don't know how we can get all the  
26 other Alaska Native people to rile up and stand up and  
27 say enough is enough. I mean, ravaging our resources,  
28 our cultural traditional resources is a -- to me, is a  
29 crime against humanity. There was a recent release of a  
30 video you can see it on YouTube, it's called 'Trouble  
31 at Sea' and it focuses on the community of Saint Marys  
32 and the impact of the decrease of salmon in -- on the  
33 Yukon River. There's a family that dried salmon many,  
34 many, many years ago. And seeing the continued decline  
35 and seeing the future of the Yukon River salmon to where  
36 it is today, they had put away fish. Excuse me. In five  
37 gallon buckets at that time, salted, salted salmon. But  
38 the following year there were restrictions, they still  
39 had some left over. So, they put it in the freezer to  
40 store it better. And according to one of the ladies that  
41 was -- that was shown on that video, he put away a couple  
42 pieces salmon -- dried salmon -- dried Yukon king salmon.  
43 An every time she gets a really severe, severe, severe  
44 wanting for dried salmon, she'd just take a little teeny  
45 weeny bit. Eat it, put it away. Maybe, the next several  
46 months later, same thing, same -- and sharing with her  
47 family as well, just that little bitty, itty bitty taste  
48 of Yukon River salmon. It's very, very heartbreaking.  
49 And I'd encourage the Council to support the most  
50 restrictive alternative or a combination of alternatives

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1 and options for the pollock bycatch of our salmon. It's  
2 destroying our culture. It's destroying our tradition.  
3 Time to fight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Uncle  
6 Tim.

7  
8 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. You're welcome. And  
9 go Seahawks.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Next we have --  
12 this is Jacqueline by the way, or Jackie. Next we have  
13 John Andrew. And he will be representing the Native  
14 Village of Kwethluk.

15  
16 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair, quyana. (In  
17 Native).

18  
19 INTERPRETER: I will start with my  
20 Yup'ik. From back in the day, my forefathers used to  
21 talk, from what our elders had used to tell us, since  
22 we were 13-14 years old, we started being taught that  
23 the they used to start catching fish from the springtime.  
24 And during the late (distortion) ice break up in May.  
25 The ice wouldn't break until June, or the middle of June  
26 and even though that the ice was going out in June, the  
27 salmon would swim up river under the ice following the  
28 smelt. And back in the day when the weather was really  
29 hard and cold, the river break up was always late. And  
30 even at that time they did not have any of the good  
31 implements you can catch fish with and so, they used to  
32 catch the fish and that they would spread them out in  
33 the -- and they used to say that all the people that had  
34 smokehouses and they would -- they were seven  
35 smokehouses and they would fill up all the smokehouses  
36 with -- full of salmon and they did catch a lot of the  
37 king salmon at that time and so it was predominantly  
38 king salmon that they harvested and from end of June To  
39 the mid of June, they used to say that there was a lot  
40 of chum salmon and they did catch the red salmon at that  
41 time, too. But when they would go swimming in the river,  
42 they said that the fish were so numerous that they would  
43 -- the fish would just swim right up to them or through  
44 them, when they were out swimming in the river. And we  
45 were told that, when people start talking about -- when  
46 they start restricting the catch of the salmon, they  
47 said that the salmon will decrease in population and we  
48 will be left with hardly anything but they, with that  
49 in mind, they used to teach us that we -- the first ones  
50 that we need to give the food to are the elderly or the

1 widows, especially to the elders, those are the first  
2 that we need to give our catch to. And especially --  
3 during this time, now, I know from my experience that  
4 my dad used to use a Bristol Bay salmon gear because he  
5 used to go to Bristol Bay to go hunting, and he would  
6 bring these up Bristol Bay salmon gear with him. And so,  
7 starting from 1950, there used to be quite a few salmon  
8 in the river. And at that time, they used to be craw  
9 fisheries, also. And, at the False Pass solution area,  
10 they used to do a lot of trawling starting in the 1970s.

11  
12 They had purse seines and they started  
13 using gill nets from that time that they started the  
14 trawling business. And that really did affect, since the  
15 1980s, we have seen a decrease. And there was a lot of  
16 plentiful fish out in the salmon, and there used to be  
17 people going out with gillnets, and we would put our  
18 nets out into the water and as soon as we put them out  
19 in the water, we'd, in haste, bring the net back into  
20 the boat, because we're catching a lot of fish at the  
21 short period of time. And we would give our catch to our  
22 families, and we would give to others. And I know that  
23 we used to go out there fishing for people that needed  
24 them. And, in the 1980s, that was when it noticeably  
25 started falling -- the number of fish started falling  
26 or decreasing.

27  
28 At the time, there's Gregory  
29 (indiscernible) and Harold Sparks telling us that there  
30 were trawl fisheries happening out in the Aleutians that  
31 were really affecting our Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim and  
32 Yukon River salmon, that the trawl fisheries were the  
33 ones that were affecting those fisheries and,  
34 consecutively, every year that the salmon decreased from  
35 that time. And with that, Fish and Game started  
36 restricting our catch. And now, we were just almost left  
37 with nothing. And there, the -- in the summertime, the  
38 fish camps used to have a lot of people in them, but now  
39 they're just eerily, nobody's face in fish camp anymore.  
40 And so, thinking back on that, it's, you know, almost  
41 brings me to tears of how the times have changed. And  
42 right now, our present, starting in November, they tell  
43 me that they ran out of dried fish and they do not have  
44 any salmon to barter with, they don't have anything to  
45 buy salmon with because back in the day, they used to -  
46 - after they had enough salmon for the year, they would  
47 barter with the other villages for seal oil or for other  
48 seal pelts to make their mukluks with or they would  
49 barter that with furs from the other villages. And that  
50 was a custom. But now, there's a lot of meetings, now,

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1 with these meetings that are happening here and I'm  
2 always happy that I get invited to come to these kind  
3 of meetings and even a couple years ago but if you look  
4 at the alternatives, you know that you've already looked  
5 at the alternatives here, and it would be better if we  
6 -- we do not need to move backward anymore. Since 1980,  
7 we have been regressing, but we need to get as much  
8 catch for the residents and we've been asking to put a  
9 chum cap, some cap on the trawleries [sic], and we've  
10 been asking the State Board to enact the chum catch, but  
11 they've been telling us no. So, last year, I was happy  
12 that we thought there was going to be a chum catch on  
13 the trawlers, but now, they said there was no, there was  
14 going to be any, no action on the chum catch proposal,  
15 and so that broke our heart. And whoever goes to the  
16 Board of Game and asks for a chum cap, we will be really  
17 happy.

18  
19 I know, the Fish and Wildlife fishing  
20 game advocates for these, but the Board denies any of  
21 the chum catch. But so, I really want to implore that  
22 the chum catch needs to be put in place. But before I  
23 start anything, I always pray to God to give us our --  
24 to give us our need. Thank you, (distortion) Chair.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is there anyone  
27 online who would like to speak?

28  
29 (No response)

30  
31 Hearing and seeing none. We're going to  
32 go into Council discussion and comments on this topic.  
33 Will you do that Brooke?

34  
35 MS. MCDAVID: Sure.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, thanks.

38  
39 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. So, we just  
40 heard a lot of information. A really great presentation  
41 from Terese and just to kind of recap the alternatives  
42 that are on the screen are, these are the ones that were  
43 supported by the Western and Eastern Interior RACs. And  
44 Terese mentioned the that, like Kawerak and the  
45 Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and TCC  
46 were also in favor of these because the combination of  
47 these alternatives would provide the most restrictions  
48 on the pollock fleet. And so, I guess it's on the table  
49 for you all to decide if you want to submit comments to  
50 North Pacific in -- also in support of these same

1 alternatives. Or if you would like to change the  
2 alternate -- set of alternatives, you're welcome to do  
3 so. But I'll turn it over to you guys for discussion.  
4 So, just, this is Brooke again for process, someone --  
5 we could entertain a motion, if you do want to submit  
6 comments, you could get it on the table and then.....

7

8 (Simultaneous speech)

9

10 MR. ANDREW: Can I do a comment? In  
11 Yup'ik? (In Native).

12

13 INTERPRETER: Oh, I forgot your name was  
14 Patrick. Okay. John Andrew from Kwethluk. Brooke was  
15 doing a presentation, I was thinking about my hometown  
16 because, take a look at this Western Interior. They are  
17 in support of (distortion) it is not an option they want  
18 to go with alternative 2. And the third (distortion)  
19 guys' are doing. And so, we just, instead of opposing  
20 them, we should just follow suit and adopt this as is  
21 written on the board here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

24

25 INTERPRETER: I wanted to tell you real  
26 quick. Quick here, this alternative, they are really  
27 supporting all of the -- we are supporting all of the  
28 alternatives here.

29

30 MR. ANDREW: (In Native).

31

32 INTERPRETER: The alternative 5 to be the  
33 first option that we are going with. And then if that's  
34 not possible, Alternative 2 and 4.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And just to  
39 summarize for folks online, Member Andrew was saying he  
40 thinks that this Council should potentially support what  
41 the other RACs have done, but he does want to see  
42 Alternative 5 as the highest priority because it has the  
43 most restrictions. And, as a reminder, you can support  
44 a combination of them, but you can, I think, sure it  
45 would be good to note in your letter that Alternative  
46 5, Option 1 might be your priority. But maybe we could  
47 hear a motion so that we could take some action.

48

49 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair, I move that we  
50 support Alternative 5 Option 1, in-season corridor cap

1 is -- will be the most restrictive, then our alternative  
2 could be 2. Then, the third option could be a number 4.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John Andrew made  
5 a motion to support Alternative 5 first, and then 2 and  
6 4. But all of them, either way. Is there a second?

7

8 MR. PETER: Phillip Peter.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Peter.  
11 Peter seconds the motion. Do we want more discussion?

12

13 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Henry.

16

17 MR. PARKS: I'm going to speak in Yup'ik.

18

19 INTERPRETER: My cousin here. You're the  
20 translator we got. Okay. They do support and he made a  
21 motion to support this and there's a second. And there  
22 has not been any vote. And so, I am saying this as  
23 myself, right now, if he made a motion to support  
24 Alternative 5, followed by 2 and then 4. And so, we are  
25 giving them the power to -- give the opportunity for the  
26 Council because we are voting this way. I do not like  
27 this. But if we put it as one and give them okay, right  
28 now, as it stands, Alternative 5 is the first one. If  
29 they don't accept that, then they go to Alternative 2.  
30 Maybe I'm wrong, but it kind of decreases our  
31 effectiveness. But if you could fix. If he's making a  
32 motion that these three -- there's a first and second  
33 and third option up here. And so, we are giving the  
34 opportunity to the Council that, if you do not need --  
35 if you don't accept Alternative 5, then you go to the  
36 other next two. And so that's kind of.....

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke, did you  
39 want to follow up?

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Henry, I want  
42 to make -- I was listening to the translation, and I  
43 just want to make sure I understand. Are -- you are  
44 worried that if we have multiple options that we're  
45 supporting, that they might not support Alternative 5  
46 first?

47

48 MR. PARKS: Yes.

49

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Well, just so you  
2 know, they have told everyone when they put out this  
3 draft that it's okay to select multiple ones. It's not  
4 like at say Board of Fish where you want to pick the  
5 number one proposal that you want. These are all options  
6 that can be together in combination and that way they  
7 address different parts of the way the pollock fleet  
8 operates. But you can certainly -- the Council can  
9 certainly put wording in there that you think one of  
10 these is the most important, but you also support the  
11 other ones. Thank you.

12  
13 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Brooke. (In  
14 Native) language (In Native) number one priority. (In  
15 Native), motion (In Native). Number one Alternative, 5,  
16 Option 1. (In Native) RAC (In Native) from this RAC.  
17 Quyana, Madam Chair.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Henry.  
20 (In Native).

21  
22 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, can I say  
23 something?

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

26  
27 MR. MORGAN: Walter Morgan. You know, all  
28 this -- all these options we have, you know, the Fish  
29 Commission been working on it with Tanana Chiefs, and  
30 you know, more than we did, this first time I seen it  
31 and have no time to review it. You know, I would like  
32 to, you know, vote with -- which alternatives that Inter-  
33 Tribal Fish Commission thinks is better for us, since  
34 they had it for a while. But, you know, that's just my  
35 opinion. I, you know, just slapped on my lap today and,  
36 you know, had no time to read it and really did -- do a  
37 study commission, you know, had this for a while and  
38 they analyzed it and see and you know, which is the best  
39 option. And I think we ought to go with what the Fish  
40 Commission thinks is better for us. Thank you.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
43 Walter, for pointing that out. I wanted to say something  
44 along those lines, too, that, you know, these people who  
45 are all supporting this combination, yeah, they had more  
46 time to study it and research it and have more  
47 discussion. So, I also, you know, trust their judgment  
48 on this as well. It was -- was it presented to us before  
49 Terese? I think it was, if I'm not mistaken, with the  
50 Central Bering AC. But I know we've seen the alternatives

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1 in years past, but not this detailed yet or something.  
2 But I remember we were presented with alternatives  
3 before, but it's a lot, yeah, Walter. Quyana.

4  
5 MS. VICENTE: Through the Chair. This is  
6 Terese Vicente with the Kusko Fish Commission again. I  
7 think last March, when this RAC met, we presented a very  
8 similar presentation. And you got an overview from Doug  
9 Shaftel, who works with the National Marine Fisheries  
10 Service on the alternatives. So, this is just kind of  
11 an updated one once we've read through the analysis that  
12 came out last September. I don't know that I've shared  
13 this with any of the ACs, though always happy to do so.  
14 I just don't always get the notices about those meetings,  
15 so, hope that helps.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That does, thank  
18 you. Any other discussion? Oh, yeah, John.

19  
20 MR. ANDREW: (In Native)

21  
22 INTERPRETER: There was a meeting last  
23 year in Anchorage. We were there with quite a few  
24 representatives from Bristol Bay, from Kuskokwim, from  
25 the Yukon Interior -- from the Interior. There was people  
26 from Yukon, and we were going after the Option 5 at that  
27 time, and we would not -- we could not obtain that  
28 Alternative 5 because I keep saying that they cannot  
29 support Alternative 5. And so.

30  
31 MR. ANDREW: All these years, they never  
32 had a member that's Native from our region or all the  
33 other tribal nations. Quyana, ma'am.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.  
36 Brooke wants to follow up.

37  
38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the  
39 Chair. I did want to just take a step back and look at  
40 some of these bigger picture things that John brought  
41 up in his public comments and just now and you guys were  
42 talking about wanting that tribal representation on  
43 North Pacific, and that's something you have sent  
44 letters in the past on. We'll have other items coming  
45 up on our agenda that you'll be able to maybe address  
46 some of those things that are outside the scope of this  
47 Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Chum Bycatch.  
48 So, when we talk about the Secretarial Review and you  
49 guys formulate comments that you want to send to the  
50 Office of the Secretaries. I know other Councils have

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1 talked about how salmon management really needs some  
2 updates. And that's one place you could do that. You  
3 could also raise your concerns again to the Board through  
4 your annual report. And then John, Member Andrew, was  
5 talking about Falls Pass and Area M and that fishery  
6 also intercepts or has -- yeah, they it's not bycatch  
7 because they actually retain that harvest, but they  
8 catch Kuskokwim and Yukon salmon and those fisheries and  
9 we will be talking about Board of Fisheries proposals  
10 later that address that aspect of it. So, after we're  
11 done with this North Pacific chum bycatch, we'll be able  
12 to talk about some of those -- other aspects that you  
13 guys are bringing up. So, I just didn't want you to  
14 think we're ignoring them. Quyana.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
17 Brooke. (In Native).

18  
19 (Simultaneous speech)

20  
21 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

24  
25 MR. MORGAN: I just wanted to clarify  
26 what I said. What I really meant, too is work with the  
27 other groups and vote as one and everybody in the same  
28 boat, you know, and what's best for all of Inter-Tribal  
29 and Tanana Chiefs and us. That's what I really meant, I  
30 would like it that way and, you know, work with them  
31 and, you know, make -- it'll be a lot stronger that we  
32 were all together and that's the reason I said, you  
33 know. Thanks.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
36 Walter, good point. Anybody else?

37  
38 (No response)

39  
40 If there's no further discussion, we --  
41 can I entertain question?

42  
43 (No response)

44  
45 Unless you need more discussion.

46  
47 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair. Since he moved  
48 and it was seconded and it was absent, Alternative 5,  
49 Option 1. But then we have to include a letter or in a  
50 language to -- yeah. (In Native). Yeah, yeah. How would

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1 we -- how? Yeah. How do we...?

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke can  
4 answer that.

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Henry. So, if  
7 you -- you're voting on the motion is to support these  
8 alternatives, but we can also -- we don't need a separate  
9 motion to add that language in in your letter about the  
10 priority for number one, we have recorded those comments  
11 as part of the discussion so, when we draft the letter,  
12 we'll make sure that's in there. If that makes you feel  
13 better. Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

16

17 MR. PARKS: Question (In Native), Madam  
18 Chair.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, Henry  
21 calls question, so we're ready to put this to a vote.  
22 Roll call by Brooke. Thanks.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. So, the motion on the  
25 floor is to send comments to North Pacific Fishery  
26 Management Council about the chum bycatch management  
27 alternatives being considered. And the Council is  
28 supporting Alternative 5, Option 1 as their priority  
29 alternative, but also supporting that in combinations  
30 with Alternatives 2 and 4. And we'll start with Tiffany.

31

32 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: John.

35

36 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Norma.

39

40 MS. EVAN: Yes.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Henry.

43

44 MR. PARKS: Yes.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Philip.

47

48 MR. PETER: Yes.

49

50 MS. MCDAVID: Francis.

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MR. PRINCE: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Walter.

MR. MORGAN: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Chair Cleveland.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes, 8-0.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again everyone. We're going to take a short break. Can we be back by 11:15?

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, everyone. It's 11:22. Apologies for being late coming back from recess. If we can start maybe getting back to our agenda and we're going to pick up where we left off yesterday on proposals. And that brings us to, under Regional Proposals 8, which is WP26-49, Unit 18 coyote, increase hunting harvest limit to 4 coyotes and extend season. This will be on page 123.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-49. And as she said, it starts on page 123 of your books. Wildlife Proposal WP26-49 was submitted by this Council and it requests to increase the hunt and harvest limits for coyotes in Unit 18 from 2 to 4 and lengthen the hunting season in -- to August -- from August 15th to August 30th. The proposal states that this would create additional opportunities for federally qualified subsistence users. Residents of Unit 18 have observed the number of coyotes to be increasing in parts of the Unit, and there are no known conservation concerns. Hunting regulations for coyotes were transferred from the state regulations in 1990, when the Federal Subsistence Management Program was established, and hunting seasons and harvest limits have not changed since, under federal or state regulations. Coyote populations information in Unit 18 is very limited and

1 comes from hunter and trapper sightings, fur buyers, and  
2 voluntary trapper reports. And according to the most  
3 recent ADF&G Furbearer Management Report, the Unit 18  
4 coyote population is stable and increasing at low  
5 levels. Reported harvest for coyotes is through  
6 voluntary questionnaires sent out by ADF&G. This data  
7 is gathered by regions instead of units, and Unit 18 is  
8 part of Region 5, which is along with Units 22, 23 and  
9 26A. And since 2010, the largest number of coyotes  
10 reported shot in one year was two, with up to ten  
11 reported from trapping.

12  
13 If this proposal is adopted, federal  
14 regulations for coyote hunting in Unit 18 would be  
15 increased. This would increase opportunity for federally  
16 qualified subsistence users to harvest coyote under  
17 hunting license in Unit 18. No conservation concerns are  
18 expected, as all available information indicates coyote  
19 harvest is extremely low and that populations are  
20 increasing. Additionally, the trapping harvest limit is  
21 no limit, and coyotes may also be taken by firearm under  
22 a trapping license. However, hides must be salvaged and  
23 the quality of hides during the extended season into  
24 August and May is likely lower than during the winter.  
25 And adopting these regulation changes also increased  
26 regulatory complexity by misaligning state and federal  
27 hunting regulations for coyotes in Unit 18. So, the OSM's  
28 preliminary conclusion is support proposal WP26-49.  
29 Thank you, Madam Chair, members of Council. I'd be happy  
30 to answer any questions.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom.  
33 Are there any Questions from the room? We'll start with  
34 the room.

35  
36 (No response)

37  
38 Are there any questions online?

39  
40 (No response)

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: No. What about  
43 public comments received during the open comment period?

44  
45 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair, Tom  
46 Plank, OSM. There are no comments received during the  
47 open period.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. What  
50 about from Tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultation

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1 reports?

2

3 MR. PLANK: Again, Tom Plank, OSM. We did  
4 not receive any during consultation.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And  
7 agency and tribal comments, under that would be ADF&G,  
8 federal agencies, tribes and ANCSA Corporations?

9

10 (No comment)

11

12 Hearing none. And if I go too fast, you  
13 can always, I can always come back, if there are people  
14 waiting that I miss. And then advisory group comments  
15 from other RACs, Fish and Game Advisory Committees,  
16 Subsistence Resource Commissions.

17

18 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. No other RACs  
19 have taken this up.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Other  
22 written public comments?

23

24 (No comment)

25

26 No. And then we're at public testimony.  
27 Would anyone like to testify?

28

29 (No comment)

30

31 Okay, we're we'll move on to the Council  
32 motion, then. Is there a motion on the table for WP 26-  
33 49?

34

35 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

38

39 MR. ANDREW: (In Native) motion on WP 26-  
40 49, (In Native).

41

42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, John.  
43 Moves to support WP26-49. Is there a second?

44

45 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, I second, this  
46 is Francis.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis seconds.  
49 Do we need more discussion? Yes.

50

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1 MR. ANDREW: Question.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

4 Question, (In Native).

5

6 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis, yeah.

9

10 MR. PRINCE: So, this is Francis, for the  
11 record, I just want to support this proposal since we've  
12 been seeing the increases in coyotes in the Lower Yukon  
13 and they're starting to get closer to the villages. And  
14 just recently, one of those villages reported they saw  
15 coyotes in their village, but I don't know which village  
16 was it.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for  
19 that, Francis. I've also encountered a coyote in  
20 Quinhagak. When I was walking my dog towards evening, I  
21 waited a little too long, and we ended up coming back  
22 at -- in the night and didn't realize a coyote was  
23 following us. And as soon as I went into the house, it  
24 attacked my dog, but my dog was vaccinated, lived. The  
25 coyote moved on to the rest of the village, and someone  
26 else got it when it attacked another dog. But anyway,  
27 just out of curiosity, like these are such new predators  
28 for our region that, if I'm not mistaken, we might not  
29 even have a Yup'ik word for coyote. Does anyone happen  
30 to know of a Yup'ik word for coyote? I've always  
31 wondered.

32

33 (No response)

34

35 Okay, quyana. And lastly, of course, it  
36 would increase subsistence opportunity for us. Quyana.

37

38 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair. Walter.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Walter.

41

42 MR. MORGAN: We've been seeing more of  
43 them around the Horn Mountains. There's a breed of wolves  
44 that we think breed with the coyotes and they -- they're  
45 different looking, you know. But they look like a coyote  
46 and a wolf. They were really funny. Their fur was kind  
47 of short, though. We caught like, 8 or 9 of them. And,  
48 you know, they were different than the regular wolves.  
49 So that's something for you. And I was going to Kalskag  
50 from Aniak three years ago, and I got a coyote on the

1 river. He was smaller. But we're starting to see more  
2 and more of them. That's my report. Thanks.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
5 Walter. (In Native)

6

7 MR. ANDREW: Question.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.  
10 Question's been called so we're going to roll call vote  
11 with Brooke.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, this is Brooke. The  
14 motion on the floor is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-  
15 49 that was put in by this Council to increase the  
16 hunting harvest limit for coyotes in Unit 18 from 2 to  
17 4 and to lengthen the hunting season to August 15th  
18 through May 31st. We'll start with Walter Morgan.

19

20 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

23

24 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

27

28 MR. PETER: Yes.

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

31

32 MR. PARKS: Yes.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

35

36 MS. EVAN: Yes.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

39

40 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

43

44 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Chair Cleveland.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

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50 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes, 8-0.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you everyone. This is Jackie again, and we're going to move on to a crossover proposal by Bristol Bay region. And it is WP26-38/39, Unit 17 brown bear, increase harvest limit to 2 bears, eliminate permit requirement and extend season. And it's on page 129.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair again, and members of the Council. For the record, Tom Plank OSM, and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-38/39 and as the Chair pointed out, this starts on page 129 of your books. WP26-38 is requesting to increase the harvest limit for brown bears in Unit 17, from one bear to two bears, and eliminate the state registration permit. And WP26-39 request to extend the brown bear season in Unit 17 to year-round. The proponent for -- states that in 2011, the Board of Game adopted a two-bear per year harvest limit in an effort to reduce human-bear conflict and to provide greater opportunity to hunters. The two-bear limit does not appear to have significantly increased local bear harvests. Public comments made at recent Bristol Bay Council meetings indicates brown bears are very abundant in Unit 17, and a two-bear bag limit is not likely to have any negative impact on their population. This proposal would also remove the state registration permit requirement but would not eliminate the requirement to seal harvested bears with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

And then, for WP26-39, the proponent states that the Board of Game adopted proposal at their January 2025 meeting to extend the Unit 17 brown bear season year-round. And this proposal would align state and federal brown bear seasons. The federal subsistence regulations for brown bears in Unit 17 have remained the same since 1999. The Board of Game increased brown bear harvest limit from one bear to two bears in 2011, and the Board of Game again extended to Unit 17 brown bear season to year-round in 2025. Brown bears are widely distributed in Unit 17. Population data is sparse, and the last estimate was done in 2004, which estimated 103 bears per 1,000 square miles.

Most harvest occurs in Unit 17B, and non-residents account for approximately 75% of the harvest. Annual harvest from 2011 to 2023 was 54 to 167 bears, but on average, only 5 hunters per year took 2 bears. However, unreported harvest and human-bear

1 conflicts are common. One alternative considered is to  
2 retain the state registration permit, because removing  
3 that requirement would require all harvested bears to  
4 be sealed. Eliminating the state registration permit  
5 require -- requirement may create law enforcement  
6 concerns if a user fails to salvage the hide while  
7 harvesting under federal regulations. Therefore,  
8 eliminating the state registration permit may provide  
9 federally qualified subsistence users the flexibility  
10 to salvage only the hide under state regulations or only  
11 the meat under federal regulations, although input from  
12 law enforcement on this would be beneficial. Currently,  
13 bear is taken under a registration permit in Unit 17 do  
14 not need to be sealed, unless the skin or skull is  
15 removed from the Unit. However, skin of the head and  
16 front claws are required to be removed from bears  
17 harvested by state subsistence permits at the time of  
18 sealing.

19  
20 If proposal WP26-38 and WP26-39 are  
21 adopted, the Unit 17 brown bear hunt would be extended  
22 to year-round with a two-bear limit, providing  
23 additional opportunities for subsistence users under  
24 federal regulations. The registration permit requirement  
25 would also be eliminated, and no impacts to the brown  
26 bear populations are expected as users may already  
27 harvest two brown bears, year-round, in Unit 17, under  
28 state regulations, including on federal public lands.  
29 Eliminating the state registration permit requirement  
30 may decrease harvest reporting and increase the burden  
31 on subsistence users to seal all harvested bears, as the  
32 front claws and skin of the head are required to be  
33 removed at the time of sealing from any bear taken under  
34 state subsistence permits. Eliminating the state  
35 registration permit could also benefit subsistence users  
36 who would like to retain the claws for use in  
37 handicrafts. So, the OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
38 support WP26-38 and WP26-39. Thank you, Madam Chair,  
39 members of Council. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom.  
42 Does anyone have any questions?

43  
44 (No response)

45  
46 Online?

47  
48 (No response)

49  
50

1                   And what about for public comments  
2 received during the open comment period?

3  
4                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair, Tom  
5 Plank, OSM. There are no written public comments  
6 submitted during the open period.

7  
8                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Tribal and  
9 ANCSA Corporation consultation reports?

10  
11                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair Tom  
12 Plank, OSM. We did not have any reports on that.

13  
14                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, thanks.  
15 And then agency and tribal comments, including ADF&G and  
16 federal agencies, tribes and ANCSA Corporations?

17  
18                   (No comment)

19  
20                   And what about for advisory group  
21 comments with other RACs, Fish and Game Advisory  
22 Committees, Subsistence Resource Commissions.

23  
24                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair, Tom  
25 Plank, OSM. Bristol Bay did meet before us and they  
26 supported both WP26-38 and -39.

27  
28                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Other  
29 written public comments.

30  
31                   (No comment)

32  
33                   None. And public testimonies.

34  
35                   (No comment)

36  
37                   Okay, hearing and seeing none. We're  
38 going to move on to our Council motion on the proposal.  
39 Brooke.

40  
41                   MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, thank you, Madam  
42 Chair. I just wanted to let the Council know, since this  
43 is a crossover proposal, if it's something that you would  
44 prefer to defer just to the Bristol Bay Council because  
45 it's in their region, you could. Or you can take it up  
46 to support or oppose. Thanks.

47  
48                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for  
49 that, Brooke. I would like us to take it up because  
50 there are villages who have C&T to those brown bears in

1 17. And John, John Andrew, you have something to add?

2

3 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Madam Chair, John  
4 Andrew, Kwethluk. (In Native)

5

6 INTERPRETER: I'm not really sure about  
7 this because I know my cousin said Bristol Bay and in  
8 the Goodnews area, and I know the young people do not  
9 hunt grizzlies anymore. And why are they wanting to hunt  
10 two instead of one? Because the people -- there was,  
11 beforehand, in the springtime, when they used to go hunt  
12 the brown bear, they used to go hunt them when they were  
13 coming out of the dens, before they started eating  
14 carcasses of the moose or caribou that had died during  
15 the winter time or before they go down to the rivers and  
16 eat the dead salmon or other carrion. And so, it was at  
17 this time that we went to go hunt them because of their  
18 oil, their fat was pure. And when they start eating,  
19 when they start eating the seal -- or the dead seals or  
20 carcasses, it just really does something to the bears.  
21 And so, in the winter -- in the fall time, the bears fur  
22 are at a premium. And so, before they shed their long  
23 hair. And so, at that time, they are good for mattresses  
24 or to use as clothing or parkas. And so, in the  
25 summertime, their furs are really rough and they smell  
26 like carrion, that what they have been eating. And so,  
27 whatever they're -- carrion food that they are eating,  
28 then that's what they smell like. And so, when they  
29 start eating the bear -- the berries, that's when they  
30 start their -- they start getting good. And so, when  
31 they're getting into the dens, that's when the premium  
32 that we should go hunt them or when they're coming out  
33 of the dens, that's when we should do it. And so, we  
34 should go to the mountains instead of the foothills here  
35 on the Kuskokwim. And so, the ones up in the mountains,  
36 further out, are a lot better at a premium. Thank you,  
37 Madam Chair.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.  
40 Does anyone else want to follow up from John's comment?

41

42 (No response)

43

44 (Pause)

45

46 Before we discuss this any further, I -  
47 - can I recommend or suggest we maybe support the motion  
48 first? Or -- yeah.

49

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: We just need a motion to  
2 get it on the floor to discuss, and then you can either  
3 vote it up or vote it down, but the motion would be to  
4 support and then you could discuss if you want to support  
5 or oppose.

6  
7 MR. MORGAN: Walter, I'd like to support  
8 WP26-38/39.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
11 Walter. Walter moves to support this proposal. Is there  
12 a second?

13  
14 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is  
15 Francis. I second it.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
18 Francis. Now we can discuss it further, if there's any  
19 more.

20  
21 (No response)

22  
23 I'll go then. So, I guess I like the  
24 proposal because, as you all know, I like more alignment  
25 within the regulations between the state and feds,  
26 especially. And then, I also come from a place where we  
27 have a lot of brown bears and a lot of human contact and  
28 conflict at times making the brown bear sometimes a  
29 safety concern. This would also, by eliminating the  
30 permit or the tag, less confusion and less citations by  
31 the user. And of course, more subsistence opportunity.

32  
33 (Pause)

34  
35 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

38  
39 MR. PARKS: If there is no more further  
40 discussions, I move to -- question, sorry.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question has  
43 been called by Henry Parks. And we'll do a roll call  
44 vote with Brooke.

45  
46 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, guys. So, the motion  
47 on the floor is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-38 and  
48 -39. And these proposals seek to increase the brown bear  
49 harvest limit in Unit 17, from one bear to two bear and  
50 eliminate the state registration permit requirement, and

1 also to extend the season to year-round. And it sounds  
2 like they're having more fun next door than we are in  
3 here. So, we'll do roll call, and we'll start with John  
4 Andrew.

5

6

MR. ANDREW: No.

7

8

MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

9

10

MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

11

12

MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

13

14

MS. EVAN: Yes.

15

16

MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

17

18

MR. PARKS: Yes.

19

20

MS. MCDAVID: Phillip Peter.

21

22

MR. PETER: Yes.

23

24

MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

25

26

MR. PRINCE: Yes.

27

28

MS. MCDAVID: Walter Morgan.

29

30

MR. MORGAN: Yes.

31

32

MS. MCDAVID: Chair Cleveland.

33

34

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

35

36

MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes, 7-1.

37

38

39

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
Brooke. I think this might be a good time to break for  
lunch. And then when we come back, we're going to hear  
from -- we'll hear about the Arctic Beaver Observation  
Network. And then we'll take up that proposal this  
afternoon. Okay. We're in recess now. Thanks.

44

45

(Off record)

46

47

(On record)

48

49

50

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good afternoon,  
everyone. This is Jackie. We're back from lunch. It's

00051

1 1:20, and we're going to start the afternoon with a  
2 presentation on Arctic Beaver Observation Network by Ken  
3 Tape from UAF. Ken, are you online?

4  
5 MR. TAPE: I am. Thanks, Jackie. I'm not  
6 sure if I can share my screen. Can you -- it says only  
7 meeting organizers and presenters can share. Can you  
8 make me an organizer or a presenter?

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: One second.  
11 We're doing that now.

12  
13 (Pause)  
14  
15 MS. MCDAVID: Hi, Ken. This is Brooke.  
16 You should be able to present now. Sorry about that.

17  
18 MR. TAPE: I think so. Yeah. Let me give  
19 this a try here. You guys -- I probably have to hold on  
20 for a second. Camera. That's me. Then what about my  
21 screen? You probably don't see my screen, do you?

22  
23 MS. MCDAVID: Yep. We can see. We can see  
24 your screen. We see the PowerPoint in PowerPoint, not  
25 the presenter mode. So just so you know.

26  
27 MR. TAPE: Yeah. Do you see me, too? Just  
28 out of curiosity.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we see you. You're  
31 kind of a little box, but we can see you in the corner.  
32 Okay, cool.

33  
34 MR. TAPE: Yeah. Thanks a lot for having  
35 me. I'm sort of peering out into the virtual world here.  
36 And how much time? 10 to 15 minutes or less. What do you  
37 guys want?

38  
39 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, I think 15 minutes  
40 max would be good. And that'll give us time for  
41 discussion afterwards, because I'm sure folks will have  
42 a lot of observations to share about what they're seeing  
43 in this area.

44  
45 MR. TAPE: Absolutely. I'm actually  
46 really excited to talk to you guys specifically because  
47 of all those observations and really, you know, the Y-K  
48 Delta is in -- I'm saying this in an oversimplified way,  
49 but it's essentially the future version of, you know,  
50 the Seward Peninsula and the Western Brooks Range,

1 right. So, the kind of climate you guys have now and  
2 beavers and fish and all those things, I think those are  
3 all really kind of headed north. At least that's the  
4 case for beavers and probably with some fish species.  
5 So, I can see there's about nine or so people. Am I also  
6 speaking to a room full of people in Bethel then? Is  
7 that right?

8

9

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

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MR. TAPE: Okay, perfect. I'm just trying to get an idea. I can't see a single person in the audience, so. But that's great. Thank you for having me. My name is Ken Tape. I'm at UAF, and a lot of this work is sponsored by the National Science Foundation. This is a picture from the Wulik River in Northwest Alaska. So, you know, kind of between Kotzebue and I guess the mouth is at Kivalina, right. So up in Northwest Alaska you can see some beaver dams, all these beaver dams up in this part of the world. Most of them are pretty young, right. Beavers are moving into these areas. So, if you went back 20 years ago and looked at the Wulik River, this little slough here with the beaver dams would have been, you know, spawning habitat probably for salmon. And of course, the Wulik also has this huge Dolly Varden run. So, there's a lot of concern naturally about beavers in this area. And I know this is something you guys have dealt with a lot. So, I'm going to try not to belabor anything and really get to the discussion, because I would like to hear your observations.

Lots of different changes going on in the Arctic. I don't need to tell you guys about this, permafrost thaw, the expansion of shrubby vegetation, the movement of herbivores like moose, and more recently, beavers. You got tundra fires, all these things that you're quite familiar with. That's the context that these beavers are moving into. What's different about moose and beavers? There's probably a lot of things, right. But moose are mostly just responding to these climatic changes and predators and pathogens and things like that. But with beavers, they're not just responding to climate change. They're imparting their own changes. Again, something you'll be very familiar with from your observations in the Y-K Delta area. But they really affect everything, right. Permafrost, hydrology, carbon cycling, water quality, fish biodiversity, boat access. All these lowland areas are really profoundly affected by beavers. And so, I coordinate a group called the Arctic Beaver Observation

1 Network. And we are researchers, indigenous knowledge  
2 holders and land managers across Arctic and some boreal  
3 North America. So, all the way across Canada, we had a  
4 meeting at UAF in February of 2024 that involved all  
5 these folks from like I say, across northern Canada all  
6 the way to Hudson Bay and all the way wrapped around to,  
7 you know, Selawik and the Seward Peninsula. So, a lot  
8 of different voices that are studying this and trying  
9 to understand how to adapt to it.

10

11 There's Lance Kramer from Kotzebue in  
12 the lower left. He's cutting up -- skinning a beaver for  
13 a bunch of conference participants. Just a couple  
14 pictures from it. This is a beaver pond on the Seward  
15 Peninsula. Looking down on it, you can see a long dam.  
16 You can see the lodge. Again, you're pretty familiar  
17 with this. I have to give this presentation to people  
18 you know who have never been in the Arctic. So, I get  
19 to breeze through some of these slides because you've  
20 seen this sort of thing before.

21

22 It's impressive what it looks like in  
23 the winter, the fact that these animals are surviving  
24 out there. So here we are on the Seward Peninsula. Here's  
25 a beaver dam -- a beaver lodge right here. There's a  
26 pond. What's interesting about the Seward Peninsula, and  
27 as you get up to Kotzebue, they've just showed up at the  
28 Kotzebue in the last 20 years, is the ice is so thick  
29 that most of the pond, sometimes the pond's frozen, the  
30 ice is frozen right to the bottom, in which case the  
31 beavers usually get pinched out, right. But the ice is  
32 so thick that ice is often sitting on the bottom of the  
33 pond, and the beavers just have this small pocket around  
34 the lodge that remains unfrozen all the way through the  
35 year. They've still got to keep access to their shrub  
36 cache and things like that. So, you can understand how  
37 shortening winter or deepening the snowpack or whatever  
38 you can do to thin the amount of ice and increase that  
39 amount of groundwater with permafrost thaw, right. You  
40 get more of this groundwater that is really opening up  
41 habitat for them in the Arctic and they're exploiting  
42 that.

43

44 So, here's what it looks like. This top  
45 picture is 1980. That's color infrared photography,  
46 right. So, it's actually green. That's green tundra,  
47 just looks red. And you know, that's a -- that stream  
48 is probably as wide as a conference table, something  
49 like that flowing right to left. And then by 2019,  
50 beavers colonized this entire stream and really changed

1 everything about it. And, you know, we studied landscape  
2 change in the Arctic before we stumbled into this, this  
3 beaver issue. And we were just incredibly impressed and  
4 somewhat concerned, to be honest, about how dramatic  
5 these changes are. This is a cartoonist in Fairbanks who  
6 drew this cartoon actually in 2001, and it's kind of the  
7 scene that's taking place across Western Alaska and  
8 certainly Northern Alaska these days, which is beavers  
9 looking out into these, you know, regions where they  
10 didn't exist before and then going forth and really  
11 changing the nature of these streams, sloughs, lake  
12 outlets, things like that. Another example, this one's,  
13 I think, west of Nome a little ways. 2003, you can see  
14 there's again, a small free flowing stream. And then by  
15 2016 it's more like a wetland.

16  
17 So, our big questions are what's the  
18 scale of beaver engineering in the Arctic? You know, is  
19 this -- when we initially started on this, you always  
20 have the reviewer or the skeptic saying, well, we're  
21 just talking about a few dozen beaver dams and what we  
22 have learned, and I'm sure you know, this through  
23 experience, is that the scale is actually huge. There's  
24 thousands of beaver ponds you know, in Arctic Alaska.  
25 Tens of thousands, I should say. And they're really  
26 rapidly moving into these new areas. I'll show you some  
27 maps in a minute. But then the other question is, well,  
28 what is the nature of the impacts when they move into  
29 these areas? You know, and what we've found in a general  
30 sense is that when you pond water on the landscape, you  
31 thaw permafrost, it really becomes a lot more dynamic.  
32 You know, you could go back to that same stream year  
33 after year, and it might look more or less the same. But  
34 the year that beavers arrive, everything changes. And  
35 each year you go back and you know this pond is drained.  
36 There's a new pond over here. So, it really becomes a  
37 much more dynamic place. But overall, we think of them  
38 as oases that are accelerating the effects of climate  
39 change in the Arctic. So, they're really exacerbating  
40 the permafrost thaw and migration of species and all  
41 those sorts of things. Big questions related to clean  
42 water and fish, particularly fish, I think probably has  
43 complex interactions with beavers. And I'd like to hear  
44 your observations. We have a proposal that's in review  
45 right now to do a pretty big fish study in Western  
46 Alaska. So, we would be able to answer some of those  
47 questions. But at this point, we don't have any firm  
48 answers on how beavers affect fish, except through the  
49 observations of people in the various villages that were  
50 working. And so, we work directly or through the ADF&G

1 Subsistence Division in Shungnak, Kotzebue, Nome, a  
2 little bit in Selawik. We work in Noatak. And then some  
3 of those Canadian communities, of course, are part of  
4 the broader network. And so, we do interviews in those  
5 villages and talk to people about their observations  
6 related to beavers. So, let's see. Hold on for a second.

7

8 MR. MORGAN: Ken, you just went on mute.

9

10 MR. TAPE: Sorry. Can you guys hear me?  
11 I had to take a quick break there.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, we can hear  
14 you.

15

16 MR. TAPE: You see my screen? Let me go  
17 back to the -- get this thing back here. All right. Can  
18 you hear me now?

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

21

22 MR. TAPE: Okay, cool. All right, so  
23 we're going to get through the rest of this. This is a  
24 bit of a research team at UAF. We study a lot of  
25 different aspects, you know, carbon cycling, permafrost.  
26 We do have Will Samuel, who's doing -- leading a lot of  
27 the fish work. I don't think this is too important. This  
28 is what the beaver expansion looks like, let's say behind  
29 Kotzebue. So, here's Kotzebue in 2002, you had two dams.  
30 By 2019, you can see 98 dams behind town. So, you know,  
31 it's just a very rapid process of beavers moving into  
32 these areas. If we look at a map of Arctic Alaska, so  
33 everything colored here is Arctic Alaska. There's  
34 12,000, over 12,000 beaver ponds that we've mapped. And  
35 that's already old. I'm sure it's a bigger number than  
36 that. That number is doubled between 2002 and 2017. So  
37 again, really moving. And they are selective of the warm  
38 areas right. So, the entire North Slope still does not  
39 have beavers. But our models show that in the future --  
40 so, if you look at these bottom ones 20-90 compared to  
41 historically where you haven't had beavers on the North  
42 Slope, we're predicting that those beavers are going to  
43 colonize those areas as it gets warmer.

44

45 And to put a little finer point on it,  
46 this is the Seward Peninsula from 2003 to 2020. Brown  
47 means low establishment probability. And blue means high  
48 establishment probability. That's the probability that  
49 a beaver pond gets established. And so, as you can see,  
50 is just over the last 20 years, that probability of a

1 beaver pond being established has gone from closer to  
2 zero, you know, less than 0.25 to above 0.75. And the  
3 factors that we see controlling that are freezing degree  
4 days. So essentially how long winter is and how cold  
5 winter is. And I think that has to do with ice formation.  
6 Rate of vegetation green up, mean June temperature, and  
7 then weekly river discharge. They like wet years which  
8 makes sense. And then percent shrub cover, of course,  
9 that's what they eat. That's their habitat.

10

11                   And I got a video here I'm actually --  
12 this is from the Seward Peninsula. I'll show this real  
13 quick. So, this is a stream that's been totally  
14 transitioned into a sort of a beaver wetland, right.  
15 Just one pond after another. And this up here is, of  
16 course, what the stream used to look like. So, I just  
17 want to show that video. And then one last one, kind of  
18 for fun. We get asked a lot about predators. Predators  
19 respond to beavers. I'm sure you all have observations  
20 about this. And we generally have not put a lot of time  
21 into studying this, but I have this great video that I  
22 want to show. So, you've got a bear in the foreground,  
23 right. There's this bear messing with the camera. Okay.  
24 And it ends right there with a nice chest view of the  
25 bear. But I'm going to show it to you once more and see  
26 what's going on in the background. All right, so that's  
27 the background. We've got this beaver nervously swimming  
28 back and forth, and there's another bear on the lodge  
29 here. So anyway, just kind of a fun video. All right.  
30 So that's all I got. And I'm definitely curious to hear  
31 your observations and suggestions and anything else  
32 related to beavers that you've noticed. Thank you.

33

34                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. That  
35 was very interesting. I'll start. So, this is Jackie.  
36 I'm from Quinhagak, which is south of here. And much  
37 like, you know, your presentation and the rest of our  
38 region here our beaver population has increased by so,  
39 so much. And I'm just wondering if there's a connection  
40 with -- does that have anything to do with pikes also  
41 coming in or -- because I guess we've noticed at the  
42 same time an increase with pike, even though I don't  
43 think that they may not have anything to do with each  
44 other, I thought I'd ask. Thanks.

45

46                   MR. TAPE: It's a great question, and  
47 there's a whole bunch of fish questions that I wish I  
48 could answer, but I'm pretty sure that you guys actually  
49 have a better idea than I do. I'm not a fish biologist  
50 to begin with, so I'm collaborating with people to try

1 to understand these. We're trying to get some funding  
2 so that we can conduct that research. But that's exactly  
3 the type of question -- I mean, like, if Will were on  
4 here, I should have asked Will to join me because he's  
5 the fish biologist, and I know there's some pike  
6 questions that we're looking at in this proposed work.  
7 You know, I understand that beaver ponds can be good  
8 rearing habitat for juvenile fish because sometimes the  
9 bigger fish can't get in there. But beyond that, I really  
10 shouldn't be answering anything about fish, which I know  
11 is disappointing to you guys, but I really am pretty  
12 sure that you know more about it than I do. So, you say  
13 you've seen more pike along the same time that these  
14 beavers have arrived?

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Actually, I  
17 would say the beavers came first and then the pike are  
18 newer than the beavers.

19  
20 MR. TAPE: Okay, I'm going to mention  
21 that to Will.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And no worries  
24 about, you know, not being able to answer. Any other  
25 questions? Walter.

26  
27 MR. MORGAN: Hello. Walter Morgan. We  
28 used to have a fishing spot that -- like six miles from  
29 Kalskag, we used to have a lot of pike in it and, you  
30 know, and these beavers came in. They built dams here  
31 and there and houses, and now we don't have any pike  
32 there. We used to go back and feed our, you know, fill  
33 our sleds and like, you know, four hours, two hours, as  
34 fast as you can put your hook down and pull it up, you'd  
35 get a fish. I mean, now I don't see that. We -- I went  
36 back this year. We fished for, like, four hours. We got  
37 one pike. So, you know, we know they ruined, you know,  
38 fishing areas. And also when I lived in Aniak, 30 miles  
39 from Kalskag, and it's -- there's a stream, red salmon  
40 stream. You know, and it's just full of red salmon, and  
41 it's like, you know, 20 feet wide, but it goes all the  
42 way to the mountain. But I can see beaver dams now. And  
43 when I went back bear hunting, I walked that trail. And  
44 there's hardly any reds now. It used to be full of red  
45 salmon. Now there's beaver dams. Maybe they couldn't go  
46 up, you know. That's my personal observation. Thank you.

47  
48 MR. TAPE: I appreciate that. So, your  
49 sense is that the primary impact, the primary negative  
50 impact at least, is that basically dams are blocking

1 fish movement. I saw a comment too. Something came up  
2 in the chat. Did that go to everyone? Pike need deeper  
3 water. This is from Kara Domnick. They're seeing more  
4 salmon eating fish in waters that used to be too shallow  
5 for predator fish. If beavers are making dams, then they  
6 are making the water deeper for the predator fish. I  
7 mean, so one thing that I've -- in my small amount of  
8 knowledge about beavers and fish, which does not really  
9 compare to the observational record that you guys have,  
10 is that it's often sort of a complex story like this.  
11 Like if you look at Kara's comment about beavers making  
12 deeper water. Yeah so, beavers are blocking pike.  
13 They're blocking salmon. But then she also says if  
14 beavers are making dams, then making the water deeper  
15 for the predator fish. I'm just reading someone's  
16 comment. I don't know a lot about this myself, but I  
17 appreciate the observation. Then Kevin says there's a  
18 lot of evidence to support northern pike showing a  
19 habitat preference for slower moving or placid water  
20 environments. They're ambush predators. I'm not as  
21 familiar with their numbers in the Quinhagak region.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

24

25 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis  
26 Prince and hi, Kenneth. I'm from Kotlik. I grew up from  
27 Kotlik and live in Kotlik throughout most of my life.  
28 And I kind of noticed that once we started getting more  
29 beaver in our area, the pike population pretty much  
30 increased really, really hard and rapidly. And would you  
31 know of, like, if the beavers do have other predators,  
32 you know, like otter too, as well? Because I used to  
33 trap for a couple seasons, and I did get information  
34 from elders from home that there are some otter out  
35 there that do hunt beavers and take over their dams as  
36 well.

37

38 MR. TAPE: I think -- that's a great  
39 question. First of all, I'm going to give you the same  
40 answer that I gave everyone else, which is I can tell  
41 Francis, that you actually know more about this than I  
42 do. But I appreciate the observation and the question.  
43 I believe otters -- I've heard from -- what's his name?  
44 On the Seward Peninsula. He's a great resource. He's  
45 mentioned otters predating on beaver kits. I'm not sure  
46 if you had another question. I'm pretty sure I can't  
47 answer it but appreciate the observation though.

48

49 MR. PRINCE: That was it. Thank you.

50

1                   CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Ken, this is  
2 Jackie again. Do you know how maybe the increasing  
3 population, obviously, it affects a drainage system like  
4 a river. Would you be able to elaborate a little on that  
5 if you can? Thanks.

6  
7                   MR. TAPE: Sure. Well, I mean, in the  
8 most obvious sense, you have this stream -- you start  
9 with a stream, and you end with a pond, right. But I  
10 think the big thing there is just, especially in terms  
11 of just access, it's one thing to cross a stream, but  
12 in the summer or the winter, but to cross a beaver pond  
13 in the summer or the winter is like a really laborious  
14 sort of thing, and that's if you're just crossing  
15 laterally. So, things like snowmachine access in the  
16 winter, I mean, you guys are out there in the winter on  
17 snowmachine, and you probably know that these sort of  
18 sprawling wetland beaver areas are pretty, pretty  
19 sketchy. You know, there's going to be open water in  
20 places, particularly around the dams. I mean, even just  
21 skiing Goldstream Creek behind my house in Fairbanks,  
22 the only places you fall in are around those beaver  
23 dams. So, there's definitely an issue with just  
24 traveling through these areas. And it's going to be the  
25 same with caribou and things like that. Of course, beaver  
26 ponds are good for birds, right. Like I think you're  
27 going to see more waterfowl and things like that. Moose  
28 love these beaver ponds. I mean, they're hotspots for  
29 wildlife activity. That might be a little silver lining.  
30 But I think it's counteracted by a lot of the potentially  
31 negative effects on fish. But yeah, what we see is  
32 permafrost thaw occurring around these ponds. And that's  
33 a, you know, I think that's a big issue. And it just  
34 destabilizes the valley bottom, turns it into a much  
35 more dynamic place, turns it into a wetland,  
36 essentially.

37  
38                   So, those are some of the changes that  
39 we're observing. I mean, things like riparian  
40 vegetation. I think there might be some initial effects,  
41 but basically what -- you're going to get more shrubs,  
42 right. You might initially get some permafrost collapse,  
43 but all this dynamic sort of environment, that's really  
44 the harbinger of climate change in these various  
45 effects. It's essentially a warmer environment. There's  
46 more unfrozen water in winter. Like a lot of these  
47 streams, for example, in the Western Brooks Range, you  
48 know, a lot of these streams are almost frozen to the  
49 bottom in winter. There's not much groundwater because  
50 the permafrost, you know, prevents there from being

1 groundwater. But as groundwater starts to seep into  
2 these streams and beavers dam them, you end up with a  
3 lot more unfrozen water in winter. And that is what  
4 makes it dangerous to travel across on a snowmachine but  
5 also provides a foothold for a lot of new aquatic  
6 species, you know, moving into the Arctic.

7  
8 So yeah, that's a good question. And I'm  
9 not sure if -- I'm sure I didn't answer it  
10 comprehensively, but I just see it as a more dynamic,  
11 wet place. And if there's any, you know, in your area,  
12 most of the permafrost isn't in the valley bottoms  
13 anyway. I'm guessing that permafrost is thawed out from  
14 a lot of the floodplains in your area, whereas up in the  
15 Noatak or on the Seward Peninsula, you know, you still  
16 have these bodies of permafrost in the valley bottoms,  
17 and those are thawing as water is ponded there and all  
18 the heat that gets trapped with that water.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again,  
21 Ken. And when you mentioned that when it warms up and  
22 creates more wetland for our region, it creates more  
23 bogs and more than wetland and I think maybe even  
24 shrubification [sic], since you mentioned shrubs, which  
25 also affect our berry patches. Just.....

26  
27 (Simultaneous speech)

28  
29 MR. TAPE: Yeah.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: .....thinking  
32 out loud. Brooke, do you have a question? Oh, Henry  
33 Parks.

34  
35 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
36 Henry, for the record. You know, I live in tundra  
37 villages. It's located west from Bethel, and it's kind  
38 of flat home -- I mean, it's kind of flat land back  
39 home. So, back in the old days, when I was a younger  
40 man, we used to have a lot of blackfish. And these  
41 blackfish are -- they don't come downstream. But other  
42 fish like whitefish and pikes and lush, they go  
43 downstream to the Kuskokwim River. But then these  
44 blackfish stay around in our area. And then my question  
45 is -- because they're declining right now these  
46 blackfish, so my question is, do beavers' urine or poop  
47 can affect blackfish?

48  
49 MR. TAPE: I don't know. It's a great  
50 question and I really appreciate that observation. So,

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1 you're saying there used to be a lot of blackfish in  
2 your home region, but they've been in decline for a long  
3 time. Is that correct?

4

5 (No response)

6

7 I mean, in general, my understanding,  
8 which again is not nearly as deep as yours, but my  
9 understanding is that blackfish are kind of an endemic  
10 Arctic species, right? They do well in these cold tundra  
11 environments. And that's precisely what we're losing  
12 with climate change, right. We're losing those  
13 environments for endemic Arctic species. And beavers are  
14 just kind of speeding that up. So, I don't know the  
15 question about, you know, beaver feces and urine, if  
16 that could be the reason for it. It's possible. But I  
17 would also just lean towards these other effects that  
18 that come along with beavers and, or perhaps just climate  
19 change more generally, but that's just speculation. But  
20 I appreciate the observation. Because I get this  
21 question from time to time that I can't really answer,  
22 but you probably come closer to answering it than anyone,  
23 which is, you know, okay, so all these species are doing  
24 better. A lot of species are doing better. They're sort  
25 of riding in on the back of climate change, of beavers  
26 like, you know, boreal species, right. Moving into these  
27 areas that are suddenly getting warmer and favorable  
28 habitat is there. But then the question is, well, what  
29 are -- what exactly are the species that are losing out  
30 here? And I think it's what you're pointing to, Henry.  
31 Species like these blackfish which are, you know,  
32 endemic, sort of cold-loving species that are probably  
33 losing out. That would be my guess. I think I saw Kevin  
34 Fraley was on here, too. Or Kevin Foley. Anyway, if  
35 anyone has any ideas about that, please chime in.

36

37 I got to tell you guys, these are like  
38 the most specific and best questions that I've ever  
39 received. It's just they're coming from people who are  
40 really knowledgeable about the landscape, and it's not  
41 questions that I can necessarily answer, or even that  
42 I'm all that familiar with receiving, but I really  
43 appreciate it.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We appreciate  
46 your feedback, Ken And here's another question. John.

47

48 MR. ANDREW: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's  
49 been my observation in the early years when we hardly  
50 had any beavers in this region, our fathers and myself,

1 we used to travel a long way to look for them. In those  
2 days, those lakes and the blackfish creeks, they never  
3 freeze over the whole winter. Once the beavers start to  
4 show up and damming them up, we can't find the channels  
5 for the blackfish traps. And when I was growing up, a  
6 lot of families practically wherever, before the days  
7 of welfare programs, people had to work. Some of them  
8 had to walk out there all day long just to go check  
9 their blackfish traps, and they bring back a whole  
10 backpack full of blackfish per trip. Nowadays, they  
11 don't do that. You've got to find a place where there's  
12 no sign of beaver dams if you want to get a good  
13 blackfish trap site. And they used get a lot of them.  
14 And I know that I used to help my dad check his blackfish  
15 traps. They used to be made out of (indiscernible) the  
16 blackfish traps. But then back in my time after my father  
17 graduated -- I mean, quit trapping, I took over. We had  
18 to start using chicken wire traps. And there were too  
19 many beavers. Once the beavers settled down, there would  
20 be hardly any blackfish, because they have trouble  
21 migrating out in springtime. Those blackfish are trying  
22 to migrate into the lakes to spawn and reproduce. They  
23 have getting back -- they have trouble getting access  
24 to their spawning grounds. That's the big problem right  
25 there.

26  
27 And when the water is stagnant, the fish  
28 die off, I've -- we've seen that in dams where a number  
29 of their dams would be dead fish floating and the air -  
30 - the whole air stinks and water is not drinkable for  
31 even people and animals. It's happening all over. I hear  
32 the same stories from the tundra villages, in the coastal  
33 area, then down in (In Native) area, the same story.  
34 Yeah, there are too many. There's too many of them,  
35 standing up and flooding the main denning areas. I think  
36 the old guys used to say, when beaver, other species  
37 take over, certain species die off or move out. That was  
38 our observation earlier. And there are too many and  
39 sometimes that's both good and bad. One species start  
40 to explode in population while other ones die off pretty  
41 fast. Thank you, Madam Chair.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.

44  
45 (Simultaneous speech)

46  
47 MR. TAPE: I mean, that's.....

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead, Ken.

50

1 MR. TAPE: I mean, that's the best,  
2 that's one of the best accounts I've ever heard of, sort  
3 of this whole transition that's occurring as beavers  
4 come into an area and, you know, their impact on, in  
5 this case, on blackfish. It's pretty similar to what I  
6 heard at this meeting a couple of years ago. There were  
7 guys from Inuvik way up the Mackenzie Delta, Northwest  
8 Territory, northern coast of Canada, right. And they  
9 had, I think it's mostly whitefish that they were  
10 targeting, but, you know, just very, very similar  
11 concerns. I think it would have been really fun to have  
12 some of you in the room with us because similar  
13 observations and similar concerns. But I'm inspired to,  
14 you know, do see if we can do some research on these  
15 blackfish observations because, yeah, I think you're  
16 answering my questions more than I'm answering yours.  
17 So, thanks a lot.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke, you had  
20 a question earlier?

21  
22 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Jackie. Thank  
23 you so much, Ken, for presenting all this. This Council  
24 has been sort of wrestling with these observations for  
25 many years now and kind of at the point where it feels  
26 a little bit like they are seeing these landscape changes  
27 and changes to their ability to harvest certain things  
28 for subsistence and access certain areas. And it's  
29 almost like the science and the research hasn't caught  
30 up to what people are observing on the ground out here.  
31 And the Council has kind of been talking about, okay,  
32 well, we know this is happening, but what can we do  
33 about it? And I think one of the things they would be  
34 interested in hearing about is if, you know, of in any  
35 other areas like -- such as the Arctic, if any sort of  
36 restoration efforts have been attempted. And, you know,  
37 could beaver be considered, you know, an invasive  
38 species? Is there any way to do habitat restoration or  
39 is it pretty much a one-way street once these changes  
40 has -- have happened? Is there any going back? Thank  
41 you.

42  
43 MR. TAPE: Boy, that's a -- thank you.  
44 That's a great question. And I would say there are no  
45 good management solutions, unfortunately, that we've  
46 come across so far. I mean, I'm sure some people on this  
47 phone call have pulled apart a beaver dam before. It's  
48 a lot of work and it gets rebuilt almost overnight,  
49 right. So, you know, I've heard of things like in B.C.,  
50 I've heard of Native people pulling apart beaver dams

1 during certain fish migrations, you know, important fish  
2 migrations to important lakes and things like that. But  
3 I'm just -- and that's what they talked a little bit  
4 about in Inuvik, you know, is doing a bit of that,  
5 pulling dams apart during critical times. So, there's  
6 some things like that. And I mean, I'm really excited  
7 to be talking to this group because I think there may  
8 be, you know, some options. We could at least try some  
9 things, right. Get some funding for you guys to go out  
10 and try some things on the landscape. But they're really  
11 -- I haven't heard any great solutions. You can -- they  
12 have these things called pond levelers. They're called  
13 beaver deceivers. And what they do is, you basically put  
14 a pipe on the bottom of the pond underneath the dam, and  
15 it allows you to keep the water level lower in the pond.  
16 It prevents flooding, but that's not really the problem  
17 here. The problem is that there's an issue of fish  
18 passage. You know, you need like a fish ladder or  
19 something like that for the fish to, like, get over  
20 these dams. So, I'm afraid I don't have any good answers.  
21 I mean, people can use dynamite. You can do things like  
22 that. But none of the options seem very good or long  
23 lasting, and they probably won't have the desired  
24 effect. So, I'm afraid I don't have a lot of good  
25 solutions.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again  
28 for all your feedback. This is Jackie again, and you're  
29 welcome to stay on and stay through the proposal process  
30 if you want to.

31  
32 MR. TAPE: I appreciate that. Thank you,  
33 Jackie. Thanks so much for having me. I just wanted to  
34 say.....

35  
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37  
38 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

39  
40 MR. TAPE: .....once again.

41  
42 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sorry, Ken.  
45 There might be another question. So, hold your goodbye.

46  
47 MR. TAPE: Okay. Another question I can't  
48 answer.

49  
50

1 MR. PETER: My name is Phillip Peter. I  
2 want to make a short comment on this issue. Because we  
3 had -- because we discussed this before, like long time  
4 ago about the beaver dam and you mentioned about the  
5 dynamite, bombing those other dams and also their  
6 houses. And beavers are increasing -- decreasing little  
7 bit in Kuskokwim. I live 32 miles above Bethel, Akiachak  
8 and the tundra, 18 miles. My observation was beavers are  
9 beginning to unite, you know, group together and build  
10 a big house because they're lacking right now about their  
11 food. And I asked my uncle when he was alive, how should  
12 we destroy a beaver dam? One thing he mentioned -- once  
13 mentioned to me is to -- not on the middle where water  
14 is flowing, but on the side. We did it. Me and my cousin,  
15 my (In Native). We did it. One -- what my uncle tell me.  
16 So, we take after -- we skin it out on the right -- left  
17 side. Skin it out, the marsh and then the mud, and then  
18 next year we went up to check that beaver dam, the one  
19 that we work on. And that beaver dam got flowing water  
20 where we make -- and starting to creek. But the beavers  
21 didn't close it. And right now, whenever I go up to  
22 berry picking in that area, that creek, Gweek River, ten  
23 miles above Bethel. We call it Gweek. And when you go  
24 entering to that Gweek River about 1, 2, or 3 bends, you  
25 see that creek we call it -- (In Native). That's where  
26 we worked on that beaver dam. And now that beaver dam  
27 is now a flowing creek. And the dam was gone. That's how  
28 we -- that's how my uncle explained it to me. And I  
29 don't see many -- I don't see no more beaver dams on  
30 that creek. That's my comment. Thank you, Madam  
31 Chairman.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Phillip.  
34 And Ken.....

35  
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37  
38 MR. TAPE: Thank you.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: .....do you want  
41 to respond? You can feel free to respond if you want.

42  
43 MR. TAPE: Sure. It sounded like he was  
44 recommending notching it on the side of the dam.

45  
46 MR. PETER: Yeah, yeah.

47  
48 MR. TAPE: Yeah. Maybe that's the way to  
49 do it.

50

1                   CHAIRPERSON    CLEVELAND:    That    is  
2    interesting.

3  
4                   MR. TAPE: I appreciate the comment.

5  
6                   (Pause)

7  
8                   MR. PETER: Oh, Madam Chairman, I forgot  
9    one more comment. Those beavers are beginning to build  
10   their houses on the side of the Kuskokwim River -- the  
11   stem Kuskokwim River. There's only a few miles above  
12   Bethel where we short cut into Church Slough. There's a  
13   beaver house right there, and those beavers are  
14   beginning to build their houses on the stem of the  
15   Kuskokwim, not on the tributaries and the slough. There  
16   used to be none on the main stem of the Kuskokwim River,  
17   and I was surprised. We got three houses from my village  
18   across from Akiachak, beaver houses. And also, when I  
19   went up to get wood, I see quite a few above Akiak and  
20   Tuluksak. And the beaver houses, they're beginning to  
21   move. Quyana, Madam Chairman.

22  
23                   CHAIRPERSON    CLEVELAND:    Quyana    (In  
24   Native) Phillip.

25  
26                   MR. TAPE: Yeah. It seems like once they  
27   filled up a lot of the stream and lake outlets and that  
28   kind of habitat that they -- it seems like they start  
29   building those bank dens on the bigger rivers. Selawik  
30   River is like that, too. It's just -- I haven't actually  
31   boated up it, but my colleague Will has boated up it and  
32   other friends of mine, and I understand that there's  
33   just, you know, beaver lodges every hundred yards you  
34   know, bank dens. I'm going to read Brianna's -- Brianna  
35   shared her comments here as well. I have to advise  
36   against destroying beaver dams without doing a proper  
37   assessment. Beavers and their dams provide a lot of  
38   positive benefits to the ecosystem, including but not  
39   limited to, critical habitat to salmon rearing, predator  
40   protection, and food availability to fish, and also  
41   recharging groundwater supply.

42  
43                   You know, one of the interesting things  
44   about beavers and you guys probably know this already,  
45   but in the Lower 48, beavers are one of the best tools  
46   that we have to restore degraded stream ecosystems. So,  
47   I think the number I heard was 83% of stream reaches in  
48   the Lower 48 are degraded and not in their natural state,  
49   which first of all, is so different than what we have  
50   in Alaska, right. Just, you know, agriculture, roads,

1 development, you know, the footprint. And so, it's quite  
2 a contrast from that, where beavers are truly a valuable  
3 conservation restoration species. And that's a little  
4 bit what Brianna is speaking to. But then there's a --  
5 it's a very contrasting perspective that we have out in  
6 the tundra. Whether it's the Y-K Delta or the Seward  
7 Peninsula or Northwest Alaska, where beavers come into  
8 these areas and are seen a lot more as disruptive, right,  
9 as having a lot of negative impacts. And I think both  
10 of those can be valuable. But I think just acknowledging  
11 that there is a lot of complexity, and maybe that's what  
12 Brooke -- that Brianna is alluding to here. Yeah. Yeah.  
13 If you want to introduce yourself, Brianna, or elaborate  
14 on that, please do.

15  
16 MS. SHERER: May I speak?  
17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Brianna, we  
19 were about to call on you anyway, so. Thank you.  
20

21 MS. SHERER: Thank you. So, I'm -- hello,  
22 everybody. I'm Brianna (In Native) Sherer from the  
23 Native Village of Napaimute. My background is in  
24 fisheries as well, and I've done a lot of research in  
25 beaver complexes because those are areas where coho tend  
26 to like to rear and grow. And I also I went to school  
27 in the Lower 48, where we talked a lot about beaver  
28 conservation. And I remember just being out like being  
29 down there being like, what the heck? We have such a  
30 beaver problem in Alaska. This is crazy. But it did  
31 teach me that -- the importance of that balance of --  
32 we get to learn the lessons of what they've done in the  
33 Lower 48, where they extirpated beavers too quickly  
34 without really thinking about the impacts. So, I'm not  
35 against beaver management and destroying dams that are  
36 where there's too many, but just to be mindful of it, I  
37 guess, and to have a more balanced management practice.  
38 Quyana.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Brianna.  
41 That rhymes. Francis.  
42

43 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is  
44 Francis. More of a -- like a comment and then a question  
45 after. I'm from Kotlik and in my village I noticed that  
46 in the past that they used to fight a beaver dam that  
47 used to block our Whitefish Lake, which we call Kotlik  
48 Lake. And back in the day, our elders used to -- when  
49 that beaver dam got way too big and crossing the whole  
50 creek or the river, they tend to go busted up just in

1 the middle, but not the beaver house. Just a beaver dam.  
2 And also, a question with the declining of muskrats, has  
3 that affected blackfish from migrating to those areas  
4 where they used to habitat? Because I know back in the  
5 days, they used to trap muskrat a lot and kind of seem  
6 like muskrats gave the options for the blackfish to  
7 migrate to their lake areas or wherever they spawn.

8  
9 MR. TAPE: So, how do the muskrats  
10 facilitate that? That migration? I don't know, first of  
11 all. This must -- this decline. Go ahead.

12  
13 MR. PRINCE: This is Francis. I noticed  
14 that our declining in our muskrats, that it made it  
15 harder for the blackfish to migrate to these lake-edge  
16 areas to avoid, like, other predators in the streams.  
17 You know, like the pike, you know, and they're swimming  
18 up these really narrow streams, maybe even at least two  
19 inches wide only. Because I observed seeing a blackfish  
20 right outside my parents' house and there's no lake,  
21 just swamp areas. Yeah.

22  
23 MR. TAPE: That's really interesting.  
24 I've heard of this muskrat decline a lot, you know,  
25 pretty widely. It's something I hear from time to time  
26 on these -- in these types of conversations, but I don't  
27 really know how it fits in with the rest of the  
28 ecosystem. It sounds like you have a pretty good idea,  
29 though.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. This  
32 is Jackie again. And Brianna, if I can call on you again,  
33 if you're on. I meant to -- we meant to ask in your  
34 comment, you say it would be a positive for salmon  
35 bearing areas and maybe what we've observed, or some  
36 others have observed as well was the blockage of salmon  
37 bearing and -- what's the word I'm looking? Spawning  
38 areas. That's how it's working in my area at least is,  
39 where spawn -- or sorry, where salmon used to spawn in  
40 these (In Native) side eddies and side channels. Yeah.  
41 So, when there becomes a dam and I guess a home there,  
42 the salmon don't spawn in that same area. So, we were  
43 just wondering, I guess the positive there or can we  
44 hear about the positive from that? Thanks.

45  
46 MS. SHERER: I can't speak to -- in depth  
47 because I haven't -- I guess I'd need to see data or  
48 research on it, but I mean, you know, with dams -- with  
49 beaver dams, their role in the ecosystem is to change  
50 the river and create new habitats. So, like, there are

1 some areas where, yeah, maybe they'll block it off, but  
2 another type of species can occupy that niche, I guess  
3 is what you'd say. But there are -- sorry, I lost my  
4 train of thought here. I think it goes down to what  
5 we've been talking about. When there's too much though,  
6 where like it could be a positive to remove those dams  
7 to like reclaim that habitat for salmon spawning. But I  
8 do know that at least with older beaver dams that are  
9 left over, they create like beaver complexes. It creates  
10 like a refuge where salmon can go in and spawn in there  
11 like the, the juveniles. That's where they're rearing.  
12 But yeah, I can't speak too much on it. I'm not an expert  
13 at beaver, beaver dams, and their role in river  
14 ecosystems, but yeah.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. There  
17 was just a comment in the room that maybe it's -- could  
18 be a big or potential research need then, if that makes  
19 sense, Ken.

20

21 MR. TAPE: There is a research -- sorry  
22 to interrupt. There is a research need. I mean, I think  
23 there's a lot of great observations just on this call.  
24 And I think, you know, focusing some research on this  
25 is a great idea anyway.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Kevin.

28

29 (Simultaneous speech)

30

31 MR. TAPE: I see Kevin.....

32

33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Kevin, you're  
34 on.

35

36 MR. FOLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can  
37 you hear me?

38

39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

40

41 MR. FOLEY: Thank you. I just wanted to  
42 offer an observation to the point that Brianna had made  
43 earlier in the benefits of beaver ponds. But I would  
44 like to preface this by saying that I have very little  
45 experience of understanding or knowing beaver ponds in  
46 the area, in the region here. But one of the benefits  
47 that we see deals directly with juvenile rearing of  
48 salmon. We know that these impoundments that are created  
49 by beaver dams, oftentimes the water is slightly warmer,  
50 which makes it more favorable for the growth of juvenile

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1 salmon. In addition, there's greater food inputs in  
2 these areas, which also favors their growth. And we know  
3 that the literature tells us that the larger a juvenile  
4 salmon is when it migrates out to sea, the greater chance  
5 it has for survival when it's at sea. So that's just one  
6 advantage that I can think of. And I'd like to stop  
7 there. Thank you.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for  
10 your input, Kevin.

11  
12 (Pause)

13  
14 Any other discussion from the room or  
15 online?

16  
17 (No response)

18  
19 Hearing and seeing none. Like I said,  
20 Ken, you can stay on if you want while we go through the  
21 proposal process. But first, Brooke wants to say  
22 something.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Jackie. Yeah, I  
25 just wanted to -- this is Brooke -- let Ken know. The  
26 Council is getting ready to talk about a proposal they  
27 put in last year about beaver trapping regulations. And  
28 currently in those regulations, there's a restriction  
29 on disturbing or destroying beaver houses when trapping.  
30 And so that will be the discussion that follows, if  
31 you're interested to hear a little bit about that. You're  
32 welcome to stay on. But if not, we really, really  
33 appreciate you joining today. And that was a really good  
34 conversation. I know they've been waiting for -- to share  
35 all these comments with someone who does have a research  
36 interest in this area. And I'm sure they'd love to see  
37 a Western Alaska Beaver Observation Network, or maybe  
38 some cross regional work to compare, yeah what's going  
39 on in different areas. So, if there's ever, you know, I  
40 know just from past experience with grant writing and  
41 stuff, need for letters of support or anything, always  
42 feel free to get in touch and we can bring things like  
43 that before the Council. Thank you.

44  
45 MR. TAPE: I really appreciate you guys  
46 having me. And you know, I've been doing this for ten  
47 years. I've been studying the beaver stuff, and this is  
48 probably the most enlightening conversation, you know,  
49 post presentation discussion that I've had. So, I really  
50 appreciate all your observations and for having me in

1 spite of not being able to answer all your questions.  
2 And I'll stick around for some of the discussion. Thanks  
3 a lot.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Ken.  
6 You did great. So yeah, we really enjoyed that  
7 conversation. So, we're going to move on to -- on the  
8 agenda it's WP26-47 Unit 18 beaver, eliminate  
9 restrictions on disturbing or destroying beaver houses  
10 under trapping regulations. And that's on page 107 of  
11 the booklet. And, yeah, Tom, whenever you're ready.

12  
13 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
14 Members of the Council. I guess we'll keep this beaver  
15 talk going. So, for the record, my name is Tom Plank,  
16 Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management,  
17 and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for  
18 Wildlife Proposal WP26-47 and starting on page 107 of  
19 your books. Wildlife Proposal WP26-47, was submitted by  
20 this RAC and request to remove the restriction in  
21 trapping regulations against disturbing or destroying  
22 beaver houses in Unit 18. Proponent states that removing  
23 these restrictions will increase opportunity for  
24 federally qualified subsistence users and that there are  
25 no conservation concerns for beavers in Unit 18. The  
26 prohibition of destroying or disturbing a beaver house  
27 under a trapping license has been in state regulations  
28 since at least 1971, and in 1990, this prohibition was  
29 adopted by the federal regulations from state  
30 regulations when the Federal Subsistence Management  
31 Program began. Current beaver hunting and trapping  
32 regulations have no limits and no closed season in both  
33 state and federal regulations. Densities in Unit 18 have  
34 remained high throughout the unit and appear to be the  
35 highest southeast of the Kuskokwim River in the Kilbuck  
36 Mountains, and along the lakes and sloughs of the Johnson  
37 River southwest of Bethel. Harvest of beavers is not  
38 well documented, since sealing is not required for Unit  
39 18 and information obtained is through voluntary  
40 trapping questionnaires.

41  
42 Now, if this proposal is adopted,  
43 trappers could disturb or destroy a beaver house in Unit  
44 18 when taking beavers under a trapping license. This  
45 prohibition does not apply to the taking beavers under  
46 a hunting license. Beaver houses may already be  
47 destroyed or disturbed when hunting, unless otherwise  
48 prohibited by agency specific regulations. The impacts  
49 to the beaver population of this regulation are  
50 uncertain, but conservation concerns are unlikely given

1 the extremely liberal hunting and trapping regulations,  
2 both under state and federal regulations of year-round  
3 seasons and no harvest limits. Depending on the time of  
4 year, beavers may have kits in the lodge. A possible  
5 concern of allowing beaver lodges to be disturbed or  
6 destroyed is increasing the likelihood of wanton waste,  
7 if beavers in a lodge are killed but not salvaged.  
8 Adopting this proposal increases regulatory complexity  
9 and complicates law enforcement by misaligning state and  
10 federal regulations requiring trappers to differentiate  
11 land status. The OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
12 support this proposal, WP26-47, but one thing that we'd  
13 like to get a little more information -- Liz Williams  
14 is on the line, and she has some questions for the  
15 Council to kind of get more information on this  
16 particular proposal. So, I'll let her take over from  
17 here.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom.  
20 And did you say her name is Liz?

21  
22 MR. PLANK: Liz Williams.

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Liz  
25 Williams, if you're on.

26  
27 MS. WILLIAMS: I am. Thank you, Madam  
28 Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. Are you able to hear me?

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, we are.

31  
32 MS. WILLIAMS: I'd like to introduce  
33 myself to the Council. I am taking Pippa's place. She  
34 was the Cultural Anthropologist that worked with this  
35 Council and she retired. And so, I was working in Eastern  
36 and Western Interior. But now I'll be working in the  
37 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. And when we look at a proposal  
38 like this, the anthropologist's job is to write cultural  
39 knowledge and traditional practices section. And that's  
40 maybe what we would call traditional ecological  
41 knowledge. And a lot of it has already been mentioned  
42 by different members of the Council. But when you discuss  
43 this proposal, it would be super helpful for me to hear  
44 more about how beaver have been taken care of in the  
45 past. How people use them and maybe how that's changed.  
46 I don't know if Ken Tape is still on, but there's a  
47 really good Master's thesis, I think it's from the 90s  
48 by Jennifer Linkous, where she compared perspectives on  
49 Beaver in Selawik and Fort Yukon. And the reason that  
50 she did that research is because the Office of

1 Subsistence Management started receiving proposals about  
2 how local people could deal with the explosion of beavers  
3 as soon as the Federal Subsistence Management Program  
4 started, almost in 1993. And so, her study, she spent  
5 about a month in both communities talking to people  
6 about, you know, what effects beaver had. And a lot of  
7 it is the same things that you said. And I remember that  
8 destroying muskrat habitat was also noted in that  
9 thesis, just to answer a question that somebody asked  
10 before. So, I'm sorry I'm not there in person. I look  
11 forward to meeting you in person. And I think I've met  
12 a couple of you before but thank you for letting me say  
13 this and introduce myself, and I'll just be listening.  
14 Thank you.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Liz,  
17 and nice to meet you.

18  
19 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
20 Members of the Council, me and Liz are both here to  
21 answer any questions you may have.

22  
23 (No response)

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So far, hearing,  
26 seeing none. What about from the public comments  
27 received during the open comment period, Tom?

28  
29 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Tom  
30 Plank, OSM. There were no written comments provided  
31 during the open period.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And  
34 for tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation reports?

35  
36 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. We did have  
37 one representative from ONC Tribe call in and he called  
38 in opposed of WP26-47 for the removal and/or disturb or  
39 destroy and beaver houses and beaver hunting in the  
40 region.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.  
43 Agency and tribal comments by -- starting with ADF&G and  
44 federal agencies, tribes, and ANCSA corporations.

45  
46 (No comment)

47  
48 And then advisory groups. Other RACs,  
49 Fish and Game Advisory Committees. Subsistence Resource  
50 Commissions.

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MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, OSM. No other RACs have taken this up yet.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Are there written public comments? No. And we're at the public testimony portion, and we have John Andrew representing the Community of Kwethluk up next.

MR. ANDREW: My name is John Andrew from Kwethluk. Up in my village, they had a mixed feeling for this one. The younger generation wanted to go for it, but then people like me, that used to be trapper in my lifetime, they used to tell us not to molest any beaver lodgings or dams or any shelters or denning areas of wild animals. That was our original teachings. (In Native).

INTERPRETER: As it is, I don't really -  
- I'm not really against this, but growing up, our parents used to tell us that we should not be messing with the dens or the shelters of the wild animals, that we should not even be destroying or anything, for any kind of animal shelter. So, there's -- I do like this proposal, but this is against the teachings of my.....

MR. ANDREW: Food and shelter for us. (In Native). Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In Native), John. Any other public testimonies, either here or online?

(No response)

Okay, we'll move on to the Council motion. Oh, Patrick. Yes.

MR. SAMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Pat Sampson. I only wanted to say real quick. I grew up my mother sewing furs and everything. And when she sewed (indiscernible), they called it (In Native), the small baby beavers that were in the beavers right before they were born. And they were fully developed, but they're small. And so, when she sewed those, those were sold right away, even before she even finished them, because the pelt is of very high quality. So, with this, if it goes through, that would give the opportunity for those that know to be able to take juvenile or the younger beavers who have better pelt that garner higher price

1 for whatever handicraft you may make, whether they be  
2 beaver hats or mittens or leggings or what not. But the  
3 younger juvenile beavers are -- they command higher  
4 prices than the older beavers. And I just want to bring  
5 that up. Thank you.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Pat. Now  
8 I want beaver fur leggings. If there are no other public  
9 testimonies, we will move on to the Council Motions. And  
10 again, we will be first needing to move to support WP26-  
11 47 in order to move on it. Quyana.

12  
13 (Pause)

14  
15 MR. PETER: Madam Chair, I'd like to make  
16 a motion to accept Wildlife Proposal WP26-47.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Phillip.  
19 Phillip moved to support or approve WP26-47. Is there a  
20 second?

21  
22 MS. AGAYAR: Second.

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Seconded by  
25 Tiffany. And then let's go into some discussion.

26  
27 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Phillip.

30  
31 MR. PETER: If we accept this and pass  
32 this proposal, now we're going to -- it's up to the  
33 person who is hunting or trapping to destroy, if he  
34 wants to the beaver house?

35  
36 MR. PLANK: Through Chair. Tom Plank,  
37 OSM. Yes. That's -- basically this will allow that if  
38 you're trapping, that if for some reason you feel that  
39 you need to disturb or destroy a house, you would be  
40 able to under federal regulations.

41  
42 MR. PETER: Madam Chair. Another question  
43 I've got is, do we have to purchase a license from Fish  
44 and Wildlife?

45  
46 MR. PLANK: Thank you, member Peter, for  
47 your question. Tom Plank, OSM. So, this -- however --  
48 whatever you have to do now to get -- to go trapping,  
49 you'll still have to do that. The only difference is  
50 where before you weren't allowed to disturb the house,

1 now you'll have that option under your trapping license.  
2 You could do it anyway under your hunting license, but  
3 this will give you the option to also do it under  
4 trapping if you feel you need to. But it doesn't change  
5 anything else. It just changes whether or not you have  
6 that option as a trapper.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks. And is  
9 there any other discussion? Brooke.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. If you recall  
12 Liz, the new anthropologist that replaced Pippa, she was  
13 asking if you guys could share a little information about  
14 -- I know John, you talked about trapping beavers in the  
15 past growing up and how you used to have to go really  
16 far, and now it's changed. But she would like to hear a  
17 little bit more. Like when you were young, did you use  
18 to harvest beaver? Did your elders use to harvest  
19 beavers? Could you share a little bit information about  
20 that, please? Thank you.

21

22 MR. PETER: Madam Chair.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

25

26 MR. PETER: I like to make a short  
27 comment. Yes, when I was young, I go with my two uncles  
28 to trap beavers beginning January all the way to --  
29 until the beaver opening closed, a long time ago. They  
30 had the regulations. First the limit used to be 40  
31 beavers. And then when the beavers are increased, that  
32 limit changes to 80. 80 pelts and the pelts, the big one  
33 pelt costs \$220. And the smaller one \$200, and the  
34 smallest 75. But, you know, when those beaver -- when  
35 we're trapping beavers, when we catch a small beaver  
36 that long, my uncle told me we quit on this beaver house,  
37 so we have to move to other house. That's the  
38 conservation. And those old people, they knew, and then  
39 there were a lot of trappers them days, beaver trappers  
40 in (In Native), we always call it (In Native), like the  
41 middle slough and (In Native), the second one, the main  
42 stem, Johnson River. The third one. That's where my uncle  
43 used to trap and those are what I mentioned. Qu yana.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana.....

46

47 (Simultaneous speech)

48

49 MR. PARKS: Madame Chair.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: .....Phillip.  
2 Henry.

3  
4 MR. PARKS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm  
5 supporting this proposal here because -- the reason why  
6 I am supporting is, you know, back in my younger days,  
7 we hardly had any beavers back home. But since the beaver  
8 population grew. Some of the creeks are -- have dams  
9 right now, and we can't go to our, like, our berry  
10 picking spots due to the closures of the rivers by the  
11 beavers and also affecting our fish. They go up to our  
12 -- they go up to their spawning grounds, to the lakes  
13 in our area, even blackfish and we have no more willow  
14 trees back home because we used to have a lot of willow  
15 trees, but we hardly have any no more. Especially on the  
16 rivers. So, I support this proposal. Quyana.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Henry.  
19 Anyone else or (In Native)? And do you think that was  
20 enough for Liz? Or she might be online. Liz would -- do  
21 you have any other.....

22  
23 (Simultaneous speech)

24  
25 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh.....

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, sorry. Go  
28 ahead.

29  
30 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, that's just wonderful.  
31 That's super helpful. I appreciate it. Thank you.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. And,  
34 you know, I'm pretty sure you'll hear more from us in  
35 the future and more about beavers. So.....

36  
37 (Simultaneous speech)

38  
39 MS. WILLIAMS: I hope so.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native). If  
42 there's no other discussion, I'll entertain question,  
43 and then we can start voting.

44  
45 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

48  
49 MR. PARKS: Question (In Native).  
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Question  
2 has been called by Henry Parks, and we'll do a roll call  
3 with Brooke following that. Brooke.

4  
5 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
6 We'll start with Walter Morgan.

7  
8 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

9  
10 MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince.

11  
12 MR. PRINCE: Would it be okay to remain  
13 neutral?

14  
15 MS. MCDAVID: We usually don't allow  
16 people to abstain unless you have a strong reason or  
17 conflict of interest. But if you want to wait till  
18 everyone else votes, you can. Okay. We'll come back.  
19 Phillip Peter.

20  
21 MR. PETER: Yes.

22  
23 MS. MCDAVID: Henry Parks.

24  
25 MR. PARKS: Yes.

26  
27 MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan.

28  
29 MS. EVAN: Yes.

30  
31 MS. MCDAVID: John Andrew.

32  
33 MR. ANDREW: No.

34  
35 MS. MCDAVID: Tiffany Agayar.

36  
37 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

38  
39 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. The Chair votes last.

40 So, Francis?

41  
42 MR. PRINCE: Francis says yes.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Chair Cleveland.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

47  
48 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Motion passes, 7-1.

49  
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
2 everyone. I'm going to call for a five-minute break. So  
3 back at 2:51. Qu yana.

4  
5 (Off record)

6  
7 (On record)

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, John.  
10 I've just been reminded about our break going over. It's  
11 3:00. Well, over the break I mentioned. We'll come back  
12 from recess. We're finished with all the proposals. So,  
13 we're not going to be going through that process for the  
14 rest of this meeting, but we are going to move on to  
15 more action items. E -- under E there's annual report.  
16 Federal Subsistence Board FY24, annual report replies.  
17 And that summary will be presented by our Coordinator,  
18 Brooke. And you can go to page 143 for that. Again,  
19 that's for the annual report. Thanks.

20  
21 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
22 Just one moment while I get situated here. If you guys  
23 want to start looking on page 143 like Chair Cleveland  
24 mentioned. This is -- so starting on page 143, this is  
25 the Federal Subsistence Board's reply to the annual  
26 report that you submitted last year. And you actually  
27 included 16 different topics last year, which was a lot.  
28 But the Board only replied to four of them because some  
29 of those topics were informational. You were just  
30 letting the Board know about some issues, but you weren't  
31 requesting a response because several of those items  
32 were outside the Board's jurisdiction. But we'll just  
33 go through the four replies briefly that they did respond  
34 to, and I'll give you an overview.

35  
36 So, I don't have to tell you all, but  
37 you have been talking about the salmon crisis for years.  
38 Long before I've been working with you guys on this  
39 Council even, but it's continued to get worse in recent  
40 years, and you have asked the Board to help elevate  
41 those concerns to the level of the Office of the  
42 Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture.  
43 You have asked to request that the Secretaries liaise  
44 with the Department of Commerce to more holistically  
45 manage salmon across their jurisdictions in river and  
46 in the marine environment. The Board responded that they  
47 have elevated those issues to the past administrations.  
48 As you know a year ago, we had a new administration come  
49 into place in D.C. and the Board said that they would  
50 elevate the salmon issues to the new administration.

1 They also voted on that to pass on some letters that you  
2 and other Councils had requested to be elevated at the  
3 regulatory meeting last year and also at the summer work  
4 session. But unfortunately, that has not happened yet.  
5 I'm sure you're aware there's a lot going on with the  
6 government right now. But I just wanted to flag that for  
7 you in case that is something you want to raise again.  
8 Basically asking them to follow through with that  
9 action. Even though it hasn't been done yet, you could  
10 consider putting that request in again.

11  
12 The second request that you asked for  
13 was to actually have the Board take the lead on  
14 coordinating interjurisdictional management of salmon.  
15 And the Board's reply was basically that that is outside  
16 of the Board's jurisdiction. They did encourage you to  
17 participate in the Alaska Board of Fish, North Pacific  
18 Fishery Management Council, etc. But I think that that  
19 request kind of ties into your first request to elevate  
20 those issues, because you've wanted to see a different  
21 structure for salmon management. And so perhaps  
22 considering tying that into any elevation request that  
23 you have would be an option for how to maybe more  
24 effectively address that.

25  
26 Number three, you requested for a co-  
27 management agreement with Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish  
28 Commission, sort of in as, like a mirror of what's done  
29 on the Kuskokwim between Fish and Wildlife Service and  
30 the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. And  
31 the Board replied that the Federal Manager on the Yukon,  
32 who is Holly Carroll, she is working with the Yukon  
33 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission to explore these  
34 options. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
35 is a much newer and younger organization than Kuskokwim  
36 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, so they're still  
37 working to build some of their capacity. They did just  
38 get their first executive director hired. And so,  
39 they're really hopeful about opportunities for the  
40 future and perhaps being able to do more co-management  
41 as time moves on. The new director -- there's a question  
42 from Chair Cleveland, is Craig Chythlook, and I believe  
43 he's originally from Dillingham, but he lives in  
44 Fairbanks now, so.

45  
46 And then the fourth topic is, you all  
47 requested for more balanced geographic representation  
48 on the Council among your members. And in particular,  
49 you were concerned about not having representatives from  
50 the coastal area and from Mekoryuk and Nelson Island

1 Communities. And so, I will let you know that -- kind  
2 of who applies to the Council it's up to folks in the  
3 region. So, we can't force people to apply from certain  
4 communities or certain areas. We do try to do a lot of  
5 outreach. We send applications, we email them, we mail  
6 them in the mail. We do post on social media, on radio  
7 ads to try to raise awareness that folks are able to  
8 apply. But in the end, we don't have control over who  
9 decides to apply. I can let you know that we had that  
10 one vacant seat on the Council, and someone has applied  
11 from a community that is not currently represented on  
12 the Council. We're waiting to hear about appointments  
13 and if that person gets appointed, I look forward to  
14 maybe sharing more with you, but we can't really divulge  
15 any of that information at this time. So, but as Council  
16 members, you guys are the ones with lots of good  
17 connections. And I know there was someone from -- was  
18 it Kongiganak? Kongiganak? From Kong -- I'm sorry, I  
19 can't say the full community name, that was here today  
20 that Chair Cleveland and I spoke to and talked to her  
21 about the application process. So, it really takes a  
22 team effort to get the word out and try to get people  
23 to apply. So, if you guys ever think of anyone that you  
24 think would be a good Council member, you can always  
25 give them my number, give them my contact, I can send  
26 them an application. And the application period has not  
27 opened up for this year yet, but when it does, we'll be  
28 sure to pass that announcement out so we can get folks  
29 interested.

30  
31 Those were the -- basically an overview  
32 of the four topics and replies from last year's report.  
33 And if you guys have any questions, I'd be happy to try  
34 to answer any questions.

35  
36 (No response)

37  
38 And member or Chair Cleveland, if it's  
39 okay, I could say one more thing. I wanted to let you  
40 guys know too, that Jackie came to the Federal  
41 Subsistence Board work session last summer, and during  
42 the summer is when the Board reviews all the annual  
43 reports from all the different Councils across the ten  
44 regions in the state. And so, Jackie was there. She was  
45 able to engage in conversation with the Board about some  
46 of these topics. So, that's one way that the Board gets  
47 to hear more about some of these issues. Thank you.

48  
49 There was a question about process. So,  
50 you guys don't have -- this isn't an action item right

1 now. This is just a chance for you to see how the Board  
2 responded to the issues you raised last year. The next  
3 thing that we'll do after you guys are done with this,  
4 and if you have any comments or questions, we can address  
5 those. But the next thing will be to talk about the  
6 topics you want for this year's report that you'd like  
7 to go to the Board. And before we jump into that  
8 discussion our leadership team, Representative Justin,  
9 will be giving just a brief overview of the annual report  
10 process so that when you're developing topics for this  
11 year, you'll have a little direction. But before we get  
12 to that, yeah, I just wanted to make sure you knew how  
13 the Board responded to last year's report. So, no rush.  
14 We can sit and read over as long as you'd like.

15  
16 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair. (In Native)  
17 annual report (In Native).

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

20  
21 INTERPRETER: Do we need to adopt or vote  
22 on the annual report? No, there's no need to vote on the  
23 annual report. So, he asked if we needed to adopt the  
24 annual report for this and she said no. And the way that  
25 I read this annual report, this is -- it's okay with me.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Henry.

28  
29 MR. PARKS: Madame Chair, Henry (In  
30 Native).

31  
32 INTERPRETER: I'll speak in Yup'ik. These  
33 issues that we have discussed -- some of these issues  
34 are -- I mean, we are earnest in what we do here, but a  
35 lot of the issues that we raised up are not adopted by  
36 the Board of Fish. And we work hard on these items and  
37 for them to not agree to what we want, it's kind of hard  
38 because subsistence is our way of life and it's very  
39 important to us. And I just wanted to bring this up and  
40 John Andrew touched upon the subject here, and I did  
41 agree with him. And just like -- that our concerns are  
42 not listened to, and that's it.

43  
44 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair. Question, from  
45 Francis.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Francis.

48  
49 MR. PRINCE: I just wanted to ask a  
50 question. Was my letter about the pike program included

1 with this one that I wrote, I believe, last year, seeing  
2 if they could do a research on the Yukon pike?

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Francis. So,  
5 your letter that you emailed to me I sent that to the  
6 fisheries managers and the federal fish staff also  
7 shared that with their state counterparts with Fish and  
8 Game. And we were going to have a presentation about  
9 pike and some of the research that has been done so far  
10 to kind of have more discussion about sort of tied in,  
11 you know, you talked about some of it with -- during the  
12 beaver discussion about how you all are seeing increases  
13 in number of pike. And you have concerns about predation  
14 on juvenile salmon and other species. That was not  
15 included as part of the annual report, though. If that  
16 is a topic that you would like brought up, it is  
17 something that I don't -- the Board doesn't have really  
18 jurisdiction over. But I think continuing those  
19 conversations with the managers and the researchers  
20 about what opportunities there might be to address some  
21 of those concerns could be a good avenue. And at our  
22 March meeting that's coming up, I am going to try to get  
23 that presentation rescheduled so that we can continue  
24 some of those discussions. And there might also be  
25 opportunities during the next round of like this Council  
26 for the Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program gets to  
27 develop your priority information needs. And if you  
28 know, predation of pike or anything else about pike and  
29 impacts to other fishes is something you would be  
30 interested in adding to that list, definitely keep that  
31 in mind for the next time that that call for research  
32 priorities comes out. And we can include it there. Thank  
33 you.

34  
35 MR. PRINCE: Thank you, Brooke.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke, do you  
38 have another response?

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Chair  
41 Cleaveland. Henry and John, I just wanted to respond. I  
42 just wanted to say that I sympathize with you saying  
43 that you feel like your concerns are not heard. Some of  
44 the issues that you raise. The other Councils have some  
45 similar concerns as you, and a lot of it just has to do  
46 with the way things are structured right now. And it's  
47 kind of -- people feel like they're hitting a wall  
48 because there isn't an easy answer for how to address a  
49 lot of these big issues, especially with salmon, when  
50 you have the state, you have the feds, you have

1 Department of Commerce, you have Department of Interior,  
2 Department of Agriculture. That's stuff that has to  
3 change at a high level of government, you have things  
4 that need to go through Congress, like Magnuson-Stevens  
5 Act. And so, I would really encourage you guys tomorrow  
6 when we're having that discussion about the Secretarial  
7 Review and the issues that you want to talk to the  
8 Secretaries about, to bring some of those things up.  
9 That's how some of the other Councils have brought those  
10 up. I know a lot of people are concerned about the  
11 Secretarial Review and how it may have come about by a  
12 petition from a sport hunting group, but it's also an  
13 opportunity for you all to advocate for things that would  
14 benefit you. So, I just wanted to put that out there as  
15 well. So don't lose hope. Qu yana.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. That  
18 was nice of you, Brooke. If there are no further comments  
19 or discussion on FSB FY24 Annual Report Replies, I'd  
20 like to move on to number two, identify issues for FY25.  
21 Well, actually I'd like to just hear from Justin and  
22 then I was going to recommend that maybe we sleep on the  
23 issues and come back to it tomorrow rather than just  
24 coming up with, you know, right now and maybe we can  
25 plug it in before other business section of this agenda  
26 tomorrow. But so just keep that in mind. I would like  
27 us to have more time to think about our annual report  
28 or identifying issues for FY25. And another reason why  
29 I want to save it is because I would like to hear about  
30 the Secretarial Review first before deciding on the  
31 issues. But so for now can we hear from you, Justin?  
32 Thank you.

33  
34 MR. KOLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
35 Members of the Council. Justin Koller, again  
36 representing the Office of Subsistence Management.  
37 Regarding your annual report development we have spoken  
38 previously with you about your annual reports and the  
39 replies you received from the Board. We have spoken about  
40 how your reports provide information to the Board and  
41 are an opportunity for us to share information with you  
42 at the same time. We would like to continue that  
43 conversation by highlighting a few important points  
44 before you develop this year's report. Number one, Title  
45 VIII of ANILCA is what gives the Councils authority to  
46 submit annual reports. Those annual reports should  
47 highlight subsistence trends and issues from your  
48 region, specifically the Y-K Delta region, your Council  
49 region. Annual reports, along with Council  
50 recommendations on regulatory proposals, are the key

1 means by which the Councils prepare the Board to make  
2 important decisions on regulatory matters. Annual  
3 reports are used in our analyses, our regulatory  
4 analyses. They're used by staff to help identify  
5 research needs in the region. They're also used by staff  
6 to help identify regional outreach needs. Annual reports  
7 can also provide recommendations on subsistence  
8 management strategies and overall program processes. The  
9 Secretaries has established the Board and delegated to  
10 it the authority for administering or -- excuse me, the  
11 authority for administering the subsistence taking of  
12 uses of fish and wildlife on public lands, and the  
13 related promulgation and signature authority for  
14 regulations.

15  
16 So, in short, and that was -- I read  
17 that directly from the regulations. So, in short, that  
18 means that the Board is concerned with issues of take  
19 of fish and wildlife on federal public lands and the  
20 regulations that govern the take of those resources  
21 under federal regulations. So, issues outside of federal  
22 subsistence, fish and wildlife regulations, federal  
23 regulations are likely beyond the Board's authority to  
24 act or to provide a substantive response to the Council.  
25 If you're requesting a response or action from the Board  
26 in one of your annual report topics, please state the  
27 Council's ask on the record. So just be very clear on  
28 the record what you want the Board to do about a specific  
29 issue or what you're asking of the Board. So, this will  
30 just make communication with the Board more effective  
31 and lead to more robust and better responses to the  
32 Council. So as a Council, you'll decide what is the more  
33 effective way to convey an issue to the Board also either  
34 in the annual report or sometimes it's better in the  
35 form of a letter. And your Coordinator Brooke can help  
36 with that also to differentiate what's better in the  
37 annual report and what's better in a letter to either  
38 the Board or land managing agency or something like that,  
39 so.

40  
41 Again, this is your opportunity to  
42 identify topics of interest from 2025. So, no additional  
43 topics can be added during the winter 2026 meetings. And  
44 that's when your Council will review and approve this  
45 annual report. You'll see it again at your winter  
46 meeting. So, we'll do our best to be responsive and  
47 answer questions as you develop your report tomorrow.  
48 Some of the issues that you bring up, we may be able to  
49 take care of on the spot and provide information that  
50 may satisfy your curiosity. Or you may decide to leave

1 it in a report, which is fine as well too. But we'll do  
2 our best to provide information to you while you do  
3 this. The Board's summer work session is scheduled  
4 August 4th and 5th of 2026, in Anchorage. And at that  
5 meeting, they will review your annual report. Council  
6 Chairs or Council representatives are invited to attend  
7 and communicate their annual report topics and regional  
8 issues directly to the Board. The program will cover  
9 travel costs for one chosen Council representative. And  
10 last year that was Chair Cleveland that attended. The  
11 Council representative and tenants will report back to  
12 the Council at their next meeting in the fall. So, I'll  
13 hand it back over to Chair Cleveland and your Council  
14 Coordinator. And it sounds like we'll be developing  
15 these topics possibly tomorrow. Thank you.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
18 Justin. So, yeah, I'll just -- I can say it again. Let's,  
19 you know, tonight -- tomorrow is our last chance. So,  
20 tonight and today, tomorrow, let's be thinking about of  
21 all our issues, maybe prioritizing from those issues.  
22 And let's avoid, you know, like sending 16 asks this  
23 time and prioritizing those a bit better. And that's  
24 kind of why I wanted us to, you know, sleep on it so  
25 that we can choose, you know, the most important and  
26 prioritize our issues that way. Saving it for last --  
27 so just another reminder. Yeah. And then Brooke wants  
28 to add something, too.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. I just wanted  
31 to follow up and just kind of maybe reiterate some things  
32 Justin said. And that's -- the annual report doesn't  
33 just have to be thought about as requests or things  
34 you're asking for. It's also a way of sharing with the  
35 Board. And that could just -- you're informing the Board.  
36 You might not necessarily get a response if you're not  
37 having an ask, but you're still sharing important -- you  
38 can still share important information to the Board. So,  
39 if there are, you know, issues that you want to make  
40 them aware of, it doesn't necessarily have to be a  
41 question or something you want back, but just to make  
42 them aware, these are some of the things we're dealing  
43 with in our area. So, I just wanted to say that it can  
44 be a question, or it can just be information. So, thank  
45 you.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
48 Brooke. That's helpful. Since we're coming back to this  
49 tomorrow, let's move on to more action items. So, under  
50 f, it's the Alaska Board of Fisheries proposal comments.

1 And that'll be on page 11 -- 149.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is  
4 Brooke. So, things have changed since we originally were  
5 planning this meeting. Jackie's book is falling apart  
6 over here. Maybe we're all falling apart a little bit.  
7 So originally, you guys were supposed to meet in October.  
8 Yeah. And the AYK or Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Board of  
9 Fish meeting was happening in November. So, at your March  
10 meeting last year, you all voted to do a working group  
11 with the Yukon RACs all together to talk about the AYK  
12 Board of Fish Proposals. A working Group in late  
13 September, Tiffany was the representative from this  
14 Council who participated, and it was a really nice  
15 discussion. We had the people from upriver, middle  
16 river, lower river talking together about different  
17 perspectives on some of those proposals. But  
18 unfortunately, because of the government shutdown you  
19 guys couldn't meet in October and those comments were  
20 not able to be submitted to Board of Fish. So that  
21 meeting has already passed. I think at the March meeting  
22 you might get an update about some of the proposals that  
23 passed. I know there was at least one for Kuskokwim to  
24 allow eel sticks to be added to the gear types and then  
25 a few for the Yukon about salmon. But there are still  
26 two Board of Fish meetings coming up that you guys have  
27 an opportunity to comment on proposals. The Area M  
28 meeting is in February. The comment deadline is February  
29 3rd and then the statewide meeting is in March, and that  
30 deadline is March 2nd to submit comments. That working  
31 group with the three different Yukon RACs also talked a  
32 little bit about the Area M proposals and the statewide  
33 proposals because they wanted to support proposals that  
34 will help protect the chum and chinook salmon being  
35 caught in Area M that are supposed to be coming back to  
36 Kuskokwim and Yukon.

37

38 They didn't really have time in  
39 September to look at all the individual proposals, so  
40 they decided to just submit a comment that they support  
41 any proposals that help reduce fishing time in Area M.  
42 You guys have an opportunity, though, to think a little  
43 bit more about which specific proposals you might want  
44 to support. And we have a handout from the Bering Sea  
45 Fishermen's Association. They went through the  
46 proposals, and this is just an example of what another  
47 group is doing. I also talked to Terese with Kuskokwim  
48 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission earlier, and she said  
49 they're taking a similar approach. So, I'm going to pass  
50 out this handout, and we can talk about it. And you guys

00088

1 can think about what you would like to do about how to  
2 address Area M proposals. And then before I pass it out,  
3 though, the statewide meeting in March, there are a  
4 couple of proposals for that meeting, too, that seek to  
5 deal with trawl fishery and hatcheries. So, you can think  
6 about if you want to talk about those as well or just  
7 talk about the Area M ones. And this is not a required  
8 action item. You guys are a federal Council. If you  
9 don't want to take action and submit comments on these,  
10 you don't have to. But I know you've been very concerned  
11 about the Area M fishery in the past and the interception  
12 of Western Alaska salmon. So, if you would like to submit  
13 comments on these proposals, we can do so. So, I'll just  
14 come pass these out.

15

16 (Pause)

17

18 Okay. I think everyone in the room has  
19 a copy. This unfortunately, is not available online, so  
20 folks will just kind of have to listen in, for now. I'll  
21 -- would you guys like me to kind of read through some  
22 of these -- the overview? Okay. So, Bering Sea  
23 Fishermen's Association -- this is some background  
24 information. Since the 1960s, we have identified an  
25 issue where Area M fishers targeting sockeye salmon  
26 bound for Bristol Bay are catching upwards of 2.5 million  
27 chum salmon bound for other areas. Not all are bound for  
28 AYK, but roughly 50% are. And when AYK escapement goals  
29 aren't being met, a moratorium has been imposed on Yukon  
30 River residents and restrictions are put on subsistence  
31 fishermen. It becomes clear that every fish matters and  
32 restrictions cannot be placed solely on AYK residents.  
33 While there have been restrictions and closures in the  
34 Area M fishery, we do not believe current measures go  
35 far enough to protect Yukon and Kuskokwim declining  
36 stocks. There are 56 proposals for consideration at the  
37 Area M Board of Fish meeting next month. And Bering Sea  
38 Fishermen's Association says that they have paid special  
39 attention to 11 proposals that are specific to the June  
40 Area M fishery, where we know the impacts are greatest  
41 to Western Alaska salmon.

42

43 And this is some of the things they  
44 think that should be considered. Support proposals that  
45 reduce time and area closures in the June Area M fishing  
46 period. To maximize passage of chum and Chinook stocks.  
47 Oppose any proposal that might increase harvest in the  
48 June Area M fishery because that would also increase  
49 chum and chinook incidental catch. Oppose the use of  
50 harvest caps or triggers or thresholds, because data

1 collected from fish tickets may or may not be accurate  
2 or timely. Express concern over the general self-  
3 policing of the seine and drift fleet without sufficient  
4 trooper presence. Encourage increased trooper presence  
5 on the fishing grounds during the June Area M fishery,  
6 as well as checking fish tickets on tenders and checking  
7 fish tickets at the docks, and within processing  
8 facilities. Encourage timely release of genetic  
9 information by Alaska Department of Fish and Game for  
10 both chum and chinook from both the June and post-June  
11 sockeye fisheries.  
12

13 So, in summary, these considerations  
14 lead us to strongly support proposal number 136, which  
15 requests a complete closure as our preferred proposal  
16 with compromise proposal number 131, which would be the  
17 next restrictive by proposing a straight 12 days of  
18 closure during the middle of June. They go on to say  
19 that we understand that a complete closure of the June  
20 fishery is very unlikely, but there is some strategy  
21 which indicates if you lend your full support to a  
22 complete closure, understanding that it is unlikely,  
23 there is an acceptance of compromise with proposal 131,  
24 which is designed to offer a lot of protection for AYK  
25 chum and chinook salmon.  
26

27 So, they went through and they listed  
28 out all 56 of those proposals which -- that's a lot of  
29 proposals. And I know we're not going to be able to go  
30 through all of those, but they did highlight these two  
31 proposals in yellow on page 3 that I just mentioned.  
32 Proposal 136 would be a complete closure of the Area M  
33 fishery. They said that's not likely to happen. So, their  
34 second -- what they're calling their compromise is to  
35 support proposal 131, which would close 12 days during  
36 the middle of that June fishery. So, that's kind of a  
37 summary of the strategy that they're taking. And that's  
38 Bering Sea Fisheries Association. The Fish Commission  
39 hasn't or the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish  
40 Commission has not formally finalized their comments.  
41 But just in speaking off the record has a -- is going  
42 to pursue a similar strategy. But I just wanted to share  
43 that with you all kind of as a start for discussion for  
44 how you might like to provide comments for this meeting.  
45 So, I'm not sure if any of your ACs have talked about  
46 this yet or any of your tribes, but that meeting is  
47 coming up soon, and this is a chance to maybe just start  
48 talking about some of that. So, I am not an expert on  
49 any of this, but if you guys have questions, I can try  
50 to do my best to answer them based on the information we

1 have available. Thank you.

2

3 MR. MORGAN: Got a question, Chair.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Walter.

6

7 MR. MORGAN: The Bering Sea Fishermen  
8 Association, did they have the same seats as they had  
9 the last time? Because they, you know, we put these  
10 proposals through and they're always voted out four-  
11 three, four-three, I mean. Did anything change in the  
12 Bering Sea seats? Was there any additions to any new  
13 seats? Thank you.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for the question,  
16 Walter. I am not really familiar with Bering Sea  
17 Fishermen's Association and their structure. But were  
18 you -- are you maybe talking about the Board of Fish?  
19 And when these proposals go to Board of Fish, how they  
20 get voted on at Board of Fish? Sorry, I just wanted to  
21 clarify.

22

23 MR. MORGAN: Yeah, I was thinking of  
24 that. Sorry. I was -- because all the proposals that we  
25 had, you know, there were all voted out. I mean, who's  
26 going to say these proposals, you know, will go through?  
27 I mean, seem like we're in the same boat again. We'll  
28 go down and they'll tip us over.

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Walter. I  
31 understand it can be a frustrating process to have to  
32 continually advocate for the same things every three  
33 years when this comes up. I know the last time this  
34 meeting happened, there was record turnout at that  
35 meeting from people from Western Alaska, from the  
36 Kuskokwim and the Yukon and everywhere. And they had to  
37 extend the meeting a couple days to hear all the  
38 testimony. Unfortunately, this is the process that we  
39 have to work with. And that doesn't mean we have to like  
40 the process. We can keep asking for the process to  
41 change. But if you would like to make your voice heard,  
42 submitting comments is one of the only ways to do that  
43 at this time. The Board of Fish also has recently started  
44 doing traditional knowledge testimony at the beginning  
45 of their meetings. So, any tribes can submit the names  
46 of anyone from your tribe that would like to testify at  
47 the beginning of the meeting and share traditional  
48 knowledge with the Board of Fish. That's separate from  
49 comments on proposals. So that's something new. That's  
50 an opportunity that you all might want to take advantage

1 of. You would have to do that at, you know, in your  
2 communities, make that decision to send someone. But  
3 that's another way to help get your voice heard a little  
4 bit more, so.

5  
6 Of course we don't have control over how  
7 the Board votes. There is one new Yukon River  
8 representative on the Board of Fish. Her name is Olivia  
9 Irwin. She replaced Stan Zuray who was on there before  
10 from the Yukon. She was on the Eastern Interior RAC for  
11 a little bit. She had to step down from the RAC because  
12 she got appointed to the Board of Fish. But I know she's  
13 a strong advocate for our regions, and I can't really  
14 say much about anyone else. But I just encourage you to  
15 think about submitting comments if you want to. This is  
16 your only opportunity to do so at this meeting, because  
17 that deadline will be coming up on February 3rd.

18  
19 MR. MORGAN: Excuse me, Ms. Chairman. I  
20 remember this, you know, we had all these good proposals,  
21 even what, you know, everything went -- 136, I think it  
22 was proposal. We're all for it. And, you know, and  
23 everybody got upset in the end and nothing was passed.  
24 With Stan missing, I mean, it don't matter who's on  
25 that. If it's Stan or her, they'll still outvote you  
26 because there's 4 to 3 still. And it's, you know, that's  
27 the way I look at it anyway and watch this happen, so.  
28 I have no hope or, you know. It's frustrating. All that  
29 time we spent there and all that money they put into it  
30 and all that work. It just went out the door. That's  
31 what I experienced in that time. Thank you.

32  
33 (Pause)

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Just a thought.  
36 So, on the Board of Game, I know we have, you know, one  
37 Alaska Native sitting on the Board there and for Board  
38 of Fish, Olivia is maybe the rural or Native  
39 representative. There's one more? Yeah, (indiscernible).  
40 That's right. Yeah, I guess with Alaska having the, you  
41 know, the highest percentage of Alaska or Natives per  
42 state, I don't know, I think it would at least, you  
43 know, make sense to have at least two of these  
44 representatives on each Board. Of course, in a perfect  
45 world, it would even be half, but. And I guess the  
46 current process and, you know, it depends on who's  
47 governor, who's commissioner, who's in those positions  
48 and the one to be appointing people. But so much like  
49 you know, FSB and other groups where we advocated for  
50 more Indigenous representation. I don't know if it's

1 possible to do it through the -- for both Boards to  
2 maybe recommend the same type of consideration to  
3 include more rural or local or Native seats within the  
4 Boards. It's just a thought, and I'm not sure if it  
5 could be in a form of a letter or a proposal. And yeah,  
6 I wouldn't know where to start, but it's just a thought.  
7 Thanks. Brooke.

8  
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
10 Just in response to your suggestion. This is just my  
11 personal recommendation, is that might have more weight  
12 coming from your state Fish and Game, ACs since that is  
13 a state process. So potentially continue that  
14 conversation in that forum. And the matter at hand here  
15 today, though, is if this Yukon Delta RAC would like to  
16 submit comments supporting some of these proposals that  
17 are trying to decrease the interception of chum and  
18 chinook in Area M, so. Thank you.

19  
20 (Pause)

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: What does the  
23 group think? Do you think maybe we could -- we should  
24 help out BSFA by providing some support letters for at  
25 least two of the proposals that they are highlighting  
26 here? What are your thoughts on a support letter?

27  
28 MR. ANDREW: (In Native).

29  
30 INTERPRETER: Are you talking about the  
31 highlighted areas? I do support -- I support 131 and  
32 136.

33  
34 MR. ANDREW: That's a motion.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana, John.  
37 So, John Andrew made a motion to -- for our RAC to write  
38 some support letters for the two highlighted,  
39 recommended proposals to support by BSFA. Is there a  
40 second?

41  
42 MR. MORGAN: Walter Morgan. I second.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Walter Morgan  
45 seconds. And we can now go into some discussion. Brooke  
46 has a question. Go ahead Brooke.

47  
48 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Maybe this will  
49 help with your discussion. So, they're recommending --  
50 the priority one would be to close Area M and that's

1 proposal 136. They also say they know that's probably  
2 not going to happen. So, they want to advocate for that  
3 but also support as a second option if that doesn't pass  
4 number 131. So, my question to you guys is, do you want  
5 to have that same priority or do you -- how would you  
6 like to word your support letter? Thank you.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Does anyone here  
9 happen to know if other groups have also sent support  
10 or provide support letters?

11  
12 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, member  
13 Cleveland. This is Brooke. So, I'm aware of just a few.  
14 Like I mentioned, the Fish Commission hasn't yet  
15 finalized all their comments. They might be leaning in  
16 a similar way. Eastern Interior RAC and Western Interior  
17 RAC, which are the two Upper River Yukon Councils, they  
18 weren't able to comment on the individual proposals.  
19 They just submitted comments that they support any of  
20 the proposals that will reduce bycatch or interception.  
21 Sorry. The Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Council also  
22 made recommendations and they -- let's see, they  
23 strongly supported 136, which is the closure. They have  
24 a fishery subcommittee that really looks at a lot of  
25 these issues and also 131 so similarly. They also support  
26 -- there is another proposal. Well, these are just the  
27 two that we're talking about right now. So, there is  
28 support from other groups of these proposals. But I don't  
29 know about -- I know there's lots of other groups out  
30 there. Those are the only ones I'm aware of right now.  
31 Thank you.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
34 Brooke. That was helpful. Still helpful. I guess I would  
35 agree with BSFA's choices with number one being a  
36 complete closure and then the second one being the next  
37 best or next highest percentage of decreasing seines and  
38 drifts. So, yes, I support 136 and 131, and I support  
39 our Council to write letters, support letters. Henry.

40  
41 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair. Henry, for the  
42 record. (In Native). I'm going to talk in Yup'ik.

43  
44 INTERPRETER: We set our nets out here  
45 on the Kuskokwim, and we know that the king salmon come  
46 in numbers during the springtime when we first start  
47 fishing. And so, I'm thinking that this is too early.  
48 That this -- maybe I'm wrong here, but the June 21-23  
49 closure seems to be a little late for the two -- oh,  
50 what am I saying here? Am I? I thought I was wrong here.

1 But around the 12th of June the king salmon start coming  
2 into this area, and they start coming in numbers at that  
3 time. And so, I'm thinking that this support number two  
4 seems to be a little late here. And so, if these two  
5 proposals are passed, I'm thinking that they will  
6 intercept the chum salmon that are coming through --  
7 that we expect them to come here, and I have no idea on  
8 the speed of the salmon coming from the Area M fisheries  
9 to our Kuskokwim waters. And so, I was only concerned  
10 about that. And so, looking into the future here I'm  
11 just saying that I support that number one, number 136,  
12 but it's probably not going to happen even if we support  
13 the 136 proposal. Even though that it's not going to  
14 pass, I am supporting 136. Thank you.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. So, from  
17 Henry's comments I just -- so he had some maybe questions  
18 within his comment. One was maybe not knowing how long  
19 the salmon take to swim from Area M to our region. Does  
20 anyone happen to know that? And also, depending on how  
21 long that takes, the proposed dates for proposal 131 of  
22 closing it from June 12 to 23 may be too late to affect  
23 those ones that are bound for WAK, Western Alaska. Does  
24 anyone happen to know that question, how long it takes  
25 the salmon? And you know, we're talking about chum salmon  
26 in this case, from Area M to the Western region?

27  
28 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Walter.

31  
32 MR. MORGAN: Walter. Can we look at their  
33 catch in Area M when they have a big number? Does it  
34 have in any record? And we'll know, you know, when they  
35 swim through Area M because you'll see a big number, of  
36 course. Big catch. I mean, that's one way to know. They  
37 do catch most of the salmon, you know, that's bound for  
38 western Alaska in that time period. And it's a big number  
39 all the time. So maybe we can do some research and see  
40 what date the past -- the last year when they caught all  
41 that salmon and maybe hopefully get it. Thank you.

42  
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
44 Walter. And I think Brooke has a response.

45  
46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, guys. This is  
47 Brooke. Thank you, Chair Cleveland. So, Walter, I'm  
48 going to respond based on the information I have in  
49 front of you. I'm not -- we don't, unfortunately, have  
50 anyone here to really present the data on this that's,

1 like, super knowledgeable, but I have the proposal. So  
2 that proposal, 131, it states that -- so, in the past,  
3 there were some genetic studies that show that the peak  
4 Western Alaska chum salmon migration through the South  
5 Peninsula fishing areas occurred around June 18th. So  
6 that's why they selected those dates right around that  
7 peak, so that it would hopefully provide the most  
8 protection to close it when those fish are migrating  
9 through there. So, I hope that helps answer that about  
10 why they provided those dates.

11  
12 And also, Henry, to respond to you. I'm  
13 not as familiar with the timing for Kuskokwim chum, but  
14 I -- on the Yukon, there's two runs of chum. There's the  
15 well, there's the summer chum and the fall chum and the  
16 fall chum come later. And they're the ones that have  
17 really been suffering these last few years. So, I think  
18 they're hoping that this would really help, especially  
19 with those stocks. If that's helpful. Thank you.

20  
21 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, Walter. This  
22 is for only chum, right? So, they -- basically, we can't  
23 do nothing to stop them from catching the kings that are  
24 coming through, right? Because they come through a  
25 little earlier in False Pass with the king salmon. But  
26 the chums are a little bit later, so I don't know. You  
27 know, I'm all guessing I -- but I've seen catches where  
28 they have like around the 8th of June where they have  
29 really big numbers of catches under Area M, so.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And you're  
32 talking about chinook for...?

33  
34 (Simultaneous speech)

35  
36 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay.

39  
40 MR. MORGAN: And, you know, and the dogs  
41 -- this is only dog salmon for -- right? We're looking  
42 at? Yeah. Thank you.

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Walter. Yeah.  
45 Unfortunately, we don't have the data to show you about  
46 any of these -- to answer any of these questions. I do  
47 know we had put in a request, this Council. There are  
48 some updated genetic studies for the fish that are caught  
49 in that area that were just published. They're going to  
50 be presented at the Board of Fish meeting that's coming

1 up. You all had requested to get those presentations to  
2 this RAC, but they weren't ready yet, at your last  
3 meeting. So, at the March meeting, hopefully we might  
4 be able to get an updated presentation about some of the  
5 -- to answer some of the questions you're having. That  
6 will unfortunately be after the Board of Fish meets. But  
7 you know, the conversation I think is ongoing. And I  
8 know you guys call them dog salmon, but in some parts  
9 of the Yukon, that's one of the main and only salmon  
10 that they get. So that's why it's so important,  
11 especially people in the Upper Yukon. Thanks.

12

13 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, Henry.

16

17 MR. PARKS: Quyana. For the record,  
18 Henry. I'm just going to make a comment. You know, back  
19 in my young teen days, I should say, we hardly had any  
20 reds, you know, red salmons, but then right now, we're  
21 having chums that are returning in low numbers, but then  
22 the red salmons are really increasing in numbers. So, I  
23 always get -- how could these reds, well, we had none  
24 back then. And nowadays they're returning in greater  
25 numbers, seems like in every year. So that -- but the  
26 chums are going down in their numbers including the  
27 kings. So, I'm always what -- somewhat -- my mind working  
28 something like that. Why? You know, asking myself.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

31

32 (Simultaneous speech)

33

34 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair, John Andrew.

35 (In Native).

36

37 INTERPRETER: I used to go swimming. I  
38 used to go fishing. In 1950, I went out to Kodiak, and  
39 I used to hear about the False Pass in that area that  
40 there are purse seiners in before the False Pass  
41 fisheries became an issue. They used to say that when  
42 they caught red salmon, they used to catch a lot of red  
43 salmon. And at that time, they used to -- when they did  
44 catch the chum salmon, they used to just chuck them  
45 overboard because they did not have overseers, and the  
46 red salmon commanded high prices. So, that's why they  
47 chucked the chum salmon over. And so, since the False  
48 Pass started fisheries in 1970s, commercial fisheries,  
49 the Department of Fish and Game has that record, and  
50 maybe they can bring that up. And so -- and they used

1 to keep track of data but I'm not sure which actually  
2 they did. But I know that people that went to Bristol  
3 Bay to go fishing and those that had purse seines, and  
4 when they did catch the chum salmon, they should chuck  
5 them overboard and keep the red salmon. So that's nothing  
6 new and that's where -- so that's why -- how it affected  
7 our areas and decreased our fish population.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In  
10 Native). So just a reminder because I have to remind  
11 myself, too. We are still in the Council motion. It's  
12 been motion to be adopted and seconded, and we're in  
13 discussion. We can continue discussion if there is any  
14 more -- but just a reminder, this is an action to send  
15 support letters supporting proposals 136 and 131.  
16 Quyana.

17  
18 MR. ANDREW: Question.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question's been  
21 called, but, Brooke, you can still ask your question,  
22 your actual question.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Just before you guys move  
25 on to vote. It would be good to have a little  
26 justification. And I have heard you guys say many times  
27 that it's not fair for you to be shut down when folks  
28 are still harvesting these salmon in other areas, and  
29 it would be good if you could say something along those  
30 lines again, or if you have other reasons why you want  
31 to support, just to put it on the record so we can add  
32 it to the letter. Why you think these are important  
33 proposals. Thank you.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

36  
37 MR. PRINCE: Madam, through the Chair. I  
38 just have one question for 130. It states that chinooks  
39 caught in Area M are from AYK and there was other areas  
40 and shortening to setnet and same periods closure in  
41 June. June has season earlier. I wonder what date part  
42 of June are they considering about closing?

43  
44 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is  
45 Brooke. So, Francis, I'll answer your -- I'll try to  
46 answer your specific question, but I also want to just  
47 back up and say there are, you know, like 15 or so  
48 proposals that are trying to address this in different  
49 ways. And so, the two that you guys are talking about  
50 supporting will hopefully have the greatest impact. But

1 that's not to say that some of these other ones wouldn't  
2 also be other potential good ways to address some of  
3 these issues. The dates I'm -- I just pulled up that  
4 proposal 130. I'm trying to see. It looks like that  
5 proposal seeks to do more of, like, a windows approach  
6 throughout the fishery season, instead of trying to  
7 close a big block of time at once. It looks like starting  
8 in early June, like June 6th having 64-hour fishing  
9 openings and then closures and then open again, for  
10 example, that's not the exact language, but that's the  
11 approach that they would be looking at for that one.

12

13 MR. PRINCE: Thank you, Brooke. You  
14 answered my question.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: And just to clarify, I saw  
17 some heads nodding that for the reason you want to  
18 support these is to hopefully bring more fish back to  
19 Kuskokwim and Yukon. Is that correct? Okay. Seeing lots  
20 of yeses, I just want to put that on the record. Thank  
21 you.

22

23 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair. This Walter.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Walter.

26

27 MR. MORGAN: I see on 136, it says June  
28 7th to the 28th. So, there they are thinking of, you  
29 know, those kings that are running on proposal 136 but  
30 on 131 it don't start till the 12th. And you know,  
31 they're going to already catch the big number of kings  
32 and chum. You know, those are prime dates. I'm thinking,  
33 you know, for them, from the 1st to the 12th is probably  
34 a big fishing period for them. That's why I wanted to  
35 see if there's data in numbers of catch in Area M from  
36 June 1st to the 12th. Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
39 Walter. And Brooke has a response.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the  
42 Chair. This is Brooke. Walter. Yeah. I'm sorry we don't  
43 have that data, but we could note in your comment letter  
44 that one of the reasons you have 136 as a priority is  
45 because it also -- since the window of the closure is a  
46 lot bigger, maybe it would also help with king salmon.  
47 Is that a good summary of what you were...? Okay. I'm  
48 hearing yes. Thank you.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And I have to add  
2 that I want to make sure that we also verbally agree  
3 with what -- some of the reasons that Brooke mentioned  
4 that we've said in the past that our region, you know,  
5 we're the ones that suffer from this shortage to the  
6 point where, you know, like on the Yukon especially.  
7 Meanwhile, there's people comm fishing for the resource  
8 that sustains us, you know, and that we survive by, so.  
9 And we've been, you know, we've been taking that -- I  
10 guess we've been the ones who were the most affected for  
11 so long already. And so many of our people think it's  
12 enough. It's enough time that we're the ones that suffer  
13 from this.

14  
15 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, can I say  
16 something that we heard? One of the fishermen came home.  
17 He had five helpers. He bought them brand new trucks  
18 during that opening. All of them. He bought everybody  
19 trucks. And you know, there's a lot of money. They don't  
20 want to let it go. That's a big run they're hitting.  
21 That's their money maker. So, it's going to be hard. I  
22 think, you know, they've been doing it for years. And  
23 now we're, you know, we should have stopped it a long  
24 time ago. But now it's our fault. We should have say  
25 something. You know, people like Mr. Andrew said, you  
26 know, back he knew about it a long time ago, and it kind  
27 of hurt us. So, we need to really look at all the  
28 information and do it now, than wait 10, 12 years and  
29 can't do nothing about it. You know, we don't want to  
30 be in that situation that we are now. So, we got to be  
31 on top of everything. You know, make sure we do it now  
32 and not pay for it down the line. Thank you.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
35 Walter. Tiffany, were you -- oh, okay. So, just a  
36 reminder. We're still in the motion, unless we have more  
37 to discuss. And if we don't, then we would be ready for  
38 a question to be called. Thanks.

39  
40 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman. I will make  
41 a short comment in regards to this issue. For a long,  
42 long time, all of us are stressed. I know. When I heard  
43 the first testimony, what we heard from Tim this morning,  
44 my wife cried for him. For her. My wife cried for her.  
45 My kids really loved dry fish, especially strips. They  
46 like to eat strips. King salmon strips. And my grandsons  
47 and granddaughters, and my great grandson and my great  
48 granddaughters, they all love fish. Especially those,  
49 my grandsons and my granddaughters and my great grandson  
50 and daughters. They love fish. Even the stink heads.

1 They love them. The taste. When they're really young,  
2 babies, whenever we eat the fish, and stink heads, my  
3 wife always put them in their lip and doing like this.  
4 That's why they love -- every time the fish arrive, my  
5 great grandsons, they start digging whole, king salmon  
6 stick heads. And I'm really -- and when there -- we used  
7 to fish, I used to fish too. Young, young men, before  
8 the state of Alaska became a state. The whole Kuskokwim  
9 from the mouth, all the way up to the end. They used to  
10 fish -- we used to fish commercial 24 hours a day, 7  
11 days a week. But my dad used to cut their heads, open  
12 up the stomach and sold it for big ships down there.

13  
14 Maybe it was a territory days. No. And  
15 also now, in our century, 21st century, those outsiders,  
16 people are going to start trying to control us. They  
17 give a lot of options whenever we have issues. Real  
18 truth issues. Always rejected from the Board of Game.  
19 Always give us hardship. We need to tell them the truth  
20 will set us free. That's what our elders used to tell  
21 us. When we tell stories, the elders used to tell us.  
22 Tell them truth so they could believe. And I hope these  
23 two issues will be either two issues were one on one  
24 right now on these two issues. Which one will it be  
25 passed and which one will be rejected? Two issues we're  
26 talking.

27  
28 I've been sitting in this committee, and  
29 also I'm at Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Commission with  
30 Walter. We've been crying about this for a long, long  
31 time. It should have been done a long time ago. When  
32 Harold Sparks alive, we used to heard it and heard on  
33 the report when they're having a big meeting AVCP, crying  
34 about this Area M. They tried to work with the  
35 department, but nobody listened to late Harold Sparks.  
36 He was talking truth on the talk, when you have a  
37 testimony. You know, when we have a big meeting. I never  
38 forget -- when we have a big meeting, AVPC meeting,  
39 1984, us fishermen, Kuskokwim. Those elders tell us  
40 we're not -- we're close using the king net, 8-inch. We  
41 stop using it and we use 8-inch, 5.5-6 inches for a  
42 long, long time. And then all of a sudden the fish drops.  
43 King salmon were starting to using only 4-inch. We setnet  
44 4-inch.

45  
46 These histories are on my shoulder  
47 because money. Money. My grandma used to tell me, in the  
48 last days people will not working together because of  
49 the money. Because of the money. And they'll start to  
50 exchange words. I understand them, what they're trying

1 to do. We need to start what -- like Eddie Halfnallow  
2 said, talk to them tough words. Talk to them tough words.  
3 The truth ones. They'll accept it. When they against us,  
4 don't back off. That's what Eddie used to tell us. Tell  
5 me. Don't ever back off. When this system fails, keep  
6 going forward. Like hardships these days. If we -- either  
7 two will be accepted -- either these two, one will be  
8 accepted or failed, both of them, again. We're following  
9 the regulations. Federal regulation. Department of Fish  
10 and Wildlife regulation. Us, we followed them. Why those  
11 North Pacific Area M can control that? My question, and  
12 the trawlers? They got Board. We submit them. All that  
13 work. And we heard them, they rejected them. We couldn't  
14 work together. Thou shall not discriminate, only work  
15 together. And that Magnuson-Stevens Act should be  
16 followed a long time ago. Nobody enforce it. Nobody  
17 enforce it. And they don't know how many fish wasted  
18 down there. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, for my  
19 comment.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quayana,  
22 Phillip. (In Native). Francis.

23  
24 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, through the  
25 Chair. This is Francis, and I just want to make a comment  
26 on these proposals. You know, they have a set deadline  
27 for late June and comes to my concern, I come from the  
28 Yukon, you know, and they're already setting a date for  
29 us to close June 1st, and it would be fair if they can  
30 close the same time as the Yukon. This still isn't fair.  
31 I used to be a commercial fisherman, and I noticed that  
32 back in the day, you know, we used to have Japanese  
33 buyers buying our fish on the Yukon with boats, and they  
34 used to buy with cash. And since then, we haven't had  
35 king salmon commercial fishing since 2005. And they cut  
36 us off. You know, we're the middleman of the commercial  
37 fishing. And that's our income for the year to provide  
38 for our family, you know, to use that income we get --  
39 that really small income we get for gathering our  
40 subsistence needs for the winter, you know, saving it  
41 for gas, saving it for stove oil. And I just want to  
42 make a comment about last year's Season A fishing. The  
43 bycatch was about 8,000 kings within the first 38 days.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
46 Francis. Your comment will be noted. And all your  
47 comments are noted today. Any other discussion before  
48 anyone decides to call a question?

49  
50

000102

1 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, question (In  
2 Native). Henry, for the record.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Henry.  
5 I'm sorry, John, if you called the question and I spaced  
6 it. Oh, and then we were going to vote. But then we got  
7 into more discussion or something. Okay, now we're ready  
8 to vote. Roll call (In Native) unanimous? Oh, roll call,  
9 please, Brooke.

10  
11 MS. MCDAVID: All right, we'll do a roll  
12 call vote. And the motion on the floor is to submit  
13 comment in support of Alaska Board of Fisheries  
14 proposals number 136 and 131, prioritizing proposal  
15 number 136, which would be the complete closure and then  
16 131 as a backup as the next highest potential reduction  
17 in interception of Western Alaska salmon. We'll make  
18 Tiffany run. Tiffany.

19  
20 MS. AGAYAR: I support.

21  
22 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. John Andrew.

23  
24 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

25  
26 MS. MCDAVID: Norma.

27  
28 MS. EVAN: Yes.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Henry.

31  
32 MR. PARKS: Yes.

33  
34 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip.

35  
36 MR. PETER: Yes.

37  
38 MS. MCDAVID: Francis.

39  
40 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

41  
42 MS. MCDAVID: Walter.

43  
44 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

45  
46 MS. MCDAVID: Chair Cleveland.

47  
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

49  
50 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes 8-0.

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(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. We're -- it's 4:40, but we are going to at least go through the statewide proposals that are on this agenda, and then we can decide if we want to go through the Council motion process today or tomorrow after the summary. Quyana. And Brooke will do the summary.

MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, guys. I don't know why I keep saying -- I'm sorry, Jackie. Thank you, Chair. So, as I mentioned there was that working group with the three Yukon RACs, and they submitted some comments on statewide Board of Fish proposals. There were two groups of proposals that they commented on. The first set I'm showing here, they were about trawl fishing in the state fishery. So, these three proposals, I'll just read the comment. Proposal 163, 164, and 165, the working group strongly supports efforts to better regulate trawl fisheries, reduce bottom contact and habitat destruction, and to use salmon excluders as is done in other fisheries to reduce salmon bycatch.

So, these three proposals, 163 is looking to define what trawl gear is and that it should not touch the bottom. The 164, it is seeking to make sure those boats have sensors, so they know when it touches the bottom. And 165 is to require salmon excluders, so that -- I'm not super familiar with the technology, but they use that when salmon get into the nets, they can swim out. So, that's those three proposals. If you guys are interested in commenting on them, you could decide if you'd like to support, like the working group suggested. Both Eastern and Western Interior supported these, so. But it's up to you guys if you would like to take them up. It can just be one -  
- yeah.

MR. MORGAN: Oh, 165, man, they must have new technology to get -- maybe those fish are educated, they swim out or what? I don't know.

(Simultaneous speech).

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Not that -- oh.

MR. MORGAN: Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
2 Walter. I don't know if you're really asking, and not  
3 that I really know the answer anyway, but I have seen a  
4 photo of it and a presentation, and I can't even cite  
5 who did it and when, but I know I remember seeing a  
6 presentation. Maybe it was from these guys, the  
7 Alliance. But it is a contraption that somehow only lets  
8 pollock through and not chum or something. Or less chum.  
9 Brooke has more to add to that.

10  
11 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. I think just to  
12 follow up on that, some of the discussion in the working  
13 group was right now, this type of fishing isn't very  
14 well regulated. And they were hoping just to try the  
15 different measures that will help, maybe help to improve  
16 it. So, I think to your question, Walter, maybe it will  
17 help, but at least to try something was their thinking.  
18 Thank you.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, I have a  
21 suggestion before we get into further discussion. To  
22 adopt -- to move to adopt these proposals, to discuss  
23 them and then figure out how to vote for them. Quyana.  
24 So, is there a motion to adopt statewide BOF proposals  
25 163, 164, and 165?

26  
27 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair. (In Native).

28  
29 INTERPRETER: I make a motion to accept  
30 the proposals 163, 164, and 165. And that is Henry Parks.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. Henry  
33 Parks made a motion to support proposal 163, 164, and  
34 165. Is there a second?

35  
36 MR. ANDREW: Second.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John Andrew  
39 seconds. Now we can discuss.

40  
41 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, can I say  
42 something on this?

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Walter.

45  
46 MR. MORGAN: You know, they only talk  
47 about adult salmon. But everybody knows here, every year  
48 we get different size salmon out in the ocean. I mean,  
49 you know, who's saying they're catching all adult  
50 salmon? They might be juveniles, too. So, a juvenile

1 would probably go through the net and get caught, you  
2 know. Is there a consideration in that too? I mean, you  
3 know, there's -- I can see where they they're not fully  
4 grown. There's all kinds of salmon out there. They're  
5 just not one big -- you know, the way it looks in your  
6 head, the way they explain it, it's a big salmon, but  
7 as you know, every year salmon goes out in the ocean and  
8 they're all different size. You know, there's not only  
9 one size. Thank you.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
12 Walter. That's a good point. Brooke.

13  
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. I guess maybe  
15 to help you guys with your discussion a little. Do you  
16 -- this was the suggestion from the working group for  
17 their justification for why they support these  
18 proposals. You guys could if you agree with it, we could  
19 also include it, as you know, your justification. So,  
20 better regulating the trawl fisheries, reducing bottom  
21 contact and habitat destruction, and trying to reduce  
22 salmon bycatch.

23  
24 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, so we support  
25 it. And it's helping. At least it's a start, pretty  
26 much. Yeah. Thank you.

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
29 Walter. Tiffany. Oh. So yes, I mean, I would agree and  
30 I'm assuming our whole group would agree with this  
31 justification for a better regulation out there on the  
32 trawl fishery and bycatch.

33  
34 (Pause)

35  
36 MS. AGAYAR: Madam Chair, I'd like to  
37 call question.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,  
40 Tiffany. So, we're up for a roll call vote with Brooke  
41 now. Brooke.

42  
43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. One  
44 moment. I'm just making one more note here. Okay, so the  
45 motion on the floor is to support Board of Fish statewide  
46 proposals 163, 164, and 165 with the justifications  
47 mentioned. Tiffany.

48  
49 MS. AGAYAR: Yes.

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: John.  
2  
3 MR. ANDREW: Yes.  
4  
5 MS. MCDAVID: Norma.  
6  
7 MS. EVAN: Yes.  
8  
9 MS. MCDAVID: Henry.  
10  
11 MR. PARKS: Yes.  
12  
13 MS. MCDAVID: Phillip.  
14  
15 MR. PETER: Yes.  
16  
17 MS. MCDAVID: Francis.  
18  
19 MR. PRINCE: Yes.  
20  
21 MS. MCDAVID: Walter.  
22  
23 MR. MORGAN: Yes.  
24  
25 MS. MCDAVID: Jackie.  
26  
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

28  
29 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes, 8-0. And  
30 Madam Chair, there was one other group of proposals,  
31 another set of three proposals that deal with hatcheries  
32 that the working group suggested supporting, but it's  
33 up to you guys if you'd, similarly, like me, to give a  
34 quick overview or if that's something you're interested  
35 in or not, you could decide. Do you want me to just give  
36 a quick overview? And if you want to take it up, you  
37 can. If not or -- just not hearing any feedback. I know  
38 it's the end of day. Everybody's tired. This would be  
39 our last thing if you guys wanted. And then.....

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sure. Yes. And I  
42 mean, it could be because, you know, for myself, I don't  
43 know much about hatchery or -- and I don't know about  
44 everyone else, but that's my reason. But I would still  
45 like to hear. Thank you.

46  
47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And I totally  
48 understand. That's why if, you know, I can tell you what  
49 the working group thought. And if you guys aren't  
50 interested in taking it up because you don't feel like

1 you know enough, then it's okay. But the working group  
2 said that they support proposals 170, 171, and 172 to  
3 reduce egg take and overall hatchery production. They  
4 said a growing body of scientific evidence shows that  
5 hatchery salmon compete with wild salmon for resources  
6 and impact their diet, their growth, their productivity,  
7 and their numbers of wild salmon in the marine  
8 environment. So, they said we need to reduce hatchery  
9 production so that our struggling wild salmon have a  
10 better chance at health and survival. Not only does this  
11 need to be done here in Alaska, but efforts need to be  
12 made to reduce international hatchery production  
13 throughout the North Pacific. So, I guess the question  
14 is, are these proposals -- you guys are interested in  
15 taking up? Or if you don't want to, that's okay too.

16  
17 MR. MORGAN: Madam Chair, we don't know  
18 anything about hatcheries, so I -- so, we support it  
19 anyway? Because, who's supporting this? We want to know.

20  
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, I agree. I  
22 also don't know much about hatcheries and maybe this  
23 region in general or mostly -- I don't want to speak for  
24 everyone. But the working groups that -- the other  
25 working groups that Brooke works with supported these  
26 three, is what she said. So, Western and Eastern Interior  
27 RACs were the ones or their working groups? Correct me  
28 if I'm wrong, Brooke.

29  
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. So,  
31 in September, there was a working group that had a couple  
32 people from each of the RACs, including this one. Tiffany  
33 was on the call for that group and they talked about  
34 this. So, the Eastern and Western Interior RAC already  
35 met, so they already voted on this. So, it's up to you  
36 guys if you also want to. If you don't feel comfortable  
37 because you don't feel like you have enough information  
38 about the subject matter, that's okay too. Thank you.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

41  
42 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair. John Andrew,  
43 Kwethluk. (In Native).

44  
45 INTERPRETER: One time I was part of a  
46 group. I would travel to (indiscernible) area,  
47 considering proposals about what was at hand and when  
48 they did not understand what the issue was about and  
49 they were from out of that area, they would ask  
50 for information and just leave it at that, and wait until

1 they got more information. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

4

5 INTERPRETER: Are you making a move?

6

7 MR. ANDREW: (In Native).

8

9 INTERPRETER: I'm making a motion that  
10 we should just leave it as is. And that we should do no  
11 action on this because we haven't even looked at the  
12 issues of hatcheries.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, John Andrew,  
15 motion to take no action on these three proposals. Is  
16 there a second?

17

18 MR. PRINCE: This is Francis. I second.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis seconds.  
21 Maybe we should give a reason why. I know we did say a  
22 reason why we're not taking action, but for discussion  
23 record purposes, can we maybe say it again?

24

25 (No response)

26

27 Like I said, I'm able to too. So, some  
28 of our members have stated that maybe we don't know as  
29 much about hatcheries as well as other parts of Alaska,  
30 maybe. And they're also not close to our region and  
31 where we live. It's another reason why we don't know  
32 much about them. And then remember, John Andrew also  
33 stated that when he was in -- or when he participated  
34 in the Bristol Bay RAC, as I think an observer, he  
35 observed that when they came across proposals that  
36 weren't from the area they would take no action. And  
37 that's how he came about making his motion. Any other  
38 discussion?

39

40 MR. PETER: Question.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Phillip.  
43 Question has been called. All in favor of the motion to  
44 take no action on these three proposals, say aye.

45

46 IN UNISON: Aye.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed,  
49 same sign.

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(No response)

Motion carries. Quyana. So, that concludes the Board of Fish proposal, whole subject matter and so, congratulations. We did it all by 5:00. And so tomorrow morning we will start with the Secretarial Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program at 9:00 am, here. And we'll have an overview from DOI. And after hearing from them, we will go -- we could go to Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program or -- oh, sorry, I skipped something. We could go to g: future meeting dates, more annual or more action items. And then Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. And then unless we want to include identifying our FY25 Annual Report issues. But we can figure that out when we get to it tomorrow. That concludes the day. So, we're in recess until 9:00 am tomorrow. Thank you, everybody. Quyana.

(Off record)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 109 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIN DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 21st day of January 2026;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 6th day of February 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael Morel  
Chief Project Manager - Transcriptions