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1 EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

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6
7 VOLUME II

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10 PYKE'S WATERFRONT LODGE
11 Fairbanks, Alaska
12 March 4, 2026
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18 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

19 Robert C. Wright, Sr., Chair
20 Susan Entsminger
21 Linda Evans
22 Eva Burk
23 Andrew Bassich
24 Gerald Alexander

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30 Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 3/04/26)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning, everybody. We're going to call the meeting to order. It's 9:15 a.m. You can go ahead and go ahead with the roll call.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. This is Brooke McDavid for the record. I will do roll call. We'll start online. Sue Entsminger

MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, Sue. Thanks for joining us. Dorothy Shockley. I believe Dorothy is going to be absent today. Linda Evans.

MS. EVANS: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

MS. BURK: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Andy Bassich.

MR. BASSICH: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Chair Charlie Wright.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Galen Gilbert is absent. Donald Woodruff is absent. And Gerald Alexander

MR. ALEXANDER: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair with 6 of 9 council members we have quorum. And then I just have a couple of quick housekeeping announcements this morning before we get started again. This is day two of the Eastern Interior Winter 2026 Council Meeting. We will start this morning after a little bit of follow-ups on things from yesterday with public comments on non-agenda items, and then we'll move into discussion of WP26-75. The proposed -- the proposal to close 25D remainder to Moose hunting by non-federally qualified users. There is a new modification that was made by OSM that the Council will consider and we'll be taking public

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1 comments on that when that comes up. And as a reminder
2 to comment on non-agenda items or agenda items there are
3 green cards on the table in the back. If you're here in
4 the room, you can pass -- fill those out and pass them
5 to me or any other staff member. Just indicate on there
6 if you want to provide a comment on an agenda item or a
7 non-agenda item and then if you're online and want to
8 provide comments, you can use the raise hand feature on
9 Teams or press star five on your phone and that will
10 raise your hand and we'll call on you when the time
11 comes. You can also email in written comments to myself,
12 that's brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov or
13 subsistence@ios.doi.gov.

14
15 And Mr. Chair, yesterday we talked about
16 selecting the future Council dates for the next couple
17 of meetings. And when we talked about fall 2027 forgot
18 to note down a location for that. So that will be the
19 fall -- not this fall, but next fall it'll be a wildlife
20 meeting where you're going over proposals. Would you be
21 wanting to meet in Fairbanks for that or did you want
22 to possibly try to go back to Tok since that meeting
23 didn't work out in Tok last time because of the shutdown?
24 I just wanted to throw that out to the Council.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: How does the Council
27 feel? Tok it is. Thank you.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you for
30 that. We will note that location down as Tok with
31 Fairbanks as a backup if for some reason, they're not
32 able to accommodate us. And then, Mr. Chair, sorry, Chief
33 Gilbert, Council Member Gilbert, was not able to join
34 us, but he did send me a recording of his Council Member
35 Report. And it's about five minutes. And I was hoping
36 before we get started, we could just play that for the
37 record.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Please do.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Okay.

42
43 MR. GILBERT: Hi, everyone. It's been a
44 long time. I just want to say hi to each and every one
45 of you. And yeah, it's been a while, and I'm really --
46 I just want to sincerely apologize for not being present
47 in our meeting. Yeah, I just -- I'm just getting back
48 from a Washington, D.C. trip. Been down there for like
49 a week and just got back last Friday. I'm still, you
50 know, I'm still recuperating from adjusting to the time

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1 frame and pretty exhausted, but I do go -- but I do have
2 the TCC convention coming up and I have some stuff to
3 take care of here at home. And yeah, just really trying
4 to just make sure my grandparents, Trimble and Mary, are
5 situated during the convention as well. And I got some
6 other things I have to do while I'm over there, but
7 again, I really apologize for not being present in our
8 meeting.

9

10 And as for my report, I'll keep it short
11 and sweet. So, on my report, I just want to say that
12 this winter obviously has been a long, cold one, but it
13 hasn't been as cold as Fairbanks. Fairbanks has been the
14 coldest from, you know what I've been personally doing
15 the survey on, you know, on asking people. But yeah, I
16 think the coldest we got this year was like -63, but it
17 wasn't that long. We were battling like -45 in that
18 long-term stretch of cold and it wasn't too bad. There
19 hasn't been any caribou all winter, just until probably
20 like a month ago from now. We started seeing signs,
21 tracks, and now they are surrounding the village right
22 now. So, you know, that's kind of later than last year
23 that they showed up, but they're here, they look healthy.
24 They're in great shape from what my hunters tell me and
25 that's always good, you know, and I've been so busy this
26 year that, you know, I haven't even been able to, you
27 know, go out and hunt myself and you know that alone and
28 getting wood and, yeah. I've only gone out a few times
29 to haul wood and -- but yeah, my schedule's been pretty
30 crazy this past winter and now that it's warming up and,
31 you know, me myself, my people are really looking forward
32 to the spring. And as I say, we're downhill to spring
33 now. One of my personal favorite times of year is
34 springtime and you know, back to the caribou. They're
35 hanging around the not inside the village, but they're
36 hanging outside around the village and yeah, they're
37 just, they're back and, you know, everybody's happy.
38 We're -- everybody's -- the village is happy.

39

40 And so, you know, I ain't really got
41 much to report except on the caribou. And you know,
42 except, like, other than a bunch of meetings that I
43 can't really think about all of them on what to say and
44 putting it all in my report. But you know, the Arctic
45 Village, (indiscernible) translates into Arctic Village.
46 We're doing great. You know, we're staying warm and yeah,
47 we're really looking forward to the springtime now, just
48 like everybody else. We're -- that long, brutal winter
49 was -- you know it -- I'm not going to lie. I've got
50 mentally draining after a while and yeah, you know, it's

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1 just, we're just ready for spring. I know everybody is.
2 We're ready for springtime. Nice warm weather. And, you
3 know, I just told my people in my chief report here in
4 the village that, you know, I keep telling them, I'm
5 like, man, we're going to celebrate the spring carnival
6 big time this year. And yeah, because that's what it's
7 all about. And yeah, I'm, again I know I keep
8 apologizing, but I just want to apologize again that I'm
9 not there. And I wish I was there. I'll be at the next
10 one, hopefully. And yeah, I really look forward to our
11 next meeting together once again, everybody and you
12 know, yeah, everything's good. The people are good. Our
13 elders are good. So, I appreciate it. I appreciate
14 everybody taking the time to hear my report. And if
15 there's any questions, just let Brooke know and she'll
16 shoot me a text and, you know, I'll answer it so, and I
17 look forward to the future. I do. I really do. And you
18 know, I look forward to seeing everybody again. So,
19 everybody take care. God bless and I'll see you again.
20 Mahsi' choo. Later.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: All right. We thank Member
23 Gilbert for sending that over to us even though he wasn't
24 able to be here. And Mr. Chair, I just wanted to follow
25 up on one thing about the Fortymile discussion
26 yesterday. I heard off the record that some folks
27 mentioned they wanted to maybe also pass along a comment
28 to the HMC about making sure that all the local ACs are
29 represented on that coalition. And so, I just wanted to
30 open the floor for a little bit of discussion on that.
31 So, Andy could hear that and consider if that's something
32 you guys want to pass along officially. Thanks.

33

34 This is Brooke. So, the ACs represented
35 on the Fortymile coalition right now are Anchorage,
36 Central, Delta, Eagle, Fairbanks and Matanuska Valley,
37 Upper Tanana, Fortymile. I heard a comment that Yukon
38 Flats isn't currently represented and especially since
39 Circle is right there. And an important hunting area for
40 this herd that you all might want to make sure a seat
41 is extended to the Yukon Flats AC or someone from Circle.
42 So just if that's not the case and you don't want to see
43 that, that's totally fine, but I just wanted to make
44 sure if that is something that you wanted to see that
45 that's passed along.

46

47 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I can
48 address that. The coalition has always extended in the
49 past an invitation to the Fort Yukon region, and they
50 had declined to be a part of it, but I don't think there

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1 would be an objection to that. I also wanted to clarify
2 that the Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley are non-voting
3 members of that coalition. So, they attend, they give
4 input, but they don't have a vote at the Coalition on
5 decisions made on the harvest management plan, so.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, my
8 understanding is Circle is not on there either?

9
10 MR. BASSICH: Circle has always been
11 represented in the past by Bill Glanz when he was on for
12 Central and we're currently trying to find a -- well,
13 actually, we do have a Central person there, Sarah is
14 representing Central. So, that -- those two communities
15 are pretty close. And so, they're represented through
16 Central.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. So, are you
19 happy with the representation on there?

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Oh yeah. I think, I
22 think it covers the bulk of the range of the herd. The
23 ACs are represented. But I guess what I'm trying to say
24 is that if -- I can certainly bring this up before the
25 coalition if either Circle and/or Fort Yukon wanted to
26 participate, then we could bring it up. Usually there's
27 discussion at the beginning of the meeting about future
28 participants. So, I'll bring it up.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.

31
32 (Simultaneous speech)

33
34 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That
37 was all the follow-ups from yesterday that I had noted
38 down. Back to you.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
41 I'm writing really quick. I'll be right back from where
42 I'm at. Okay, so we're back to the agenda and we are now
43 at 11.d, Revisit Select 2026 to 2028 Federal Wildlife
44 Proposal WP26-27 Unit 25D Moose - close to non-federally
45 qualified users and Unit 25D remainder. Consider --
46 today, will be considering a new OSM modification. You
47 have the floor, sir.

48
49 MS. MCDAVID: And council members, page
50 nine in your binders is where the analysis starts for

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1 this and then there are copies on the table in the back
2 for anyone that would like to look at it in the audience
3 and that.....

4
5 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
6 Members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank, Wildlife
7 Biologist for the Office of Management. And as everybody
8 just said, we're going to -- we're revisiting Wildlife
9 Proposal WP26-75, which starts on page nine of your
10 books. And basically, I wanted to share an alternative
11 that OSM developed after hearing the Eastern Interior
12 Regional Advisory Council and the public comments that
13 were made during the fall for the -- when the proposal
14 was presented to you. And OSM went back and after
15 reviewing years of public comments and assistant
16 studies, it seemed like a lot of the conflict is along
17 the river corridors. So now we're presenting this
18 alternative to you to kind of hear your thoughts and
19 your comments and, you know, give you an option to vote
20 on this if this is something that works for y'all. So,
21 this alternative, there's a map on -- of it on page 24
22 in your books. And this alternative would be a targeted
23 closure along the river corridors, areas mostly hunted
24 by local subsistence users and where most of the user
25 conflict seems to occur. Specifically, it's a ten-mile
26 corridor, five miles on either side along the Yukon River
27 and a five-mile corridor, which is about two and a half
28 miles either side along Birch Creek, including the upper
29 and lower mouths. The Sheenjek River to River Mile 60,
30 the Porcupine River, the Black River and the Chandalar
31 River. This alternative does not alleviate all user
32 conflicts, since non-federally qualified users could
33 still harvest moose on gravel bars below the mean high-
34 water mark, as these are still state management lands.
35 And I'll just kind of keep it short and sweet there. And
36 I'm here to answer any questions you may have or go from
37 there.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I have a
40 question to start off. I know that there's user conflict,
41 but the fact that the low density doesn't change and the
42 lack of account doesn't change. So, I wanted to put on
43 the record that in the past, the locals done the moose
44 count and it took him a week, but they still done it and
45 they made a good count. So, I think that we should be
46 able to do better as managers to count that moose before
47 we open it up. There's a lot of people in Fort Yukon
48 alone. It's a big village, that has a hard time getting
49 meat, so I could revisit this after a good count is
50 done. And if the state has a hard time doing it, or the

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1 feds then let the locals do it again because they've
2 done it. And for some reason, I don't know why that went
3 away. I think that that's a really good idea, but I
4 couldn't -- myself, personally, I couldn't reopen this
5 and change it because of the lack of account to start
6 with. That's big. I would be really open to looking at
7 it again if they could do a really good count. Thank
8 you. That's my thoughts on it. If anybody else has
9 anything to say. Go ahead, Gerald.

10

11 MR. ALEXANDER: Back in 2008 Bruce,
12 Thomas was -- he was in charge of this moose count and
13 he approached me and asked me if I wanted to do it. It
14 took me, I think three days. We flew -- they sent a cub
15 up. It took us three days to go back and forth and every
16 square on that -- our region. But anyway, we did a pretty
17 good accurate count because, you know, we're only flying
18 150ft off the ground. You could see what's what, you
19 know, but that was in 2008. It was more cows and bulls.
20 But there was, you know, I never saw a herd in my life,
21 but I did see one then just, you know, throwing this at
22 you.

23

24 (Pause)

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the
27 record. So, this is a proposal that's coming back to the
28 Council. The Council will need to make a new
29 recommendation to the Board about this modification. The
30 comments that you made at the last meeting are -- oh,
31 we have an open mic online. We are here on page 29. The
32 comments from the last meeting are there. And then at
33 this meeting, you'll need to make comments on this
34 modification. And so, we'll go through the steps since
35 we do have some public comments and we might have some
36 agency comments and yeah, then we'll end with our Council
37 motion. Thanks.

38

39 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: All right. Thank you
40 for the analysis and we'll go to public comments. Was
41 any received during the open comment period?

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, that -- there
44 were none. We do have some new ones that'll -- we'll get
45 to later down the list.

46

47 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you. Any
48 tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation report?

49

50

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1 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
2 Plank, OSM. We did bring this up during the tribal
3 Council -- consultation that we had in February, and
4 there were no comments on this particular one.

5
6 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.
7 Agency and tribal comments.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, we can open it
10 to the floor, if any -- or if anyone online from a tribe
11 wants to comment on this. But at our last meeting, we
12 did hear from CATG that they were in support of the
13 original proposal. We do not yet have a comment from
14 them about this modification.

15
16 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Can you tell me how
17 long this will be open? So, we had that on the record.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. So, at this meeting,
20 the Eastern Interior RAC will be making your
21 recommendation, but the final vote will be at the Board
22 meeting in April, and there will be opportunity for
23 another tribal consultation with the Board right before
24 the Board meeting starts on April 20th. And so, if CATG
25 or any other tribes want to send in written comments,
26 they can send those to me or Orville Lind. He is our
27 Native Liaison with OSM, and we will make sure that
28 those are passed to the Board or tribes can participate
29 and ANCSA corporations in that government-to-government
30 consultation. That happens the day before the Board
31 meeting and provide oral comments at that time. And
32 lastly both the public and tribes and agencies as well
33 are able to call in and comment during the Federal
34 Subsistence Board meeting when this proposal comes
35 before the Board for discussion.

36
37 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
38 Is there any advisory group comments, other RACs?

39
40 (No response)

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Fish and Game
43 Advisory Committees?

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. The Fairbanks
46 AC did take up this proposal in its original form and
47 they opposed it. I have not heard from them about the
48 modification. I don't think they've had a chance to meet
49 yet.

50

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1 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Subsistence Resource
2 Commissions?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Other written public comments. Anybody
7 want to do any public testimony today? Come on up.
8 There's a familiar face in the room there. Good to see
9 you, Charlie.

10
11 MR. JAGOW: Thank you. Oh, for the
12 record, it's Charlie Jagow. And as you guys know, I'm a
13 horrible public speaker, so apologize as I stumble
14 through this. But to start with, thank you to OSM for
15 working to create a modified closure. And I appreciate
16 the Eastern Interior RAC for taking the time to take
17 this up again. As I testified back in December, a -- 25D
18 entirety closure would have a pretty big negative impact
19 on myself and my family. I live on the upper Porcupine
20 River. However, I also run a small guiding operation and
21 as a part of that operation, I run one guided hunt in
22 25D every year. And I'm hunting in an area that it's a
23 long ways from any river system. It's only accessible
24 via float plane. And we're hunting moose that are
25 residential to that area. So, we're of no impact to
26 subsistence hunters. And we do that on purpose. So, if
27 the modified closure would have absolutely no impact my
28 ability to do that. Additionally, the last meeting,
29 there was a little bit of discussion about how much
30 aircraft hunting was done in 25D. There's very, very
31 little. I know of only two other folks that are hunting
32 with an airplane, and I believe they've got comment today
33 as well. And they, you know, they're hunting in similar
34 locations as myself and they're definitely -- they're
35 not impacting any folks that are hunting along the river
36 system.

37
38 And another thing to keep in mind I
39 believe Tyler sent in a comment as well, but the Sultans
40 up there on the Sheenjek. Anybody that knows him knows
41 that for all intents and purposes, they are subsistence
42 folks. They very heavily depend on being able to harvest
43 a moose every fall, and they just happen to fall under
44 the state regulations. So, I think that's important to
45 keep in mind. So, with that all being said, I definitely
46 would support the modified closure. However, I feel that
47 it wouldn't be ethical for me to get up here and say
48 that without also mentioning, I still really don't feel
49 there should be any closure at all. And I completely
50 understand the want for closure. And I get how

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1 frustrating it is to have so many boats in your backyard.
2 I feel for you. I know that the salmon fishing has been
3 closed, so harvesting a moose has become that more
4 important. I get that. But this is -- it's a conflict
5 issue. It's not an over harvest issue. If you look at
6 our harvest data, the harvest is very, very low. And
7 yes, the moose population is low, but it has been for
8 pretty much forever. It's never been high in that area.
9 It's a -- it's just a low-density area and that's because
10 of predation, not because of harvest. I spent a lot of
11 time flying and looking at regions of the Yukon Flats
12 that are only accessible via aircraft and I'm not hunting
13 those areas. Nobody else is hunting back there. And the
14 moose population is just as low in those locations as
15 they are along the Porcupine River, especially the Lower
16 Porcupine, where you get a lot of hunting pressure, like
17 there's not more moose back where there's no hunting.
18 So that really points towards this isn't -- again, it
19 isn't an over harvest issue.

20

21 And then additionally, there's some
22 things that should be kept in mind. This closure actually
23 could have some negative impacts on the subsistence
24 hunter. And number one, we all know this is -- this only
25 applies to federal land. And I'm just going to use the
26 Porcupine as an example. But you know, at least my
27 understanding and folks should correct me if I'm wrong
28 but most of the conflict occurs when boats are running
29 up and down repetitively, especially during that prime
30 time, early morning and in the evening, and essentially
31 spooking moose from other folks. And if you're a local
32 person, you know the area better. There's probably a
33 better chance you're hunting on a side slough or a lake
34 close to the river, and then you've got somebody else
35 that isn't as familiar with the area running up and down
36 with the riverboat, especially a jet boat that's very
37 loud and that's disruptive. And I completely understand
38 the frustration with that. But if you have a closure
39 like this, it definitely has the possibility of creating
40 a lot more of that. Just, we're just going to run up and
41 down river, and we're going to try to hunt moose on the
42 gravel bars, and we're never going to get out of our
43 boat. And so, the state hunter is going to be even more
44 disruptive than they currently are.

45

46 Additionally, we also know that, you
47 know, there's a lot of people in the state, both state
48 hunters and federal hunters, that are very dedicated
49 hunting every year. And if we have a closure like this,
50 they're not just going to go away. They're going to go

1 somewhere else. And this this area in particular, they
2 all go to Circle. They drive up to Circle. They put
3 their boat in there and they go down river, and they go
4 up to Porcupine or up the Sheenjek River or wherever
5 they're going in 25D. They've already kind of got that
6 routine. I see a lot of them when I'm in Circle. I'm
7 there a lot during the hunting season. A lot of them do
8 it every year. I believe that a lot of those folks, if
9 they decide not to just do the state land hunt below the
10 high-water mark they decide to go elsewhere. They're
11 going to go up the Yukon, and they're going to be hunting
12 the lower (indiscernible) and the mouth of the Charlie.
13 And that's where the people from Circle hunt. And that's
14 a small area. And they're already sharing it with a lot
15 of people today. Like they don't need -- they've arguably
16 probably got more people in their backyard than in 25D
17 remainder. And now they're going to have the additional
18 traffic. And I get that not wanting to have it in your
19 backyard, but like, does it go to somebody else's? And
20 that's a problem when you start closing a bunch of areas.
21

22 And then lastly, I'm not going to name
23 any names, but I think all of us know, you know, at
24 least one person or probably many people that grew up
25 in the village or grew up out on the trap line. And for
26 whatever reason, when they became an adult, they moved
27 to Fairbanks. And in this area particularly would
28 probably be Fairbanks. But every year they've still got
29 relatives in the village, or they've still got relatives
30 that live out on the trap line. They take their family
31 and they go out there and they participate in a moose
32 hunt. They spend time with their family, and they take
33 their kids to the area where they hunted with their
34 grandfather or their father and their parents, and
35 they've got an 11-day season to do that. Their state
36 hunters now, they're not federal subsistence. That's
37 like the disadvantage that they've got from moving to
38 town. And that's fair, however, to say you don't have
39 any hunting season at all. You can't take your kids and
40 hunt back where you grew up just because you moved out
41 of the village. You don't even get the very short 11-
42 day season, I feel that's unfair. I know I would be
43 highly bothered if that was, you know, the case where I
44 grew up. And I think that's going to affect far more
45 people than maybe we're realizing. So that's all I've
46 got. Sorry, that was a long ramble. I very much
47 appreciate the time and thanks for letting me comment.

48
49
50

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

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1 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich here.
2 Thank you, Charlie. You said you weren't well spoken,
3 but I think you're really well spoken and it's good to
4 see you back here. I think your discussion and your
5 argumentative points are spot on. And you mentioned that
6 you did not support the full closure, but you would
7 support the amended version before us right now. Just
8 to be clear, maybe a little bit to the point, your
9 primary arguments on that is possible displacement of
10 other hunters and other nearby areas. If we were to
11 support the corridors, I'm going to call it the corridor
12 closures. The displacement of hunters going to other
13 areas would increase the pressures there. That's one of
14 your arguments, correct?

15
16 MR. JAGOW: So essentially the only
17 difference between the two closures as far as like who
18 it's going to affect is for lack of better terms,
19 essentially myself, the two other airplane hunters and
20 the Sultans. That most the traffic, 99% of the folks
21 that are hunting under state regulation, they're hunting
22 with a riverboat along that corridor. So, you know, my
23 own selfish needs, I definitely -- I would way rather
24 see this modification. I think it's more appropriate.
25 It also, you know, it's -- the conflict and the problem
26 is trying to be resolved is along the river corridor.
27 Those of us that are hunting, you know, a long ways from
28 the river, we're essentially hunting moose that aren't
29 utilized otherwise. So, I would definitely support, you
30 know, this one over the first closure, but I think that
31 either of them, any closure at all definitely has a --
32 the possibility of all three of those blast problems.
33 The pushing hunters into other areas. So, if somebody
34 says, I don't want to deal with just trying to hunt
35 under the high-water mark which will certainly be a
36 population hunters that don't realize they can do that
37 or decide they don't want to deal with that because it's
38 risky. I feel like a lot of them will move upriver from
39 Circle and then the not allowing folks that, you know,
40 originally from the village that's, you know, also going
41 to have an effect.

42
43 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay.

44
45 MS MCDAVID: Sue has a question for
46 Charlie.

47
48 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Oh, go ahead, Sue.

49
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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes. Thank you. Charlie,
2 I just wanted to ask you. I think I heard you correctly,
3 you would rather it not go for the reasons of all the
4 displaced hunters in the domino effect. But I wanted to
5 ask you about the river corridor. Do you feel five miles
6 on either side in those areas that are five miles is too
7 much, or is it something that you think people can live
8 with?
9

10 MR. JAGOW: I think it comes down to if
11 you're hunting from a boat along the river, it could be
12 a mile and you're still -- that's the country. You're
13 not going to go beyond that. You know, unless you're
14 crazy, essentially, that's a longways to pack a moose
15 out in the country. I got some nodding heads here. As
16 far as those of us hunting with an aircraft and getting,
17 you know, long ways off the river system, that's --
18 yeah, we're going way further than that. I can definitely
19 live with that kind of corridor.
20

21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Thank you. I have
22 one more question. So, you mentioned that you only --
23 you know, of these people that hunt there now. Do you
24 think it's possible that there's other hunters that you
25 know, you're not even aware of that are hunting up there?
26

27 MR. JAGOW: So, I would say at most there
28 might be 1 or 2 annually, but it's pretty limited. Like
29 there's a ton of lakes to land on it. It's all float
30 plane accessible, but it's pretty limited to the areas
31 that are actually productive for hunting. And I do spend
32 a lot of time flying over that area. I already know
33 those spots. I keep an eye on them. I spent a lot of
34 time before season scouting and it's, you know, somebody
35 hunting repetitively year after year, you can typically
36 see that kind of use on the ground. So, I'm not saying
37 I'm not missing 1 or 2 people, but when you think about
38 how large 25D remainder is, even if there is a couple
39 other folks like that's very minimal. Like there's
40 really not a lot of aircraft use in that unit.
41

42 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Are you done, Sue?
43

44 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I have other
45 questions, but I think it'll come up later. So, thank
46 you, Charlie and Charlie.
47

48 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: All right. Thank you.
49 Any more questions?
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(No response)

Hearing and seeing none. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke. We did receive several written comments, so I'm going to make sure we share those. I'll read them and just bear with me as I open these up. All right. The first one is from Tyler Selden. He also commented along with Charlie Jagow at our fall meeting in opposition to the original closure proposal for the entire subunit. But this is what he has to say about the modification.

After reviewing the modified proposal, which would allow our family to continue hunting moose on the stretch of the Sheenjek River that we've always hunted on, as well as continued hunting access to the flats and lake country back off the river corridors, we see no reason to continue to oppose the proposal as currently written. Please let everyone who contributed to these amendments know that we're extremely grateful that our family's situation was taken into account after we explained the negative impact the original proposal would have had on our ability to secure our winter meat. The fact that the original restrictions were then tailored to allow us to continue hunting moose during the fall season and the place where we live demonstrates that OSM has a broad interest in protecting the hunting rights of all subsistence users across the Yukon Flats. Thank you. Tyler Seldon. And then I have a few more.

We have one from Daniel Hayden. And bear with me just to give me a moment, okay. Daniel says: I would like to extend my gratitude for the opportunity to express my concern for the proposed hunting area that could potentially be affected by this new regulation. Although this proposal/modification does allow a large portion of 25D to be unaffected as far as hunting moose goes, it does restrict hunting in a manner that completely cuts off residents who have hunted these areas/waterways for decades by means of riverboat and even drop off flying hunts. I am very familiar with unit 25D in its entirety. Not only have I hunted extensively in unit 25D, but I've also flown this part of Alaska for close to three decades, logging thousands of flight hours as a commercial pilot. Much of what I see from the air, especially during winter months when the tracks are visible in the snow, indicates a healthy population of moose activity. In the summertime signs of resident moose can be seen by the beat down trails that lead from

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1 the wooded areas to meadows and grassy lakes, where the
2 moose feed on a regular basis. Almost every lake with
3 moose habitat shows this kind of activity and has since
4 I started flying in the area back in 1998.

5
6 I was raised in Unit 25A to the north
7 in ANWR, where I have cabins that I maintain for hunting,
8 trapping and recreation. I spent a lot of time as a
9 young man growing up in the woods, subsistence hunting
10 for survival. I know what an important resource moose
11 can be, and since 2003, my family has hunted in Unit
12 25D, just south of where I grew up. Since I live in
13 Fairbanks now, it is a ten-day hunting season for us.
14 September 10th to September 20th. The area we typically
15 hunt is only accessible by floatplane and there are
16 always moose to harvest. Unit 25D has many lakes in
17 areas that are conducive -- conducive to moose habitat.
18 Hence, it's a good area that I've had the privilege of
19 hunting in for over two decades. I know the proposed
20 modification does not include the area that I hunt, but
21 as a unit with several navigable waterways there still
22 remains a healthy population of moose for hunting along
23 all the rivers in Unit 25D. The idea that resident
24 hunters will no longer be allowed to hunt along and off
25 of rivers where they have had access to for years, will
26 only crowd other hunting areas in other units. The season
27 for non-subsistence hunters being the 10th to the 20th
28 allows hunting, but of a much shorter duration, thus
29 allowing the subsistence users a much greater advantage
30 which to me is necessary for their lifestyle and
31 survival.

32
33 I lived off the land for much of my early
34 days and know what that means to the locals as
35 traditional hunters and gatherers. The current hunting
36 dates for resident hunters and subsistence hunters, to
37 me, is a balance that allows everyone to benefit from
38 this resource that I think all Alaskans should have the
39 option to utilize. Thank you for your consideration in
40 this matter, and I hope we can all benefit from the
41 land, federal, which in reality is owned by the
42 taxpayers. Sincerely, Daniel. Daniel Hayden.

43
44 Oh, okay. Now I have another comment
45 sent in from Sarah Behar in Central. And Sarah said:
46 Hello, Brooke. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet
47 as a community to discuss the modifications to proposal
48 WP26-75. However, I did reach out to community members
49 via email and here is a summary of the comments I
50 received. Four community members who were in favor of

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1 the original proposal stated that closing corridors
2 along the listed waterways would be an acceptable
3 alternative, since that is how most hunters access the
4 area. As mentioned in the original comment, community
5 members have observed lower numbers of moose than in
6 past years. The modified proposal would accomplish a
7 similar goal and increase the likelihood of subsistence
8 users meeting subsistence needs.

9
10 Two community members are neutral on the
11 proposal, stating it would not affect their current
12 hunting patterns. Two community members liked the
13 modified proposal better than closing the entire
14 subunit. And then Sarah also had one more person that
15 emailed her. She said one more person responded to my
16 email and said he liked the modified proposal better
17 than the original. Thank you, Sarah Behar from Central.

18
19 And one more comment, Mr. Chair. Let me
20 just -- sorry, there's a bunch of emails. We did share
21 this proposal with some of the local law enforcement
22 officers to get their feedback about the corridor
23 proposal -- modification. And we heard back from Cody
24 Smith with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and also
25 Daniel Valentine with Alaska State Troopers or Wildlife
26 Troopers, sorry. I'll let you know what Trooper
27 Valentine mentioned. And then if Clayton Merrill would
28 want to come up and share about what Cody Smith commented
29 on afterward that would be great. So, Trooper Valentine
30 felt that comparing the Yukon River with you know,
31 corridors like something on the Dalton Highway is apples
32 to oranges because the Dalton is a single fixed location
33 and a road. It doesn't change and it's only 50 miles
34 wide. He said enforcing a five-mile corridor on the
35 Dalton has its own challenges. Hunters leave from one
36 part of the highway, not realizing there is a curve in
37 the roadway around the next mountain and end up
38 harvesting animals within the corridor unintentionally.
39 Enforcing a corridor around a river that varies in width
40 from one mile to over five miles in the proposed area
41 and is constantly changing, abandoning old channels and
42 cutting new ones would be extremely difficult. So that's
43 his comment about the corridor idea. And then it's okay,
44 Mr. Chair, for Clayton to share Cody's comments.

45
46 MR. MERRILL: This is Clayton Merrill,
47 Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic and Yukon Flats
48 national wildlife Refuges. And this comment is from Cody
49 Smith, Senior Law Enforcement Officer. I believe many
50 of you are familiar with him. He's been here for quite

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1 a while. He said: Thank you for sharing this. I don't
2 think that there is any particularly difficult
3 enforcement aspects to this. The Dalton Highway
4 Management Corridor is another example of a corridor
5 type restriction in this region, and all it takes is
6 plenty of education and enforcement presence to ensure
7 that folks abide by the rules. So, kind of opposite to
8 the trooper's opinion there. But Cody goes on to talk
9 about: historically harvest reporting compliance for
10 moose along the entire Yukon drainage is low. I've talked
11 to countless individuals in and around communities from
12 Fort Yukon to St. Mary's and everywhere in between that
13 admit that they're very distrustful of how the data is
14 being used. There's an individual who I've gotten to
15 know that lives most of the year at a remote camp along
16 the Yukon. He admitted to me this past year that he
17 harvests a moose almost every year and does obtain a
18 valid hunting license and harvest ticket but has not
19 reported a harvest in many years due to his dislike and
20 distrust of the federal and state game management
21 process. He and I spent a while last year discussing how
22 that information is used and ultimately benefits the
23 moose population and the hunters. Last fall, he texted
24 me and said that he reported his moose harvest for the
25 first time in a long time. I hope that decisions are
26 being made and proposals brought forward with more
27 information than 11-year-old surveys and grossly
28 incomplete data collected from harvest tickets, because
29 the number of them we are getting returned is a fraction
30 of the moose being harvested out there. I don't doubt
31 the predation is having a substantial effect on the moose
32 population. But as I've seen firsthand with the
33 Mulchatna Caribou and the mainland portion of the Nelson
34 Island muskox herd, illegal or unreported harvest has
35 an enormous impact on the population and is often far
36 worse than most agency representatives will acknowledge
37 or are willing to discuss openly during RAC meetings.
38 Thank you, Cody Smith.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Before we move to an online
41 comment, do any council members have a question or any
42 questions for Clayton or...? Okay. And we do have an on
43 of someone online with their hand raised that would like
44 to give a comment its phone number ending in 4363. If
45 you could please introduce yourself and then you're
46 welcome to share your comments with the Council.

47
48 MS. HAYDEN: Hey. Good morning. My name
49 is -- I'm gonna [sic] start off with this here. I'm a
50 little bit nervous, so forgive me. My name is Susan

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1 Hayden. I was born and raised in the Arctic National
2 Wildlife Refuge. And I mean, literally born. I was born
3 in a cabin, trapping cabin in 25A in 1975, and I have
4 lived up there with my family from birth until 17, when
5 I moved to Fairbanks and we were a year-round family.
6 We lived the subsistence lifestyle. We stayed out year-
7 round and would make a trip every -- to the city, every,
8 every 2-3 years. And when I was 17 is when I moved to
9 Fairbanks but still maintained my trapping area. So, I
10 would spend six months in Fairbanks and then six months
11 out in the wilderness. So, I'm very familiar with you
12 know, the subsistence lifestyle and the need -- and to
13 be able to harvest you know, food from the land, you
14 know, moose and caribou, which was our staple.

15
16 And since I moved to Fairbanks, I've
17 been very ingrained to live in the woods. The subsistence
18 lifestyle, the bush, the trapping, everything, is just
19 -- it's the heart of my soul. And I have been boating
20 and hunting and trapping in 25A, 25D, and 25C off and
21 on my entire life. It says I've since moved to North
22 Pole, where I work in the summer and commute back to my
23 cabin and trap in the winter. I have been moose hunting
24 in 25D for the past 10 years, and my oldest son has been
25 hunting the same area with his uncle for the past 22
26 years. He started hunting and that's my brother, Daniel
27 Hayden. He's been hunting with his uncle for 22 years,
28 ever since he was 9. So, he's very attached to our
29 hunting grounds and what it entails. And it's his, you
30 know, part of his upbringing and it's very much a part
31 of his life. And then about 5 years ago, I had purchased
32 a float plane, and then I had been bringing my youngest
33 son out here for the past 5 years, and you know, hunting
34 in 25D. And with the float plane, I can get off of the
35 rivers. So, I'm not in conflict. Me and my family we're
36 not in conflict with the boaters and the river hunters
37 and the subsistence hunters along the river, because we
38 go way off of the rivers. And that was kind of the
39 purpose also. So, we're not in conflict with them and
40 being just a resident, I only have a ten-day window, and
41 -- you know from the 10th through the 20th, you know,
42 where the subsistence users, their season opens way
43 earlier and closes way later. So, I feel that gives the
44 subsistence user a much better chance to be able to
45 harvest their moose. But even as just a resident, I find
46 when we don't get a moose for the family, my family's
47 grown, you know, grandchildren and whatnot. It's grown
48 to about ten when we don't get a moose for the year, I
49 find it makes it even -- then makes for a very tough
50 winter just to get through and trying to have to go to

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1 the store and buy meat, and with all the antibiotics and
2 chemicals that they put in in beef nowadays. I really
3 thrived on being able to have that, you know, organic
4 meat and it's so much more healthy.

5
6 So, and then back, probably about 25
7 years ago, I did a trip from Circle. I boated from Circle
8 to the Porcupine and then all the way from the Porcupine
9 to the border, you know, moose hunting. And my dream is
10 to do that again sometime. But these hunting
11 restrictions, you know, along the corridor will forever
12 kill that dream of being able to do that again. And so
13 what I just feel that these restrictions, I mean, if we
14 have to, you know, then I like the amended version, you
15 know, where it only affects the river, but I feel it
16 that since we haven't had a moose survey done, you know,
17 in the, say the past 10 years. I feel that just, you
18 know, that we don't have a proper count, you know, for
19 the moose. And just me flying over it just as a private
20 pilot, you know, in fall time and wintertime is when I'm
21 commuting back and forth to my cabin, a lot of times
22 we're low and the tracks we see the sign, we see the --
23 in the fall time, the trails, you know, from the moose.
24 I think we have a very healthy population, moose
25 population from just what I've seen. And, you know, I
26 feel that we shouldn't have, you know, pretty much any
27 restrictions right now unless they do a count and come
28 up with the fact that, you know, hey there is a shortage
29 of moose. But hunters and trappers and -- you know, have
30 been doing a very good job of thinning down, you know,
31 the wolf population, the moose population. So, we're
32 kind of getting rid of, you know, thinning down the
33 predators and -- which I think is leading to a decent
34 moose population.

35
36 And I also feel like that you know, just
37 because I'm not subsistence anymore, I don't feel like
38 I should lose my rights to be able to, you know, convert
39 back to the woods and be able to harvest my moose. And
40 I was thinking about the -- about other residents also,
41 you know, that have grown up in the surrounding villages,
42 but, you know, since moved to Fairbanks and, or you
43 know, to town, some for employment, some for, you know,
44 for doctors. I said they now may potentially lose their
45 rights to hunt in their childhood hunting grounds
46 because they're now not a resident or subsistence. In
47 which I believe is totally, totally unfair. I believe
48 hunting should be a right for all Alaskans and even
49 outsiders, and not just for a small select group. I can
50 understand temporary restrictions when moose populations

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1 are low, but now this is not the case considering they
2 have not done a moose survey in quite a few years. And
3 I'd just like to say those are my thoughts. Once again,
4 forgive me for being nervous. I'm kind of jumping all
5 over the place here, but I thank you for your time and
6 consideration and let's all get out there and enjoy the
7 hunting together.

8
9 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you so much for
10 your testimony. Questions? Andy Bassich, go ahead.

11
12 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. For the record, Andy
13 Bassich, thank you for your testimony. Really well
14 received. And I can understand your desire to get back
15 to that lifestyle. I have a question for you and that
16 is hearing your testimony, do you feel that if this
17 modified version, which would close a five-mile corridor
18 along the rivers would that impact you to the point
19 where you don't -- do not feel that you would be able
20 to have successful moose hunts given that you have a
21 float plane to access areas outside of this closure area?

22
23 MS. HAYDEN: No, I don't feel it would
24 impact -- it wouldn't impact me at all. The only thing
25 is like I said, I grew up out in the wilderness, boating,
26 hunting, canoeing. It's a very -- I absolutely love
27 boating and moose hunting. And like I said, I went on
28 that really long boat trip from Circle to the border was
29 absolutely the most beautiful trip ever. I love river
30 hunting. And so, I guess that would be the only thing
31 that it would impact. But as far as being able to get a
32 moose every year, I don't feel that, you know, this
33 modified version would be more acceptable than the first
34 version.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

37
38 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

39
40 MS. ENTSMINGER: Charlie, I have a
41 question.

42
43 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Yes, Sue. I'm just
44 going to go ahead.

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you. Yeah. Thank
47 you, Charlie. This is Sue. I have a question for you,
48 Susan. How did you find out about this closure? If you
49 could let me know that.

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1 MS. HAYDEN: So, the only way I found out
2 about this closure -- and I was very upset about it,
3 because I feel something this big and that could
4 potentially affect so many people, so many hunters, I
5 feel that we weren't notified. Now, a friend of Sue's,
6 that's also a friend of mine was the one who notified
7 me. And this is why I couldn't even testify during the
8 first hearing was because I didn't find out about it
9 until, I think it was the first week of February when
10 testimony was already given and received and this was
11 pushed through. And if it wouldn't have been for my --
12 our mutual friend, I would have -- would not have even
13 heard about this. And, and possibly I always hunt from
14 the 10th through the 20th, it's what I've done for the
15 last ten years. I wouldn't -- you know, may totally have
16 missed that there was any closure at all, you know,
17 hence they pushed through the first version that that
18 would have affected us.

19
20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Thank you for
21 that. I just wanted to let other council members know
22 that here's an example where non-federally qualified
23 subsistence users are unaware of the federal system. And
24 it bothers me that, you know, they're supposed to be
25 coordination between the state and the federal system.
26 And here it is not. And if it weren't for my friend, our
27 mutual friend who just happened to be at my house doing
28 a project, he lives in Fairbanks now, but he grew up a
29 mile and a half off the road system here, and like Susan
30 moved to Fairbanks and learned to fly. And that's how
31 he met Susan. So, I these are -- this is a issue to me
32 that's vitally important. And I know we're supposed to
33 be asking questions, but that is why I asked that
34 question of Susan. Thank you, Susan.

35
36 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I don't see any
39 other raised hands. I did hear from ADF&G Area Biologist
40 Mark Nelson. He is up in Barrow right now and unable to
41 attend today. But we do have Aaron Poetter online from
42 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and just wanted to
43 check with Aaron if he had any comments he wanted to
44 share since Mark wasn't available before we move on.

45
46 MR. POETTER: Yeah. Good morning, Mr.
47 Chair, Members of the Council. Thanks for the
48 opportunity to speak this morning. So obviously, the
49 Department of Fish and Game, we -- the state's opposed
50 to this closure in its original form or its modified

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1 form. I appreciate Mark having had the opportunity at
2 the last meeting to present the biological data related
3 to moose in 25C as well as the harvest information. But
4 there's just no biological justification for a
5 restriction to access. So, we're certainly in a opposed
6 position to that closure. Extensive federal season
7 provides a lot more opportunity in this area than what
8 the non-federally qualified season is at ten days there.
9 Again, any non-resident, they are restricted to 50 inch
10 or four-brow-tine bulls. And the long-term average
11 harvest in this area from as has been reported, which
12 seems to be in some questions about how accurate the
13 harvest reporting is. We're only seeing 27 moose being
14 harvested in this area from our records. Mark did pass
15 along that while we have not had the opportunity to get
16 a survey in over the last few years due to weather
17 conditions, he is slated to try to get a survey in next
18 week to try to get the updated information. So, we are
19 trying to keep our finger on the pulse of what's
20 happening with moose in this area. For everything that
21 we can discern, it is -- that may not be a dense
22 population of moose, but they are stable. And so, the
23 state is opposed to this restriction. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
26 Please come on up.

27
28 MS. WARD PETER: Okay, cool. So, my name
29 is Kayleen Ward Peter. I'm a Tribal Council Member for
30 the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. Me and
31 my partner, back room, he's Second Chief of Venetie
32 Village Council. We kind of came here last minute. I'd
33 like to say also, from what Susan was saying, that I
34 never seen anything about this also. I know Galen may
35 have heard something, but I haven't heard anything about
36 this closure or an alternative. I've been listening to
37 these other hunters who have also lived on the land,
38 even though they're not federal subsistence hunters. I
39 do agree that there should be alternatives for them who
40 have lived out there. I'm not sure how that can be done
41 through the Board. But I just wanted to say from where
42 I live, and our hunting up by Venetie Arctic Village,
43 that we do see a problem with hunters flying in during
44 the fall seasons. They'd be buzzing the moose. They buzz
45 the caribou. We've had instances where hunters fly in
46 and they try to camp right next to you. Like there is
47 issues with non-hunters and even my family, we weren't
48 able to get a moose this fall, but due to our
49 circumstances where I live, we were able to harvest later
50 on. But that just shows that, you know, with all the air

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1 traffic coming through the watersheds and like you guys
2 are stating for the alternative, the Yukon River
3 watersheds and that corridor I think the alternative
4 personally, and I'd like to say also, I'm not here on
5 behalf of the tribe. I was just stating that I am a
6 tribal council member. But we have not spoken about it
7 together. But I think an alternative to include these
8 other -- I mean, other hunters who have lived here on
9 the land, even though they're not called federal
10 subsistence hunters, I think there should be some type
11 of alternative for them. But what we're worried about,
12 I think, as tribes along the rivers, is all these hunters
13 with planes that don't care about us, that just want to
14 come in for antlers. There's even instances where
15 they're covering up their numbers on the plane, so we
16 can't take pictures of them flying so low along the
17 river that they're flying right above us. And I
18 understand they do have to come down to land. But I just
19 wanted to say it as a Alaska Native hunter myself that,
20 you know, we do see these influx of flying in during the
21 hunting seasons. And I think it is a good idea to
22 restrict some things, but like I said this is the first
23 time I'm hearing about it. I read through that packet
24 as fast as I could a minute ago. I believe that hunters
25 that have lived out there that aren't considered federal
26 subsistence hunters should have some type of -- I'm not
27 sure how that can happen if they can keep hunting like
28 us because they have lived there. But what we're mainly
29 worried about is tribes and hunting in the fall for our
30 families is these hunters that are coming in and buzzing
31 us and buzzing the caribou and buzzing our villages. We
32 even had instances where they're buzzing while we are
33 having a funeral, and it's just not fair. And the
34 rudeness when they land at our airports. So that's all
35 I wanted to say. Like I said, I didn't come here fully
36 prepared, but I did read through it and I think the
37 alternative personally is what I would go for. But I am
38 thankful that these Boards are thinking about our
39 subsistence uses. Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy. I'll
42 go after you.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Member
45 Bassich for the record. I'm curious, are you seeing much
46 conflict or competition with the boat hunters up in the
47 Venetie area, or is it primarily the aircraft?

48

49 MS. WARD PETER: Primarily aircraft. It's
50 a lot. We're like -- when we go out, we go on boats

1 also, but we also travel across the land. But in this
2 instance, last year when we went upriver, like halfway
3 to Arctic there was a lot of aircraft coming through.
4 And someone that was hunting there for over two weeks
5 that we just came to visit, he wasn't even able to see
6 moose at all because these planes are constantly going
7 back and forth. And that was the instance I was saying
8 that these people even parked right next to his camp,
9 and you could plainly see his camp right there. So, it's
10 just, it's like the common sense and also the common
11 courtesy to, you know, subsistence hunters that I don't
12 think some of these people understand, but it's made
13 aircraft for your question.

14
15 MR. BASSICH: And just to clarify --
16 Member Bassich, again. Just to clarify some of the
17 impacts from the aircraft, obviously are objectionable
18 to the people, but do you feel like that aircraft traffic
19 is also moving moose off the river system where you
20 normally would hunt?

21
22 MS. WARD PETER: Yes. And that's what I
23 was trying to say. Sorry if I didn't say that.

24
25 MR. BASSICH: Thank you very much.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So would you support
28 the original proposal of keeping the whole area closed
29 or the corridor. I just wanted you to say it on the
30 record for me, please.

31
32 MS. WARD PETER: Wow. I mean, I did say
33 -- I would like for protection. I don't -- do I have to
34 choose?

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Nope.

37
38 MS. WARD PETER: Okay, so that's what I'm
39 saying. Is that like, yes, I would like the full closure
40 if it could include these people that have lived on the
41 land also. Like these other ones that are giving their
42 comments. Like I do understand, we know they live out
43 there, like we know they are respectful and that they
44 don't take too much just like us and -- but it's the
45 outsider ones that come that have no respect and treat
46 us the way they do. And I don't know how you can include
47 them. I would love for a large closer closure if it
48 could include them, but I don't know how that can happen.
49 But at least the alternative.

50

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1 MS. HAYDEN: Hey, I have a question. I
2 have a question. Can you hear me?

3
4 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Yes, I can hear you.
5 Go ahead.

6
7 MS. HAYDEN: Hello? Okay. Hey, this is
8 Susan Hayden, and I was the one who gave testimony
9 earlier. I'm a -- I'm one of the floatplane pilots now.
10 I have a question now. Are these all hunters or are
11 these commercial pilots that are flying, you know,
12 they're following down the river because, you know, fall
13 time, it can get really crappy. You know, weather and a
14 lot of people, they follow a lot of the commercial
15 pilots, flying hunters out, say from the Chandelar or,
16 or other areas. They're flying down the river in order
17 to get to Fort Yukon, which is the kind of

18
19 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Excuse me.....

20
21 (Simultaneous speech)

22
23 MR. HAYDEN: The central place where then
24 they -- go ahead.

25
26 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: You can't ask
27 questions here on this platform. I'm sorry. I thought
28 you were Sue the council member. My apologies.

29
30 MS. HAYDEN: Oh, okay. I'm sorry, I
31 thought we could ask questions also.

32
33 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: No. Thank you.

34
35 MS. HAYDEN: Okay. Sorry about that.

36
37 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: You can testify your
38 mind that during public testimony, but you can't butt
39 in and ask questions. I'm sorry.

40
41 MS. HAYDEN: Got you. Okay. No problem.

42
43 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you. Sue
44 Entsminger. We'll get that straight this time. My
45 apologies.

46
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank you, thank
48 you, Charlie. And will -- I'm very sensitive to Susan's
49 feelings and thank her for understanding the process
50 here. This is to the young lady that's talking. I forgot

00027

1 your name, I apologize. Is some of this air traffic, can
2 it be from the airports in the communities?

3

4 MS. WARD PETER: In terms of hunting, no,
5 these are small bush craft that are obviously for hunting
6 and not for commercial passenger use.

7

8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I just want you
9 to know that I am real sensitive to that kind of thing.
10 And I would -- I understand your feelings about that.
11 And I -- it opens the window to me for more education
12 that this Council has worked on for years. There has --
13 we need to have more education and more respect, that
14 is the reason I served on this Council is to bring
15 respect to the people, all the people. So, I really
16 appreciate your comments here. And so, you -- I'm going
17 to ask you a question. So, allowing the amendment to
18 just be the river corridor closed to non-federally
19 qualified subsistence users. You could go for that?

20

21 MS. WARD PETER: You're asking if I
22 support that one?

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, if you could
25 support it. Yes. Thank you.

26

27 MS. WARD PETER: I think because these
28 aren't final. I don't want to say I want to choose either
29 or. Like I stated before, I like the closure. If it
30 could include these other hunters that have stayed here
31 for many years. What -- mostly -- like I'm -- I stated
32 I'm here on behalf of myself, not my tribe. I just
33 mentioned I'm -- am in my tribe, but if there could be
34 alternatives for hunters who have lived on these lands
35 also that are not considered federal subsistence hunters
36 but at this time, I'm not going to choose either or.

37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank you.

39

40 MS. WARD PETER: I can go now or...?
41 Okay. Thanks. I wasn't going to talk, but then I read
42 through the packet, and I felt like I had to due to the
43 stories. Like I was stating that, you know, this is all
44 over the river, that these stories are happening. And
45 it's not just Venetie Arctic.

46

47 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. Thank
48 you Kayleen for your testimony. It's very helpful.
49 There's a discussion about low density and low abundance
50 of moose. And do you feel like that is an issue?

1

2 MS. WARD PETER: Again, this is
3 personally, I feel like yes. We have an influx of
4 families that get moose and then there's families that
5 don't get moose because of just like the vast amount of
6 area we have to cover. And then like I stated, with the
7 influx of traffic, air traffic, that it does seem harder,
8 especially for hunters that don't have boats and things
9 like that. They fly right over our land. Over to the
10 east as well, not just along the rivers. I mean, I have
11 pictures all over my phone of these planes flying over
12 our land constantly. And a lot of times, like I said,
13 they even cover their numbers. So personally, I'm not
14 representing everyone in Venetie Artic. It could be
15 different for them, but I do see it lowering where
16 families don't get it. Like I said, this year we didn't
17 get one in the fall. We waited till winter, but that's
18 because we have that opportunity. But for families, you
19 know, that rely on that fall hunt, it does affect it and
20 it does make it harder for us.

21

22 MS. BURK: Thanks. We -- this is Eva
23 again. We need eyes on the ground like you. And so, one
24 of the things in both the Fish and Game Advisory
25 Committee, and then this Regional Advisory Council is
26 documentation of bad behavior. So, we've been asking
27 folks on the ground if you see something, if you're able
28 to video it, photograph it, and get that submitted here
29 to our Council Coordinator. That -- and then we can get
30 these to like their Fish and Game AC too or any of the
31 reps here, council members, because it's really
32 important for people to understand. I know there's a lot
33 of good actors out there, but there are bad actors. And
34 unfortunately, that's what you're testifying to. And
35 it's -- and I just commend you for your testimony. And
36 if you're able to provide any, you know, photos,
37 documents, videos, anything like that, it's very
38 helpful. Thank you.

39

40 MS. WARD PETER: Thank you.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: And Kayleen, I'd love to
43 get your contact information so that I can make sure
44 those get to you. I think we have some outdated stuff
45 for Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. Thanks.

46

47 MS. WARD PETER: If you have your phone,
48 I have a QR code.

49

50

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1 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: And before you walk
2 away, there's applications for the RAC back there
3 if.....

4
5 (Laughter)

6
7 I must say, this is a tough situation.
8 I personally, on another note, have dealt with guides
9 being in my cabin when I get there to hunt. All set up
10 and camping in every trail. And we end up being the bad
11 guys when we try to clear our trails that we've been
12 using for millennia. So, it's really tough when you call
13 the authorities and they come in and they bother the
14 local people instead about their boat tickets and start
15 handing out fines. So, it's really tough even for people
16 to turn people in for being bad actors. So, it's really
17 tough when the system works against you in so many ways.
18 So that breaks the trust that a lot of people, so. It's
19 a really tough situation and I feel for everybody and
20 I, I really hated to cut off Ms. Hayden, and I respect
21 everybody's testimony, everything, but just trying to
22 follow process. No disrespect to you. I appreciate it,
23 if it came over that way. Thank you.

24
25 Give us one second, please. I really
26 need to have a bathroom break. I don't mean to break in
27 the middle of this. I was trying not to. But I can't
28 wait no more. So, can we have a short break? Five, ten
29 minutes? Yeah.

30
31 (Off record)

32
33 (On record)

34
35 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay, back to
36 business. Yep.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
39 is Brooke McDavid. I just wanted to remind folks -- it
40 was pointed out that that the map on page -- what page
41 number is that? 24 of the packets and then the map that's
42 in the handout copy that's towards the back that shows
43 the corridors and the one that I'm showing on the online
44 Teams meeting is a little bit misleading about exactly
45 where those corridors apply. They do only apply on those
46 red federal lands, which is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife,
47 the Yukon Flats Refuge lands, they don't apply on the
48 Native corporation lands shown in brown or the state or
49 in blue or the BLM lands. So just wanted to make that
50 clear for the record that the corridors would just be

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1 for the federal hunt and that federal hunt would just
2 be those red federal lands. Thanks.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a quick question.

5

6 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

7

8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. The BLM Alaska
9 Select Lands. So, there is still select lands there and
10 who's managing it now on the select lands? The BLM or
11 the state and Native?

12

13 MS. MONTGOMERY: Hi Sue, this is Clare
14 Montgomery for the record from BLM. And I believe that
15 we still manage the lands until the selection takes
16 place.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke and just
19 to clarify with our team and BLM but the selected lands,
20 the federal subsistence priority does or does not apply
21 there? Thanks.

22

23 MS. MONTGOMERY: Again, while it's still
24 BLM managed land and until/if a selection happens
25 federal subsistence priority does apply.

26

27 MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Hello. Who am I
30 speaking to?

31

32 MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin,
33 OSM, Wildlife Division Supervisor. I just wanted to
34 clarify on the record that the BLM selected lands are -
35 - what's depicted on the map are only those lands open
36 to federal subsistence uses, and so the selected lands
37 are not open to subsistence use for the purposes of
38 federal regulations. I mean, they're still managed by
39 BLM as far as I guess, you know, land management goes.
40 But for the purposes of federal subsistence, they are
41 not open to federal subsistence until those land
42 selections would be, you know, removed and or, you know,
43 obviously, if they're transferred, they wouldn't be
44 anyway but I just wanted to clarify that currently the
45 only federal public lands for the purposes of federal
46 subsistence use are the Yukon Flats Refuge lands in Unit
47 25D remainder.

48

49 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. If it's okay, I
50 can add. I would like to ask another question. So, it

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1 says BLM Alaska Selected Lands is a -- is BLM selecting
2 them or the other entity, the Native or state selecting
3 BLM lands?

4
5 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yep. It's the other way
6 around too. Lisa Grediagin for the record. And so yeah,
7 there's a lot of general domain BLM lands across the
8 state that have these selections on top of them, whether
9 they're state or Native corporations that, you know,
10 they're kind of over selected and they're still working
11 through the process on which ones are going to be
12 officially conveyed and which ones would be
13 relinquished, and then would go back to the BLM. So I
14 think the point of this map was just to convey the full
15 land status of 25D remainder, because the map we had in
16 the previous analysis that you guys saw in the fall only
17 showed the federal lands open to subsistence, and we OSM
18 wanted to show all the land status so that you guys are
19 aware of all the Native lands in that area. Because I
20 think in the fall, OSM kind of made the argument like,
21 oh, if you close federal lands, it'll condense people
22 on the state managed lands. But the fact is, most of the
23 state managed lands in 25D remainder are Native -- are
24 private lands basically that, you know, not anyone could
25 just hunt on unless they have permission. And of course,
26 I mean, I'm not talking about below the mean high-water
27 mark. I'm talking about, you know, the actual private
28 state lands that are depicted on the map. So hopefully
29 that helps.

30
31 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any more
32 public comments? Anything else? Go ahead, Gerald.

33
34 MR. ALEXANDER: Hi. It's Councilman
35 Gerald Alexander, I'm going to comment on this. I'm not
36 going to throw myself under the bus or anything like
37 that. But there's 25D, I was kind of hesitant on even
38 questioning it, but after listening to you guys'
39 testimony and Charlie, I understand what you're saying.
40 You know, I've -- 60 years, I was born, you know, and I
41 have seen these outsiders come in and come and go, but
42 really it wasn't a problem for me and I'm not saying I'm
43 going to -- to your question, you know but anyhow under
44 this, I just started reading it and it says, see as
45 modified by OSM to close moose hunting by non-federally
46 qualified users from September 10th to the 20th. That's
47 early. You know, I've been out there in that -- those
48 out on days and these are still green but still we still
49 get a lot of boats. But the last ten years I haven't
50 seen much. So, you know I can't say I'm against it or

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1 for it. But you know, I'm just throwing my opinion out
2 there. It's an opinion. That's it. Thank you.

3

4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Just for
5 process, it sounds like we're starting to get into
6 discussion. And it'd be good if the Council could get a
7 motion on the floor before further discussion. Thanks.
8 This is Brooke.

9

10 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. For the record, I'd
11 like to make a motion that we support WP26-75 as
12 presented to us.

13

14 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'll second.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich here. I'm
17 going to speak to the motion. I do have a couple more
18 questions before I make a couple of decisions here. My
19 first question is in regards to some of the testimony
20 given to us in trying to make some sort of exception for
21 some of the individuals who gave testimony. It's my
22 understanding and I need some correction or some
23 clarification that there may be a process in place
24 through the federal program where an individual family
25 can seek a C&T determination for a closed area for a
26 federal area. Is that correct? Seemed to me we did
27 something like that down on the Copper River for fishing
28 at one point in time for families that had showed long
29 term use, or could I get a clarification on that?

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Member
32 Bassich and someone else can jump in if I misspeak, but
33 I believe that's just for National Park Service and
34 that's probably why you're recalling for Copper River
35 and Wrangell-St. Elias.

36

37 MR. BASSICH: Thank you for that. I was
38 hoping that that might be an avenue to give those people
39 a little bit of opportunity. My second question is the
40 maps here are not detailed enough for me to really
41 understand where tribal lands are. And so, my question
42 would be if tribal lands were closed to hunting without
43 -- unless there was permission directly from that tribe,
44 how might that impact some of these corridor regions?
45 And I know we probably can't get into the real detail
46 on that, but I'm just wondering what that consideration
47 would be and the issue of people traveling the rivers
48 and then landing or shooting on the gravel bars. My
49 understanding would be those tribal lands go to the high-
50 water mark. Is that correct? And so, the state waters

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1 would be the waterway and below mean high water. Is that
2 correct definition or -- I need some clarification on
3 that. In the case that tribal lands in those particular
4 areas where they would come down to the river if they
5 were closed, how would that impact access along the river
6 for hunting?

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
9 Brooke. And others, again, feel free to jump in. So, the
10 tribal lands are the brownish tan ones that you're seeing
11 there. And what I was trying to say at the beginning
12 when we got back on record was this corridor wouldn't
13 apply to those tribal lands because those are managed
14 under the state, they are private, but so you can't hunt
15 there without permission, but the state regulations do
16 apply. You are correct about below the mean high-water
17 mark is also state managed. So, if there was a gravel
18 bar in the middle of the river or something folks could
19 still hunt there.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Thank you for that
22 clarification. Mr. Chair, I'd just like to say that my
23 perspective is that I am in support of this modification
24 to WP26-75 as was presented by OSM. My justifications
25 for it are, there have been considerable local and
26 traditional knowledge saying that moose populations are
27 not doing well. We have not had a survey in quite a
28 number of years to show otherwise. It's my understanding
29 that when you're talking about biological data and/or
30 indigenous knowledge you have to consider both, but
31 we're lacking in the biological data currently at this
32 point in time. So, I'm going to lean towards the
33 indigenous knowledge that we've heard testimony for
34 showing that there is low moose population densities and
35 subsistence, or federally qualified users are having
36 difficult time meeting their needs for moose hunting. I
37 believe that this is a good -- this is a really tough
38 decision to make, but I do believe that the modification
39 by OSM is a good solution to a problem. I recognize that
40 it's going to create some hardship for people that want
41 to hunt under the state regulations. It may cause some
42 displacement of hunters to other areas. However, given
43 the long history of hearing this discussion at the RACs
44 for many years I believe it's time now to try and take
45 some action to alleviate some of that conflict and to
46 provide for federally qualified users to get the best
47 opportunity they can to meet their needs, knowing that
48 they don't need -- that they don't have other economic
49 needs to meet their food needs and their traditional
50 ways.

1

2

3 In regards to the airplane and those
4 issues, it's pretty clear from what I've heard from the
5 testimony that these closures in the corridors would not
6 affect people flying with aircraft, that there's plenty
7 of country out there that would be open to them, that
8 would allow them to obtain their food. So given that, I
9 don't think that that is an issue for those individuals
10 to meet their needs. I think one of the jobs of this
11 body is to try and come up with equitable solutions as
12 much as possible. And that's what makes this one tough
13 because we are going to have to close things off if we
14 do adopt this or if the Board does adopt this. However,
15 I think there are other opportunities for these hunters
16 that may be displaced to go to other areas to hunt or
17 to -- maybe even if it -- this action reduces some of
18 the hunting pressure, then, in my opinion, that's a
19 success. What I have noticed over the many years is that
20 most people pick up books and they look at where can
21 they hunt the longest and what are the largest bag limits
22 that they can get, and that's where they're generally
23 drawn to oftentimes. And so, I think it's going to be
24 really incumbent upon all parties that if this is
25 adopted, that there is a very strong educational aspect
26 put out there to the public to inform them well in
27 advance so people can make other plans if they choose
28 not to hunt here.

28

29

30 The final thing that I have a great deal
31 of concern about, and I voiced this for many years, is
32 the increased activities of air taxis dropping off
33 hunters into areas and not being responsible for whether
34 those hunters are knowledgeable, respectful or even good
35 at taking care of their meat. And so I'm going to take
36 this opportunity to strongly recommend both to the state
37 of Alaska and to the federal programs, that there be --
38 begin to be some discussions on some regulatory
39 processes or other types of processes that would begin
40 to hold air taxis accountable for their actions in
41 dropping off hunters that may not be respectful and that
42 there must be a system created because this is becoming
43 more and more apparent in a lot of these remote areas
44 where air taxi air carriers from farther distances away
45 are now entering into new areas. They're competing with
46 local air taxis, who have been well established and have
47 well established relationships with the communities that
48 they operate around. So, there is a respectful exchange
49 between those communities and those local air taxis. I
50 don't think those people are the problem. I think the
issue is when outside people come in and they don't know

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1 anybody and they don't know the country, whether they're
2 doing it meaningfully or unmeaningfully, they create a
3 lot of this conflict, and I think that's kind of the
4 root of what our problem is here with some of the issues
5 with the conflict. I think that's all I have, Mr. Chair.
6 But I will be support -- in support of the modifications
7 proposed by OSM. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Any other Council
10 Comments? Question? Oh, go ahead Linda.

11
12 MS. EVAN: I was wondering about the
13 people who already -- who live in that area. We're
14 talking about who are not federally qualified
15 subsistence users. How to accommodate them? They live
16 there. Thank you.

17
18 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Maybe I need to be
19 educated a little bit more. My understanding is a number
20 of them have aircraft, so they have other opportunities
21 to hunt in the non-closed areas. If it was the corridors
22 that were going to be closed only, they can still hunt
23 in other areas outside those corridors because they have
24 aircraft to reach those areas. So those people would not
25 be impacted. We heard that testimony to that earlier.
26 And, and I would need some clarification on the one
27 family that lives up the Sheenjek. I believe it's a
28 Sheenjek River. I don't think and maybe Charlie could
29 come up and, and clarify, but I don't think that they
30 would be impacted if it was only held to the corridors,
31 not the full closure. Is that correct, Charlie, if maybe
32 you could come up and.....

33
34 MR. JAGOW: Yes. For the record, Charlie
35 Jagow. That is correct. The corridor is cut off before
36 their camp. So, this would eliminate affecting them.

37
38 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. So, Linda. Yeah.
39 So basically, the people we've heard testimony from
40 would not be affected by the corridor closure. They would
41 be affected if we closed the entire 25D west. Thank you.
42 That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

43
44 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Let's try to use our
45 microphones. Just a reminder. Sue, you out there? You
46 have a comment?

47
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.

49
50 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: You got the floor.

1

2 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you so much. This
3 is Sue. I -- let the record reflect that if I had the
4 option of voting against the full closure again, I would
5 vote against it right now, but I am in a -- wanting to
6 compromise and be very sensitive to the needs of the
7 communities across the region that -- on that river
8 corridor. I can accept this modified river corridor
9 closure only. And I definitely feel strongly that if we
10 keep closing areas to non-subsistence, all we do is
11 affect more and more areas across the state. And I --
12 it concerns me that these kinds of things are happening
13 across the state and we're not being compromising as the
14 users. Because there's good people in every walk of life.
15 There are good people in the cities. There's unfortunate
16 situations like Susan and even some of our members that
17 are living in Fairbanks now. And if your permanent place
18 of abode is in -- outside these areas, you're a non-
19 qualified subsistence user. And I think it's very
20 important to figure out a way to all of us work together
21 and understand each other. There's going to be a lot of
22 work in the future for educating the public because I
23 think there is a bad apples, not the majority, but I
24 think the bad apples make it look bad for the majority.
25 I do not feel bad apples are the majority at all from
26 urban areas. But one of them makes it bad for everybody.
27 And this is time to all of us to say, hey, we need to
28 work together. This is the right thing to do under this
29 circumstance. So, I am going to support this, but please
30 let the record know I would have voted against the full
31 closure. But this is a compromise and I really feel it's
32 important to do that. Thank you.

33

34

35 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue. This
36 is Charlie. I want to make a comment myself. This is
37 really hard. If you look at the census for Alaska, it's
38 exploding. The military has exploded. There's not enough
39 animals to feed everybody, so we have to have some kind
40 of control. I have sympathy for all the people that are
41 being affected. I think about everybody in a whole.
42 That's the best way to go forward. And I just wanted to
43 state that we can't help three people and then affect a
44 thousand. So, I will also support the corridor
45 protection. Even though knowing that there's not a good
46 count and this seems to mask having to do a count going
47 into the future. In my mind, count would have done better
48 instead of all this. But I just wanted to state that for
49 the record and state that I will support, even without
50 the count. Thank you. Okay. Okay. Go ahead.

50

1 MS. BURK: Thanks. This is Eva. I feel
2 like there's a lot of mixed feelings even about the
3 modified proposal. I'm hesitant to support it, but I
4 probably will based on public testimony and just based
5 on comments from other council members. I think, though,
6 in Alaska, we really need to get more real about the
7 situation that's unfolding on the lands and waters. And
8 we need to get really -- for the people that are living
9 year round in these rural communities that are facing
10 hardships in every season, and their subsistence
11 resources, their main primary food sources are all in
12 some sort of decline, with the most relied upon salmon
13 being in a very, very serious state of decline and not
14 looking to recover anytime soon. And I think -- one
15 thing I mentioned yesterday is about the declines I see
16 in caribou kind of matching that pattern of decline in
17 salmon and that we are probably in some type of cycle.
18 And that's the thing that's making kind of making me
19 lean towards supporting this is really hoping that we
20 are in a cycle, and we see some sort of recovery. But I
21 will also share a little story. I grew up trapping and
22 hunting and fishing about -- it's like 100 miles
23 downriver from Nenana and about 30 miles snowmachine
24 ride through a swamp. So, you have to go very slow. It's
25 very bumpy. And when I first went to Rampart to trap
26 with Charlie, my mind was blown that we could get on the
27 snowmachine and drive five miles and start seeing things
28 in the traps right away. My experience growing up in
29 Nenana, that was the resources had been impacted for
30 some time, and that's why our fish camp and our trapping
31 cabins were so far from Nenana. And one thing that my
32 dad often complained about was these new people that
33 come out here, they set traps down when they just see a
34 set of tracks. They don't understand the amount of tracks
35 that they need to see to understand what a healthy
36 abundance or population is. And I think in Nenana, you
37 really see being on a road system, this influx of, you
38 know, non-federally qualified subsistence users, right.
39 And I think for me, when the Yukon salmon closure first
40 started, I'm in a grieving. So, it was like a bargaining
41 of wanting to taste king salmon. So, I -- we went and
42 we put in four-inch nets knowing darn well we were going
43 to get king salmon as a -- what do you call like a --
44 we're supposed to be targeting non-salmon, but we knew
45 we were going to get king salmon. So, we set down four
46 nets because we have big families. That was the one and
47 only year we did that, because my heart felt terrible
48 to think about people that lived in these communities
49 that couldn't get their subsistence needs met. And I had
50 a job in a city, and I could go to the store if my net

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1 didn't get fished. And so, I stopped doing that. That
2 was a personal sacrifice. And that's the kind of
3 situation I don't think we fully understand that we're
4 in yet with caribou and moose, and I'm really
5 disheartened to see a lack of data. I really would hope
6 that this proposal doesn't mean that there isn't going
7 to be a survey. Right now, we're looking at some -- I
8 think some of the rationale from the biologists that
9 work for both the state and federal agencies, it's like
10 you have a goal and a range, low, high end for your
11 population objectives or when it's salmon, your
12 escapement objectives. And right now, we're trying to
13 reauthorize antlerless hunts in 20A, which is right by
14 Nenana. But for all these years past, we're not allowed
15 to harvest a cow for potlach so I'm confused as to why
16 we're going to allow this cow hunt. And then I look at
17 the rationale, and it's because we jumped up a little
18 bit above the low end. And I would advise to anybody
19 that's managing fish and wildlife in a changing climate
20 right now that we need to start shooting for that high
21 end. Across the Board in all units and for all species.
22 That's how I really, really feel about fish and wildlife
23 management because we're in an unknown place. And I know
24 from reading different articles that in order to have
25 sustainable fish and wildlife management you can't
26 maintain a level of harvest that you historically had,
27 which means you're going to have to harvest less in a
28 changing climate. And how we start coming to those
29 decisions is going to take all of us. But I think all
30 of us need to really just kind of sit with that in our
31 heads that we don't know what's ahead of us. The salmon
32 are in such decline. Indications for caribou are bad.
33 So, I don't know what would make moose any different
34 right now, knowing that the numbers in my own region
35 aren't that great. So, I just really think our management
36 approach needs to change, but because local people and
37 other people are willing to support this corridor,
38 modified corridor, I think I'm inclined to. But I just
39 wanted to put those comments on the record.

40

41 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

42

43 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Always
44 wise words coming from you and very well thought out and
45 very well-reasoned. So, thank you. I agree 1,000%. I
46 wanted to build a little bit on that. And in your
47 comments about always moving and trying to manage to the
48 high end, we had public -- or we had testimony yesterday
49 by a number of our council members recognizing the
50 successes of the Kuskokwim Salmon Management, because

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1 that is exactly what they're doing. And they have not
2 missed an escapement for over 12 years, whereas the Yukon
3 is in total decline because we always manage to the
4 lowest common goal. So, I just wanted to reinforce that
5 idea, not only to managers but to the public, because
6 the public needs to understand that too. The public is
7 the ones that put the pressure on managers to open things
8 up. Whether it's fishing or hunting. So, the public needs
9 to understand some of those bases for wildlife and
10 fisheries management under a changing climate condition,
11 which is exactly what we're in right now. So, I'm -- one
12 thing I have noticed, and I'm taking note, is I'm hearing
13 a lot of discussion about public outreach and education.
14 And we need to do that more than ever. So, thank you for
15 your words. I agree.

16
17 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: I want to add one
18 more thing and as an example of the necessary -- how
19 necessary it is to do moose counts. I've been bothering
20 for a moose count in 20F for years, and this last fall
21 there was three moose killed. So that's how important
22 the moose count is. Otherwise, you end up in that
23 situation where you only get three moose for one village.
24 It's really heartbreaking to know that that's where
25 we're headed. So, I would really, really push for moose
26 count in the future. Thank you.

27
28 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Are we ready for
29 a call? I call for a question and vote. I guess I need
30 to restate the motion. The motion was to -- for the
31 Eastern Interior RAC to support WP26-75 modification
32 presented by OSM.

33
34 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay. We'll do a roll
35 call vote. Thank you, Brooke.

36
37 MS. MCDAVID: All right, this is Brooke.
38 We'll do a roll call. And starting from the top, Gerald
39 Alexander.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Mic. Mic please.

42
43 MR. ALEXANDER: Okay. Put me on the spot.
44 Boy, I'm going to have to abstain.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Well.....

47
48 (Simultaneous speech)

49
50 MR. ALEXANDER: I'm not sure.

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1

MS. MCDAVID: We can come back to you.

2

3

MR. ALEXANDER: I can't decide.

4

5

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. We'll come back to
you. Next is Andy Bassich

6

7

8

MR. BASSICH: Support.

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10

MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

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12

MS. BURK: Support.

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14

MS. MCDAVID: Sue Entsminger.

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16

MS. ENTSMINGER: Support.

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18

MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

19

20

MS. EVAN: Support.

21

22

MS. MCDAVID: All right, Gerald, back
over to you.

23

24

MR. ALEXANDER: I'm awarded. I support.

25

Thank you.

26

27

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And last Chair

28

Charlie Wright.

29

30

CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Support.

31

32

MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes 6-0.

33

34

CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Go ahead. Use your
mic.

35

36

37

38

MS. BURK: I have a question about, like,
units. Do they -- so, like, well you know this table
that's like the harvest numbers and the number of
hunters. Will we get a report of that in the future, or
is that something we would have to request for 25D? Or
would that be done at like the Fish and Game Advisory,
or would it be done here?

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46

MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
Wildlife Biologist, OSM. So, my answer to that is going
to be a little bit vague because right now we just voted
on this with the -- as the Council and this will still

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1 need to go to the Board. Now, if the Board votes with
2 the Council and or if at any point this becomes a
3 closure, all closures come back and be and are reviewed
4 every four years. So, this will come back. So, any
5 reports that are done in that time period I will include
6 in that analysis. But if it isn't closed and I'm just,
7 you know, so it has to be brought up again, as in
8 something that you'd want to get from, you know, local
9 managers and ask for that report from them. Again, I'm
10 giving a vague answer because this isn't the final vote
11 on this still has to go to the Board. So, I don't want
12 to make an assumption.

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: And through the Chair.
15 Member Burk, we did get a bit of a report from Mark
16 Nelson with Fish and Game at the last meeting. I'm sure
17 you remember talking with him, I do -- I can send that
18 to you again, but we don't have any updated data at this
19 time. If that's something you'd like to see again, maybe
20 after next fall hunt. We could always extend an
21 invitation to invite him back to do another
22 presentation. Thanks.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich here. I'd
25 like to request that a year from now in our spring
26 meeting, that we just get some sort of an update. And,
27 you know, I guess we'll -- I'm not sure on timelines,
28 will the Federal Subsistence Board take this up before
29 this year's hunting season? It will. So, I think it
30 would be really great to give both ADF&G and federal
31 managers an opportunity to collate some of the data from
32 this hunt and see if this is in fact accepted what
33 impacts it may have had and what it would have changed.
34 And it would also be good to have a little bit of
35 historical data included there as a comparison to see
36 where we're at, just as an indicator. Because I think
37 we're going to run into more and more of these types of
38 situations. And it's -- and I think it's almost like a
39 test case. I hate to use that word. But I really think
40 that we need to be kept apprised on the types of actions
41 that we are recommending and the impacts, both positive
42 and negative. So that it can inform us in future
43 decisions.

44

45 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Yeah. I mean, I
46 forgot I didn't add this to the record, but what we all
47 just experienced at the Board of Fish Alaska Peninsula
48 meeting was a feeling of kind of like, well, one blatant
49 racism, but two, like retribution in the fact that
50 because we had created some extra closed fishing time,

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1 there was going to be intentional chum chucking because
2 of the anger towards us for closing -- causing closures.
3 And so, when I hear about bad actors and the pushing of
4 animals out of the closure corridor and into other areas
5 that are then only accessible by planes, I get very
6 concerned that because of this closure, we might see an
7 increase in that type of behavior because there are some
8 bad actors out there. And so, I just really want to,
9 one, keep a pulse on what's happening on the ground from
10 locals requesting documentation of anything that they
11 see like that. And then two also just keep an eye on the
12 harvest, I think would be really important. That's what
13 we're doing in these other areas too, is, you know, just
14 checking the numbers as these newer closures and more
15 restrictions get into effect. Thanks.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks all for your
18 discussion. This is Brooke. I just wanted to make a note
19 because it came up, you know, some concerns about
20 transporters and and flying in hunters, not necessarily
21 the local folks with airplanes. Western Interior
22 discussed that quite a bit at their meeting and I sent
23 a text to Jack if he might want to call in the morning
24 and do a public comment. Just to share with you guys
25 they had -- Western Interior had some suggestions and
26 they're sending a letter about that. I wasn't there, so
27 I don't have all the details, but we could get you some
28 more information tomorrow. And you know, perhaps at a
29 future meeting we could invite someone from the Big Game
30 Commercial Services Board just to give a presentation
31 about maybe what that Board does, and you know, how they
32 sort of deal with you know, complaints or violations or
33 things like that so folks know the proper reporting
34 protocols and things. Thanks.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: I guess I would also like
37 to just inquire. I'm pretty ignorant about that aspect
38 of state and federal regulations, and it might be really
39 good to have some kind of a understanding of what the
40 federal program can do as far as requiring compliance
41 or training or things, whatever it may be. I know the
42 state doesn't -- hasn't in the past really shown much
43 interest in trying to regulate that at any level. But
44 since this is the federal program, it might be good to
45 explore what might be able to be required on federal
46 lands.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thanks
49 Andy. This is Brooke. Yeah, I think, you know, the
50 Federal Subsistence Board doesn't deal with it so much

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1 as our land managing agencies and I -- and they're
2 probably all slightly different in how they do deal with
3 that permitting, not for commercial guiding on BLM
4 versus refuge, etc. So, I don't know if anyone here
5 wants to say anything about that. That's from the
6 agencies now or, you know, we could definitely earmark
7 that for the future, a little more in-depth discussion
8 and learning opportunity.

9
10 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay. Going forward.
11 Okay. Next on the agenda WP26-77, Units 12, 20 and 25 -
12 Wood Bison, recognize customary and traditional use.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
15 is Brooke for the record. So, this is on here. It's not
16 for you guys to take it back up as a proposal. So, we
17 won't be going through all those steps. We just put it
18 on here to talk a little bit more about the deferral.
19 So, if you do want to look at this proposal again, it
20 is on page 31 of your binders and there are copies on
21 the table for folks and it's on the website. But -- so,
22 at your last meeting, you voted to defer this proposal.
23 But you didn't really put a timeline on that or any you
24 know, clear thoughts on the record about how you might
25 like to see that proceed. So, I just -- we put it on
26 here so that you guys could talk about, you know, if
27 that's something you want to take up again at your next
28 meeting or you know, if you want to wait till the
29 wildlife cycle two years from now or what?

30
31 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: So, I would like to
32 see it on the -- go forward. Yeah. On the next meeting
33 would be really good. Thank you.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you Charlie for that.
36 The Board will -- when you present to the Board about
37 the deferral it'll be good to include that when we talk
38 to them. We did talk a little bit with TCC and some
39 other folks in the region about maybe some options for
40 -- for not only consultations, but for just outreach in
41 general. And Liz and I -- Liz Williams with OSM and I
42 are going to try to go after this meeting is over to the
43 TCC subregional meetings and hang out in the Tribal
44 Resource Stewardship room and just chat -- to be
45 available to chat to folks about not -- anything about
46 the federal program, but this proposal in particular.
47 We weren't able to get on the actual subregional meeting
48 agendas at this meeting because it was so full, but
49 there's should be another opportunity in August,
50 hopefully to maybe especially talk with the Upper Tanana

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1 tribes who were the -- really the only voice that we
2 heard in opposition. So, we want to make sure also that
3 they know that there's consultation opportunity and if
4 that is something that they would like us to do, an
5 actual formal government to government consultation that
6 we can help arrange that. So just wanted to make you
7 guys aware of that and if you wanted to add anything or
8 have any other ideas.

9

10 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: I think that's a
11 really good idea. And I'll be there in that room at same
12 time, and I can help you navigate that. And so, we can
13 make it a little bit easier, and we can talk to those
14 chiefs, the ones that pertain to this and help get a
15 meeting, whether it be there or in the near future. I
16 think that we didn't have our fall convention this year
17 due to funding. So, I can't promise that it will happen.
18 I'm sure they'll announce that during this convention,
19 whether they'll have that fall one. Normally we only
20 have a spring convention. And because things are coming
21 so much, we added that extra convention. But due to
22 funding cuts and losses that we don't know if they'll
23 go forward at this time, but we'll keep you informed.
24 Thank you.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
27 we also hope to spread the word to the Regional Advisory
28 Councils in the area or in the Eastern Interior region
29 in case they want to take it up and weigh in and make
30 sure we get that broader feedback. I did talk about it
31 at a Fairbanks AC meeting but haven't been able to
32 coordinate with others yet. So just wanted, yep, to give
33 you guys an update on that. And it sounds like at the
34 Board meeting, you'll be able to also share that you
35 would like to see this at your fall meeting. Thanks.

36

37 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you. Anything
38 else to be said? Anybody?

39

40 (No response)

41

42 Okay. Going forward. Next on the list
43 is Reviewed and Approve FY 2025 Annual Report.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Council
48 Members, I just passed out to you the draft annual
49 report, and I heard Charlie comment that it's shorter
50 than some of your past annual reports that were record

1 length. But I wanted you to know that it's not included
2 with the pages I just passed out, but the letter that
3 you sent to provide comments on the Secretarial Review
4 will be attached to this document when it goes to the
5 Board and that letter is in your meeting packets as
6 well. It starts on page 135 of your binders and that
7 letter is very long. So, I think the idea was there
8 wasn't a need to repeat the exact same things. But as
9 we go through -- go over this draft annual report, we
10 can also refer to the letter that starts on page 135.

11
12 So, the topics that you voted to include
13 at your last meeting were delays in Council letter
14 elevation and lack of engagement, inter-jurisdictional
15 collaboration and co-management for rebuilding Yukon
16 River salmon. Add a requirement for coordination with
17 tribal entities on salmon management actions. And that's
18 into the delegation of authority letters and then
19 outreach and education to address hunter conflicts and
20 ethics. And then the last topic is more of a catch-all
21 to just highlight some of those really important things
22 that you brought up in the Secretary Review Program.

23
24 Now if it's okay with you, Mr. Chair,
25 we can go through each of these five briefly and have
26 an opportunity to discuss each one. So, topic number one
27 at your last meeting, there were some frustrations
28 expressed about Council letters that had not been
29 elevated. It had been almost a year at that time since
30 the Board had voted to send some Council letters and
31 they hadn't been forwarded by the Board yet. I am happy
32 to let you know that at the Board work session at the
33 beginning of February, the Board voted a third time to
34 forward those letters and those were forwarded. So, I
35 just wanted to make you aware that that was completed,
36 and those topics were about salmon management issues,
37 the (d)(1) lands and council compensation. But you also
38 discussed in the Secretarial Review ways to help prevent
39 that in the future, that delay. And so, some of the
40 suggestions you talked about were developing a strategy
41 for how the Councils, the Board and the program can
42 engage -- and that's the federal subsistence program as
43 a whole can engage with the Secretaries and other
44 agencies on major subsistence issues that fall outside
45 of the Board's authority, but that directly impact
46 federally qualified subsistence users. And that
47 suggestion that you came up with came because a lot of
48 times in your annual reports, you get a reply. Well,
49 that's outside the Board's jurisdiction. And I think you
50 -- I know especially Member Shockley was frustrated by

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1 that because there are these major issues that you've
2 brought up time and time again, especially related to
3 salmon and this need for cross-jurisdictional
4 management. And so, their -- the suggestion is to develop
5 a strategy about how to deal with issues just like that.
6 You also suggest that the Board should have a
7 correspondence policy similar to the Council
8 correspondence policy. So, it's transparent how that
9 process works and develop guidance for how the Board or
10 OSM can advocate for subsistence users and other
11 regulatory arenas such as North Pacific or Area M. And
12 you ask the Board to discuss those suggestions.

13

14 Before we move on to the next topic,
15 does anyone have any comments or modifications you'd
16 like to see for that first topic?

17

18 (No response)

19

20 Yeah. So just a -- Member Burk asked if
21 I could back up since she stepped into the room. So,
22 we're currently reviewing the draft annual report to the
23 Federal Subsistence Board and attached to that report
24 will be your full comments on the Secretarial Review.
25 And yeah, so the process is sort of to just go through
26 each topic in your draft report. And if you'd like to
27 see any changes to the topic or additions, we can note
28 those at this time.

29

30 MS. BURK: This is Eva, I'm taking over
31 for Charlie. He stepped out for a second. Does anyone
32 have any comments on -- you said the first topic? Because
33 I do have a comment. Okay. I don't know where to bring
34 this in. I don't even know the level of appropriateness
35 of this, but I think it's really important to understand,
36 especially when we're talking about this jurisdictional
37 issue around salmon and the bouncing back and forth. I
38 was really disturbed particularly at the Department of
39 Fish and Game. I hate to put people out on the record
40 that because I think there's a lot of great people I
41 that work at Fish and Game, but the kind of leadership
42 that the tribes had to put forth, the resources and
43 organizing it took to change regulations in the marine
44 environment. One in the North Pacific's jurisdiction and
45 then the other within the Board of Fisheries, state of
46 Alaska's jurisdiction. And to me, it's very fragile, the
47 protections that were put in place, especially for the
48 Board of Fish. And I just want to note that this is all
49 by design.

50

1 At a time when the Pacific Northwest
2 tribes were receiving their treaty rights to salmon, it
3 was the same -- or to all fisheries. Excuse me. It was
4 the same time that the Alaska Native Claims Settlement
5 Act, and it was before ANILCA. And so, it -- why we have
6 disjointed management of salmon I feel is all by design
7 because it's been well documented for -- the federal
8 government knew this for -- in a 1920 report the reliance
9 of Yukon River people on salmon. And so, I think, you
10 know, they're even with the Alaska Native Claims
11 Settlement Act, a lot of the allotment and the
12 corporation model, it had come from the federal
13 government's basically taking over of other lands in the
14 contiguous United States, the Lower 48. And so, I feel
15 that the Native People of Alaska have been
16 disenfranchised from their aboriginal rights and their
17 title to the resources of Alaska. And I, don't know
18 where that fits in here, but I do think it is important
19 because sometimes we're just looking at what's happening
20 right now instead of understanding the history that led
21 up to the issues that we're having and we're seeing
22 right now and the inability for a real gravel-to-gravel
23 stewardship plan to materialize. I'm especially
24 concerned about the Yukon River rebuilding plan. And
25 although I hear you, Andy, there is a lot of
26 communications and outreach, for people along the Yukon
27 River it's still very much feels like it's being done
28 in a vacuum. And it really does feel like its purview
29 is limited, especially as the panel members have tried
30 to get the Yukon River Panel to address marine bycatch
31 and intercept of Yukon bound salmon as something that
32 needs to be addressed in the Yukon River rebuilding plan.
33 And it didn't happen. That wasn't prioritized. And so,
34 I have a lack of faith in the gravel-to-gravel
35 stewardship plan. I think there really needs to be more
36 understanding and working across at all levels. And I
37 think when it comes to the North Pacific, unfortunately,
38 it requires working with the Secretary of Commerce who
39 oversees that body. And until we start having
40 cooperation at that level, and between all those
41 different agencies, we only have the idea of a gravel
42 plan. We have no gravel-to-gravel plan. And so, I just
43 have to kind of reiterate that for the record, that this
44 disjointed management of salmon and rebuilding, it
45 really feels like it's by design and to disenfranchise
46 and take away the aboriginal rights to resources. And
47 you can hear the leaders, 150 tribes united, and it's
48 really hard to hear as somebody who sits on a panel and
49 listens to the testimony of hundreds of people.
50

1 So, I'm just -- Charlie distracted me.
2 So, now I had such a good punchline, Charlie. God darn
3 it. And the issue is not over. We have to go to the
4 legislature to continue to protect salmon, and I just
5 don't understand it.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much, Eva,
8 for your comments. And I do want to point out in the
9 Secretarial Review letter you do make -- you made that
10 point at the fall meeting that it's not truly gravel-
11 to-gravel without that input from Department of
12 Commerce. So that is included there. And I'm just going
13 to check moving to the next topic, I believe it's also
14 included here. So, topic two is inter-jurisdictional
15 collaboration and co-management for rebuilding Yukon
16 salmon. And you discuss the need -- okay. To be
17 effective, this effort will require collaboration
18 between the program, the state of Alaska, Yukon River
19 panel, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and also
20 the Department of State, because I believe that's where
21 that international hatcheries issue comes in and a
22 suggestion that you all had was also to establish more
23 liaison positions so folks from each of those agencies
24 attend the -- each other's meetings. And then you go on
25 to talk about the importance of co-management and
26 bringing in those tribal voices. And you end by -- you
27 suggested that the Board invite representatives from the
28 Secretary's Office to hear directly from subsistence
29 users about the impact of the salmon crisis. Hearing
30 directly from subsistence users is the only way to begin
31 to understand how devastating the loss of salmon has
32 been to our communities. And that -- go ahead Andy.

33
34 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, I
35 appreciate that. I think from my perspective, and I think
36 many people share the same perspective. What's lacking
37 is in this interjurisdictional system that we have or
38 don't have, entities -- agencies or entities have these
39 hard cutoffs as to where they can -- they perceive they
40 can give input and that's what's failing us. So, the
41 example I want to give is the Yukon River Panel, which
42 I'm probably the most familiar with, in our treaty it
43 says that we shall give recommendations for marine
44 catches and bycatches. However, we have never done that.
45 Our organization has never gone to the Board of Fish or
46 to the North Pacific Council to my knowledge and given
47 meaningful testimony based upon the Yukon River Panel's
48 position or the people of the Yukon River's position on
49 salmon, bycatch issues or the depletion of salmon wild
50 stocks through hatchery over production. And I brought

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1 that up many times at our panel. Still continuing to try
2 and work in that direction as a part of the rebuilding
3 plan because it won't work unless we address the marine
4 issues. So, rest assured, it's trying to be worked into
5 the plan. I don't know what form it's going to take, but
6 that's just one example. The Federal Subsistence Board
7 refuses or will not take action to make comments on
8 behalf of us on the Yukon River in regards to salmon in
9 the areas that they're not permitted to have direct
10 influence on. The Board of Fish has a little bit more
11 latitude, but they don't talk to the North Pacific
12 Council really on these issues of salmon declines. And
13 so, in my view, what's really needed to change and that
14 kind of goes back to what I was showing you yesterday
15 with the words from Socrates. Instead of working with
16 the system we have now, we need to begin to start making
17 a change. And the first change is for those
18 organizations, those regulatory bodies that have those
19 authorities to sit to get together at a table and have
20 a coalition or I don't know the term for it, but I'm
21 going to use the word coalition to start working on
22 these positions so that each entity has its
23 understanding of what its position is, that they can
24 share, and hopefully have some discussions on -- and
25 gain understanding of the other positions. That's the
26 only way we're going to fix this problem. And that's
27 really what we're going to need for the long-term future.

28
29 So, I don't know how to ask for that,
30 but I do know that that's in the hearts and minds of a
31 lot of people that are struggling. And it's not just
32 salmon. Salmon is probably the primary one because it's
33 the lifeblood of people who live along the Yukon River
34 and other tributaries of the Yukon River. But somehow,
35 we have to start moving the needle at the agency level
36 and at the regulatory level to start taking action. It's
37 going to take a long time to form. It's going to take a
38 long time to be effective. But just because it's not in
39 the law books or the regulations right now, doesn't mean
40 that it shouldn't be worked on to be put into a process
41 moving forward. And I've brought up for many years the
42 international aspect, because we're also being impacted
43 by the international hatchery productions and bycatches,
44 and that's a much bigger, tougher role. But maybe if we
45 could get things going within the state of Alaska, that
46 might be the leverage used to start addressing some of
47 the more bigger international issues. These problems
48 aren't going away. They're just going to get bigger. And
49 so, we need to start and we can't do it our RAC can't
50 do it. The combination of RACs can't do it. It has to

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1 be the will of the leaders of these larger agencies or
2 organizations to recognize that that support path we
3 have to take. It's not going to be an easy path. It's
4 fraught with a lot of indecision and a lot of -- we're
5 going to have to work through a lot of the mechanics of
6 how something like that would work. But somehow, we have
7 to start that. And boy, I hope it happens before I'm
8 fish bait at the bottom of the Yukon River, because that
9 would be something to me that would feel like it was all
10 worth it. To me, that's a measure of, okay, 30 years or
11 25 years of putting your time into something, something
12 good might happen for younger people in the future. And
13 that's the only reason I'm at this table. My days are
14 gone for a lot of this, but I'm here because I believe
15 in the youth and I believe in future generations, and
16 their right to have the kind of life that we had. So,
17 thank you for indulging me for a minute. But sometimes
18 I think it's really important for the people who listen
19 to these transcripts and these meetings to understand
20 kind of the deeper heartfelt parts of why we're here.
21 And hopefully that will influence them to take some
22 action. And I know none of this is going to be easy
23 action, but it has to happen for the younger generation.
24 That's what I plead that we do it for. It's not for us.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much
27 for that, Andy.

28
29 MS. BURK: I think -- this is Eva, I
30 remember what -- it was -- it I was thinking about the
31 tribal leaders and particularly the Association of
32 Village Council Presidents in that region and how the
33 salmon crisis is a humanitarian crisis. And I think that
34 is an important acknowledgement. I also think of Tanana
35 Chiefs Conference testimony about the health -- rapid
36 changes in diet can have rapid changes in health. We're
37 also seeing a large increase in violent deaths, which
38 is like premature, accidental or homicide, suicide.
39 We're seeing a lot of that in our region right now.
40 Charlie said almost 300 people died last year in our
41 region, which is a lot of young people too. I can think
42 of in my own region. And so that's the humanitarian
43 crisis and not having the resources to quantify that or
44 not having it in a study that these folks can quickly
45 point to like these things are happening on -- they're
46 being developed as we speak, kind of the analysis of the
47 impacts. What we really need is in a socio-economic
48 analysis of this Yukon River salmon crisis. And I would
49 say it's not just the Yukon River, it is the entire
50 Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim River drainage, which is about

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1 40% of Alaska's watersheds. It is really important to
2 understand the magnitude of this. Another thing that I
3 heard in public testimony was that ecosystem crisis. We
4 heard that again when Dr. Jim Simon was testifying about
5 the eagles yesterday. I just, I really think -- I also
6 know that these communities are strong and resilient
7 within our own community of Nenana. We're looking to see
8 where the resources in the state are, I guess okay,
9 where they're not seeing the declines that we are, and
10 then doing cultural exchanges to hunt and fish so that
11 our people are still able to do those things. And we're
12 getting involved in farming. So, we are resilient. We're
13 going to adapt and we're going to stay in place. And
14 we're always going to be in community. And I really, you
15 know, back to what Andy saying, what we need now for
16 salmon is -- it has to be a priority. It has to be
17 prioritized by all leadership at all levels. The
18 governor, the legislature, federal administration, our
19 Alaska representatives in our Congress. Everybody needs
20 to be prioritizing the salmon crisis that we're in and
21 also the eco -- I really feel like there's an ecosystem
22 crisis, and we're just every year looking at the numbers
23 and hoping that things don't fall apart.

24
25 I think a good model would be the
26 migratory AMBCC, the migratory bird and the cooperation
27 there. I think we're dealing with a migratory species
28 and having a framework that understands that and tends
29 to that is important. And so, I think, like Andy said,
30 the things that we need in place, the laws, acts,
31 frameworks, bodies, they're not developed yet. And I
32 hope that our comments here can help -- are being sent
33 to the right people that can help us get the resources
34 in place to establish these bodies and get the
35 representation from the local folks and start to really
36 protect our migrating resources. Thank you.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Thank you,
39 Member Burk, for those comments. And I did want to point
40 to your comment letter on the Secretarial Review 10A,
41 you mentioned that exact thing at your fall meeting about
42 the need for socio economic analysis done by DOI and
43 USDA. So that is being forwarded.

44
45 All right gonna [sic] move down to topic
46 number three. At your last meeting, you wanted to include
47 a request to modify the Yukon fisheries delegation of
48 authority letter to request that Tanana Chiefs
49 Conference Tribal Resource Stewardship Department, Yukon
50 River Drainage Fisheries Association and Yukon River

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1 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission be added to the list of
2 entities with whom the federal manager is required to
3 coordinate with -- for Yukon River salmon management
4 actions. I wanted to let you know I did go to the Western
5 Interior Council meeting last week and I asked them how
6 they felt about this, since I figured that the Board
7 would want the other Yukon Councils to weigh in on that
8 and they were supportive. And I plan to also ask Yukon
9 Delta RAC when they meet the week after next. I did flag
10 though, one entity that may have been left off this list
11 and that was AVCP and I wanted to ask you guys if you
12 felt like they should also be included just to make it
13 equitable with the lower river representation. And if
14 you could put that on the microphone, Eva, instead.

15

16 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Yeah. The AVCP
17 is responsible for the Lower Yukon villages, so it's
18 important to include them. I think that's an oversight.
19 Thank you.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you. I'll
22 make sure that that edition is included and will include
23 whether or not Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC also supports
24 in the final version of the annual report. All right,
25 moving on to topic number four. This is a topic that you
26 all have continued to bring up over the years and
27 outreach and education to address hunter conflicts and
28 ethics. There was -- there has been more discussion at
29 this meeting on this topic. And there was also a call
30 to you know, make sure that we continue the efforts of
31 the hunter ethics outreach and education initiative that
32 have been done in the past, even if that looks a little
33 different with the players involved or who might be
34 leading that to make sure that that we keep up with that
35 work.

36

37 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich here. I'm
38 wondering if maybe this particular bullet point could
39 be the focus of a letter that could then be sent to some
40 of the agencies that we would want to partnership with,
41 to also ask small amounts of funding from them for a
42 combined effort. So, you know, BLM, ADF&G, U.S. Fish and
43 Wildlife Service, obviously OSM, maybe TCC. I'm just
44 thinking that given the discussions at this meeting and
45 past meetings and the fact that we are clearly
46 identifying outreach needs at this meeting from what
47 we're hearing from testimony and from Council discussion
48 that that might help us. Because quite frankly, I think
49 why some of this has stalled is that it takes money. No
50 matter what you do, it takes some money to do some of

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1 this and we can come up with some projections on some
2 of the projects we want to do, but that will be wasted
3 effort if there isn't some funding to go along with that
4 and, you know, \$5,000 from each entity that really isn't
5 much out of their budgets. But boy, if we could pull
6 together 15- or \$20,000 to really put an effort in this
7 fall it might be just the push that we need to get the
8 boulder rolling. So just a thought from the Council, but
9 I would -- I think that would be a good strategy to try
10 and keep this present right now. And I don't know if we
11 would need a motion for that. Okay. If we do, then I
12 would make a motion that the Eastern Interior RAC use
13 bullet point 4, on outreach and education to draft a
14 letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ADF&G, BLM,
15 TCC and possibly other entities identified later to help
16 contribute to a combined educational and outreach effort
17 within the Eastern Interior region.

18
19 MR. ALEXANDER: I'll second that.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Speaking to the motion,
22 I'll just reference my earlier comments.

23
24 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.

25
26 MR. BASSICH: Question.

27
28 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Okay, I'll ask for
29 unanimous consent. All those against, please signify by
30 saying aye.

31
32 (No response)

33
34 Hearing none. Motion passes. Thank you.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Member Bassich,
37 for that motion. And we'll be sure to get that drafted
38 up after the meeting. I'll just also say for that topic
39 when you have brought it up before to the Board, there
40 has been a lot of favorable support from other Councils
41 across the state. Western Interior in particular had a
42 lot of the same issues that they discussed at their
43 meeting. Oh, that is another thing that I want -- that
44 I forgot to bring up to you guys. I did also ask them
45 how they felt about adding the Native lands to the maps.
46 That was a request that you all wanted to see. And that's
47 sort of how this discussion of conflict and trespassing,
48 the need for outreach came up because of that discussion
49 that kind of prompted it. So, they were also in support
50 of adding, adding those to the maps, but that was kind

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1 of an aside. I just wanted to get that on the record.

2

3

4 So, the last topic on here is about the
5 Secretarial Review and the way we sort of summarized it
6 to here as comments was one, to attach the full letter
7 which is, you know, goes very in depth with a lot of
8 your comments, but sort of breaking that out into bullet
9 points here so that someone that's not going to take the
10 time to read the full comment letter could still maybe
11 scan this and see some of the items you identified. And
12 it's also broken out between items that you feel that
13 the program as in the Board and OSM could potentially
14 address without necessarily direction from the
15 Secretaries and then separate bullets that you feel that
16 the Secretaries -- we need the -- a higher level involved
17 because it's outside of the jurisdiction of the Board.
18 And so, I'll just briefly run through these. The ones
19 in the first section are ones that you feel could be
20 addressed sort of in-house. And that's improving
21 correspondence and the annual report processes, making
22 the council member application process more efficient.
23 Exploring design options for a combined state federal
24 red book. Developing more detailed regulatory maps that
25 show Native corporation lands. Working toward renewing
26 the memorandum of agreement with the state. Modifying
27 Board policy on rural/nonrural determinations to provide
28 deference to the Council's. Formalizing additional co-
29 management arrangements.

29

30 And then the sum of the bullets that you
31 felt we need the Secretaries to engage on are like you
32 already mentioned, this inner jurisdictional, ecosystem-
33 based management of salmon, process for engaging with
34 the secretaries on issues outside the Board's
35 jurisdiction. And that includes two-way communication
36 with the Councils on such issues. Publishing a
37 comprehensive social -- socio-economic analysis of
38 subsistence in Alaska and how it has changed over time.
39 Requesting additional funding for effective
40 administration of the federal program and resource
41 management research. And changing policy to allow OSM
42 to conduct primary research.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Brooke. Just something I
45 want to maybe highlight on bullet point three publish
46 comprehensive socio-economic analysis of subsistence in
47 Alaska and how it has changed over time. It seems to me
48 that there would probably be a high likelihood that
49 partnering with universities, whether it be in Alaska
50 or outside of Alaska. There are a lot of people that are

1 studying and interested in this. And so, taking some of
2 the burden off of OSM or other entities, I'd like to
3 just make that as a suggestion. I know personally, I've
4 talked with a number of other students or people going
5 for their master's or doctorate that are very interested
6 in this, especially in regards to the fisheries' aspects
7 of it. So, I just wanted to put that out on the record
8 as something that might be pursued that would also reduce
9 work effort and funding needs directly. Thank you. And
10 I always think that building partnerships is the --
11 really what we need to do in the future. And I didn't
12 identify myself as Member Bassich.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Member Bassich,
15 And this is Brooke again. I do want to let you know we
16 did know at that point in your Secretarial Review comment
17 letter where it's a little more detailed and that's on
18 the second paragraph on page 144 in your binder. It says
19 the departments could partner with researchers at
20 University of Alaska and Alaska Department of Game or
21 ADF&G Division of Subsistence in this endeavor. Well,
22 you brought up these points at the last meeting. So, I'm
23 glad that you repeated them for the record again today
24 since you feel that they're important.

25
26 MR. BASSICH: For the record, this is
27 Member Bassich. I feel like I'm a broken record. I've
28 been bringing up a lot of these topics for many years
29 and some of them have been acted on, but a lot of them
30 still have not. And maybe that's part of the frustration.

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Council members
33 are there any other edits that you would like to see to
34 the to the draft annual report before we move on? And
35 just a reminder, we can't add additional topics at this
36 meeting. But if you want to flag any other topics they
37 could be, you know, sent as letters or added to your
38 annual report for this fall, which you'll be developing
39 at your fall meeting -- or in your report for this year
40 which you'd be developing at your fall meeting.

41
42 (No response)

43
44 And if there aren't any other edits, we
45 would just need a motion to approve the annual report
46 with the suggestions noted.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair member Bassich.
49 I'd like to make a motion that the Eastern Interior RAC
50 support the annual letter with the additional materials.

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MS. EVAN: This is Linda. I second the motion.

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MR. BASSICH: And if there's no discussion, I'd call -- no.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for those comments, Eva. I'm just trying to think about -- okay. Well, first I'll note I believe in your report last year, you did bring up the Copper River in that exact same comments. And that was also tied in to the discussion about how you all would like to see the federal ANS established. But I'm trying to think as far as in this current draft where you feel like that could be squeezed in or if you want to just earmark it for next annual report. I do have some ideas that actually came up from the Western Interior Council about structuring the annual report in the future. They

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1 started including a little, I don't know if you want to
2 call it like a report card of the different species. And
3 so, because one of the things you know, in ANILCA for
4 your annual report is you know, to identify what's going
5 on with the various fish and wildlife populations in
6 your region and any strategies or recommendations. And
7 so instead of having all these separate topics, I mean,
8 you could also have those, but maybe a standard section
9 that basically, you know, would break down like say it
10 would say salmon, moose, caribou, bears, etc. and you
11 could have a few, you know, for each thing or each year
12 you could say, you know, are we seeing improvements in
13 any of these or do we have concerns with these? And
14 maybe that could help show to a little more overtime if
15 we started being yeah, a little more trackable,
16 consistent in that overtime. But yeah, but back to Member
17 Burk's comment about adding comments about the Copper
18 River. I -- it sounds like Andy might have a suggestion.

19
20 MR. BASSICH: Maybe -- this is Member
21 Bassich, maybe under bullet point eight where it says
22 additional joint Council comments and other subsistence
23 topics. Maybe we could just add a C to that and address
24 that. Would that be an appropriate place?

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: I believe you're looking
27 at the Secretarial Review comment letter and
28 unfortunately that has already been sent. But I was
29 thinking about topic number two here where you have the,
30 you know, the inter-jurisdictional collaboration and co-
31 management of salmon. Maybe we could add something
32 referencing, you know, how what is happening on the Yukon
33 also impacts other drainages and fisheries because of,
34 you know, displacement, but also that what is happening
35 or has happened on the Yukon should be a caution. A
36 point of -- sorry, I'm jumbling my words. I think it's
37 about lunchtime, but you know, I think Eva said it much
38 better. But just to make sure that what has happened --
39 try to prevent what has happened on the Yukon from
40 happening on the Copper.

41
42 MR. BASSICH: I was just going to say,
43 maybe we understand the topic and the desire from the
44 Council, and maybe we could just leave it to our
45 Coordinator to find the appropriate place to make an
46 additional comment in reference to learning from the
47 Yukon River and Kuskokwim experiences that we do not
48 create the same issue on the Copper River, which is
49 beginning to happen. And I'll just reference the many
50 times over, at least the last 3 or 4 years where this

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1 topic has been brought up at this Council.

2

3 MS. BURK: Thank you. And this is Eva. I
4 think one important thing is the -- when we're thinking
5 about, I think on bullet or topic two, right.
6 Interjurisdictional collaboration and co-management.
7 I'm not sure if it fits in because this one is specific
8 to rebuilding Yukon River salmon. And I think what I
9 what I'm more referring to is more of Council comments
10 on the Secretarial Review of the program. And so, kind
11 of fits in both. But what I'm thinking is -- what I
12 mentioned earlier is this -- when we set ranges for
13 populations or escapements, if you look at the
14 escapement goal review, I believe Ahtna Intertribal
15 Resource Commission once all the comments become public
16 has some good language about this, but that when you
17 look at the escapement goal review and how we're like,
18 the department doesn't meet the escapement like half the
19 time across all waters and rivers, and I find that to
20 be very problematic. And I think that's -- it's kind of
21 what I'm referring to here is we need to start not just
22 looking at Alaska in these river by river, but kind of
23 holistically using the same management approaches in
24 different regions and we're coming up with the same
25 results, right. And so how can the state and feds, local
26 people start to realize that the real work that needs
27 to be done is meeting escapement goals. And I think
28 that's my comment with the Ahtna region is they're also
29 not meeting escapement goals. That's why they're
30 subsistence closures. And what you see systematically
31 across the board, I mean, unfortunately for the Yukon
32 River, there's like 20 years of not meeting subsistence
33 needs for chinook, while a commercial fishery for chum
34 was allowed that intercepted chinook because it's a
35 mixed stock fishery, right. So, though that's what I'm
36 talking about, that -- that's the management approach
37 to fisheries in Alaska is not working. And I'm really
38 concerned about other areas of Alaska beyond the Yukon.
39 And I really would hope that we can start highlighting
40 where we can push and those direct pressure points. And
41 to me, it's the escapement goals. And it's -- if that's
42 your management approach, then why aren't we meeting
43 escapement and who's fishing and who's not? Thank you.

44

45 MR. BASSICH: Just a real brief comment.
46 I think you're spot on. And I think the crux of the
47 problem is there's no penalty for not reaching an
48 escapement goal except for the people. That's the
49 problem. There is no penalty. And that's part of the
50 Yukon River Panels problem. There's never been any

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1 penalty to the Alaska side when escapements were not
2 made in Canadian fisheries were closed.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all for that
5 discussion. Well, it just jogged my memory that like I
6 said, we won't be able to add additional topics to the
7 annual report or the past Secretarial Review letter, but
8 the next item on the agenda which, you know, I don't
9 think we should take up now, but when we come back from
10 lunch or later in the meeting is that I will be letting
11 you guys know that that comment period for the
12 Secretarial Review was extended. And so, we could
13 formulate additional comments sort of as an addendum to
14 your previous comments. And it would just basically be
15 another comment letter that would go along with the one
16 you already sent. And I did note down a few things that
17 have been brought up that you all potentially would want
18 to include in that. And when we get to it, we could
19 decide if you want to do that at that time. So, if that
20 sounds okay, there is the motion on the floor to approve
21 the annual report.

22
23 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

24
25 MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich. I call
26 question on our motion and I'll restate the motion. The
27 motion is to adopt the annual report and additional --
28 additions to the annual report to the Federal
29 Subsistence Board.

30
31 CHAIRPERON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.
32 We'll do a unanimous consent vote. All those against,
33 please signify by saying aye.

34
35 (No response)

36
37 Seeing or hearing none, passes.
38 Lunchtime really quick before you said anything. It's
39 12:30, so I guess, one hour. 1:30. Come back. Thank you.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you and if it's okay
42 with the Council, we might move into the fisheries
43 reports after lunch since we'll have some folks joining
44 us. Okay. Thanks.

45
46 (Off record)

47
48 (On record)

49
50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
2 is Brooke. This afternoon we're gonna [sic] jump a couple
3 items ahead to the Fisheries Reports. That way we can
4 accommodate some folks that have joined us for that
5 discussion. And I just wanted the Council to know these
6 1st 3 items under Fisheries Reports, the Recap of North
7 Pacific, Recap of Area M Meeting and the Yukon Panel
8 Salmon Rebuilding Plan. Those are not actual
9 presentations. They're just here as placeholders for
10 Council discussion because I know these are 3 really big
11 issues. And you know, this past month there was a lot
12 that happened and I wanted to make sure you had an
13 opportunity to talk about that as a Council and hear
14 from others about that. So, just wanted to put that out
15 there. And we also had added yesterday that you all
16 would -- wanted to hear -- had the statewide Board of
17 Fish meeting added and hopefully hear comments from
18 Tanana, Manley and Minto, Nenana ACs if they're
19 available. So, I'll turn it back to you, Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
22 So, we're down at Fisheries sports -- Reports. Recap of
23 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council action on
24 Chum Bycatch. Do we have somebody in the room that wants
25 to report on that?

26
27 (Pause)

28
29 We have our tribal rep here in -- at the
30 table. So, I think when she gets done with her mouthful,
31 she might give us a little report. Yeah.

32
33 MS. BURK: This is Eva. At the North
34 Pacific, I think there was a lot of mixed feelings on
35 the action from different tribal groups that had went
36 there. What tribal groups had asked for was an overall
37 cap in all clusters. And then a more restrictive cap in
38 Clusters 1 and 2, where a lot of the Western Alaska chum
39 are caught. And I think on average, 60% of Western Alaska
40 chum are caught in clusters 1 and 2. And 40% can be
41 caught in Clusters 3 and 4. And the motion that end up
42 passing at the Council was not an overall cap. It was
43 for a Western Alaska cap of 45,000, and it was for
44 Clusters 1 and 2, and then the penalty would be if that
45 cap was reached the following year, there would be a
46 closure and 19 stat areas would be closed, 4 of which
47 would be fixed in regulation. The 4 stat areas that are
48 fixed in regulation are some of the stat areas that have
49 the highest amount of pollock catch. So, they're very
50 important fishing grounds. So, the penalty is very high

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1 for the pollock industry if they go over that Western
2 Alaska cap the industry cannot -- even though real time
3 genetics are being developed right now. And there is
4 annual genetic information collected. The industry still
5 has to operate like it's a cap of 225,000 chum, because
6 they have to assume that roughly 20% of the chum that
7 they are encountering are Western Alaska. And so, even
8 though there's a Western Alaska limit, you still have
9 to operate on this overall cap type of framework.

10
11 And then a couple of other additions
12 that I thought were very important were within the
13 incentive plan agreements. Each kind of group of boats,
14 like, there's a catcher vessel, there's a catcher
15 processor group. Then they have incentive plan
16 agreements on how they're supposed to operate and how
17 they work together to avoid chum salmon. And there's a
18 couple of provisions that were added, and one is
19 requiring the Incentive Plan Agreement Managers to make
20 weekly salmon bycatch reports available to salmon users,
21 Alaska Native tribes and tribally authorized consortia
22 and fish commissions. And that will allow fish
23 Commission and other groups to kind of map out where the
24 majority of Western Alaska bycatch is happening every
25 year, because through this analysis it wasn't very clear
26 on a fine scale where Western Alaska chum were being
27 caught. And so, it was through revisions of going back
28 through data that we could hone-in on stat areas. And I
29 think the idea would be within a stat area to even have
30 more finer understanding, because the stat area is like
31 30 miles by 30 miles. So, it's kind of important to
32 understand even there, when the time area of when western
33 Alaska chum are migrating through. And then -- I thought
34 there was one more other provision.

35
36 And then the other part about that was
37 the Western Alaska Chum Salmon Index. If this cap will
38 be in effect until, and this is what we're hoping for,
39 right? That the Yukon River would have to be above the
40 90th percentile of the historic summer run. So, that
41 would be above 3.8 million for Yukon summer chum and
42 1.39 million for fall chum. And I think that's a good
43 recap. Is there any questions comments? And you know,
44 before -- I'm going to actually say this, because it was
45 very clear going into the Council Meeting that these
46 council members and others in the room across all sectors
47 want to take a meaningful action to protect migrating
48 western Alaska chum. And I think at the Board of
49 Fisheries, I didn't feel like everybody in that room
50 understood the need for meaningful action. And I just

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1 actually want to commend the North Pacific, which I think
2 is very different mindset I had than I went into this
3 process. So, I just want to put that on record. I am
4 impressed with the body and the effort and the council
5 members.

6
7 MS. BASSICH: I was just going to say
8 maybe if you could go over that last bullet point that
9 you were talking about and their actions. I wasn't real
10 clear on what that action intent was, how that's going
11 to impact Yukon River fall chum. Could you go over that
12 last thing that you were talking about there? Thank you.

13
14 MS. BURK: Yeah, they were -- so one
15 thing that we were asking for from the advisory panel,
16 and I had support for this, but we didn't know how to
17 word it or how to actually collect the data was a --
18 what it -- what we ended up was calling it was a
19 reporting benchmark. And what -- the idea I initially
20 had in the reporting benchmark is that the impact rate
21 or else kind of exploitation rate, because impact rate
22 is this whole set of calculations and data, but basically
23 wanting to keep the exploitation rate of the pollock
24 fishery on the Yukon fall chum less than 1%. And so that
25 and so what does that mean? Right. Well, for 184,000
26 fall chum, they would have to take less than 1,841,
27 right? And then -- but that didn't make it through the
28 Council. And so, what they ended up saying instead was,
29 there is a -- establish a Western Alaska chum salmon
30 index based on Yukon River summer and fall run
31 reconstructions. And what the index is doing is kind of
32 like an abundance threshold. So, the cap -- this 45,000
33 western Alaska chum cap would be in effect until there
34 was at least 3.8 million summer chum. And I want to say
35 what's not clear is it "and/or" right, or both. So, I
36 think we should have got clarification on that. And then
37 Yukon River fall chum would be it would have to be at
38 or above 1.39 million. And so, the way I'm interpreting
39 it is that both of these need to be met.

40
41 (Pause)

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody online want
44 to ask Eva a question about the North Pacific report?
45 Any more in the room?

46
47 (No response)

48
49 Hearing none. We're moving on. Recap of
50 Alaska Board of Fish Area M meeting. Gale, you want to

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1 take the helm on this one? Thank you.

2

3 MS. VICK: Okay. For the record, my name
4 is Gale Vick, and I am on the Fairbanks AC, and also the
5 Facilitator for the BBAYK, Bristol Bay AYK Coalition. I
6 wasn't at the Area M meeting, but I felt like I was. I
7 was watching them pretty much all the time and we were
8 caucusing a lot. And so basically what happened at Area
9 M is that we went into this with several proposals. And
10 we had talked for weeks about which proposals we felt
11 were the strongest. And we all, as an AYK group,
12 supported Proposal #136, which John Lamont put forward.
13 And that was to shut down that June fishery in Area M
14 in order for us to get a better understanding of how
15 many chum and chinook also were going through. So, the
16 backup proposals were the BSFA proposal which allowed
17 for 10 straight days at a time, which allowed for more
18 travel time for chum to go for safe passage. And then
19 the backup to that was Proposal 132, which -- I'm sorry,
20 is that 172. I -- I'm mixing up my Board.

21

22 MS. BURK: 131.

23

24 MS. VICK: 130. Thank you, 131 was the
25 BSFA, 132 was the Fairbanks AC Proposal. And what
26 happened at the end was that there was we had 3 solid
27 votes on the Board, but we needed that 4th vote. And
28 there were people from many different sectors that came
29 to help Board Member Olivia Irwin to write a substitute
30 language for a proposal #127, that the Koyukuk AC had
31 submitted. Our AC -- Fairbanks AC had opposed it only
32 on the basis that it had triggers and caps, which we all
33 feel do does not work. And also, is the basis for the
34 adaptive management plan, which is the current plan from
35 2023, I mean, yeah, '23. So, the result was that we did
36 get substitute language, which is an RC245. And that was
37 the vote that came up before the Board. And those of you
38 who have been to Area M meetings before, this was pretty
39 amazing how quickly this went. It was actually
40 startling. So, the -- and I have given -- and I'm with
41 Eva, I have to give all credit to all the people who are
42 involved in this. It was an amazing coordination. And I
43 just think everybody did an outstanding job. So, the
44 proposal that was written as a substitute language was
45 basically based on the proposal number 140, that the
46 Fairbanks AC had put forward in 2023. That had been the
47 most supported and did not pass at the time. We had to
48 work very hard to get that 4th vote. And Greg Svensson
49 was the 4th vote. So, it was a 4-3 vote.

50

1 The end result is that that proposal
2 will allow for a little bit less fishing time in the
3 June fishery and allow for more windows, which is our
4 objective. But the real objective was it basically
5 demolished and that's not the correct word, but it pro
6 -- it made the adaptive management plan ineffective and
7 because that was based on triggers and caps. So, we
8 wanted retention of both the -- that -- I meant that
9 proposal had retention of chum and king salmon. But a
10 subsequent proposal on what [sic] Proposal #135 voted
11 that down for kings. So, as it currently stands in the
12 June fishery chum are -- have to be retained but kings
13 salmon do not. Which is really a very poor outcome as
14 far as monitoring what's happening with king salmon. And
15 so, this is a step forward. After the 2023 meeting. It's
16 a major step forward. But the Borough, as many of you
17 noticed, the Aleutians East Borough and the Seiners and
18 other groups are very unhappy with this outcome, and
19 they have pursued some legislative action.

20
21 And it's I don't think that their
22 petition will go anywhere, but we're not going to solve
23 this Area M problem even with this new proposal. It's
24 just a step in the right direction. We really need better
25 genetics. We need better on-the-ground monitoring. We
26 don't have -- we've been talking with the Alaska Wildlife
27 Troopers at great length. I submitted an RC which was
28 RC #50, and that was to illustrate how in the last 10
29 years, there's been only 1 year, in '23, where we had
30 any citations whatsoever. And I'm an old commercial
31 fisherman and we know all of us know even on the Yukon
32 River and the Koyukuk and -- I mean on the Kuskokwim
33 River, we know that we're going to get citations in
34 every season. And that didn't happen in Area M. It was
35 partially due to weather. It was partially due to the
36 great expanse that occurs out in the Area M. It's very,
37 very difficult to patrol. Troopers just don't have the
38 funding for it. And we cited this as a reason for the -
39 - why the adaptive management plan doesn't work. And
40 they cited as a reason why it didn't work because they
41 didn't get any citations. Well, the reason they didn't
42 get citations because there wasn't [sic] troopers on the
43 ground.

44
45 So, all of these are pieces of a puzzle.
46 And 1 of the things that -- on Monday night, I invite
47 everybody who's listening or in the room to join the
48 Fairbanks AC Fisheries Subcommittee Monday night. We're
49 going to have a full discussion on this, and we're going
50 to be talking about a plan going forward to develop a

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1 workgroup that, if nothing else, will have discovery and
2 all the issues that we can't get to at the Board of
3 Fish, both for Area M and the hatchery issue as well.
4 So, does that kind of sum things up?

5

6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
7 Does anybody have any questions for her?

8

9 (No response)

10

11 Okay. Thank you.

12

13 MS. BURK: Thank you for that, Gale. This
14 is Eva, for the record. I just wanted for people who are
15 listening-in to know the percentages and reductions in
16 time because I think like 140 would have give -- given
17 3 16-hour openers and that's what Member Irwin
18 substitute language was asking for. But Member
19 Chamberlin put in amendments, so it was 3 24-hour
20 openings a week instead. And that was for drift gill and
21 purse seines. And, and so what that comes out to is, for
22 purse seine and drift gill who take a lot of Western
23 Alaska chum I think purse seines more so in quantity.
24 And that was a 31% reduction in fishing time. From 310
25 hours to 216 hours for the purse seine fleet. For the
26 drift gill, it's a reduction in time of 39%, from 352
27 hours down to 216. And then also the setnets had a little
28 bit reduction in time, 13%, from 416 hours to 362. So,
29 I just -- I'm a numbers person. So, I thought folks
30 online might want to have that. Thanks.

31

32 MS. VICK: No, that was great. Thank you,
33 Eva, for that. I didn't have those numbers handy, but
34 that's real important to know. And I also want to thank
35 you personally and a whole bunch of other people who had
36 helped. And the reason that Member Chamberlain had done
37 that amendment was because of the deciding vote. He was
38 holding firm on the 16-hour versus the 24-hour. So, that
39 was the difference.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
42 for that good report. We really appreciate you. Go ahead,
43 Andy.

44

45 MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich here.
46 Gale, can you just talk a little bit about generally
47 what the next steps are for people?

48

49 MS. VICK: Yeah, thank you for that
50 question. So, like I said previously, we need to maybe

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1 consider a legislative ask to put together a work group
2 that would include all sectors. So that we can get down,
3 and we can bring all these questions that we all have.
4 Whether it's an Area M fishermen or somebody from the
5 AYK that we can start having better discovery on this.
6 And then we can also get to more pressure on the state
7 for the genetics, for both the chum and the chinook
8 genetics that we need to have going forward, and the
9 test-fishery. I had a proposal in there for a juvenile
10 chinook test fisher in the post-June. But the Board
11 couldn't entertain it because of course it would had a
12 fiscal note attached to it, so. And that -- we need to
13 pursue things like that so that we have a greater
14 understanding of the numbers of chum. We also need to
15 work on getting that retention of chum back. And those
16 of you who are at the meeting or listened to it saw a
17 lot of the fishermen who would say, you know, especially
18 seine and drift, who would say that they could safely
19 handle a chinook that came up into their nets and really
20 sit in it would -- it would swim off. Well, all of us
21 here know that a fish that's handled at all, is a dead
22 fish when it has to go 2000 miles. So, that's a fish
23 that we don't have a record of. And I defy anybody to
24 tell me that when you're pulling in a heavy seine or
25 even a drift a set, that you are able to handle a chinook
26 that isn't damaged, especially when coming up in a
27 Driftnet isn't damaged by the gills already. So -- and
28 because if you handle it by the gills or the tails, then
29 it's done for almost immediately. But they were saying
30 they would scoop it up in their arms, and one guy was
31 illustrating this, and I was thinking to myself, I would
32 love to see that in action. You know, when a big net's
33 coming in. Anyway, I diverse. I'm sorry.

34

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

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MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Follow up just along those lines. I just wanted to get on the record that there was a lot of discussion probably almost a decade ago now, about live -- holding boxes in fish wheel and how detrimental that can be even for short periods of time and the handling of the fish in live boxes being released and it was determined. And we've had reports and testimonies on this on how sensitive the fish are. And there was a lot of effort put into trying to make fish friendly fish wheels so that we could retain certain fish and release others. And the net result was that it's usually ends up bad for the fish, no matter how careful you are. So, I just wanted to get that on the record to support what Gale has just said. The other

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1 thing I wanted to ask you, Gale, we -- earlier in the
2 meeting today, we were having some discussions on
3 collaboration between agencies moving forward as some
4 of the possible solutions to this. I was just wondering
5 if you had any thoughts on that, in reference to gravel-
6 to-gravel or bringing agencies or regulatory bodies
7 together in a more collaborative way to work on this in
8 a more holistic way?
9

10 MS. VICK: Thank you, Andy, for that
11 question. That's a wonderful question, and I'm all for
12 it. I mean, I think everybody has to get on this boat.
13 And even people who are opposed to some of the
14 suggestions that we have are the -- I think we all need
15 to get -- that's why we're suggesting the idea of a work
16 group, because we all need to get together and come up
17 with real hard solutions. Eva's long been working on a
18 salmon corridor plan, which I totally support. And that
19 requires a lot of mapping and education and inquiry. And
20 that includes the agencies. So, the agencies definitely
21 need to be involved in that. I think one of the biggest
22 problems we have, and we heard a lot of testimony at the
23 Council about this, is that we have -- and at the AYK
24 Board meeting in this very room, that we have a lot of
25 restrictions and cross jurisdictions that people can't
26 go over right now and the agencies. So, what happens
27 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife doesn't necessarily get
28 translated to the action of the Council. And this is the
29 problem with the rebuilding plan for the Yukon River.
30 And we have to include everybody. So, all the way down
31 from the mouth -- or from the headwaters of the Yukon,
32 all the way down to Area M and into the Gulf of Alaska.
33 We have to include everybody because this is where the
34 salmon go. And we need to understand that. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
37 Do you have something more to add? Go ahead.
38

39 MS. BURK: Thanks. One of the things I
40 think is important, and I'd like to get your take on
41 this too, is there was a RC from the Area M and concerned
42 Area M fishermen -- the Area M seiners and concerned
43 area and fisherman groups asking, I think the
44 legislature, to -- or asking for more law enforcement
45 and patrol in Area M in the coming years. And I think
46 the way to do that is to go through the legislature and
47 ask for funding to support that. Because I think and I
48 mentioned this earlier today, there's like kind of this
49 underlying threat of, well, we're just going to go hard
50 on the chum because of the time restrictions that you

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1 all put on us. And so, it feels that there was a little
2 bit of retribution in the air, this little bit of spirit
3 of retribution. I'm kind of personally concerned about,
4 and then also what we've seen. And here's where this
5 come [sic] from because it was really clear from there,
6 they gave a June fisheries report. And so, they have
7 their sockeye graph of what they've been harvesting in
8 the June fisheries in Area M. And through talking with
9 folks the Bristol Bay sockeye in the past few years
10 hadn't been coming down into the Gulf. And so, there was
11 actually poor sockeye harvest. And that's why we saw
12 lower chum harvest over the past few years is just
13 because there was lower sockeye harvest. And so, as sea
14 ice is forming and growing and maybe pushing those
15 sockeye down into the Gulf, and then maybe increasing
16 the amount of sockeye that are coming through in the
17 next few years, I'm concerned that we might see higher
18 levels of chum catch even with reduced hours. And so,
19 I'm concerned still about chum chucking because we heard
20 from the groups down there that processors don't want
21 to buy chum or are not buying chum. And so, I'm just
22 really concerned about all those things. And so maybe
23 there's a way to -- for groups to go to the legislature
24 and say, hey, we need to follow up, the local people ask
25 for this patrol enforcement and we need to make sure
26 it's funded. Thanks for that. And thanks for bearing
27 with my long explanation.

28
29 MS. VICK: No, no, you had a lot in there
30 actually, that was really super important. Prior to
31 submitting that RC50, I did talk with, the head of the
32 Alaska Wildlife Troopers in Anchorage and in Kodiak, and
33 they all said the same thing, it's the funding issue.
34 And -- a huge funding issue. And they also -- we were
35 having that conversation at lunch today that the
36 Stimpson, which is the big (indiscernible) out of Kodiak
37 goes through Area M on its way to Bristol Bay, but it's
38 only in Area M for a short time and it's not in the
39 salmon season. So, most of the trooper presence is --
40 during that time period is in Bristol Bay because they
41 have 1,400 permit holders and it's just a huge fishery.
42 So, it's -- in '23 when they had those -- they had 22
43 citations and Area M and 9 of those were resulted from
44 chum chucking. Both in seines and drift boats. And what
45 they -- what they were able to do is, I found out their
46 secret weapon, and that is they had borrowed a rescue
47 helicopter. A search and rescue helicopter for that time
48 period and used it in Area M. And that has \$1 million
49 camera on it. And that camera allows them to see from
50 long distances. So, as an old commercial fisherman

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1 myself, I know if you see the presence of a, of a troop
2 or plane or a boat on the ground, you're going to be on
3 your best behavior. But with that super camera, they
4 were allowed to be so far off that the boats weren't
5 aware that they were in the area. And they just can't
6 do that all the time. That was just a one-time thing.
7 So, you're absolutely right, Eva, that we all need to
8 maybe come up with a -- an ask a collective ask to the
9 legislature to increase trooper funding, specifically
10 to have troopers on the dock, in the processing plant
11 on -- and in some of the tenders. So, you're rotating
12 them, there like observers and you're rotating them on
13 the tenders and you're rotating them at the dock and in
14 the processing plant. And that way we'll get a better
15 idea of the number of chum that are coming in and chinook
16 as well, and what they do with them. Because we know
17 from on the ground that a lot of those chum because the
18 processors do not want them, there's no money in them
19 right now. They're small and they don't want them. Go
20 into -- they just get ground up. So, I think all of
21 those -- we can't get to some of that because there's a
22 lot of proprietary confidentiality that we can't get to
23 some of this information. And -- but I think eventually
24 we'll be able to get through discovery some more
25 information on that. But the trooper presence is
26 critical. Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. No more
29 comments?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 We thank you. So, you don't have to get
34 up. We could talk about the Statewide Board of Fish
35 right now, if you'd like to accommodate you so you don't
36 have to move.

37
38 MS. VICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I
39 appreciate that. Okay, so we are going into the Statewide
40 Board meeting which starts in -- on the 18th, and that's
41 going to be an Anchorage, also at the Egan Center. And
42 we will be talking about this at great length on -- in
43 our meeting tomorrow at the AYK and also on Monday night,
44 which is open to the public. And I do want to say, any
45 of you here are listening if you do want to participate
46 with our AYK group, please let me know. The only
47 restriction we have right now is no agency people. And
48 that's -- I'm very sad about that, but there's a reason
49 for that, so. But all of you who are concerned about all
50 of these issues that we're talking about, we talk about

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1 them at great length and we work on the strategic
2 planning as well. But the Statewide Meeting is going to
3 start in the 18th. And that's going to have 2 very
4 important subject areas for us. And that is the hatchery
5 issue and the hatchery reduction, there's 3 proposals
6 in right now. And also, the trawl reduction and there's
7 several proposals on that, 2 or 3, I think. And so those
8 are the things that we'll be talking about tomorrow and
9 also Monday night. And very specifically on which
10 proposals, I have them here, but I haven't highlighted
11 them. So, I have to go through the whole list before I
12 can figure out which ones. But I think I did email that
13 to you guys, so that list should be available to you.

14
15 And this is -- the hatchery issue, there
16 again, we're probably not going to get too -- very far.
17 Already a lot of people are hearing from their relatives
18 and friends down in Southeast how this is going to --
19 how a 25% reduction in egg production at hatcheries is
20 going to really harm them, that is not true. And it's
21 actually going to have very little effect when it comes
22 down to it. But we need to start pulling back on our
23 production because Alaska has the highest production of
24 pink salmon in the Pacific Northwest right now. Russia's
25 going to come online with increased chum production that
26 will probably outpace us. But right now, we're the big
27 hatchery producers. And what we have talked about a lot
28 that the state doesn't agree with us on is that the
29 hatcheries are competing with our wild salmon for pray
30 food. And they're actually eating each other at some
31 point. So, there's a lot of competition between the
32 hatchery and the wild stock and that they're one of the
33 major decline factors of the 5 big decline factors. So,
34 we'll be fighting that battle again, but not expecting
35 to get a whole lot. We need to go back again. We've
36 talked to several legislators and say we need to have
37 this workgroup to help us get to some of the real issues
38 on this. Because the hatchery committee that the Board
39 of Fish reinstated in 2019 has only met a few times
40 and there wasn't any sense to keep on moving because it
41 was basically controlled by the state and we weren't
42 getting anywhere on our information levels, so. So we're
43 going to do that and then we're going to also get behind,
44 of course, the trawl reduction. And those are biggies
45 and I'm not prepared to really go into detail on that,
46 but we will on Monday night. So, thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
49 for that report. Do you want to say something, Eva?
50 Okay.

1
2 MS. BURK: Thanks for that, Gale. That's
3 helpful. I'm not sure if I'll make it, we'll see. I'm
4 barely alive right now. So, for -- just a report, I
5 think now would be a good time for statewide to give a
6 report on what our ACs -- cause there are within this
7 region. So, that the Minto, Nenana, Tanana, Rampart,
8 Manley ACs met together. Gale was present. Virgil was
9 present. And I think the Tanana, Rampart, Manley they
10 lost members along the way, so they lost quorum. But our
11 Minto, Nenana AC held quorum. And so, we supported
12 Proposals 170, 171 and 172. And 170 was the Fairbanks
13 AC to reduce hatchery output of chum and pink by 25%. I
14 think 171 that was the one by Kenai River Sports Fishing
15 Association, and that was to reduce pink hatchery output
16 to levels that conform to acceptable stray rates,
17 because there was a lot of strain of pink salmon into
18 wild salmon stocks in the lower Cook Inlet. And so,
19 there is a salmon management plan for that area. And so,
20 I liked that one because it was trying to keep a plan
21 responsible, accountable. And then 172 was basically
22 codifying an informal, I guess, agreement by the
23 commissioner and department to put a moratorium on any
24 increase in pink and chum hatchery output. And so, that
25 would just be in regulation. And so, we supported those.

26
27 And then for statewide, I think one
28 that's really important was Proposal 11. This one was
29 put in by Linda Kozak. And this was actually one -- a
30 question that was posed at the North Pacific Fishery
31 Management Council because we were considering closing
32 statistical areas down. And so, they wanted to know if
33 they could fish in these certain statistical areas that
34 are within state waters, which are exactly these state
35 waters west of 170 degrees west longitude. And so,
36 Proposal 11 is to close those state waters to commercial
37 groundfish -- fishing with trawl gear. And because of
38 maybe the displacement of boats with what just happened
39 with the bycatch, we really need to be -- being
40 protective of these areas. And then also depending where
41 you are -- the Aleutian Islands are like a marine
42 potlatch area. Islands everywhere. Shumagin Islands,
43 Aleutian Islands, Pribilof Islands, the Bering Sea shelf
44 edge. Anywhere where you have a shallow sea floor in the
45 ocean and you have sea ice melting and you have
46 freshwater influx and warming temperatures, it's all the
47 productivity. And so, you know, the Aleutians are very
48 important -- they're very important marine areas. And
49 so, I'm very concerned with the exploitation and
50 degradation of the habitat within these areas, and to

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1 protect them. And so, I went a little on about that
2 Proposal 11 but I just I think it's really important to
3 understand how everything is kind of happening. And in
4 state and federal waters, you have to really manage them
5 together. And what is happening in federal waters could
6 affect state waters. So, we supported number -- Proposal
7 11. And then there was [sic] Proposals 163, 164, and
8 165. That had to deal with -- 160 -- those were put in
9 by Alaska Healthy Habitat Alliance. And Proposal 163 was
10 to define all trawl operated inside state waters as non-
11 pelagic and developed new performance and monitoring
12 standards.

13
14 And this is something we're addressing
15 in the North Pacific as well, is whether or not pelagic
16 or midwater gear is actually on the bottom, and how much
17 of the time? For how long? And so, there's a lot of work
18 right now to understand just that, quantify it. And then
19 on the other side of it, develop new performance and
20 monitoring standards. And then, 164 was monitoring
21 requirements for vessels participating in fisheries in
22 state waters with pelagic trawl gear. And that's
23 basically observation. The -- most trawl vessels have
24 observer coverage and federal waters, and they should
25 have that in state waters. Proposal 165 Salmon Excluder
26 Requirements for Illegal Gear Types. That's again, kind
27 of conforming state and federal regulations. I
28 personally not [sic] totally sure if salmon excluders
29 work because of how salmon might travel together,
30 particularly chum. Chinook might be a little different,
31 but I don't know. But I still support it because I think
32 it's important to be as protective and conservation-
33 minded as we can. So, we supported those together and
34 that of course was Nenana/Minto. And I know Tanana,
35 Rampart, Manley is probably going to meet to get some
36 comments in this week. And then Gale, did you talk about
37 the king salmon annual limit? We supported proposal 180,
38 which established a statewide annual limit of 5 chinook
39 salmon in sport fishery. 179 did the same thing but the
40 annual limit was 10. And I think with all the limitations
41 in for chinook that we're seeing across the state it's
42 important to have a statewide limit. So, did you want
43 to speak to that one at all?

44
45 MS. VICK: Sure, thank you. And I do want
46 to add to that you brought up an issue on the depth of
47 the -- and the shallowness of Area M, and there was a
48 proposal from the Koyukuk AC to shallow up some of the
49 drift and seine nets, and that did pass at the Board of
50 Fish meeting. Yeah. Which was a very important thing.

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1 So, on proposal -- I'm sorry, which one were you on Eva?
2 On -- oh, 179, 180. Yeah, our Fairbanks AC did the same
3 thing. That -- Earl Kreiger was the sponsor of 179 and
4 I know him and I know what he was trying to do, but
5 there was a better proposal to support. In the time of
6 king conservation right now we went with the 5 annual
7 limit rather than the 10. I do want to say that I
8 listened and maybe some of you did too, the recent,
9 Alaska Outdoor Council candidate forum for governor. And
10 there's -- a lot of the things that you all are doing
11 here and people all over the AYK are bringing up are
12 starting to resonate with both candidates and like you
13 said earlier, council members and Board of Fish members.
14 So, the pressure to really conserve kings, for instance,
15 is huge right now. And I think there'll be a lot of
16 support for that. I also want to say that there's another
17 site issue coming up where coho in -- especially in the
18 upper Cook Inlet, Andy Couch has a proposal in for that
19 are being impacted. And so, what we're seeing is these
20 incremental changes. So, all of our salmon are in trouble
21 because even our sockeye are getting smaller. So, thank
22 you.

23
24 MS. BURK: I'm -- this is Eva for the
25 record. Thank you for that. And then the other one -- I
26 think we had different -- difference of opinions on
27 proposal 175 at the AC level. We did support with
28 modification. After thinking about this and talking more
29 about this. I'm not sure if I made the -- if we made the
30 right decision, but we think that the dipnet needs to
31 be held in the hand. It shouldn't -- you shouldn't be
32 able to tie it off to a rope and then extend it way
33 down. So, it's hitting the bottom because the best way
34 to save a king is to not catch a king. And people are
35 most definitely fishing like that. I also -- the people
36 who put this in the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource
37 Commission. I think they're trying to think of different
38 ways to conserve king salmon. That's the reasoning for
39 this one. And then we -- it wasn't clear in the language
40 about whether or not you could have a safety tie off
41 rope versus a rope for extending down to deeper depths.
42 So, I think we wanted to see better language about that
43 and that dipnet should be held in the hand. And also --
44 but we didn't know if we should change the mesh size
45 requirement. So, we opted not to. The concern was for
46 folks having to replace gear, but also, it -- the concern
47 was about killing kings with the larger mesh. So, there
48 was a little bit of concern, especially if you're -- if
49 you have it in the depths and you're catching it down
50 there near each -- I think where you dip net and this

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1 is a statewide gear type, right? So, we're trying to
2 wrap our heads around all the different dip netting and
3 the depth and speed of each of these different rivers
4 because yeah, the Copper can be very intense and rough
5 and fast. And so that's probably why people are tying
6 them off with boats. But we might need to rethink that
7 approach to fishing when we need to be thinking about
8 king conservation, so. So that, and we -- so that's
9 where we were at with that one.

10
11 MS. VICK: Yeah. If I just may, want
12 [sic] to add to that, we had a similar difficult
13 discussion for many reasons. And, we just didn't want
14 to burden people with having -- if it was a statewide
15 proposal having to change out their mesh size, if they
16 were at a certain size. But we talked with a bunch of
17 the scientists and it was minimal, in fact, in terms of
18 the king conservation issue. And I do appreciate the
19 intent of the proposal. We were opposed to it for a
20 variety of reasons because it was unclear on the
21 language. And there is a safety issue. I think there's
22 a greater issue that's involved in this than just the
23 dip netting that we'll get to in the discussion at the
24 board meeting. And I think we should all be paying
25 attention very closely to that. So, thank you.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
28 is Brooke. I just wanted to remind the Council that you
29 and Western Interior submitted some joint comments on a
30 few of the statewide proposals. You supported 163, 164
31 and 165 to better regulate and monitor trawl fisheries.
32 And you also supported proposals 170 and 172. About Egg
33 take and hatcheries. I'm not sure what happened with
34 171, the working group didn't discuss that one. So, I
35 think that's why it didn't get voted on. But if anyone
36 -- we can't send someone from the Council to the
37 statewide meeting, but if someone on the RAC is going
38 because of your AC already and you would want to present
39 the comments from the Council you would be able to do
40 that.

41
42 (Pause)

43
44 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Can I make a
45 motion for the EIRAC to support Proposal 171 and 180,
46 at statewide Board of Fish?

47
48 MS. BASSICH: Member Bassich. Second.

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1 MS. BURK: This would -- I really like
2 the language of 171 and I think that's a good way to
3 kind of ratchet down hatcheries by keeping them
4 accountable to their plan. And then -- and that's to
5 prevent straying. And then 180 is the proposal to have
6 an annual sport fish limit of 5 king salmon. So, I think
7 it would be good for us to support those as well.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: And Eva -- this is Brooke.
10 I think -- I'm sorry Charlie and I were chatting. Did
11 you mention what each of those proposals is seeking to
12 do? Just so everyone knows what they're voting on. Okay,
13 cool. All right. So, 170 and 180. And since the comment
14 period has passed, this would need to be go in as an RC.
15 Okay. And we do -- there was a question from Charlie
16 about quorum and if Sue is on. We do have quorum with
17 5. So, she -- I see her name on the screen.

18
19 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. My name's been on
20 the screen. Sorry guys, but I had to step out for 30
21 minutes. I got about back about 10 minutes ago.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue.

24
25 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I have a question
26 for you guys. I'm sorry that I had to step out, but
27 first of all, I think I heard 171 Eva and not 170.

28
29 MS. BURK: Yeah, 170 is to decrease
30 hatchery output by 25%, and then 171 was put in by Kenai
31 River Sports Fishing. And that's to reduce pink egg hatch
32 put -- so, it can reduce strain to levels acceptable
33 within their comprehensive salmon plan for that area.

34
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes. So now I know what
36 I'm working on. Thank you.

37
38 MS. BURK: And Sue, the other one just -
39 - this is Eva, just for reference was 180. And that's
40 to establish a sport fish limit of 5 king salmon
41 statewide.

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: Could you repeat the
44 motion, please?

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Hi Sue, this is Brooke. The
47 motion on the floor is to support statewide Board of
48 Fish Proposals 171 and 180.

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50 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

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MS. BASSICH: This Member Bassich. I call question.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Member Bassich. So, we can ask for unanimous consent on this? All those against, please signify by saying aye.

(No response)

Hearing none. Passes. Thank you. Are you done, Gale?

MS. VICK: Mr. Chair, if you don't mind, I have one last issue. Thank you. And when -- legislative bills. There's quite a few fisheries bills in the legislature right now that we should be paying attention to. And one of them is Senate Bill 161 by Mike Cronk. It's -- it may or may not make it through because people are concerned. It's an act related to the use of certain trawler dredge fishing gear in state water. And to eliminate a lot of the trawl in the Gulf of Alaska. And of course, we're all talking about state waters, not the federal waters, but it was in -- a lot of legislators found out that there were a lot of small boats that were in the state water trawl industry. And I personally know a lot of those boats. And here's my attitude. We don't have a definition that's good use of the trawl right now as Eva was talking about earlier. So, the trawl -- I apologize. Thank you. I'm so sorry I didn't turn that off. The trawl definition is really important in this case. And between pelagic and the heart on bottom. But the small boat fleet has just as much of an imprint as the larger boats do in terms of the bycatch issue. They will beat it out at the legislature in terms of the exact numbers, but I just wanted people to be aware of that. But I in general, I'm very supportive of this bill, so I just wanted -- and there are a number of other fisheries bills if you look online. I sent the link to the Chairs and they have that available. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Any more questions?

(No response)

Thank you, Gale. Next, we'll have Craig Chythlook up to do a report on the Yukon River Inter Tribal Fish Commission. It's not in order, but he's got

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1 a time restraint, so we'll let him jump in front. So,
2 if you're on there, on the line, Craig, please, if you
3 have the floor.

4

5 MR. CHYTHLOOK: Yes. Thank you, Charlie.
6 Can you hear me okay?

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

9

10 MR. CHYTHLOOK: Okay, I appreciate it.
11 Thank you. Hi, everybody. I'm going to do just kind of
12 a -- read a little bit of an intro about our history,
13 and then we'll go a little bit into what we've been up
14 to since this last fall. So good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
15 members of the panel. My name is Craig Chythlook,
16 recently-hired Executive Director of the Yukon River
17 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Again, a little background
18 on myself. My folks are Joe and Molly Chythlook and
19 we're all originally from Bristol Bay. But thankfully -
20 - I'm really happy to be here in Fairbanks, my wife and
21 2 boys. The Yukon River Inter Tribal Fish Commission is
22 comprised of 44 members tribal governments authorized
23 by tribal resolution, whose mission is to protect the
24 health and well-being of our people, our future
25 generations, and all Alaskans and Canadians who rely on
26 the health of our salmon. After a decade long incubation
27 as a program of Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Yukon River
28 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission was born as a standalone
29 501(c)(3) organization as of March 2025. The purpose of
30 the Commission, as stated in our Constitution, is to act
31 as a unified voice for the conservation and restoration
32 of all Yukon River fisheries, protect our traditional
33 ways of life and well-being, establish a comprehensive
34 management plan and program based on distinct, customary
35 and traditional indigenous knowledge and practices,
36 while striving for co-management to ensure meaningful
37 and substantial tribal First Nation participation in all
38 aspects of fish stewardship.

39

40 So again, thank you, Mr. Chair. My very
41 recent history with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
42 Commission started this last fall. I was officially
43 hired as the executive director in October. And how that
44 all got going is that the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
45 Commission Executive Council started having discussions
46 to prioritize the hire of a full-time ED during one of
47 the last annual meetings. So that kind of steamrolled
48 the process to focus the attention of the Executive
49 Council to work with existing staff and our interim ED
50 to help facilitate and engage and prioritize the hire

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1 of the Executive Director. So again, like, I'm really,
2 really honored and happy to be here to be the Fish
3 Commission's full-time Executive Director since October.

4
5 And just a brief update for everybody
6 in the room and members of the EIRAC, as you can imagine,
7 October through now has, has been very busy. I feel
8 like, I'm very blessed, but also diving into the deep
9 end of the regulatory world for the core functions and
10 duties and priorities of the Fish Commission. Definitely
11 hopped into it during one of the busiest times of the
12 year. So, we actively participated this last November
13 during the AYK Board of fisheries meeting. Was
14 privileged enough to help facilitate some discussions
15 there regarding fall chum stock of concern designations.
16 Immediately hopped into the holiday break. And then
17 shortly after really homing in and focusing in on the
18 chum EIS in the North Pacific Fisheries Management
19 Council process. Which looked like you guys had gotten
20 a little bit of an update on that agenda. So, one of
21 our, our big core functions at the North Pacific is to
22 continue to support our tribal seat, Eva Dawn Burk. As
23 she engages and participates and helps facilitate a lot
24 of the discussion through the AP and into the Council
25 meeting. So, that was a significant privilege to see
26 that happen to watch and support and take part in that
27 process for this last North Pacific Fisheries Management
28 Council as they came to final action and made a decision
29 regarding putting chum cap in you know, that that Bering
30 Sea/Aleutian Islands fishing -- trawl fishing area. And
31 then immediately after that, was heavily engaged and
32 participating, again just hearing updates from Gale, at
33 the Area M, Board of Fish providing a lot of advocacy,
34 support and encouragement for folks in the Interior who
35 are, you know, involved with the Fish Commission and
36 otherwise. For both meetings, we had supported and
37 worked really closely cross-organizationally, cross-
38 regionally and very specifically with Tanana Chiefs
39 Conference to bring in, you know, for us, 8 to 10 people
40 for both meetings, and combined well over 20. Having a
41 lot of coordination and collaboration to make sure that
42 we're casting the largest net, so we can get and build
43 the biggest and broadest participation to both of those
44 super important regulatory meetings.

45
46 In the interim, we have been really
47 actively working hard on growing the intent and the
48 purpose of our commission. We get a lot of our support
49 financially from BIA in a lot of those core functions,
50 similar to what's going on here is focused on ANILCA

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1 Title VIII. And a really big goal and objective of that
2 funding and us as a commission are to grow our capacity.
3 So, and right at the start of the new year, we hired an
4 Administrative Assistant part-time and she's been
5 amazing. She's from Beaver, Nenana and has family ties
6 to Old Harbor. She's been instrumental in making sure
7 that all of our advocates are supported, that they're
8 getting paid and engaged equitably and meaningfully into
9 the process. And recently we just got a position
10 description out for a Policy Director. So, heads up to
11 everybody in the room and listening online. The Yukon
12 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission has secured funding
13 for a Policy Director for the next handful of years at
14 least. And associated with that, combining a couple of
15 grants, it was a big, recognized need that we need to
16 spend more and more time directly with our tribes, so.
17 We have in the works, and hopefully, to get this position
18 description out shortly after the hire of the Directors
19 for a Policy Coordinator position. And finally, we have
20 gotten and received more funding for a Biologist and a
21 Research Director to help build our relationships with
22 U.S. Fish and Wildlife to manage and step into more
23 leadership roles, working with TCC, thinking about
24 midwater -- or, I'm sorry, mid river sonar and other
25 quantitative projects, that are going to be needed to
26 help support our continued advocacy and experience in
27 the regulatory world. So, working really hard on that
28 front, looking forward to getting that up and going.
29 We've been working really closely with the Kuskokwim
30 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, TCC and some fellow
31 -- (indiscernible) fellows at US Fish and Wildlife with
32 Keith Herron, along with Shane and Holly. We're looking
33 to set up our next meeting to come up with some initial
34 agenda items for, hopefully future shared agreements to
35 get written more formally into stone, what that MOU is
36 going to look like between the Fish Commission and U.S.
37 Fish and Wildlife and ADF&G.

38
39 I'll finish off by saying that, you
40 know, it's been definitely a significant lift these
41 last, you know, 30 plus days in this big regulatory
42 cycle. And we've got a handful of more big meetings
43 coming up with statewide and otherwise. But really, I
44 think the biggest updates that we can give you all and
45 the people that are listening is that we're really honing
46 in on the relationship building, the unifying of not
47 just the folks in the Yukon, but how do we unify across
48 regionally. Really looking to build our capacity for
49 communication and engagement and getting information
50 directly to and from our tribes and otherwise. And really

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1 looking forward to growing that relationship with U.S.
2 Fish and Wildlife. And having more and more regular and
3 consistent engagements.

4
5 One of the big goals and hopes is that
6 anytime Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission appears
7 someplace that U.S. Fish and Wildlife is right there
8 with us and vice versa. That we have an opportunity when
9 1 is seen, we're both seeing. It's big, big priority of
10 our commissioners and a part of the organization. So,
11 we have some strategic planning happening internally.
12 An upcoming annual meetings scheduled to be early May,
13 logistically pending. So, looking forward to getting
14 some outreach and heads up to folks who have been
15 instrumental in maintaining and growing a lot of these
16 relationships and in the policy world. But with that,
17 yeah, I think there's plenty more that's going on. We've
18 got amazing staff, we've got amazing contract workers,
19 that were super happy to continue to engage and support.
20 But with that I'll see if there's any questions and
21 happy to -- just happy and thank you for the opportunity
22 to speak. Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We really
25 appreciate you. Thanks for being here to give that
26 awesome report. Does anybody have anything to say or
27 ask, Craig?

28
29 (No response)

30
31 You've done a good job. No questions.
32 Thank you.

33
34 MR. CHYTHLOOK: Alright, thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I just wanted I just
37 wanted to add one thing before you're gone there. I just
38 wanted to commend you on an excellent show of unity like
39 I've never seen before at these last 2 meetings that we
40 were participated [sic] in. It was all sides of the
41 state. And as I testified, I said, we're all here for
42 one reason, and that's because all of our rivers are not
43 making escapement. So, I really appreciate the hard work
44 and unity that's going on and appreciate your time today.
45 Thank you.

46
47 (Pause)

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49 Yukon River Panel Salmon Rebuilding
50 Plan. Who's doing that one? Must be Andy.

1

2

3 MS. BASSICH: Well, I can speak to it. I
4 think that was put on the agenda because what we're
5 hoping to do in the future is have Trinity, which is a
6 group that is working with the Yukon River Panel to
7 facilitate and help develop the Yukon Panel rebuilding
8 plan, to be able to give us a presentation. But it didn't
9 happen for this meeting. I spoke a little bit earlier
10 in our meeting about it. Currently, the Yukon River Panel
11 has a working group that meets monthly to develop
12 recommendations for the rebuilding plan. To identify
13 areas that need work and to identify those entities that
14 are going to work on that. Basically, there's 2 aspects
15 of the rebuilding plan. There is the technical aspect
16 of it, data collection, mostly handled by the JTC, the
17 Joint Technical Committee. So that's both the U.S. and
18 Canadian technical group. And then I've been pushing
19 pretty hard through the UK -- Yukon River Panel
20 Communications Committee to highlight the need for the
21 social and cultural aspects of the rebuilding plan,
22 which are essential to make it work. That's the people
23 part of it. And so, I'm gaining quite a bit of acceptance
24 within the working group and currently up in Old Crow
25 and we had our meeting, there was a lot of significant
26 support for increased acknowledgement and funding. That
27 is to be determined at our next meeting. The level of
28 funding that will help go to support that aspect of it.
29 It's also been recognized that the traditional knowledge
30 component of the Yukon River Panel rebuilding plan will
31 play an essential role in that social cultural aspect
32 of it.

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I think that's all I'd be comfortable
talking about at this point in time. We will be having
the Yukon River Panel meeting in April. I believe it
starts April 11th through the 17th, here in Fairbanks.
I don't know the venue yet. It might be here at Pike's.
We're not clear on the venue. But that's a great thing
for those of us in the Upper Yukon here, and people
associated with Fairbanks it's going to make it very
accessible, so I'm hoping there'll be a great turnout
from people for that. And certainly, at that point in
time, we should have a lot more direction. I will caution
that the Yukon River rebuilding plan is not something
that's going to be done in the next year. It's a pretty
big lift. And so, my focus has been to try and emphasize
and begin to do as much outreach and communication with
the people on the Yukon River, and to also start
developing some dialogue between the Yukon River Panel
and the entities that handle or regulate the marine life

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1 stages. I keep pushing that very hard at these working
2 group meetings that that's going to be essential to the
3 success of the -- of a rebuilding plan for the Yukon
4 River. So, that's about all I have right now. Mr. Chair
5 thank you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Any
8 questions for Andy?

9
10 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva.
11 Wouldn't be Eva if I didn't have a question. Andy, how
12 would the Fish Commission be part of that monthly
13 rebuilding plan? I know we've asked the Yukon River Panel
14 to have us to have a seat and we're organizationally,
15 you know, like figuring that out. I think
16 organizationally our fish commissioners have asked for
17 a rebuilding plan task force. So how could someone, a
18 rep get involved in the meeting and stay attuned and,
19 you know, help you with the communications and, and help
20 bring in those voices and knowledge?

21
22 MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. That's a
23 great question. And actually, we're on the same
24 wavelength. I introduced that to our communications
25 committee to bring to the panel. I haven't truly brought
26 it to the attention of the task force or the working
27 group, but we do -- we will be meeting next Wednesday,
28 I believe it is. And so, I can certainly bring that up.
29 I feel very strongly that partnering with the Inter-
30 Tribal Fish Commission is a natural fit for the
31 rebuilding plan, and that input will go both ways. It
32 will help us to facilitate the needs from the people on
33 the Yukon River, but it'll also help us to facilitate
34 the communications back out to those people. So, we're
35 on the same page, Eva. And it's a little bit premature
36 right now, but it is a strong emphasis of mine. Thank
37 you.

38
39 MS. BURK: Thank you for that, Andy. I
40 appreciate it. And I will say that the Yukon River
41 rebuilding is not premature, but this meeting between
42 us might be. I feel like we're about a decade late.

43
44 MS. BASSICH: I -- Member Bassich. Two
45 decades late.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to add a
48 little bit to that. I know that there's -- it's been
49 talked about and I did see it on the agenda for the
50 traditional knowledge committee meeting that I'm

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1 supposed to be in right now. So, I'll learn about that
2 later in the report back.

3

4 MS. MCDAVID: Do we need a treaty with
5 Canada for Charlie's time?

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
8 Next on the agenda is the -- oh, Sue, I almost passed
9 you up again. My apologies. Sue, you have the floor.

10

11 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh, thank you, Charlie.
12 It's hard, I know. I don't know if that screen is in
13 front of you or behind you, but I know it's hard to keep
14 up with it. But I was just at the SRC meeting last week,
15 and I just wanted to report on that dipnet proposal for
16 the Fish Board, 175. Before we move past that, which we
17 did, but I just wanted to report that that was taken up
18 by the Subsistence Resource Commission. And this was a
19 statewide proposal. And one of the members from -- grew
20 up in Northway and lives in Tok now, but Bruce Irwin,
21 he brought up the point that people dipnet for whitefish
22 and they use 4-inch webbing in their dipnet. And the SRC
23 changed that to salmon in our region, I believe it was,
24 they just did it for salmon in our region. So, it would
25 not affect the people that use dipnet for whitefish. I
26 just wanted to report that. And while I was at that
27 meeting the local State Advisory Committee, Tok
28 Cutoff/Nabesna Road, met the same day I was down in
29 Glennallen for the Subsistence Resource Commission. So,
30 I was able to report to them how these fisheries
31 proposals went by the SRC. And similar votes. The big
32 one was the trawl fishery, and we took them up as 3 and
33 voted for them to -- more restrictions. So, I thought
34 it was important that I report that to you. Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that
37 very much. Okay. Any questions?

38

39 (No response)

40

41 Hearing and seeing none. Thank you, Sue.
42 Moving on down the list here. Yukon River Salmon
43 Management Update. United States Fish and Wildlife
44 Service.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: And Mr. Chair, this is
47 Brooke. Before Keith starts, you do have reports in your
48 meeting binders on page 57 and 59, from the Yukon
49 management team.

50

1 MR. HERRON: Good afternoon, Council. I'm
2 Keith Herron, the assistant fishery manager for U.S.
3 Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm sorry I couldn't attend
4 your meeting the last couple of days. I'm newly a member
5 of the Joint Technical Committee, one of the advisory
6 committees for the Yukon River Panel so, that's where
7 I've been. But I first like to thank and acknowledge
8 everyone and their unity at the North Pacific Fisheries
9 Management Council and the Board of fish. I heard
10 testifiers, I think from 150 tribes across the strait
11 or more a lot of people just standing up for our Yukon
12 and Western Alaska salmon in those spaces. So, I just
13 want to acknowledge and thank them for that effort and
14 thinking about the life cycle approach and that gravel-
15 to-gravel approach in conserving our salmon and
16 rebuilding stocks.

17
18 For the Fish and Wildlife side, we did
19 have a representative at the North Pacific Fishery
20 Management Council the entire time. Boyd Blihovde and
21 our Northern Alaska Fisheries Field Office did help
22 draft the U.S. Fish and Wildlife comments that were
23 officially submitted on the different alternatives. And
24 if you're interested in that, it is on the Council's
25 online agenda under b.7. It -- we were hoping to see
26 more of a conservative approach than what was taken but
27 just want to acknowledge the effort that our Fish and
28 Wildlife Service did put in that process.

29
30 And then moving to our in-river
31 fisheries because our fall 2025 meeting kind of got put
32 on hold and shortened. I just like to give a brief
33 overview, which I know many of you in this room will
34 already know these things. I'm not going to say all the
35 numbers. But in general, in 2025, we saw complete
36 closures pretty much for all the salmon. Most of the
37 historically low runs, all of the salmon within the top
38 5 lowest and that only limited opportunity was given on
39 some coho salmon and that was limited to federally
40 qualified users. That overall harvest based on the
41 estimates of drainage wide harvest, it was pretty low
42 only, right over 1,000 fish were taken in that
43 opportunity. So even though we had a pretty low run
44 rate, over 100,000, it was a pretty low harvest too.
45 Given that opportunity was limited to dipnets and for
46 federally qualified users.

47
48 And so that's kind of just the overview
49 of how the salmon went. It's just really sad. We're in
50 this these historically low times. We haven't been

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1 fishing for about 6 years now. And it's -- we're still
2 not seeing very much improvement. So, I just want to
3 recognize how heartbreaking that is to our Yukon River
4 people and the loss of the culture and the food that
5 comes with the closures that we're enacting. For 2026,
6 I expect, I don't have any official forecasts for you
7 yet. We will have those by that April meeting of the
8 Yukon River Panel. But I do expect a very similar
9 management approach that we saw during last season. So,
10 probably complete -- most likely complete closures on
11 both king and chum salmon, both summer and fall. If
12 there was any opportunity, we would limit that to
13 federally qualified users in the federal waters.

14
15 I have also heard yesterday there was a
16 question about does the public need to submit special
17 action requests every single year? I would say I believe
18 that given the runs, I would expect we would take federal
19 action to close fisheries to all users. And if that
20 opportunity did arise, then we would limit it to
21 federally qualified users. So no, I don't think it has
22 to be submitted, because I believe we would take that
23 action. And I strongly believe that the runs would
24 support that. But that's not to say it can't be submitted
25 if there was interest. But I do believe that we would
26 take federal action given what's likely going to happen.
27 For the 4-inch. That's been a big topic. I imagine it
28 would probably be about the same. Unless there's big
29 sway in either direction during management conversations
30 this coming spring, as we get closer at the various
31 meetings that help give input where we closed for the
32 bulk of the king salmon run from the quarter point to
33 the 3-quarter point. So, about 2 and a half weeks. And
34 then in the fall season where we did like the weekend
35 schedule. So, I imagine that would stay the same unless
36 there was public engagement on wanting to see more
37 restrictions. I don't see us getting less. But I -- that
38 could be an opportunity for getting more. but I would
39 imagine it would be pretty similar to 2025.

40
41 In 2025, we did have the new opportunity
42 where we looked for that -- those non-salmon harvest
43 areas. And I know it's not equal throughout the drainage,
44 but we tried to find and get that local and indigenous
45 knowledge of these places where you can fish for non-
46 salmon without catching salmon. And we did provide that
47 beginning in the middle of August throughout the fall,
48 when it's important.

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1 Whitefish fisheries. I could see a
2 scenario where that's some of the lower river people
3 said that they would like to see maybe some earlier,
4 like some early August. So, maybe when we transitioned
5 into fall season, maybe we could allow those non-salmon
6 harvest. But I would imagine we would give that again
7 as a little bit of substitute. And that was requested.
8 We were a little disappointed that that didn't get into
9 regulation from our federal side on the during the Board
10 of Fish but -- because that was brought forth from local
11 people. But that local knowledge did influence our
12 decision to implement that 6-inch whitefish opportunity
13 in those selected areas. And so, that's kind of like a
14 general overview. They're obviously going to be more
15 discussions at the upcoming preseason meetings. The
16 Yukon River Panel meeting, the Fish Commission meetings
17 on exact strategies, but I would expect a lot of
18 closures, once again, for all the species.

19
20 Tribal consultations. Those are always
21 available upon request. So, please reach out to our Yukon
22 River Management Team. And our contact was provided in
23 meeting materials. We're working with the Yukon River
24 Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, as was discussed
25 previously. And then finally, I'll just wrap up with
26 some management updates -- I mean, research updates. But
27 first, is there any questions on management?

28
29 MS. BASSICH: Yeah, I'm just curious if
30 you could give us an update on if there's much discussion
31 within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife agency on trying to
32 develop some more discrete stock assessments on the
33 Yukon drainage for chum salmon. There's a very strong
34 concern that the drainage-wide escapements, and how
35 close we got to that this year, we were only about 25,000
36 fish short of officially meeting escapement. Whereas the
37 Yukon River/Canadian bound fall Chum salmon are still
38 under 20,000 with escapement goals at 75 to 105,000. So,
39 completely in the toilet and near extirpation levels.
40 And the Tanana stocks also in some of the lowest numbers
41 of returns ever. So clearly from many people's
42 perspectives on the Yukon River, having a drainage wide
43 escapement goal is not reflective of the true decline
44 of salmon on the Yukon River. And many of us feel it's
45 very incumbent to start to develop some discrete stock
46 assessment or monitoring so that we don't lose those
47 stocks. And in particular the Canadian portion. Tanana
48 is equally in dire straits. And those are 2 -- combined
49 those are 2 very large contributors to the overall Yukon
50 River fall chum and summer -- mainly fall chum runs. So,

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1 if you could maybe speak to that, if there's any
2 discussions, I'd love to hear that.

3

4 MR. HERRON: Yeah. Member Bassich. I
5 think -- I agree with you. I think it's really important
6 to understand at more fine scale than exactly drainage
7 wide. Understand what's going on in the Tanana.
8 Understand what's going on in our upper (indiscernible),
9 like the (In Native) and the (In Native). Understand
10 what's going on in the fishing branch, understand what's
11 going on in those headwaters in Canada on the main stem,
12 like (In Native) area, and what's the impacts of those
13 types of things. So yes, I think that's really important
14 for us to understand those tributary escapements. And
15 not just look at the drainage wide, especially in --
16 yeah, you're right. It's like it causes that disconnect
17 where if you're looking at the likelihood of meeting
18 that 300,000. And I would say this year we knew we were
19 probably going to be close. But we knew how poor our
20 other monitored systems were. So, there was really no
21 incentive to think about harvest, but I could see a
22 dilemma in future years. Say you did have like a decent
23 run drainage-wide, but your Canadian main stem is at an
24 all-time low, and it's like really, really scary low.
25 So, nothing too substantive. But I agree with you and
26 we need to think about all those aspects.

27

28 MS. BASSICH: Yeah, follow up. Thank you.
29 Member Bassich here. I appreciate that. I guess what I'm
30 wondering is there -- if there's any official
31 discussions taking place between U.S. Fish and Wildlife
32 and ADF&G, on possibly looking towards some sort of
33 assessment tools there. I think that's in need. I know
34 it costs money, but you can't put a price on those runs.
35 So, I'm just -- maybe you don't have the answer to that,
36 that's okay. But I guess I'm just trying to get on the
37 record the need for that, more than anything else and
38 clearly recognize that. The other question I had is, can
39 you update us on any of the discussions between U.S Fish
40 and Wildlife, possibly ADF&G and or tribal organizations
41 on the progress of gravel-to-gravel initiative? Do you
42 have anything that you can update us on? It's okay if
43 you don't, I'm just curious. I'm just looking for reports
44 to this body to get on the record. Thank you.

45

46 MR. HERRON: Yeah. I think that 1st thing
47 you're talking about is a great priority information
48 need. And obviously a great talking point to bring to
49 the Yukon River Panel and those -- but I'm not aware of
50 any formal negotiations or conversations to that extent,

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1 but is I'll bring it back to our team as a next step or
2 things we should consider in talking with ADF&G on. But
3 I'm not aware of currently [sic] things that were
4 planned. For the gravel-to-gravel. I'm a little less
5 involved in that day to day. So, I wouldn't be the right
6 person. I would take it to -- oh, back to OSM to -- or
7 not OSM. That's our Fish and Wildlife Service still, I
8 think that would be Boyd Blihovde. And I could be
9 corrected if I'm wrong.

10

11 MS. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I really
12 appreciate it. I don't mean to put you on the spot. I
13 know, you know, you -- I do want to say I really
14 appreciate all the work that you're doing. I think a lot
15 of the work that you did in the Lower Yukon for those
16 non-salmon areas, for non-salmon species was really well
17 done and really supported that. I guess in the discussion
18 of the discrete stocks and their monitoring. I would
19 strongly encourage that U.S. Fish and Wildlife take a
20 really proactive role in trying to educate people as to
21 that conundrum that we're in. Where we have a drainage
22 wide escapement, but yet the stocks within -- the upper
23 river, stocks within the Yukon drainage are dangerously
24 low. I don't think a lot of people understand that
25 relationship. Especially people that don't live in the
26 regions. So, I would strongly encourage any time there's
27 Tribal consultation or anytime you are out into
28 communities or working with tribes, that you clearly
29 articulate that issue, because that's going to be really
30 important for people to buy in for the rebuilding of
31 those stocks into the future. So, thank you.

32

33 MS. BURK: Thanks. Thanks for coming and
34 giving report. I just, you know, in 2021, I've been
35 thinking because 2025 is -- the parent year could be
36 2021, right, for a good number of summer chum we saw in
37 2025? Yeah. And I was like, we were doing numbers of
38 what was taken in like the pollock fishery in Area M.
39 So, like in addition to just having low numbers come in
40 that year -- I don't know about in the summertime as
41 much, but Charlie tells me that in 2017, the fall chum
42 were super unhealthy. So, I wonder like if we saw that
43 same thing for summer chum too, and that's why 2021
44 looked really rough because 2017 had unhealthy parents.
45 So, just noting some of that, but also in 2021, the
46 pollock fishery took 48,658 Coastal Western Alaska chum.
47 And one thing that people weren't really honing in on
48 was the large uncertainty of whose Coastal Western
49 Alaska chum. Like are those Yukon, Kuskokwim, Bristol
50 Bay? And historically Yukon by far was the largest

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1 producer of summer chum. So, I'm just wondering like,
2 and then also in Area M in 2021, they took 1.1 million
3 chum and the genetics -- the 3 years after that from
4 2022 to 2024 showed on average 24% Coastal Western Alaska
5 chum even when we had low abundance. So, if you backtrack
6 that, you could calculate that maybe 280,000 Coastal
7 Western Alaska chum were taken in Area M in 2021. So,
8 pair that with the, you know, that's like 300,000 Coastal
9 Western Alaska chum. And it's unaccounted for as far as
10 who's river system that is. And so, I think while the
11 tribes have been leading a lot of effort, I just want
12 the Fish and Wildlife and other people on the ground to
13 understand like, you know, like how collectively in 21
14 -- 2021, how all these things came together and how we
15 still don't know what's being taken out in the ocean.
16 And I think it affects our ability to rebuild. So, I
17 don't know if you're if you had looked at all that stuff
18 like that.

19
20 MR. HERRON: Yeah. Our chum are coming
21 off some of our -- the lowest of the low. So, those
22 parent years are those historically low years '21 and
23 '22.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions
26 for him?

27
28 (No response)

29
30 Thank you.

31
32 MR. HERRON: I have a research update I
33 just gave my management. So related to that,
34 differentiating those Coastal Western Alaska chum,
35 there's a few different things that are going on. One
36 of the ones that we're involved with the U.S. Fish and
37 Wildlife Service is in partnership with many different
38 people. I won't name them all, but it is in your
39 material. But we're looking to look at those trace
40 elements within Norton Sound, Yukon and Kuskokwim. The
41 summer chum is the Western Alaska coast -- Coastal
42 Western Alaska chum is our summer chum. But looking at
43 getting some samples from 10 to 16 of the most important
44 spawning grounds, different ones across those 3 regions.
45 But trace elements are those metals that's in the food
46 we eat. So hopefully there's some promising preliminary
47 data to be able to differentiate out with the trace
48 elements between the different regions, the Norton
49 Sound, Yukon and Kuskokwim. And so, they're starting to
50 think about and get approvals for sampling summer chum

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1 from certain areas in each drainage and compare them.
2 And then another way is through other people. We, the
3 U.S. Fish and Wildlife, aren't doing it, but ADF&G, and
4 like I think the Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission.
5 But they're looking at to map the whole genome. The
6 genetics to be able to tell. So, there's 2 different
7 ways maybe we can get more details and break out that
8 bycatch in more detail. So, that's one aspect our
9 research team, Shane, is involved with. So more to come
10 by that. We also have in partnership with the YDFDA and
11 NOAA, we have environmental buoys out on the YK Delta
12 where you're able to check wind and wave conditions,
13 important things that talk about -- people talk about
14 for those salmon coming into the river, but it also
15 helps maybe helpful in some of the juvenile abundance
16 estimates. So, kind of a 2-thing that will help. We also
17 have a potential Koyukuk River main stem sonar to look
18 at the chum that are going into that system. But we're
19 still waiting to hear about funding from OSM on that and
20 that would be in partnership with the Native Village of
21 Koyukuk and TCC. So, that's an additional maybe sonar
22 in that area to better understand shifts in
23 productivity. Like why is the Anvik summer chum, where
24 are those -- if they're being counted and they're being
25 estimated for a drainage wide, where in the drainage are
26 the our summer chum going? And a large proportion could
27 be going to the Koyukuk. But we don't have current
28 assessment to see what's exactly going up that river.

29
30 So that would be a cool data gap we could
31 tackle. We're looking to get more environmental
32 monitoring out in key king salmon spawning locations to
33 look at the groundwater temperature and those sediment
34 loads in the system. So, just more monitoring the
35 habitat. We're looking to map more of the important fall
36 chum spawning areas in the Tanana and the (In Native)
37 with some thermal imagery that's in partnership with
38 UAF. That was kind of shut down last year with the
39 government shutdown. So probably this year will be the
40 1st year -- this next year will be the 1st year of that.

41
42 And then lastly, maybe 2 more things. We
43 will be shutting down our Emmonak U.S. Fish and Wildlife
44 Service office due to staffing capacity and starting to
45 think about other ways we can do outreach and getting out
46 to the river. But we are going to close that office down
47 there and launch a different type of outreach program.
48 And I believe that will be in high collaboration with the
49 Fish Commission, where they're trying to have annual
50 gatherings throughout the drainage.

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1

2 And then lastly, this is a personal plug
3 for my own research and an offer to your Council. As I
4 know you're going to be -- your next fall meeting is
5 going to be in Fort Yukon. And I think it's a really
6 cool opportunity to bring back some of the ichthyophonous
7 results and give presentations, not only for my own part
8 of the project, but also help gather other people that
9 help -- did fish health related research and give them
10 maybe a more of an overview too. So, kind of going to
11 Fort Yukon, that's where a lot of the work was done.
12 Worked with their tribal council to get support for the
13 project, but just an offer to your Council that I thought
14 it would be really cool to give a kind of a summary of
15 results because I am currently writing and wrapping up
16 those things, so I'll have more to share probably at
17 your next meeting, like I'm saying, officially.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
20 a great report. Any more questions before he gets off
21 that Chair?

22

23 (No response)

24

25 All right, you're free. Thank you so
26 much. That was a great, great report.

27

28 MS. BURK: I have a crazy question.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh.

31

32 MS. BURK: Keith. It's Eva. It's about
33 ichthyophonous. Okay, so everything eats everything,
34 right? And I think in the ocean where is the
35 ichthyophonous coming from? And I feel like I know that
36 the king salmon and chum salmon are eating pollock, and
37 pollock have ichthyophonous, because they were tested.
38 And I'm trying to recall this one slide about like maybe
39 herring. And I'm wondering if there might be a connection
40 between like pink salmon hatchery and infecting herring
41 or -- and then herring going up the food chain and, you
42 know, because everything is like all mixed up there and
43 there. I wonder if you ever came across anything like
44 that in your studies.

45

46 MR. HERRON: Yeah, I guess I know of work
47 that was going on at the state where they were monitoring
48 all those forage fisheries, all those prey species to
49 try to understand exactly what life stage. They also
50 looked at juveniles. They didn't see any like ich [sic]

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1 in the juvenile kings. So, they're going to get --
2 they're getting it probably after that first winter. So,
3 sometime in the sub-adult or adult life. The exact source
4 is still unknown. They found it in some of those pollock
5 which has been discussed. They found it in -- they never
6 found it in the herring, which is really interesting
7 because that's what they think down in Washington state,
8 where a lot of the infection comes from. But it's not
9 in our Bering Sea herring. So, it's interesting kind of
10 the dynamics of the food chain. They also looked at the
11 Kuskokwim and the Yukon like, yes, there's ich [sic] in
12 the Kuskokwim fish. It doesn't seem to be as severe. So,
13 I know when they're living out in that Bering Sea, the
14 Kuskokwim fish spend their first couple places in,
15 maybe, is it the southern that they spend their first
16 couple years in? And then in the Yukon, our fish Spenard
17 in the northern. And then they mingle later in life and
18 then they come back to the rivers. So, there's some
19 weird dynamics about the food web. Exactly, maybe why
20 our Yukon fish. Maybe it's a genetic thing for like, the
21 susceptibility of our fish. But yeah, what makes it about
22 the Yukon stock that they were seeing those severe
23 infection loads I guess. So, yes, we it's still unknown
24 and I think more needs to be done to understand exactly.
25 But it is probably -- we know it's in the ocean because
26 the juveniles don't have it, but the exact source, it's
27 still unknown.

28
29 MS. BURK: Do -- I thought I read
30 somewhere that king salmon also eat pink salmon and they
31 eat herring. But do they eat pink salmon too, like baby
32 pink salmon?

33
34 MR. HERRON: I would -- I don't know,
35 does anyone else know this? I don't know the exact
36 answer, but I know they do eat pretty much a lot of
37 things. So, I would say probably.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, well thank
40 you. Are you done?

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Just a quick
43 response from Google, says yes. That chinook -- that is
44 not official and you definitely need to verify that. But
45 it does reference a NOAA Fisheries page.

46
47 MS. BURK: Well thanks. This is Eva
48 again. I appreciate that because I feel -- I -- this is
49 super -- it's under -- really not well documented and
50 misunderstood at every level of fisheries management.

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1 The dynamics of food web. When, were, what stage of
2 life? And I bring up this question because I know like
3 one of the places that our fish are coming through first
4 is the Shelikof Strait. And I think in there, they're
5 after the A0 pollock. But maybe there's also some
6 spawning herring at that time in the area. So, that was
7 I thought because I know our fish are going through that
8 area and they're probably feeding on those things. The
9 little fry they're hatching. And then the other thought
10 that I'm thinking is, you know, with all these hatcheries
11 and I don't -- I haven't looked into like -- I haven't
12 had time to look into this honestly, but there's so much
13 pinks being released and I heard through -- we were
14 asking local people in the southeast about how does that
15 affect your herring. Because there is a impact to the
16 herring spawning as far as the amount of herring eggs
17 that used to be present and how the way that they harvest
18 herring eggs in the spots that they could rely on. And
19 so, the other thought is, you know, herring and salmon,
20 I think they also eat each other. And so, what are those
21 interactions between pink salmon release and herring and
22 then our fish that are -- and a lot of this is occurring
23 in the Gulf of Alaska too, not just the Bering Sea. So,
24 I -- I'm not -- I don't know if I'm really asking a
25 question here, but just kind of my own personal thoughts
26 and wanderings and I go down rabbit holes. But I thought
27 you might want to join me.

28
29 MR. HERRON: I always appreciate you guys
30 have a wealth of knowledge that I learn every time you
31 speak, so I don't really have an answer, but just thank
32 you because you teach me every day and every time I
33 listen to you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

36
37 MS. BASSICH: This is a question more for
38 you, Eva. I know that you've been kind of looking back
39 in history at fisheries declines and things like that.
40 And I'm just wondering if you have seen any reports of
41 that. I know ichthyophonous became a big issue starting
42 around 2000 on the Yukon River. 2000 to 2005, that's
43 when we really first started identifying it and really
44 looking at it locally on the Yukon River. But I'm
45 wondering if there are any -- it'd be interesting to see
46 if there's any indications of major declines of chinook
47 salmon in the distant past that might lead to that. So,
48 you know, I think a lot of us understand that temperature
49 is probably the largest driver of it. But -- and you'd
50 have to look back in time. Were there times -- we

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1 probably don't have the records of temperature back
2 then, but it would just be really interesting to maybe
3 -- because I know you're so good at looking at those
4 numbers and those relationships, those fine
5 relationships that sometimes elude other people. That
6 might be a thing to just kind of keep an eye out and
7 see, you know. Scientifically, we've really only
8 identified it over the last 20 years on the Yukon River.
9 But it's quite likely it may have happened in the past,
10 especially if there had been warm events in the distant
11 past as well that would have affected the runs on the
12 Yukon River that we speak about. When we do long term
13 research about the elders in the distant past and they
14 say the salmon went away. Well, there wasn't a big
15 industry then there. So, there had to be other drivers
16 that were more natural that created some of those. Just
17 a thought.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll add that it was
20 a lot colder in the past. It could have been warmer
21 before my lifetime. But according to the data camp in
22 the rapids, the in the locals, they're not official
23 results or research done, but they were seeing it in the
24 80s and it was colder then and it was less to see. So,
25 it wasn't as bad and it wasn't as infectious. So, I
26 think it's been around for a long time and just been
27 held at bay by the temperature and the climate, maybe.
28 This is just an idea. Anyway. Thanks for that wonderful
29 report, Keith. We learn from you every time you come
30 around also, and we appreciate you and all the hard work
31 that you do. Thank you. Okay. Come on up.

32
33 MS. VICK: Yeah. For the record, this is
34 Gale Vick again. Yeah, and both of you bringing up the
35 camp at the rapids that that has been going on. Dr.
36 Kozan from UW started doing this in the late 80s and 90s
37 working with Stan Zuray. But subsequently talking with
38 a lot of the scientists, ichthyophonous has been around
39 forever. I mean, it's just a -- an ancient parasite
40 that's just been around for a long time. But the issue
41 is that when you have a relatively good abundance of
42 salmon it -- they take care of themselves. They just,
43 you know, they can actually get to spawning grounds
44 carrying some level of ich. But they -- there's a sort
45 of a -- I can't think of the word, but there's -- it
46 they stabilize, you know, with a larger population, like
47 they do for a lot of things that affect the tipping
48 point. But when they get -- come into our rivers, that
49 they're more deprived of nutrients and they're smaller
50 and they're containing less fat, they don't -- they're

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1 not able to make it as far as carrying any parasites or
2 any diseases. So that was what I had learned recently.
3 And I think this does take a -- we need a deep dive on
4 this, but I don't think that's what's causing our
5 problem. I think this has been around for a long time.
6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
9 And I agree with you 100%. After being part of the Yukon
10 River feasibility study for the Mid River sonar, we're
11 seeing the fish right against the bank and they're small
12 and they're weak. So, all they need is one more pressure,
13 one more effect, and they drop. Yep. Those are so weak.
14 They don't -- it doesn't take much. There's no more fish
15 in the Middle River like there used to be. No.

16

17 But I will say that I have seen some
18 fry, some king salmon that were very strong. Yeah, in
19 like 20, 1920 -- I mean, 2020.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 I've been around for a while. But
24 anyway, they were there in the Big Windy Creek and they
25 were very strong. They could swim right uphill, that
26 steep. Right up a little bit of water, and they were up
27 in the road that it was cut into the hill, had a spring
28 coming out of the side of the hill and running down the
29 road and over the road and down about 100ft to a rear
30 and ground. There all the way -- trying to get up to
31 that mountain, into that spring, there up in the road,
32 7000 feet up there, almost straight up there about this
33 big. And they're very strong to swim uphill that steep.
34 I witnessed them and after I seen them, I looked and
35 watched them. And they did get to the next spring. They
36 were that big when they were going out. I seen them in
37 the beaver trapping, creek is 8 feet deep and we see
38 they were just full of them. And so, they went in there,
39 bank to bank that year and jumping on each other. They
40 were witnessed actually going in there. So, I would
41 concur that the small fish are very healthy when they
42 leave the spawning grounds on the way out. I just wanted
43 to add that on record. Thank you.

44

45 MS. VICK: Charlie, I hope that you write
46 that story down. This is one of those really important
47 stories we need to have. Thank you.

48

49 MS. BURK: This is Eva. We should ask why
50 Yukon man didn't video this.

1

2

(Laughter)

3

4

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll tell you exactly why. Because the mud was 4 feet deep, and it's kind of hard to drive and hold the camera at the same time to get there.

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(Pause)

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MS. MCDAVID: And for those who aren't aware, this is the Celebrity Regional Advisory Council. For the record, this is Brooke.

MS. BASSICH: Mr. Chair I would like to make a motion to write a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ADF&G in regards to requests for additional funding for genetics and discrete stock analysis for chum salmon on the Yukon River.

MS. BURK: This is Eva. Second.

MS. BASSICH: Yeah. So, I just think that this is -- especially the discrete stock issue on the Yukon River. I could see if we don't start addressing that there could be some very bad endings for some of these stocks. I think it's recognized that this might be a potential problem. However, the excuse is we don't have funding to do the work. These agencies are basically underfunded, but I think this is -- should be considered a top priority considering the social, cultural impacts, as well as historic impacts if we were to lose these genetic stocks and their contribution to the Yukon River. And it would be a great disservice to the people in the Upper Yukon River if we were to lose those stocks, because those were the one -- the chum in the Upper Yukon River from Tanana on up, was the kind of the life stone, the life, the heart, of reliability. King salmon fluctuate, but fall chum especially in the Upper Yukon, was always a constant and usually if they declined, they only declined for 2 seasons and so the impact to subsistence people was minimized by that. But we have now seen 7 years -- going on, 7 years of total decline and real concern for extrapatation [sic], not only of a species but also of a culture.

And so, I think it's really important. And I think we need to pursue this. I think king salmon is very important, but I think, right now what I see happening is the fall chum is not taking a very high

1 priority in the hearts and minds. But for those of us
2 in the Upper Yukon it will be devastating if we lose
3 that forever. And so, I just want to stress that I always
4 describe the chinook as the sexy fish and the poor chum
5 salmon as the ugly duckling, but we got to pay attention
6 to the ugly duckling here because our people need it and
7 the integrity of our cultural sustainability into the
8 future depends on that as well. So that's the reason for
9 writing a letter. Whether we can do anything about it,
10 I think anything we can do to raise the level of
11 awareness on the severity of this, because in my mind,
12 it's much greater than what the chinook salmon crisis
13 is right now. Chinook salmon are showing a slight
14 increase over the last couple of years due to some of
15 our efforts to preserve and protect them. I see a very
16 slight increase in the returns. Fall chum, almost none.
17 So that's the reason for the letter.

18
19 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I agree with
20 Andy, and I also think that the funding should be made
21 available in the form of a grant opportunity. Thinking
22 of -- I can't think of the name right now like the
23 Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, something like that.
24 Because the people who are identifying these issues are
25 all -- are identifying where the salmon are and where
26 they're going. The Canadian -- some of the Canadian fall
27 chum I think was recently found to be in Big Salt, which
28 is in the Ray Mountains? Ray Mountains, yeah. So, the
29 fish are moving around and then also down in -- when
30 we're listening to testimony, people in Kaltag said the
31 fish are moving. They are always in this stream but now
32 those same fish, because of the way they look, they're
33 moving to this other stream. So, I really think a lot
34 of the local people, they really know the information
35 and can help with the observation in the long term. Like
36 Jim -- Dr. Jim Simon testified too about all the
37 different programs that like Ahtna Intertribal Resource
38 Commission, Kuskokwim River Intertribal Resources
39 Commission, they're all putting together these awesome
40 programs. I think it's really important to have that
41 local effort and building sustainable programs so our
42 people have, you know, with all this crisis, there needs
43 to be an opportunity for our people to be doing the
44 science in these communities. It's what's needed.

45
46 And then I had as far as like the fall
47 chum too, I hear you, Andy. I hear you about the numbers.
48 The fall chum on the Tanana River have kind of been
49 okay. I think hitting the lower end of escapement goals.
50 We still want to be doing better than that. We saw a

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1 little burst of coho salmon. So, I have hope when the
2 habitat is okay, that the fish will come back. And I'm
3 concerned about some of the habitat for the fall chum
4 and the Canadian side, same with king salmon. And I
5 think that this moratorium is placed on the Yukon River
6 people. But there's still needs to be work on the
7 Canadian habitat side in order to -- cause [sic], you
8 know, for the fall chum that are going, you know, upriver
9 by you, those are typically coming -- and I think it's
10 the Kluane, right? That had the mudslide? And they're
11 seeing a direct correlation between what used to go up
12 there and what we're not seeing now. And what I'm
13 wondering is with the it, stuff that Charlie's talking
14 about in the Canadian fish being found in Big Salt is
15 that the fish are going to -- they're not going to --
16 not as many fish are going to make it as far anymore.
17 And they're going to have to short circuit and start
18 looking for new habitat down river. And I think it's a
19 bummer, but I also think that might be what we're looking
20 at. And to continue, we need that local monitoring to
21 confirm that.

22
23 MS. BASSICH: Yeah, I think I -- Member
24 Bassich here. I appreciate that. The Kluane contribution
25 was typically around 20% of the fall chum -- Canadian
26 fall chum run. So, it doesn't correlate with the 80%
27 drop in fall chum. Certainly, it's having an impact. And
28 there's also some preliminary information that they're
29 beginning to redevelop new spawning sites along the
30 Kluane where that de-watering took place. So, there is
31 some indication that they might be trying to regenerate
32 just in a slightly different area. We'll see on that.
33 So, I appreciate that. I do think that what you just
34 spoke about with the fish not making it up there even
35 highlights more the greatest impact of these hatchery
36 fish. Because fall chum, all fish are getting smaller.
37 All fish are not being able to carry the same fat
38 reserves. So, all fish are being impacted in where they
39 traditionally would have possibly moved, especially in
40 the upper reaches. So, it's all building a strong case
41 in my view for -- we got to get control of this hatchery
42 production because it's hurting everything as a
43 fundamental foundation to the fishery problem. That to
44 me is probably the smoking gun for starting the process
45 of these fish having all of these problems. Whether it
46 be ichthyophonous, not making it up to the spawning
47 streams, whatever. We know they're getting smaller.
48 They're not carrying the same amount of fat. They're not
49 as healthy. So anyway, the point is, in this discussion,
50 is to try and pay a little bit more attention to fall

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1 chum. There's some information we need to gather and we
2 need to create some monitoring systems so that we can
3 do whatever is humanly possible to help them. That's the
4 point of what I'm trying to get across. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more comments?

7

8 (No response)

9

10 Can somebody call question, then?

11

12 MS. BASSICH: I'll call a question of my
13 own motion.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.
16 Okay. We'll ask for unanimous consent on this. Anybody
17 against please signify by saying aye.

18

19 You seconded it.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: I can repeat the motion.
22 There's a motion on -- this is Brooke. There's a motion
23 on the floor. To send a letter to ADF&G and Fish and
24 Wildlife Service to basically request and support
25 funding for genetics and discrete stock analysis for the
26 Yukon. And I didn't -- I wasn't quite clear and I know
27 it'll be in the transcripts. If you wanted this to just
28 be for chum or if you wanted to say for both chinook and
29 fall chum, but with a real priority for fall chum.

30

31 MS. BASSICH: Yea, I'm -- in the motion
32 -- this is Member Bassich. In the motion this is to
33 focus on fall chum.

34

35 MS. MCDAVID: Noted. Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And I didn't hear
38 any nays, though, the motion passes. And I'd like to add
39 a little bit while I can. 10 years ago, when there were
40 still good chums around. I run my fish wheel on the
41 north bank against Mission Hill above Tanana. And after
42 I slowed down a little bit in life and started paying
43 attention to what was going in the box, I could actually
44 look in that box and see discrete stocks. I could see
45 different girths, different lengths, different teeth,
46 different colors. And this came to me after I fished in
47 many different rivers that they're all discrete in color
48 and paint. After they lose the silver and they get their
49 paint, every river has a different color. So, in my fish
50 wheel, I realized I could see at least 10 different

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1 discrete stocks in one box, one time. And they ran in
2 little pulses inside of the big pulse. A couple of days
3 I'd catch just one kind of fish, more of them, and then
4 they would peter down and then there'd be more of
5 different discrete stock. So, it'd be very interesting
6 to see what's going on out there right now, knowing that
7 a lot of those discrete stocks are gone now. But I just
8 wanted to add that it, if people really pay attention
9 that you don't even need genetics, you could just do it
10 by paint, what they're wearing. I just wanted to add
11 that. Thank you. 10 minutes, no matter what they say.

12

13 (Off record)

14

15 (On record)

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Take your Chairs,
18 please. As we get started here, we're going to jump back
19 up the list here a little bit to 11.f, Secretarial Review
20 - Comment Period Extension.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
23 is Brooke. So, as I mentioned earlier, the comment period
24 on the Secretarial Review of the federal subsistence
25 management program was extended. That comment period now
26 closes at the end of March on the 31st. So, there's
27 additional opportunity if folks haven't provided
28 comments. Those can be emailed to the subsistence, dot
29 -- subsistence at doi -- nope, subsistence@ios.doi.gov
30 or submitted online through the federal register comment
31 link. There are also wanted -- for anyone listening,
32 they're going to be statewide tribal consultation
33 opportunities provided for this that DOI is hosting next
34 week on the 10th and then again on the 17th. And if you
35 are a tribal leader or a representative that has
36 authority to participate in those consultations, that's
37 tribes or ANCSA corporations. You can reach out to OSM
38 or to -- or anyone at OSM or the Native Liaison Orville
39 Lind and we'll get you the information on how to
40 participate in those.

41

42 At your last meeting, I'm sure you
43 remember very clearly a long discussion with the Western
44 Interior Council. That resulted in this long letter that
45 is also in your packets, and I will point you back to
46 that. It starts on page 135 of your meeting packs or
47 binders. And we -- the Secretaries asked for -- there
48 were 7 topics that they requested feedback on and those
49 were the move of OSM to DOI, criteria for RAC membership.
50 The membership of the Federal Subsistence Board, federal

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1 and state regulations for duplication and inconsistency,
2 regulations governing special actions. The role of the
3 State in Federal Subsistence Management Program and then
4 Board procedures on nonrural determinations. In addition
5 to that, they said that any comments regarding the
6 Federal Subsistence Management program could be
7 submitted on Other Topics. And as joint Councils, you
8 identified a number of those and those are all found.
9 Starting with number 8 in this letter on page 141. You
10 all commented on the overall importance of the program.
11 Meaningful action that's needed to address the salmon
12 crisis. The correspondence issues that we've previously
13 discussed and strategies for dealing with them. You
14 commented on the location and availability of the one
15 public open house that was held as part of the scoping
16 period. There was some frustration that there was only
17 one that was in Anchorage that may have been limiting
18 to participation of rural users.

19
20 Additionally there were comments on
21 communication during government shutdowns need for co-
22 management. And then on number 10 on page 143 were
23 Eastern Interior specific comments which you provided
24 during your meeting day. That was after the joint meeting
25 with Western Interior. And that's when it was brought
26 up about the need for the socio-economic impacts
27 analysis. Regarding subsistence and changes over time.
28 The frustrations with the government subsidization of
29 pollock bycatch -- or pollock trawl fisheries. There
30 were comments about the Gravel-to-Gravel initiative and
31 how it's not truly gravel to gravel right now without
32 buy-in from other organizations, including Department
33 of Commerce. And also, you felt like you wanted to see
34 OSM have the ability to conduct primary research on
35 occasion to help document more TEK. And you commented
36 on the need to ensure adequate funding for the program,
37 the federal subsistence management program in general.

38
39 So, we can't add -- change this letter.
40 It's already been submitted as comments, but as we
41 discussed earlier if you are interested as a Council,
42 you can submit additional comments. That would be sort
43 of a separate letter or an addendum, to these comments
44 that you have already submitted. I made a couple notes
45 from that discussion earlier of things you were
46 interested in perhaps commenting on and that was about
47 hatcheries. And also, Copper River was brought up. And
48 then there was a lot of discussion about escapement goals
49 and management objectives needing to be towards the
50 upper end versus the lower end. I will just remind the

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1 Council though maybe to think about that these comments
2 are going to the Secretaries. And so, what is pertinent
3 for the secretaries to know and be aware of versus
4 comments that might be more suitable to go to agencies.
5 And with that I will turn it back over to you, Mr. Chair.
6 Thanks.

7

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead. Andy.

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MS. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you for that, Brooke. The only thing that I think would be appropriate possibly to include or add on in comments is the issue of hatcheries on an international scale. International hatchery productions around the Pacific Rim. And we've brought that up at numerous meetings in the past. And that's a slow process to take place. But I think keeping that on their Board and keeping it -- giving attention to that on a consistent basis is the only way we're probably going to get some action on that. And I think that's the appropriate level for that to be addressed initially. So, that would probably be through the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. And then -- I'm not really sure all the processes, I think some of it would be addressed through them, but then it's probably something that the State Department would have to begin any kind of discussions with treaties or anything like that. Regulations or treaties, international, which is a huge scale and probably decades in the making. But anyway, I think it's just really important to keep that highlighted in their mind because that's -- that is concurrent with what we want to try and do within Alaska waters and the State of Alaska. And I know the Canadians are addressing it on their side of the border. And so, it will be an issue, as we already heard, testimony or information that the pollock -- I'm sorry that the Russian chum salmon production is expected to increase 3- to 5-fold. And there is -- just for the record, there is information out there that the Japanese actually realized that it was counterproductive for them in the past and actually reduced some of their hatchery releases. So anyway, there is mixed feelings on the direction to go, but it's something that it should be elevated to that level in my view. Thank you.

MS. BURK: This is Eva. I agree, I feel like a lot of the argument we heard in the North Pacific in an area and was like, we don't want to limit our catch of the hatchery catch. We want to take these hatchery fish out of the water. And like the idea that taking out 500,000 adult chum versus the billions of fry

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1 that are released is it's like laughable, right. What
2 the real impact -- if you want to make a real impact is
3 you wouldn't release all the hatchery fish in the first
4 place. And so, I did hear a lot of people speaking to
5 that. And it was even at the Board of Fish. You know,
6 all the comments about hatchery is like, well, they sure
7 hope that fellow Board Members who are making comments
8 about hatchery, continue to have that perspective as we
9 go into statewide with the hatchery proposals. And so,
10 I think -- and also back in 2000 maybe Tony Knowles was
11 referencing the impacts of hatchery fish on wild stocks
12 even back then, before the literature review or before
13 the study. So, it's kind of interesting that when you
14 have fish as a priority at the leadership level, how
15 different things can go. And I think I just wanted to
16 kind of note that for the record, too. So, we got to
17 keep the pressure up on hatchery.

18
19 And then I was trying to look up my
20 numbers for the escapement. Oh, I know where it's at.
21 So, I'll grab it. But there was an escapement goal review
22 that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game did. And I
23 don't want to miss accurately state the percentages, but
24 it's really concerning how often we're not meeting the
25 lower end of the escapement goal on a statewide level.
26 And how that relates to the federal subsistence review
27 is the talking about closures and the need for closures.
28 And I think on the Yukon, I think what they're referring
29 to a lot in their letter more have [sic] to do with
30 animals. But I think it's important to understand the
31 authority to enact closures is really important for this
32 body and for the Federal Subsistence Board to be able
33 to do that. And sometimes it's not happening at the
34 state level where the closures need to happen or the
35 precautionary management. And so, I think it's really
36 important for this program to -- which is the voices of
37 the subsistence users, to -- like how the Yukon River
38 is under a special action request right now to make sure
39 that the federal subsistence priority is met. And that
40 needs to remain intact. The ability to do that needs to
41 remain. So that's in my mind, is how these things all
42 tie together. But I may be mixing things up too, because
43 I'm very tired.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair, Member
46 Burk about your comment on closures, I would direct you
47 to page 139 on -- of your letter that you sent. It's in
48 the binder. Just to review if you think we need any --
49 if you would like to add any additional language than
50 what you previously stated. I'll just note here the 1st

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1 2 paragraphs are more about special actions, but I'll
2 read some of this for the record. As fish and wildlife
3 populations approach critical levels, hunting and
4 fishing management must become more active, precise, and
5 conservative to ensure that subsistence resources and
6 the opportunity to harvest them remain available into
7 the future. And this is the 3rd paragraph, the ability
8 to close federal public lands, whether via special
9 action processes or regulatory proposals, must be
10 maintained. At times, closures of hunting or fishing to
11 all users are necessary when no harvest can be supported,
12 and in other cases, closures of these activities must
13 apply to a subset of users when only limited harvest can
14 be supported. And it goes on to describe in that
15 paragraph the different steps of closures and 804
16 process and non-federally qualified users closures to
17 them. And then in that 4th paragraph you state,
18 maintaining the Board's authority to implement closures
19 is critical not only for conservation but it is equally
20 important that closures may be used as needed to ensure
21 the continuation of subsistence uses. As animal
22 populations decline in human populations increase,
23 competition for resources grow, and there is less to go
24 around. When warranted closures help ensure rural
25 priority that defines the federal subsistence program.
26 Based on the language that's in this letter, do you feel
27 like anything else needs to be added in an additional
28 comment about closures?

29
30 MS. BURK: Not about closures. I think
31 that's good. I'm trying to think about where to slip in
32 escapement goals and just -- there is one sentence in
33 section 6, the role of the state and Fish and Game. It's
34 a couple sentences in in the first paragraph.
35 Additionally, the Councils emphasized that the state
36 should not have deference in federal subsistence
37 management because it has consistently opposed
38 subsistence protections and failed to meet escapement
39 goals in many rivers. I don't know how, but I feel like
40 I don't know it's an easy slip in to me.

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Member
43 Burke. So, it sounds like you might be interested in
44 adding in this new -- basically additional comment
45 letter supplying some more comments perhaps about topic
46 6. And those would be in reference to escapement goals.

47
48 MS. BURK: Yes, that's what I'm thinking,
49 but I don't know if I'm making stuff complicated. I just
50 -- I feel like that's -- when you don't -- that might

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1 not be known widely to people who are reviewing this
2 program and are coming into this issue. Understanding
3 why folks are asking for federal management, continued
4 federal management and without saying, hey, you failed
5 trying to say, hey, we want to help you meet escapement
6 goals through collaboration. And we think that the way
7 that the Kuskokwim is approaching management in a
8 changing climate is a really good case study of when you
9 manage to the higher end of escapement, that you can
10 continue to have a small harvest of kings. I don't know
11 anywhere else in the state of Alaska where you can retain
12 kings, except for a few sport fisheries. But I don't
13 know of any in-river user that can retain kings except
14 for the Kuskokwim and Nushagak Bay. And even right now
15 they just changed things in Bristol Bay fishery for king
16 retention. So, I'm -- yeah, I think I'm stumbling now.
17 Help me out, Andy. Thank you.

18
19 MS. BASSICH: No, I think that's really
20 good, I think -- I guess I would ask, I don't -- I'm not
21 very adept at what's appropriate to put in these letters,
22 but it seems to me identifying the Kuskokwim as a
23 success. Also, I think it would be, as Eva brought up,
24 I think it'd be very important information in a letter
25 to the Secretary to clearly point out that the state
26 management system has failed in reaching escapement
27 goals X amount of time, out of the last 20 years. To
28 demonstrate that this is why the federal program is so
29 important to us and that we want to try and begin to
30 change the process to try and influence escapement
31 goals. To be trying to achieve management actions at the
32 high end, not the low end. Identifying that the reason
33 why we're not -- one of the reasons why we're not meeting
34 escapement goals is we are always managing to the lowest
35 point in the escapement goal to try and allow some
36 harvest is actually hurting us. And that we have good
37 examples of how, when there is consistent year after
38 year attempts to reach higher ends, we actually achieve
39 that better in the long run. So, I don't know the wording
40 or how you would put that in there, but I think it's
41 very important to put those examples in there because
42 as Eva says, these people in Washington aren't going to
43 have the basic foundational knowledge that we have. So,
44 you have to give them that to them so that they
45 understand that. That's my perspective. Thank you.

46
47 I'm in support of that. I think we're
48 at the point in these fisheries where we have to use
49 every tool that we have to try and make some changes.
50 That's the bottom line from my perspective. And if it

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1 means, unfortunately, making a few people feel
2 uncomfortable or an agency uncomfortable, I think, you
3 know, that's -- from my perspective as a person who's
4 losing his life, that's not very important to me to
5 worry about hurting someone's feelings if they haven't
6 done the job they're supposed to do. As the state of
7 Alaska doesn't own the resource, the people of Alaska
8 own the resource. They are put in place, all these
9 agencies are put in place to help regulate the resources
10 for the people of Alaska, the agency -- the State of
11 Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not own the
12 fisheries, the moose, the caribou or whatever. They are
13 instilled -- their job is to ensure the management of
14 those.

15
16 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I just want to
17 add some numbers for the record. The March 2025 Alaska
18 Department of Fish and Game Report Monroe and Chenoweth
19 2025 reviews chinook salmon escapement performances
20 across Alaska from 2015 to 2023. During this 9-year
21 period, escapement goals were met on average 39% of the
22 time in Southeast Alaska, 41% of the time in Central
23 Alaska, 50% of the time in the Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim
24 region and 36% in the Western region. And what I see out
25 of that is during this 9-year period, escapement goals
26 were not met at least half of the time or more. And
27 that's really concerning. And I think also knowing what
28 was up evolving on the Kuskokwim during this different
29 time frame was a tribal co-management framework in
30 partnership with the federal government through special
31 action requests. And then that in-season -- then an in-
32 season management team was formed, and they meet and go
33 over the data and determine whether it's going to be a
34 poor run, a good run, and they determine the amount of
35 harvest, and they do some in-season monitoring. The
36 Kuskokwim Fish Commission does on their own to kind of
37 inform their in-season harvest. And so that it's
38 possible through a different framework of management to
39 achieve escapement. And during this time frame, the
40 Kuskokwim River has met escapement 100% of the time for
41 chinook. So, I think this is -- those -- you only have
42 so many case studies to pull from. And I just really
43 wanted that data to be on the record. Thanks.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
46 for that. Okay. Are we happy?

47
48 (Talking)

49
50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I'm always
2 happy with you guys. No, that was that was good
3 justification and information and can definitely do some
4 wordsmithing, you know, looking at the transcripts and
5 putting that together. So, what I'm hearing is you at
6 least want to add those 2 comments as an additional --
7 or those 2 topics as additional comments for the
8 Secretarial Review. And that's about the hatcheries and
9 then this discussion that you just had about escapement
10 goals and the need for conservative and precautionary
11 management. And why it's important to have the federal
12 program in place. Are there any other ideas or topics
13 for Secretarial Review comments?
14

15 MS. BASSICH: Yeah. This Member Bassich,
16 I feel like we've done a really good job of covering
17 some of the more important topics. And I think sometimes
18 -- I don't want to say less is more because probably we
19 have way more than most RACs. But I think what we have
20 come up with is the primary concerns that we have as
21 RAC, both in fish and in wildlife. And I'd be happy with
22 where we're at right now and then follow up in future
23 meetings when needed.
24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Member Bassich.
26 If the Council doesn't have any other additional
27 comments, we would need a motion to submit those 2
28 comments that were just discussed.
29

30 MS. BURK: This is Eva. So, moved.
31

32 MS. BASSICH: This is Andy. Second the
33 so moved.
34

35 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. So, the
36 motion would just be -- yeah, to restate it before anyone
37 votes. The motion is to submit additional comments for
38 the Secretarial Review related to, to hatcheries and the
39 importance of the federal program for management and
40 conservative management.
41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more comments?
43

44 (No response)
45

46 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Call question.
47

48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we'll ask for
49 unanimous consent. All those against, please signify by
50 saying aye.

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(No response)

Hearing none. Motion passes. Thank you.
So, we're going to call it a day. And everybody could be here at 6 a.m. tomorrow to get things done early. As the agenda says, 9:00 a.m. Thank you. Thank you all for being here and struggling through this day with us. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: And for those who might be wondering what we'll be starting with tomorrow we'll have our Public Comments for Non-agenda Items first thing in the morning. And then we might have some discussion there might be some folks that have time conflicts that might want to give some reports, but where we left off was the Lower Tanana Wood Bison Plan. Thanks.

(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 108 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 4th day of March;

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 20 day of March 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager