



***Southeast Alaska
Subsistence Regional
Advisory Council***

**Don Hernandez, Chairman
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199**

OSM.R26042

APRIL 17 2026

Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chairman Christianson:

On behalf of the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), I am writing to request that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) elevate the protection of subsistence fishery resources in the international Transboundary River watersheds of the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk rivers that originate in British Columbia to the current Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, members of the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Department of State, and the Alaska Lieutenant Governor. This is an on-going issue. The Council has shared these concerns with the Board since 2017.

Additionally, I would like to highlight our most recent advocacy on this issue and request that the Board provide a status update on its elevated communications as requested by the Council:

- 1) Pursuant to this Board's reply to the Council's FY2021 Annual Report, the Council re-submitted a letter to the Board making specific requests:
 - a. Write a letter to the Lieutenant Governor regarding large scale mining development in British Columbia, Canada, requesting support from the State to advocate for the protection of the international watersheds and fishery resources for subsistence uses.

- b. In this letter, include a request for the Lieutenant Governor to engage with the Department of State and our Congressional Delegation to effectively address this issue.
- 2) The Council requested elevation of this issue to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior during the last administration. We are aware that the Board sent a letter to Secretaries Vilsack and Haaland dated July 29, 2024, informing them of our support of the efforts made by Salmon Beyond Borders to bring attention to the Transboundary Rivers mining issue and the potential negative impacts to subsistence resources. The Council received the Secretaries joint response dated January 17, 2025.

The Council has received information in recent years concerning the impacts and threats to vital resources, and we feel it is incumbent upon us to bring these issues to the attention of newly elected or appointed leaders in our government who are in a position to take meaningful action to protect the rivers that Southeast coastal communities rely on for sustainable subsistence resources.

Please accept the Council's request for additional action by this Board on this important issue:

- 1) Write a letter to the Alaska Lieutenant Governor regarding large-scale mining development in British Columbia, Canada. The Council requests that the current Alaska Lieutenant Governor be asked to advocate for the protection of these international watersheds and fishery resources for subsistence use. Additionally, please ask that she engage with the U.S. Department of State, expressing her willingness to work in conjunction with our Congressional Delegation to advance this issue at the Federal and international levels.
- 2) Re-elevate this issue to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior by sending a follow-up letter to the Board's July 29, 2024, letter to the newly appointed Secretaries. Please include this Council's May 12, 2023, letter and attachments, the Board's July 29th letter, and the previous Secretaries' January 17, 2025, response letter, to convey the cumulative concerns expressed in those documents. This information should be included in the elevation correspondence to provide critical perspective and details to the new Secretaries.
- 3) Provide copies of letters generated from requests 1 and 2 to the current Alaska Congressional Delegation.
- 4) Advise the Council of the status of any letter that the Board sent to the Lieutenant Governor on behalf of the Council, pursuant to its FY2021 Annual Report Reply to the Council and any letters from the Lieutenant Governor received in response.

The Council looks forward to receiving a response to this letter from the Board by our next meeting in October 2026 and hopes that copies of the letters requested above may accompany it. The Council appreciates the Board's diligence in addressing these requests as the Council feels

the urgency and importance of protecting subsistence resources that are essential to our coastal communities here in Southeast Alaska.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, they can be addressed through our Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry, at 907-209-7817, deanna.perry@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Hernandez", written in a cursive style.

Donald Hernandez,
Chair

Enclosures: Council letter to Board requesting ltr. to Lt. Governor, dated May 12, 2023
Board Letter to Secretaries elevating transboundary rivers concerns, dated July 29, 20224
Secretaries' Response Letter to Board, dated January 17, 2025

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Members
Office of Subsistence Management
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Aaron Poetter, Federal Subsistence Liaison, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record