

Federal Subsistence Management Program
Secretarial Review
Open House/Listening Session

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Gordon Watson Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska

Volume I

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00;00;00;08

Brooke McDavid, Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Subsistence Management:

Good afternoon to everyone joining online. This is the public, open house for the Federal Subsistence Management Program scoping period. We'll be getting started in a few minutes, and I think we're waiting for folks in Anchorage to get the ball rolling.

Virtual participants:

Thank you. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty, DOI Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs:

Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks to those of you online and those in the room. My name is Kara Moriarty. I'm the Senior Advisor for Alaskan affairs for the U.S. Department of the Interior. And I love hearing the echo. I don't think anybody else can, but there's an echo up here because of the online. So, I will try to ignore that as best I can. I really appreciate everyone coming out today for our listening session for the Subsistence Review.

I'll kind of talk about that here in a minute, but Robin from the Office of Subsistence Management is going to give us some housekeeping, and one of the things she's going to ask is that folks who choose to come up and provide testimony, either here in the room or online, that you try to keep your comments to three minutes.

We've got a lot of people in the room, and we've got people online, and it's still only 3:00. And if you can do that for us, we can get through as many people as possible. And if we get through everybody and you still have more to say, you can come back, or I will give you my cell phone and my email, and you can just call in and chat with me directly as well after this is over, if you go beyond your three minutes. So, Robin, are you ready for some housekeeping? Maybe.

00;01;56;20

Robin La Vine, DOI Office of Subsistence Management:

Hello, everyone. I am, I am... okay.

Kara Moriarty:

Her echo is worse than my echo. I just want to say.

Robin La Vine:

My echo is worse than hers. If you will just bear with me. I know there is a way to mute my computer.

Kara Moriarty:

Okay, so while she's doing that, we're going to just, we're not going to officially start until we have our audio figured out. How about that? So sorry for the delay here.

Robin La Vine:

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you very much. My name is Robin Levine. I'm the Subsistence Policy Coordinator for the Office of Subsistence Management, and I'm going to be facilitating the public comments for this listening session. This is a listening session. You are all invited to comment on the Secretarial review.

They'll be providing us an overview in just a moment, but we want to let you know there are multiple ways to provide your comments. I would hazard that those of you here in person, and for those of you online, there are a lot of people here in person. For those of you who are here in person, if you would like to provide your testimony here at the mic, on the microphones, to everyone in this room and to people online. If you want to provide comments, but you don't want to speak in public, we have staff just down the hall that are happy to type up your testimony and submit your written comments for the review, for your input into the review.

We also have people online. I will be alternating, back and forth between folks here in the room and folks online. And in a moment, I'm going to tell folks online how they can get into the queue. So first, we kindly ask that everyone joining virtually keep their phones muted until it's your turn to speak. To mute your phone, you can use your phone's mute button, or you can press *6 to mute and unmute.

I would like to remind everyone this is a live public meeting. When you speak, please be respectful. No insults or foul language will be tolerated, and if we begin to hear something of that nature, especially online, I will have staff in attendance cut you off.

Also, we do seem to have a lot of people here, a lot of people who wish to provide testimony, again in person and online. And because of that, because we want to hear everybody, we're going to ask you to limit your comments to approximately three minutes. I don't want to cut you off, but I do want to make sure that everyone is heard. So, if you can meet that three-minute deadline, that would be fabulous. A couple seconds more is okay. If I start getting antsy, you know, you might know to wrap it up. You can look at me, and I'll say, "yes, that's it."

So again, if we get through everybody before the meeting is set to adjourn, you might have an opportunity to provide comments again. So please begin when it's your turn to speak. Please begin by stating your name, spelling it out. Also, please tell us what community you are from or the organization you represent.

Now, if you would like to sign up to give a public comment tonight, I know that folks have done so as they have entered this room. We have staff just outside the Gordon Watson who will take your sign-up sheets, these pink ones. And then they're going to input them into a spreadsheet. People online, those of you that want to speak, get ready, I'm going to tell you how to get into the queue. You need to press *5 on your phone. And oh, oh dear. We're ready. Oh, there we go. I'm so sorry, folks online. I'm not too sure how long we were muted.

But for folks online, press *6 to keep yourself muted. Press *5 to raise your hand. Our staff will begin to input you into the order that you have raised your hand on a spreadsheet. And we're going call you. I will call on you by the last four digits of your phone number. So make sure that, you know, if it's your mom's phone you're on, make sure you know by heart what those last four digits are because that's how we will call you when it's your turn to speak. Again, we're targeting three minutes. We want everybody to be heard. We're going to start in the room, and then we're going to go online. And if you have any more questions, we're here to help. Thank you. Kara.

00:07:29:06

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Robin. Again, thanks everyone for coming. And I just, before we get too much further, I do want to say a very special thank you and appreciation to all the staff from the Office of Subsistence Management.

Crystal, here, is the Director next to me, and she just has an amazing team. And as you can imagine, these events don't just happen. And so, I just really want to say thank you to all the staff, probably some that I am not even aware of that had a hand in this, including Sarah Taylor, in the Office of the Secretary, and all the folks who are out in the lobby, and that will be out in the lobby, and here in the room, you know, well into the evening. So, I just wanted to start with my gratitude. So thank you, Crystal.

[Clapping]

So, before I just want to give a little overview, here. I do not have slides or anything, but the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, as you know, announced this comprehensive review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program here in Alaska. This review and your participation here and in other forms of communication will help us ensure that the program is effectively serving Alaskans.

On his first day in office, just over a year ago, President Trump signed Executive Order 14153. And in that executive order, section 22 states, and I quote, directing all Interior Department bureaus to consider the cultural significance of hunting and fishing in Alaska and the statutory priority for subsistence management required by ANILCA, and to conduct meaningful consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game prior to enacting management plans or other regulations that affect the ability of Alaskans to hunt and fish on public lands, unquote.

So, in addition to that directive from the executive order, the president also ordered at the beginning of his term that all governmental departments, including the Department of the Interior, needed to review all federal programs and processes, which includes the federal subsistence program.

So, one thing I want to make clear tonight, and that I've been trying to make clear through this whole process, is that this review and this scoping is not a formal rulemaking. The scoping period is just solely to gather information at this point. No decisions have been made whether to make any changes to the program at all.

The review will focus on specific areas which we have heard about, including (1) the relocation of the Office of Subsistence Management, or often called OSM, from the Fish and Wildlife Service directly to the Office of the Secretary. So now, the Office of Subsistence Management used to be housed, if you will, under Fish and Wildlife, and now it's under Policy, Management and Budget, which resides in the office of the Secretary.

(2) The membership criteria for regional advisory councils; (3) the composition of the Federal Subsistence Board; (4) duplication and inconsistencies in federal and state regulations; (5) special action regulations; (6) the role of the State and Alaska Department of Fish and Game; and (7) procedures for rule determinations. Those are the seven targeted areas that we are focusing on at this time.

However, if you believe there are other areas of the program that we did not identify in the scoping notice that should be examined from your viewpoint, please include those in your comments. And I can attest that I've received, we have received some ideas around the program that we did not include in the scoping notice, that we may take a look at as well. Again, this review is about listening, learning, and gathering information. If the Secretaries determine they would like to make any changes, an official rulemaking process would begin at a future date.

But there is no predetermined timeline, nor is there any requirement to do anything after the scoping period closes. And again, if an official rulemaking were to occur, all Alaskans, including those of you here in the room, would have the opportunity to comment again on any specific proposal that would be announced at that time. So again, thank you for your time and commitment to this process.

I will tell you, I cannot sit still in a chair for four solid hours. That is just not going to happen. So, I think my goal will be to try to go for the next hour and a half or so and maybe break, maybe 10 to 5:00 and then, take like a ten-minute bio break and start again at five. And I'll probably do the same overview in case there are new people in the room or online. But with that, Robin, I will turn it over to you to go through who is up to bat first. Thank you very much.

00;13;15;04

Robbin La Vine:

Thank you, Kara. For those of you online, who have raised your hand, please keep them up, and lower them after you've been provided an opportunity to speak. I'm going to start in the room, and I will start with Gayla Hoseth.

00;13;45;03

Gayla Hoseth, Curyung Tribal Council:

Good afternoon, Kara and Crystal. My name is Gayla Hoseth, and I'm the first chief of Curyung Tribal Council located in Dillingham, Alaska. And I'm also the co-chair of Alaska Federation of Natives. And they'll be commenting later. And I agree with all of their comments as well. What I'm going to give you is a history of Curyung and an overview of our people and our management systems.

So Curyung is a Yup'ik name for the people, the place now known as Dillingham, Alaska, located at the confluence of the Nushagak and Wood Rivers. For thousands of years or so, the location has been a central gathering place for Alaska Native peoples due to its abundant salmon runs, access to freshwater and marine resources, and its role as a travel corridor between our river systems.

The people of Curyung are primarily Yup'ik, with longstanding cultural, familial, and economic ties to the Nushagak River watershed. Salmon, chinook, chum, coho, and pink form a foundation of our subsistence life, culture, identity, and intergenerational knowledge. Fishing practices emphasize stewardship, sharing, and sustainability. Long before the development of modern management systems.

For the people of Curyung, salmon and other wildlife species are not merely a commercial commodity or a biological resource. They are essential to food security, culture, identity, and the continuity of life along the Nushagak River. Management decisions, including those related to access, directly affect the future of our community and must be evaluated through this historical and cultural lens. Our tribal members inherently self-regulate hunting and gathering processes in alignment with our cultural teachings, understandings of natural laws and consequences, and personal tribal stewardship responsibilities for the ecosystem we are dependent upon.

Our Indigenous elders taught us to embrace and adapt to change through systematically thinking across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems, emphasizing the

actions of thinking, planning and preparing ahead for the future. One cultural teaching is the responsibility for sharing and preserving traditional foods, for not only family, but to provide for others who didn't have the means to harvest and process our traditional foods.

Russian contact in the 19th century, later American governance, introduced new economic systems, including commercial fishing, canneries, and non-local ownership expanded rapidly in Bristol Bay, altering access to salmon resources and placing increasing pressure on Indigenous subsistence lifeways. Following statehood, we introduced another management system that our people adapted and participate in today. With the passage of ANILCA, Alaska Native people recognize that even with state management, that our access to our subsistence foods are not always guaranteed. Despite these changes in management system, subsistence remained essential for survival and cultural continuity.

Today, we have Tribal citizens living around the United States. We have Tribal citizens abroad in Switzerland, Sweden, and New Zealand. We have 3,212 Tribal citizens, where we fill in 41 of the states in the United States. And most of our members reside here in Alaska, and we're both rural and non-rural. We share our foods that we gather with our families in the non-rural areas as a part of just what I explained earlier.

It's really important that we advocate for management approaches that recognize historical participation to protect subsistence priority and support local access that sustains both the resource and the people who have depended on it for generations.

Our Tribe supports: maintaining the present composition of the Federal Subsistence Board, including the three public seats, the three Tribal seats; uphold the intent of Congress as expressed in Title VIII of ANILCA; and to protect rural Alaskan subsistence ways of life and ensure that action taken by the Department of Interior and Agriculture does not result in any lessening of our subsistence protections for all Alaskans and Alaska Natives. We also support OSM staying where OSM is now and not move OSM again.

Also, we wanted to really emphasize that before any decisions are being made, once we're done with the scoping period and the recommendations come out, that we have an all RAC meeting again, that we bring all of the ten RACs together. We've been stating this in the RAC meetings that have been held throughout the State of Alaska. But for us to have an all RAC meeting so that we all hear the same information across the state. If there's going to be any changes to this federal management system that's going to affect us in rural Alaska, it's really important that we do not be separated when this information is disseminated amongst all of us because we're going to hear different things in different meeting spaces, just kind of like how it rolled out with the scoping period. Different RACs didn't get the full information. And the one-page documents that we were able to testify on, a lot of people didn't know of how that was supposed to happen. And so, so okay, I will stop. Thank you. I just want to emphasize how it's really important for us to all get together when this rolls out with the RACs. So, thank you.

00;19;03;06

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you. Gayla.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you, Gayla. Again, I will remind you all that we have a lot of people who wish to provide their comments. So please work very hard to keep the comments down to about three minutes. Next in the room is Angela Totemoff.

00;19;34;21

Angela Totemoff, Alaska Federation of Natives:

Thank you. My name is Angela Totemoff, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors. AFN strongly supports the Federal Subsistence Management Program, as implemented under Title VIII of ANILCA. Congress enacted Title VIII to protect subsistence uses on federal public lands for rural Alaskans and to establish a rural priority when state systems fail to do so.

This framework reflects Congress's recognition that subsistence uses are essential to physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence of rural Alaska communities, particularly Alaska Native communities. The Federal Subsistence Management Program exists because the State of Alaska has been unable to implement a subsistence system that complies with federal law. As a result, federal authority, federal decision making, and federal oversight are not discretionary. They are legally required to fulfill their mandate and the federal trust responsibility.

In addition to representing AFN, I want to briefly explain why this issue is significant to me personally. I grew up in Tatitlek, a remote community accessible only by boat or plane. Store bought food is expensive and often unavailable. Subsistence activities were essential to food security in community survival. This experience mirrors the findings of Congress in Title VIII and underscores why a strong federal subsistence program remains necessary today.

AFN supports retaining the Office of Subsistence Management within the Department of Interior. The 2024 relocation of OSM was undertaken with broad support from tribes, Alaska Native corporations, and rural subsistence users, and the U.S. Senate. Housing OSM within the Department of Interior ensures that the subsistence management is not only overshadowed by competing agency missions. Further, relocation would be costly, disruptive, and unnecessary.

AFN also strongly supports the cultural composition of the Federal Subsistence Board, including the three Tribally nominated public members added in 2024. This change improved the Board's alignment with ANILCA and ANILCA's intent by ensuring meaningful rural and Alaska Native representation in federal subsistence decision making.

With respect to the role of the State of Alaska, AFN does not support granting the State decision making authority within the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The State does not recognize the rural priority required under ANILCA, and delegating authority would be inconsistent with federal law. The State's existing consultative role is appropriate and sufficient.

AFN supports the current regulations governing special actions. Special actions are an essential management tool that allows the Federal Subsistence Board to respond to changing conditions in a timely manner. Weakening this authority would directly harm rural subsistence users.

Finally, AFN believes that the current rural determination process is working as intended. The regulations and policies adopted following the 2015 rulemaking and the Board's 2017 policy provided the flexibility necessary to evaluate real status using the comprehensive and informed approach. Changes to this process are unnecessary.

AFN urges the Department of Interior and Agriculture to preserve the federal subsistence Management Program as it currently exists. Uphold the current, rural priority established under Title VIII of ANILCA, and ensure the federal subsistence management continues to reflect both the letter and intent of the law. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you. And I would just say the Secretary enjoyed meeting with the AFN Board when he was here in June, and he had planned to be at your conference, the big convention in October, as you know, but to tell others, the shutdown impacted that trip. And so, we had him on live feed, but the goal is to get him back to your convention sometime during the administration. So I don't know if it'll happen this year or not. I'm lobbying for it, but, we'll see. But I just wanted to say thank you and to recognize his visit to your board.

00;23;41;06

Angela Totemoff:

Excellent, Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah. Thank you.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you. Angela. There are a number of folks that are signing up to provide comments, although they wish to do so anonymously. I would like to remind any of you here in the room that want to provide comments, but don't want to do so at the mic, we have staff down the hall to your right who can type up your comments if you wish to speak and submit them to Kara for the review that way.

Additionally, I know a lot of you have come here with papers, with your testimony already written down, and I believe that can also be submitted after you provide testimony, just so that we've got, all of your comments have an opportunity to be presented if we're keeping them short.

One more thing. As we get more people who are coming in, please track seats in the audience. If you have coats or cups or bags on seats, please move them to your feet so that others may have a place to sit down. This might be a long evening. All right, one more in the room, and then I'll go to three online. Anna Guthrie.

00;25;22;09

Anna Guthrie, Klawock Cooperative Association:

Good afternoon. My name is Anna Guthrie, G-U-T-H-R-I-E. I'm with the Klawock Cooperative Association in Southeast on Prince of Wales Island. I'm on behalf of the Tribe, we just wanted to thank you for being here, listening to us, being able to bring our comments forward.

So our Tribe does urge the Department of the Interior and Agriculture to uphold Title VIII of the ANILCA and protect the integrity of the federal subsistence management program.

We feel that the Safari Club's petition that has been submitted before you would weaken tribal and rural representation by eliminating Tribal seats and creating imbalance on the regional advisory bodies of the Federal Subsistence Board. Alaska has 229 federally recognized tribes, many of whose citizens depend on subsistence resources from federal lands. And although I'm here on behalf of our Tribe and a little community in Southeast, we recognize that there are many rural areas, tribal and non-tribal, that would be impacted by some of the decisions that are being proposed or petitioned. So, we just wanted to make bring forth our concerns about that.

Any reduction in Tribal representation would affect rural communities statewide and risks renewed pressure to shift subsistence management to the State of Alaska, something the State cannot legally do under federal law. Deference to state regulations would be contrary to ANILCA and the Secretary's responsibility to title VIII. The State cannot implement a subsistence priority consistent with federal law. The current consultation role for the State is sufficient and appropriate.

We also strongly support maintaining the Office of Subsistence Management in its current location within the Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. OSM was moved there in 2024 with strong support from the tribes, Alaska Native corporations, and rural subsistence users, with the authorization from the Senate. This placement ensures subsistence is not overlooked by broader agency missions and allows OSM to focus solely on subsistence.

The Safaris Club's proposal would be costly, disruptive, and totally unnecessary. The existing criteria for regional advisory council membership are appropriate and effective, requiring: Alaska residency, knowledge of local subsistence practices, traditional ecological knowledge, and the ability to fully participate ensures informed and meaningful input. These criteria do not need to be revised.

We believe the current membership of the Federal Subsistence Board is well balanced, particularly with the addition of the three Tribally nominated public members in 2024. This composition reflects the perspectives needed to manage a federal subsistence priority program for all federally qualified rural users.

Subsistence is not a sport or a hobby. It is a way of life essential to food security, culture, and community well-being. The Safari Club petition does not reflect what is best for rural Alaska.

Finally, we ask that the scoping period be extended from 60 to 90 days to allow meaningful public participation and that an all RAC meeting be held before any changes are made.

The rural subsistence priority is not racial. It applies to all Alaskans living in rural Alaska, contrary to what the Safari Club's petition implies.

So based on your representation that an opportunity may be available later if actions are warranted, we would just like to be noted on the record that we are asking for meaningful consultation; “meaningful” meaning that we engage in a conversation about what it means for these impacts in our area, and so you can hear from us how we believe it's going to impact these decisions in our area, not only our area, but rural areas throughout the state. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you, Anna. I'm now going to go online, and I do want to remind folks that you can sign up online to testify by raising your hand. You do so by pressing *5.

The first person who is in the queue has the last four phone number digits of 5-6-7-6. Please start by saying your name and spelling it out, and your affiliation, where you're from or organization you represent, or self, if that's the case. Again, 5676...

00;30;35;29

Gloria Simeon:

Can you hear me?

Robin La Vine:

Yes, we can. Go ahead.

Gloria Simeon:

Thank you so much. I really appreciate this opportunity. My name is Gloria Simeon, S-I-M-E-O-N. I'm a woman of the Kuskokwim River and an ultimate end user of our subsistence resources. I'm not going to repeat a lot of what's already been said. There's been some really good testimony, but I'm really concerned about this action because, to me, it violates the intent of Title VIII of ANILCA and takes away from our right to have priority for our access to our hunting and fishing resources.

I live in Bethel, and in my region, I know people are aware of the threats that we have had, with the hurricane and deep sea trawling, to our ability to access our resources. But we also are the most dependent on our resources for survival.

We're economically depressed. We're having right now just crazy high costs due to inflation and heating fuel. It's very, people have to make hard choices about the basics. We have limited healthcare options, forcing us to leave the region to get good healthcare at ANMC. Food insecurity is a growing concern, and in addition to that, our health corporation has done baseline studies that prove through research that our people are healthier when we have access to our traditional and customary food sources.

The State of Alaska does not recognize, nor does it respect or honor, the rights of the 229 Tribal nations of our state. So, we have a hard time with the trust relationship there. And some of the tribes that we have right now, to a growing number, is regulation and this confusion between state and federal regulation, especially on the Kuskokwim River. We have concerns over high seas trawling, climate change, the after-effects of the extraction industry, and concern that when it comes time to place the burden of conservation, it is on the end users of these resources. And I sometimes feel like the people, the Native people of Alaska, are becoming an endangered species as well.

I would recommend that when you're doing the scoping and any additional studies on the impact of any changes that you look at, social, economic and health impacts, that tribal consultation, meaningful tribal consultation, is conducted, and that a review of all acts and Federal laws that impact any decision making be researched. And all managing agencies, including what was listed before State and federal agencies, Native corporations, Tribal nations, landowners be involved in this consultation process. And with that, I thank you very much for this opportunity.

Kara Moriarty:

Gloria, thank you for calling in from Bethel. Appreciate it.

00;35;08;09

Robin La Vine:

Next online we have Richard Peterson, and remember we are trying to keep our comments limited to about three minutes. Thank you.

Richard Peterson, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida [Indian Tribes of Alaska](#):

Thank you and good afternoon. My name is Richard Peterson, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. We're the regional tribe of Southeast Alaska representing more than 38,000 tribal citizens.

I want to thank you for convening this open house and for hearing directly from Tribal governments. We have submitted written comments on the Federal Register and appreciate the opportunity to provide further testimony on this important matter.

For Tlingit and Haida, subsistence is not a program. It is not recreation, and it is not symbolic. Subsistence is who we are. It is how we feed our families, care for our elders, teach our children, and maintain relationships with the lands and waters we have stewarded since time immemorial. In Southeast Alaska, deer, salmon, halibut, herring, shellfish, berries, and marine mammals remain essential to our survival and our cultural continuity.

Congress recognizes this reality when it enacted Title VIII of ANILCA. Congress codified this reality in Title VIII. Section 801 declares that subsistence uses are essential to Alaska Native physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence. Section 802 establishes subsistence as the priority consumptive use when restrictions are necessary. Sections 805 and 810 require meaningful local participation and rigorous evaluation of impacts before actions may restrict subsistence.

Those provisions are not aspirational. They are binding laws. Federal law is clear. Subsistence is a priority use, and the Federal Government carries a trust responsibility to protect it. That responsibility must guide every reform considered in this review, and federal courts have repeatedly confirmed that obligation, most notably in the Katy John decision, which held that federal subsistence jurisdiction extends to navigable waters necessary to fulfill reservation purposes. That holding is particularly important in Southeast Alaska where subsistence systems are overwhelmingly marine based.

Against that backdrop, Tlingit and Haida is deeply concerned by any reform proposals that would weaken Alaska Native participation in subsistence governance. Congress created the Federal Subsistence Board and regional advisory councils to embed local knowledge directly into federal decision making. Section 805 requires meaningful participation by subsistence users for a reason. Our hunters, fishers, and gatherers hold generational knowledge of seasonal cycles, access corridors, climate driven shifts, localized depletion, and cumulative pressures from development and recreation. That lived experience is not biased. It is expertise.

We are concerned by proposals that would weaken Tribal participation in subsistence governance, particularly any effort to reduce Alaska Native representation on the Federal Subsistence Board or diminish the authority of regional advisory councils. Congress created these bodies so decisions would be informed by those who live with the consequences. In Southeast Alaska, the regional advisory council is often the only place those voices reach federal decision makers. Weakening that forum would silence the very communities Title VIII was meant to protect.

We also reject the idea that when the Federal Subsistence Board acts to protect subsistence opportunities through closures or special actions, it is somehow exceeding its authority. Those tools exist because delay can cause irreversible harm to food security. We saw this during the Covid-19 pandemic where many store shelves were empty for days to weeks on end. This continues to be true today. Rural citizens need access to lands and waters to survive. Characterizing carefully tailored conservation measures as overreach misunderstands both the statute and the standard of necessity Congress imposed.

Weakening the Board's existing tools would not reduce conflict. It would increase litigation risk and deepen harm to Tribal communities. ANILCA authorizes restrictions on non-subsistence uses when conservation or subsistence needs demand it. Federal agencies are required to evaluate impacts, hold hearings, and protect our way of life, not to manage it away.

We must also be clear about the Federal-State relationship. While cooperation with the State of Alaska has its place, federal agencies may not defer to state positions that undermine the rural subsistence priority. Federal management exists precisely because the State failed to uphold that priority. Courts have repeatedly affirmed that responsibility, especially in coastal marine dependent regions like Southeast Alaska. Subsistence governance is not about balancing competing interests. It is about honoring legal rights, the federal trust responsibility, and Tribal sovereignty.

As rural subsistence users, we are not stakeholders. We are rights holders. As this review moves forward, we urge the departments to remember that reforms must be developed with tribes, not for us and not around us. Any restructuring of the Office of Subsistence Management must strengthen accountability to Tribal communities, ensure staff expertise in Indigenous subsistence systems, and bring decision making closer to, not farther from, the people who depend on these resources. Regional advisory councils...

00;40;27;19

Kara Moriarty:

Richard, we are trying to keep folks to three minutes. Can you wrap up, please?

Richard Peterson:

We'll submit this in writing, and I'll also just finish by saying we didn't move here to enjoy these resources. We were born here because of these resources, and we steward them since time immemorial and for the future. Gunalchéesh haw'aa. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much. And again, I hate doing that to folks, but we are standing room only in here, and I want to try and get through as many as possible. So, thanks for submitting those comments and writing, Richard.

Robin La Vine:

Next person online has the phone number ending in 5010. Again, we're trying to keep comments to three minutes. Thank you.

00:41;20;22

Tyler Green:

Good afternoon, Tyler Green, Sitka, Alaska—Sitka Southeast. I'll keep it under three minutes here. Small local family here in town since 1998. I hunt and fish for seniors, others, and others, including proxies.

By the looks of things, it looks like possibly losing six public seats to politically appointed seats, it seems kind of ludicrous to me, and we'd be moving into the buddy system. In my opinion, it should be mandatory that local residents sit on those seats. Politically appointed members, for example on trawl boards, has not panned out in my opinion. In the event that nonresidents possibly manage our Subsistence Board doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

Lastly, I strongly oppose a club poking their nose in our subsistence values. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

00:42;25;02

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you. Tyler.

00:42;30;00

Robin La Vine:

Thank you very much. I'm going to go back to our folks in the room. People online, hold on. We'll get back to you in a moment.

And I would also note that we have exceeded our capacity for this room, so if folks have the opportunity to give up your seats to others, please do so. At the moment, we may have enough right now, but if we see more folks coming in, if you have had an opportunity to speak, please let others enter the room and provide them that same opportunity. Thank you. In the room, next we have Francis Gallela. Thank you, Francis. Francis Gallela.

00:43:34:04

Francis Gallela:

Don't start my three minutes yet. Okay, okay. My mom told me that nobody would ever have trouble hearing me. I came to Alaska in '72. The first Native person I met was Johnny Schaefer from Kotzebue, and you older people know him. He spent an hour telling me about Alaska, telling me about Native people, and instructing me how to get along in Alaska. Very valuable advice. He and I became friends and until Johnny passed.

In the meantime, I worked with Emil Notti, Sam Kito, Johnny Sackett, etc., etc., on down the line, all those old timers who brought us to where we are today. Thank goodness for them. And I hunted and fished, right, hunted and fished all the way from Kotzebue down to Metlakatla, even up to Saint Lawrence Island, Little Diomedea even, five-day trip that turned into nine because the airplane couldn't come in.

And I told this to somebody earlier today, when I'm hunting and fishing with my Native friends, there's no difference. When we sit around the campfire, when we have coffee, when we talk about the date, there's no difference. We are the same people after the same thing. So, I would hate to see any kind of discussion, issues, problems be based on ethnicity, or us and them. There's no need for that.

What I would like is to have some good scientific management because without scientific management, everybody loses. We cannot deplete the resource. Number two, I do think ANILCA was structured correctly. And I think that we can go back to that with the representatives from the five agencies doing a good job. And I think, we might be immune then from politics, local politics, national politics, whatever.

Excuse me, okay. I believe that we should, I have worked with the Native people and helped them subsist, side by side in many corners of Alaska. I know how important it is, and I'm probably the only person in this room who's actually put a dollar value on subsistence, so I understand it. But one trouble I have is blocking off huge tracts of Alaska automatically shutting the door when there may not be a real reason for it.

If we go back to ANILCA, ANILCA says yes, in times of emergency, in times of sparse and scarcity, we're going to have these rules, and we're going to have Native subsistence priority, which is it should be, absolutely, in my experience. But until then, I think we all should go back to the old days when I could go hunting with my buddy Perry from Kodiak and all my friends from the Seward Peninsula and enjoy together hunting, fishing, enjoying the wildlife of Alaska. I don't think, I don't think there are problems then. I know we all live together, hunted together, fished together, laughed together, ate together, and shared together. I'd like to see that again.

I would not like to see a continuation of simply locking out people because of where they live or their ethnicity. Excuse me. Just, am I done? Am I done with both microphones? Okay. Thank you, ma'am, everybody.

Robin La Vine:

Yes. Yes. Thanks.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Francis.

Robin La Vine:

Next in the room is Clinton Cook.

00:48:00;11

Clinton Cook, Craig Tribal Association:

Good afternoon. My name is Clinton Cook. I am the Tribal President in the Village of Craig, Alaska, in southern southeast. I am also the Second Vice President of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Through them roles, I also serve as the Alternate Vice President at the National Congress of American Indians. Before we get started, I would like to say thank you to the Dena'ina Athabaskan people for allowing us time on their lands, something you guys should remember, land acknowledgment, before you start these proceedings.

I speak today on behalf of our people in our communities. For 10,000 years, we have lived in relationship with these lands and waters. Subsistence is not a program to us. It's a way of life, a responsibility, and a system of knowledge passed down through generations. We harvest to feed our families, to maintain cultural continuity, and to survive in rural Alaska where food costs are among the highest in the nation.

Subsistence is not recreation. It's not a sport. It's not trophy hunting. Our harvest practices are guided by respect, restraint, and accountability to future generations. It is important to remember we do not ask for special access. We are seeking continued recognition of what has always been ours. Congress recognized this and passed Title VIII of ANILCA, guaranteeing rural subsistence priorities on federal public lands and waters.

It has only been in the last 250 years that Indigenous peoples have had to fight for the right to live, as we always have. Federal subsistence protections exist because the State of Alaska simply cannot. They have failed to protect rural and Indigenous subsistence needs, which is why federal law has stepped in. Federal courts have repeatedly affirmed that the rural subsistence priority cannot be implemented by the State under its current constitutional framework. These protections are enshrined in statute, regulation, and upheld by the courts.

My connections to these lands are not abstract. I can trace it directly through my lineage, back thousands of years, through ancestors, clan clans. I understand, or this can be difficult for other groups to grasp because people do not have that kind of a relationship to a certain place.

When our history with our land is short, it can be seen as something to be used, claimed, or taken. For us, the land is not a commodity. The land to us is an actual relative, somewhere we belong to, not something that belongs to us. When we talk about equal access, we need to be honest about history. For 250 years, forced removal of genocide, boarding schools, severed families and languages, criminalization of our cultural practices, ongoing economic and infrastructure inequities.

Equity does not mean ignoring that history. Equity means acknowledging it and ensuring survival is not sacrificed for recreation. Subsistence is foundational to community health and wellness. We call on the Department Interior to defend ANILCA Title VIII without dilution, reject State driven efforts to weaken federal subsistence management, protect the integrity of this Office of Subsistence Management, and reaffirm its commitment to tribal sovereignty and true meaningful consultation.

And I'm not going to read my last page, but traveling here for two days and giving me three minutes is not okay, simply not okay. And you need to do better. For tribal leaders, cutting off tribal presidents in her speak and cutting off other members because you gave us three minutes is simply not okay. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Clinton, I appreciate your comments and I look forward to seeing the rest of your written comments. I don't like cutting people off either, but we are trying to get through as many people as we can during this session, and I'll stay here as long tonight as the staff will allow me. But we are trying to get that done. I will say that for you tribal leaders, like Tribal Presidents, Peterson and Clinton, we've received requests for one-on-one consultations with tribes, and Orville on the staff of OSM will be reaching out to you to schedule those.

I will honor every single request that comes in. We've also scheduled two statewide tribal consultation opportunities. One is on March 10th. The other is on March 17th, from 130 to 330. So, we are trying to do everything we can to provide as much opportunity to provide your thoughts and feedback. Thanks, Robin.

Robin La Vine:

Next person in the room, Gloria Burns.

00:53:28;24

Gloria Burns, Ketchikan Indian Community:

"Sin-yeil-la" Gloria Burns. I'm the president of Ketchikan Indian Community. Ketchikan has submitted comments. We'll submit additional comments. I did have the opportunity to be at the RAC meeting in Wrangell where we provided comments, but it was so important to us this reorganization that of all the things and places that we needed to be, we chose to be here.

The Federal Subsistence Board works well. We have great respect for the staff, the energy, and the time that they place into it. We're particularly appreciative of the changes that have happened to strengthen the Subsistence Board, including the six members. We strongly believe that the people who use the land need to be making the decisions about the land.

And so what we have noticed throughout the years as we've watched is that as we had the addition of the three public seats and then the three tribal seats, that there was a strengthening of the scope and the ability because when you have people who know what it's like to be hungry, know what it's like to be in relationship with the land, it makes a difference.

We appreciate the change to the current office, and we support that. We strongly encourage that we move from a 60-day scoping period to a 90-day scoping period. And we really would like, we would just want to lift up the rest of the tribal leaders that are in this space who have had that experience. And I can echo what the other tribal presidents have said, but I want to talk about it, what it's like.

When I was in Ketchikan, when we didn't have any food, we would go and we would harvest clams, right? And we would go for our clams and our cockles. I remember being, you know, six years old, and you had an option if you wanted to eat, you went and you went clam and cockle digging. And I remember sitting in a clam pit with my grandmother and my mother and my brother. When you walk down the rocks and you're sitting there and you're doing everything you can to fill up your freezer, but it's not just about filling up your freezer. It's about a relationship with the land that with our non-human relatives, it's about reciprocity.

It is different from sitting around a fire. It is different because we have a relationship that the creator has bequeathed and that we accept and we take care of. And I was telling my Nany I was coming here, and she said to me, that is crazy, Gloria. She's 96 years old. And she said to me, salmon is our religion. We hold salmon like we hold the cross, with great respect. It has taken care of us forever. And that is what I'd like to end with. Háv'aa.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Gloria.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you. Gloria. I'm going to go back online now, and I know some of you have joined by phone. Some of you have joined by the teams app. If you joined by the teams app, you can raise your hand. There is a, there is a tool there that you can identify. If you are joined, joining via your phone, you can press *5 to raise your hand. I will call on you using the last four digits of your phone number. Next in line is 8282. Please begin by identifying yourself. We are keeping our comments to three minutes. Thank you. 8282.

00;57;32;17

Vince Mathews:

Can you... Hello... I am here. Okay, can you hear me now?

Robin La Vine:

Great.

Kara Moriarty:

I can hear you just fine, sir.

Vince Mathews:

Okay, my name is Vince Matthews. It'll show up on your computer is Sarah Matthews. But I'm not that swift on computers. But I think in context of what's all been said, this is February in Alaska, and the freezers and smoke houses along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers are empty. So, I hope this whole effort here will provide means to get those salmon back in the river.

I'll focus on the criteria for regional advisory council members. Yes, there needs to be a recognition of them and an analysis of who serves on them. The ones I've dealt with. I'm a retired Fish and Wildlife employee, served on multiple boards, multiple advisory committees, tribal groups, and other things, in addition to practicing their subsistence lifestyle. It is rare to get on any advisory group that level of experience and knowledge. So, it is easy to analyze the criteria, but you have to look at how, what was the result of that criteria.

Now, I think it's number four. But, I'm not sure about duplication of regulations. Well, I can tell you when I started with the federal subsistence program in 1993, there was discussions to have a single hunting and fishing regulation booklet to address the confusion of where, or not, where and who can hunt where. It has not happened because of resistance. At that time it was the State. It would be a huge savings in money to have one regulation book. So people that are visiting the state understand this area is different than other areas, and the local hunters know where the state regulations apply and where the federal lands apply. Our little right-angle blocks of land or difficult to find on the land.

I don't know what else to tell you other than I will draft up my notes and etc., but please remember the context of this, and the feeling that the State, who I used to work for, might be better managers.

What about the Mulchatna caribou herd? What about the Nelchina herd? And what about the Western ~~lost in~~ Alaska herd? Then I've already mentioned salmon on two large rivers that have no, very little if any, dams or any industry, and we can't seem to get the salmon back to where they were.

So, with that, I will stop and say hi to all my past friends. I recognize some of you, and I wish you best during this whole review. It's very trying to be reviewed as you're trying to balance all this stuff. So, my phone's ringing, and you're blessed that there's not a delivery truck, so my dog would interfere. So, I'll stop with that.

Kara Moriarty:

Awesome. And Ben, where are you calling in from? Oh, Vince. Okay, I heard... bad hearing. Vince, sorry.

Vince Mathews:

I am calling from Fairbanks, Alaska. Okay. And the sun is setting here, and yeah.

Kara Moriarty:

No, no better place than the Golden heart. Vince. Don't have to tell me. Thank you.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you. Vince. Next person online is Brandon Ware.

01;02;09;13

Brandon Ware, Petersburg Indian Association:

Yeah, hi everyone. My name's Brandon Ware. I'm from Petersburg, Alaska. I am representing Petersburg Indian Association as the Vice President. And yeah, I'd just like to speak a little bit to some of the proposed changes that are going under review here.

And so, first I would like to address the chair, the review of the amount of seats going into the Federal Subsistence Board. And these seats are an absolutely vital way that we as citizens of rural communities are able to express our concerns, express our needs, and it's impossible to be able to understand exactly the scope of why we need subsistence unless you live in the rural subsistence priority, unless you live in these communities. And I think that everyone here that's testifying on this is a testament as to exactly that.

We rely on fish. We rely on the meat that we're able to provide. We rely on herring eggs in the springtime to not only fill our freezers and improve our quality of life, but also to pass on traditions that our people have had since time immemorial. We've been here for over 10,000 years, and the people have stewarded this land. We've incorporated traditional ecological knowledge into the management of this. And so, while we rely on western science for the management of this, we also have history—history of over 10,000 years of doing this. And so, I urge you guys not to make any changes, not to make any changes to the Federal Subsistence Board, and to allow those six seats to be a voice for our communities, to be a voice for our people.

And on top of that, I have a pretty unique perspective as being the Vice President of Petersburg Indian Association. I also live, I live in a town that's not historically a village. While we have village sites all around us, Petersburg was settled by Norwegians. Now, this

is Lingít Aaní, make no, make no mistake about that. We also have a large non-native population is what I'm trying to say. And so, this is not an ethnic or race issue. This is a, this is an issue about rural priority status. This is an issue about our people who live on an island, who live here, who live on an island have to subsist off the land in order to improve our quality of life. It's a matter of just representing all these people.

And so, any changes you can make to the Board, any deference you give to the State would be a mistake as well because, as you heard President Cook saying earlier, that there's absolutely no way that the State could uphold priorities for rural status.

And so that's what I have to say for right now. You can expect to be seeing more comments from Petersburg Indian Association, more from Petersburg, in favor of not making any massive changes to the Board or anything else. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much, Brandon.

01;04;53;10

Robin La Vine:

Next speaker in the queue has the last four digits on their phone number of 1592. And we are trying to keep our comments limited to three minutes. 1592. Please begin by, introducing yourself. Thank you. 1592, you can unmute yourself, by either pressing the mute or unmute button on your phone or *6. Try *6. 1592. Folks online, do we have that number still connected? Does that person still have their hand raised?

Brooke McDavid:

Hi Robin, this is Brooke. Yes, phone number 1592. Oh, it looks like they just unmuted.

Robin La Vine:

Awesome. Thank you. Excellent, please begin. Yep.

01;05;48;01

Joel Jackson, Organized Village of Kake:

Yeah, I'm on the line. Can you hear me okay? Okay, my name is Joel Jackson. I'm the President of the Organized Village of Kake down here in southeast. And I'm glad you got other Tribal leaders up there from southeast that are testifying, and you know, I feel like, like they do, that we as tribal leaders, you know, should get more time. And I know you got a lot of people in the room, but it does not excuse that. You know, things need to change in that regard. But I'll go right in my testimony, a lot of information has been delivered already.

I grew up, and I'm going to be 70 years old this year. I grew up at a time where subsistence, or our way of life, was so important to us. I practiced our hunting and fishing and gathering. As I was growing up, I had seven brothers and three sisters. So, we had a large

family, and we are continually busy hunting, gathering, providing for the family for the next year.

And that takes a lot of energy, a lot of time. You know, it's not a recreational sport. We're not a special interest group. We are Alaska Native people. And that is so important to realize. And here we are talking about, and we've been talking about, what you guys call subsistence forever. And the thing about, the way the subsistence is divided amongst all of Alaska. When you look at the pie at most, unless it changed and I hadn't seen it, was less than 1% of the pie. So, you got a lot of people competing for some for their share. You know, it's so important right now.

I think I heard a few people say that the price of everything in the villages, in the rural areas, is very high. And the same is true in my community. You know, even gasoline, groceries — everything — travel, getting goods into the community. Everything is so expensive.

But we choose to stay there because that's where our people are from. And I heard somebody say, we can go back thousands of years just by our lineage. And I can do that, too, because my family comes from that, *Ḳéex'*, otherwise known as Kake, Alaska.

We have lived in that area for thousands of years, and we roam the country all around us as far as we could. We have a big customary traditional hunting and fishing area around us, extends thousands of acres and shorelines that we made use of, and you know, we didn't know it.

Robin La Vine:

Mr. Jackson, you have exceeded your time limit.

01;10;07;22

Joel Jackson:

All right, well, I just want you guys to know that, you know, we're here because we're not second class citizens. We are, we should be a priority. All right, thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

Robin La Vine:

For those of you who have joined us in the room, we have quite a lot of folks standing. There are some seats that have now opened up front, but staff have also set up a listening session, or a kind of a listening station with screen, out in the atrium. So, if anyone wants to stretch their legs but still keep track of the meeting, you can continue to track it in the atrium. We are going to go back to in-person testifiers. Our next person in line is Matthew Anderson.

Kara Moriarty:

13 total, 13 total. Yeah, I mean, I'm just, I'm doing the total. So, I don't know the breakout between in the room, out of the room. Robin might.

01;11;41;20

Matthew Anderstrom:

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Matthew Anderstrom. I'm the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe Traditional Food Sovereignty Coordinator, President of Alaska Native Brotherhood Camp 13, and Second Vice President of the Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand Camp. I'm a lifelong subsistence hunter from Yakutat area. Above all, I'm a father, an uncle, and a husband.

I speak today not only for myself, but for the families who depend on this land and these animals, not for their recreation or profit, but for survival, culture, and continuity. I'm deeply concerned about proposals and administrative actions being considered that would weaken the federal subsistence protection under ANILCA. From where we live, federal subsistence management is not overreach. It is fulfilling the law exactly as Congress intended.

ANILCA was enacted because the State of Alaska failed to protect Alaska Native and rural subsistence ways of life. Federal management exists because subsistence users were being displaced by expanding access, aircraft use, and increasing non-local pressure on finite landscapes and wildlife populations. Some argue that the federal subsistence actions create conflict among hunters. That conflict did not originate in our villages. It arises when well-funded, non-local users gained access to small areas like Yakutat, places where families have harvested sustainably for thousands of years.

There are calls to weaken regional advisory councils or diminish their influence. I want to be clear. RACs are often the only place where local subsistence voices are heard at all. Weakening them would silence the very people ANILCA was written to protect. Local hunters and elders observed changes on the ground long before they appear in statewide data, and that knowledge must remain central to management decisions.

There are further proposals to require greater deference to the State of Alaska, but the State remains out of compliance with ANILCA and has consistently prioritized sport and commercial interests over subsistence needs. That is why the federal system exists.

Finally, some proposals seek to limit emergency and temporary special actions. In rural Alaska, emergencies are not theoretical. They are failed salmon runs, unsafe ice, extreme weather, rising fuel costs, and food insecurity. Federal flexibility is not abuse. It is necessary to keep people fed. ANILCA is not broken. It is working as intended, protecting subsistence first, grounded in local knowledge, local need, and conservation.

On behalf of the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe Food sovereignty Program, Alaska Native Brotherhood Camp 13, and the Yakutat subsistence community, I urge the Department of Interior to maintain strong federal subsistence authority, defend the role of regional advisory councils, and uphold the subsistence priority promised by law. Thank you for listening.

Kara Moriarty:

Yep. Thank you, Matthew.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you. Next person in the room is in-person #8, Joseph Valle, Valle?

01;15;24;26

Joseph Valle, Yakutat Tribal Council:

Hello, I'm Joseph Valle. That's, V as in Victor-A-L-L-E. I would just like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to speak, as well as thankful expressions for all of our tribal people here today expressing the seriousness of the subsistence issue. And I'm very glad to see it. Subsistence is a word that we use to describe food, and the food is really what matters to our people a lot.

So for my testimony, I would just like to say that I am a member of the Yakutat Tribal Council for Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe, and I am speaking on behalf of my community and my family. Subsistence isn't really a recreational event for us. It's how we eat. It's how we teach our kids. It's how our culture survives. When we talk about subsistence, we're talking about food security and responsibility to the next generation.

ANILCA exists for a reason. The State failed to protect subsistence, and federal management was put in place so rural people wouldn't be displaced. And it doesn't seem like overreach to me. It seems to be more like the law working exactly as Congress intended.

Our people on the ground see the changes before they ever show up and reports. Salmon runs shift, weather shifts, access shifts. That's why local knowledge and regional advisory councils matter. Without RACs, decisions about our food are made without us.

Special actions and emergency tools aren't necessarily abuses of authority. They're how families survive when a run fails or conditions change rapidly. Where I'm from, Yakutat is small and finite. But when outside pressure increases, the people who are pushed out first are the locals who are from that land. And I don't think anyone really wants to see that.

And the State is still not in compliance with ANILCA, which is why strong federal authority is necessary. So I'm asking you to keep the system intact, maintain strong federal subsistence authority, protect the RACs, preserve special action for flexibility, and keep

subsistence as the highest priority because for us, this isn't a theoretical conversation. These decisions affect whether our families eat or not. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you. Joseph.

Robin La Vine:

Next in the room is Cynthia Peterson.

01;18;30;24

Cynthia Petersen, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe:

Good afternoon. [Spoke in Tlingit language]. My government name is Cynthia Peterson. I'm Eagle. I'm from Yakutat. I serve as the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe President. I also serve as a Yakutat Community Corporation President. I also serve as the Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp 13 President. Today, I'm here speaking on behalf of the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe, a federally recognized tribal government representing approximately 898 tribal members of Yakutat, Alaska, and the 550 community members of Yakutat who rely on our lands, waters, and subsistence resources to feed our families and carry forward our cultural practices.

Today, I'm here to submit the following scoping comments for the Federal Subsistence Management Program review. In Yakutat, subsistence includes the customary and traditional harvest of salmon, moose, deer, seals, herring eggs, berries, and several other resources that are essential to our community year-round. These foods are relied upon not only for nutrition, but for the cultural transmission, teaching our youth harvesting practices, respect for the land, and the responsibilities to future generations.

Access to these resources is especially critical given Yakutat's geographic isolation, high cost of store bought food. Three days ago, I spent \$11.49 without tax for 1 pound of frozen brown hamburger. I also paid over \$19 for ultra pasteurized one gallon of milk in Yakutat. We also receive two daily jet services a day. So we, our community really relies on the subsistence resources Yakutat can provide.

Proposals that would weaken or restructure the existing federal subsistence framework, including those advanced by non-local sport hunting and recreational interests, spur serious concerns for Yakutat. Increased competition from non-local users for moose and other resources would directly affect our community's ability to meet basic food needs. Even small reductions in harvest opportunity can have outsized impacts in a small, remote community where subsistence foods replace what would otherwise be prohibitively expensive store bought alternatives.

As part of this review, agencies must fully consider the cumulative impacts of any proposed changes on Alaska Native tribes and rural communities, including impacts to food security, cultural practices, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Any changes

that reduce tribal input, local advisory influence, or rural subsistence priority would undermine the intent of ANILCA and the federal trust responsibility.

Meaningful government-to-government consultation with tribes must be central to this review process. The Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe must be engaged early and consistently in any discussions that would affect subsistence access, management authority, and regulatory structure.

We respectfully urge the Federal Subsistence Board to maintain the existing structure of the Federal Subsistence Management Program and to uphold the commitments made to the Alaska Native peoples under Title VIII of ANILCA. Subsistence is not a preference or a pastime. It is a difference between food on the table and going without. This is our way of life. Gunalchéesh.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Cynthia.

Robin La Vine:

We'll now go back online. The next person to provide comment is Lincoln Bean.

01;22;47;21

Lincoln Bean, Organized Village of Kake Council:

Can you hear me? Hello?

Kara Moriarty:

We can hear you, Lincoln.

Lincoln Bean:

Well, thank you. [Spoke in Tlingit language]. Gunalchéesh for all the people standing up for our way of life. There's 227 tribes in the State of Alaska. There's 500 in the United States.

I'm a council member to Organized Village of Kake of 400 people. In my community, introducing you and my way, just by doing that, you would know who we are as a people, living off the land that identifies us with the land and who we are. This has been going on since I've been a young man and still going on today. It's offensive. You it's an insult to the integrity of our people and our way of life. You should be ashamed of yourself.

We live off the land. We've always have. How do I know? We've found handprints on the mountains that dated back pre-ornament time. That's before humans wore clothes. That's how long we've been here. And I ask, why is it people that are outside of Alaska telling us what to eat. Why is it that I see carcasses laying on the beach with just the heads gone. Where is the shame? There should never be a person telling a Native how to eat and what to eat when you don't even know what the hell we're eating. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you for calling in, Lincoln.

01;25;26;15

Robin La Vine:

Next person online is Akalleq Burgess. Akalleq Burgess? Please, you can unmute yourself by pressing *6.

01;25;52;24

Akalleq Burgess:

Yes, waqaa. [Spoke in Yupik language]. My Yupik name is Akalleq. In English, I'm Andrea Sanders Burgess. I am a Yupik woman. I am originally from Quinhagak, Quinhagak and Bethel, Alaska. Now living on Tlingit Aaní where I'm raising my family here in Juneau. I feel strongly, much like the Tribal leaders who have spoken before me, that there is a delicate balance that allows Alaska to continue to be home and a place of beautiful existence of our traditional ways of life, the value system, and a very intact economic system that, while some may claim to measure or try to quantify, you can never quantify that spiritual connection and that well-being that our way of life brings to us.

Growing up in Quinhagak, while we may have been called cash poor, economically depressed, I felt rich when my mom was able to open her freezer and bring out a bag of dried fish to send back to college with me. How we think about our wealth and our well-being, it's inner tied to a rural subsistence economy and upholding the Federal Subsistence Board's rural preference ensures that Alaska can continue the vitality that the rural people bring to the state. So, I think it's really just an odd, odd thing to be hosting this scoping process without looking at all of the considerations that our Tribal leaders have raised here as well as the fragile economy that our rural preference provides for our people.

We're organized. As you can see, we're calling in. We are not going to let outside interests interfere with our well-being and the continuity that we share across generations. Even while I may be raising my family here in Juneau, I am connected through all of the regions of Alaska and all of their way of life because that's who we are as Native people. We're generous. We're caring. We're loving. We know that we are stronger together, and that's the backbone of our subsistence way of life.

So, I called in today to say: do not reduce the Tribal public seats that were established recently on the Federal Subsistence Board. Do not shift any authority to the State of Alaska, to their broken system. Do not narrowly define subsistence; it's actually our way of life, as your comments today are illuminating. We need the Federal Subsistence Board to keep the special action abilities to protect our communities, as was seen during COVID and other times of need.

Additionally, we are requesting that you actually look at and consider the success of our Tribal Health Compact. We are self-governing tribes. We are able to enter contracts and negotiate directly for the taking over of provisions and services to our people, such as we do with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service. It's currently being looked at by the Department of Education here in Juneau. We encourage the Department of Interior to also be considering tribal self-governance compacting. Thank you very much. I yield back my time.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Andrea.

01;29;37;13

Robin La Vine:

We're going to take one more person online, and then we'll take that break that Kara talked about. The next person online is listed as the Native Village of Ouzinkie.

01;29;56;15

Kerry Ivory, Native Village of Ouzinkie:

Good afternoon. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. My name is Kerry Ivory, and I'm the Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Ouzinkie. I'm sitting here with our Tribal Vice President and two of our council members, as well as a community member. We are a village on an island off of Kodiak Island.

While I'm non-native myself, I depend on subsistence to feed my family, to maintain the connection to their culture, and stay connected to the land and to my family's heritage. All of these are important. But in addition to the importance of keeping all of their traditions and spiritual ties for their ancestors to alive, there... Excuse me, my phone rang. There would be a huge financial burden to the rural and remote communities in Alaska should rural preference be removed or effectively diminished by deferring to the State of Alaska. The State cannot legally enforce the rural preference as intended by Congress in section VIII of ANILCA.

I'm writing to strongly urge you to: keep OSM within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. Preserve all public and tribal seats on the Federal Subsistence Board, and do not require the FSB to defer to the State of Alaska, which cannot implement the rural priority. Please maintain the current Regional Advisory Committee membership criteria, and preserve the FSB's the authority to make rural determinations and special actions.

Just to give you an idea of what it costs to live in rural or remote Alaska, my grocery costs last year were \$13,153 for a family of three. This does not include costs paid for canned and dry goods purchased from Amazon to reduce these freight costs. That was another \$6,806.73.

My two cell phones, one for my family and one for me, cost \$1,879 last year, but you can't call local landlines with them. My local landline cost was \$1,413.90. My fuel cost was \$2,408, and my power cost was also roughly \$2,500. My basic internet cost was \$1,440.

Airfare to our hub to Ouzinkie is roughly \$200 round trip, and we have the lowest cost at any village on Kodiak Island. Our freight cost is roughly \$0.80 a pound, and we're currently on notice to boil water, so I'm flying in five cases of water per week at a cost of roughly \$25 per case. Other costs have paid in excess of \$1.50 per pound, and \$800 for airfare round trip. This comes to a total of roughly \$35,400.63 before we consider clothing, entertainment, vehicle expenses, insurance, housing, etc. This is *with* subsistence use of approximately 25% of our consumed proteins.

I would ask that you please give added weight to those whom these changes would most heavily impact. These are only the financial burdens that would be compounded for those who are most heavily impacted should these changes be implemented. Not only that, the tribal ways, our spiritual connection to the land and ancestors — and very important in today's world is also tribal food sovereignty. This also would remove our ability to keep our kids connected to their culture, decrease health outcomes by depriving elders of their Native foods, and it would eliminate the natural mental health benefits derived from continuing to practice the traditions passed down by our ancestors.

Robin La Vine:

Kerry, you've exceeded your three minutes. Thank you.

Kerry Ivory:

Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Kerry.

01;34;24;00

Robin La Vine:

I know I said we might do a break, but I realize that, Kara, you had suggested a little closer to midway through our evening. So, we'll take a few more starting back in the room. In-person testifier number ten, Aaron Bean.

Aaron Bean, Craig Tribal Association:

Oh. Thank you. Yeah. My comment was written with the anticipation of speaking longer than three minutes, so I apologize. I'm going to be jumping around a little bit. And I would say hello to my brother, Lincoln Bean who has testified a couple of minutes ago. We share the same fathers from Kake. I was born and raised in Sitka. Hello, Lincoln. Thank you for being here and speaking on behalf of Kéex' Kwáan.

So I'm here on behalf of the Craig Tribal Association. My name is Aaron Bean. I'm the Governmental Affairs Specialist for the tribe, and like I mentioned, I'll be skipping over my comment. I'll submit it, after I'm done or I think I met the three-minute mark.

But, at the outset, I think that this petition should be called exactly what it is. This is an effort for, you know, the Safari group, this petition to have these rules changed is a workaround to what's taking place in the judiciary. As has been mentioned by many other people here today, the State of Alaska is known for suing tribes, individuals, Native organizations, in relation to their subsistence rights. Most recently, there was a case before the Supreme Court last year, 25-320, concerning the conflicts between Sturgeon and the Katie John cases. And the State of Alaska was arguing that continued reliance on the Katie John trilogy, which upheld the federal authority to regulate subsistence fishing on navigable waters, was irreconcilable with the recent rulings in *Sturgeon v Frost*.

And again, my comment went into more detail and kind of highlighted some of the issues. But for brevity, I have to cut that. The State of Alaska historically, like I just said, has made it common practice to not acknowledge that we exist at all. So the idea that you would, by you I mean the Federal Government, would put back into the hands the people that fail to acknowledge we exist is really a non-starter. The petition from the folks that do it, although I understand where they're coming from, maybe fail to acknowledge the fact that the lifeways that are attached to the laws that ANILCA had in its spirit, when it was written by Congress, is not to be overlooked and, frankly, should not even be on the table. And that was one of the things that I went into detail about, how the disproportionate treatment of Alaska Natives by the State of Alaska is beyond measure. You know, we've been, there's a long history, and I did cite that. What I'm going to do is submit the written comment.

But looking far as back is the actual purchase of the state in the secession document, you know, it says and I'll quote it, "the uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may, from time to time, adopt and regard to Aboriginal tribes of that of that country." And I would like to put emphasis on that because we are separate governments. We are tribal governments. So, in the view of government-to-government, the idea that you have, not myself, but other presidents, if you could imagine limiting the talking of another president of another country that's there to express the interests of their nation to three minutes, it's just got to be noted.

But as far as that goes, you'll take note, and if you read the entire document, there's no mention of the State of Alaska because it didn't exist. But what did exist was tribes, and they were acknowledged explicitly, verbatim, and I won't repeat it.

My comment continued to go into the Indian Recognition Act, which again, was a result of Assimilation and Removal Acts by the Johnson administration. They continued to move us out and replace our lifeways with assimilation practice and removal practice.

I'm going to get really quick now, I know I'm running out of time and I won't go into that, but it is going to be in my written comment, and I spent quite a bit of time, I think I probably spent three hours, I traveled, you know, a full day. I have a lot of other things that I do that I would, you know, I could have called in, but I thought it would be really important that we be given more time to kind of express some things here.

In terms of just preserving and what we're here for today, preserving the Board's public seats needs to happen. The use of traditional ecological knowledge into the decisions is invaluable, but it cannot be duplicated by someone who doesn't have that information.

Let's see, regard to deference to the State and the Department of Fish and Game, this is absolutely unacceptable. There's no way. As discussed here and as we heard by other people, the state regulations don't uphold ANILCA's rural subsistence priority. They don't get, they just simply don't, they don't acknowledge it as I went into before. And I realize that I've gone over my time, so I'll try to summarize everything.

The Board's special action process is solid and should stay the way that it is. The Regional Advisory Council membership criteria for the region-specific boards represent the people that are there from those communities; again, cannot be duplicated.

And I think that this should be dismissed on its face. Why it wasn't, I don't understand. I'm going to look into the procedures of that to see if, that if it is a tribe, that if a tribal government were to make a petition to eliminate other user groups for subsistence, if it would be viewed in the same light. So I'll submit that. I really appreciate your time.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

Robin La Vine:

Thank, thank you. Aaron. And again, I'm really sorry that we have to limit your testimony today. Everyone has traveled so far and has such important things to say, and you deserve an opportunity to say it. But we have a lot of folks to get through. So again, we're going to try to limit our comments to three minutes. The next person in the room is John Sturgeon.

01;41;38;28

John Sturgeon, Safari Club International:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is John Sturgeon. I'm eighty years old and spent most of my life in Alaska and a very avid hunter and fisherman. So I hear this testimony. I'm kind of wondering if people actually read the proposal. I'd like to say, right off the bat, that I support a rural preference as well. I'm sure SCI does also, as written in ANILCA. They say that the proposed changes are anti-subsistence is simply not correct.

My concern is the Federal Subsistence Board has drifted far beyond its original intent, is ignoring the rule of law, and most importantly, not putting the protection of resources at

the highest priority. Specifically, the protection of wildlife must always come first. I've heard people say today subsistence has to come first. Protection of wildlife has to come first. If there's not wildlife, if there's not fish, you're not going to have subsistence. So, one of the things that we're looking at is to make sure that the protection of wildlife is a very high priority. And it seems there's a lot of confusion.

What we're looking for is Fish and Game. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game does the surveys. They go out and count the number of caribou, the number of moose, and they come up with, what you would call, harvestable surplus. And if not a harvestable surplus, they close the season. If there a shortage of game, subsistence comes first. There's no question about that. We have no objection to that. But the resource has to be managed properly. That's number one.

And my name was mentioned earlier. There never was a *Sturgeon V. Katie John*. In *Sturgeon versus Frost*, I think that we have spent more time and money protecting Katie John than anything. That was a big, big deal. In fact, Native corporations actually funded the lawsuit, which again went to the Supreme Court twice and had two unanimous decisions. And we did protect Katie John. It didn't come up with a sidenote by accident. It is something we tried very hard to do, so Katie John would not be affected, and it wasn't.

I support a priority as intended by Title VIII. I support a rural preference when the science shows there's sufficient harvestable surplus as determined by Fish and Game surveys. Decisions should always be based on science. Again, it's Department of Fish and Game as the one who does the surveys. When something comes up on whether areas should be closed for subsistence only, Fish and Game should have due deference. It does not mean that Fish and Game makes the decision to close or open the season. It means they're given due deference because they are the people that do the surveys. They are the ones, the experts. As far as I know, the Office of Subsistence Management does not go out and do surveys, Fish and Game does. So we're saying is that Fish and Game should be the one that the Federal Subsistence Board gives due deference.

Also seems to be some confusion on how board members are appointed. We are not saying that, we're looking at changing the process. Right now, they're currently appointed by the Federal Government. What we're saying they should be voted on by the local people. That's not what I've been hearing now. Again, I wonder if people want to read the proposal.

Also, federal closures should follow the law. The Federal Subsistence Board can close harvest areas on federal land to protect subsistence and conserve wildlife. But closures should only happen for reasons allowed under ANILCA, not for unrelated policy goals.

Just in closing, I guess, I wish there was more time. I called the Federal Subsistence Board last week and asked how much time you would have, and they said there was no limit. And we had some people come from down south, and other folks have come from the

lower 48 and from southeast Alaska and all over. So, I think that maybe next time, that can be planned a little bit better because this is a very important topic to everybody.

But in closing, Safari Club and myself personally have no problem with a rural preference. We think it's unique to Alaska. We think it's something we should be very proud of, but it just has not followed the law as it should. And we're asking that it follow the law, the way it was originally intended to do. So, thank you for your time.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, thank you, John. Appreciate your comments, and again, apologize if there was a miscommunication on the timeline. And again, I'll stay as long as I need to. I'll post my phone number and email, and I appreciate your patience. Thank you.

Robin La Vine:

Thank you. Next person in the room is Mike Jones.

01;46;56;02

Mike Jones, Organized Village of Kasaan:

Sángaay 'láa. My name is Mike Jones. I am the Tribal President for the Organized Village of Kasaan. I speak for our tribal government as well as my “kun-eet-see,” my ancestors.

I think some of these decisions, you could take some of our history into account. The Haida have a little bit of a different history. Fishing weirs are common practice all over the world for thousands of years. The oldest fishing weir in the entire planet was found off the coast of our island, Haida Gwaii. It's dated back 13,800 years. The oldest located dog remains ever found, in either North or South America, were found in a cave on Haida Gwaii, and they're dating that back 11,100 years. Our people were 20,000 to 30,000 strong, but in 1862, we were genocided down to less than 700 because somebody wanted our resources, the same resources that we are here to fight for today.

As you are hearing a lot of the same things, you're going to hear this again. Imagine telling the President of the United States that he only has three minutes, and he came all this way. He is my equal. I have a reasonable expectation to have the same courtesy after coming all this way.

So, under Title VIII of ANILCA, the program exists to uphold rural subsistence priority for Alaska residents. And this scoping period will shape how the Federal Government evaluates potential changes to the program going forward. For the people of Kasaan, subsistence is more than food. It is our identity, our health, our culture, and the foundation of our well-being. We are not sportsmen. We are not a fraternity of sportsmen. We fish for our families, our grandmothers, our aunties, our cousins. And we do this surrounded by all of our relatives, which are the trees, the salmon, the rivers, and everything else.

This review, in part a response to the Safari Club petition, which proposes eliminating all public and all tribally nominated seats from the Federal Subsistence Board. If adopted, this would remove Indigenous and rural voices entirely, leaving decisions about our food system solely in the hands of federal agencies. The same petition urges federal agencies to defer to the State of Alaska, which doesn't really recognize us as tribes, when crafting subsistence regulations. But the State cannot legally implement a rural subsistence priority, and such differences, would effectively end the protections ANILCA provides. For the OVK, this is a direct threat to our tribe's long-term food security and its cultural survival.

Concerns about the federal review scope: this year's scoping process covers several areas of particular concern, including the Board membership, rural determinations, and the 2024 relocation of the Office of Subsistence Management into the Office of Assistant Secretary for the Policy, Management and Budget. I'll turn the rest of this in.

I'm probably coming up on my time, but I do want to just say, after the 1862 genocide of our people, we went into three generations of boarding schools, which were designed to kill the Indian and save the man. I am a Haida Indian. And generational wealth came out of our bay as well as the rest of Alaska, and we were left with generational trauma. And we are recovering from that. And we are here standing strong and fighting for what is ours. And when I am hunting and fishing with my European American friends, I do not see them as equals. They are and always will be guests on our land. Thank you very much.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Mike.

01;51;10;06

Robin La Vine:

Kara. It is now 4:54. Do you want to take a brief break?

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, why don't we do that? We'll take a brief ten-minute bio break, and we'll get started at 5:05. Thank you.