

Federal Subsistence Management Program
Secretarial Review
Open House/Listening Session

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Gordon Watson Conference Room
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Volume III

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00;00;01;29

Kara Moriarty, DOI Senior Advisor:

Okay, it's 7:22. I know we've had many people be incredibly patient, and so I want to keep going if we can. Again, appreciate, appreciate everyone's patience this evening. And I'm looking at Robyn and Hi. Yeah. Hi, how are you? Good, good. So Robyn, do you want us, help us... I think we're back in the room, correct?

00;00;43;02

Robbin La Vine, Office of Subsistence Management:

Back in the room, we have somebody with the initials, R. A., who wants to speak anonymously. If that person, R. A., wishes to speak publicly, it is your turn, sir. Then that would be Rob Arno? Rod. Rod, yes.

Kara Moriarty:

Hi Rod.

00;01;11;18

Rod Arno, Alaska Outdoor Council:

Hi Kara. Thank you for the opportunity to get a message to the Secretaries on this review that. My name is Rod Arno. I live in Palmer, Alaska. I'm a non-federally qualified subsistence user who doesn't do anything but eat wild game and fish. And I represent the Alaska Outdoor Council, which is a special interest group that our folks have chosen to have hunting and fishing as part of their way of life. And instead of living on the wildlife habitat, they're here in these urban centers, and they're more than willing to follow the regulations more often than not on harvesting on a sustainable level. That AOC wants to thank the Safari Club International for putting a petition together because there are some

inconsistencies in what the Federal Subsistence Board's been doing now. And we also want to thank the Secretaries for allowing this review, and there's nothing on the table. It's just reviewing the petition of SCI.

Of the points in this review that were made for us to publicly speak to, I'd only speak to number four on duplication because more often than not, it's the State, ADF&G's data that's used by the Federal Subsistence Board. And so here we still have the state agency that's gathering this data. Good example of that, and a good example of the conflict that the Federal Subsistence Board causes is when you have 804 analysis. And there, when I speak to and familiar with an GMU 13 on the Nelchina Basin, is that all of that data on subsistence use is coming from ADF&G. And to the point that when OSM went ahead and put it together and publicized what they've got so far, they didn't even have the town of Delta Junction included in the survey as the local community. And that was just because ADF&G figured that there wasn't, they didn't have the funds to do that, and they did more of the Alaskan Native villages in the area.

Another example of the Federal Subsistence Board going off the rails is the Ketchikan Rural Determination. And that was opposed by the area RACs, and now you've got 13,000 residents in the Ketchikan area that that the RACs have asked that an 804 for analysis be done there. And what's that doing is that's dividing the people that live in the same city. So, as you follow down to what 804 says, now you're going to have rural people that live in towns with rural designations, and they're going to have to then score, you know, to be high enough to see who then is qualified. And the Outdoor Council looks at that like the balkanization of Alaska. You know, it's not necessary.

I have gone to the Board of Game for the last 40 years, and I've definitely seen, you know, an awakening, a moving that they and their capacity are getting, you know, better at understanding the importance of a rural priority to the point that they're implementing a rural priority at the Alaska Board of Game. And that priority is where you go pick-up your registration permit, so the registration permits only being available in the villages.

Another example is the community harvest in the Nelchina Basin. So, the State is getting better and better at understanding the importance of subsistence, not only as a food source, but to the culture of folks in rural Alaska. But alls we're saying in the Outdoor Council is that, you know, let's look and see that we can still allow those Alaskans who choose to hunt and fish as part of their way of life, even though they live in an urban area, that that would be better for Alaska's future.

AOC has submitted comments. At this point, AOC supports the four points that were made by ADF&G in their statement of January the 30th. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Rod.

00;06;14;01

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room, Dave Rippetto.

00;06;35;20

Dave Rippetto:

Thanks for having me. It's a pleasure to come and speak, and I think it's really great to see everybody here expressing their views. Just to introduce myself, my name is Dave Rippetto. I'm retired from 32 years in wildlife law enforcement, over 20 of it here in Alaska with the State and eventually retiring as the Assistant Special Agent In Charge with the Fish and Wildlife Service for the whole State of Alaska. I'm also a member of Safari Club International and one of the 100 members of the Boone and Crockett Club, which is the oldest recognized conservation agency in the United States, established in 1887 by Roosevelt and his cohorts.

Just in speaking to subsistence, well, I'll just say I had much longer comments the three minutes won't allow, and I've submitted them in writing. Generally, I support all of the SCI comments as well as those of Deputy Commissioner Mulligan. And I think they are right on line. I do believe that subsistence is important. I've seen it from the good, the bad, and the ugly side throughout the State, from the southern border to the Arctic, from Saint Lawrence Island to the Canadian border.

I think it's really important that we get back to letting science drive decisions. And only when science proves out necessary to, I think only when the science says we have to restrict Americans from public lands, should we, and we've seen a lot of growing, growing decisions by the Federal Subsistence Board restricting US citizens and Alaska residents from our federal public lands. We should also consider that wildlife population health should always be the priority. And regardless of who gets to take the animals or not, that should be their guiding principle.

I just like to reiterate the points of the SCI review. I do think the Federal Subsistence Board should return to its original structure. The RAC appointment process needs to be

formalized and made more clear. I think the Fish and Game needs to, their decision and their science needs to be considered more heavily by Fish and Game.

Also, in a nod to my old profession, I'll say that lack of capacity now in the federal enforcement, both the restructuring of Fish and Wildlife Service and the vacancies we've had recently, the Federal Subsistence Board continues to increase regulations year after year after year, with no increase in capacity. And I think all of you know that regulations or laws without enforcement is just good advice. And what you're seeing is lack of ability to enforce any of the regulations. But that's my time. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

00;09;59;00

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room, Mike Crawford. Did Mike Crawford join online?

In the room:

He was here. I don't know.

00;10;21;09

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room, Shania Murphy.

00;10;32;16

Shania Murphy:

Before I speak, I would like to extend sincere gratitude to the staff who are clearly dedicated to making sure everyone is heard. And I acknowledge that these lands are originally the homeland of the Dena'ina people. My name is Shania Murphy, and the following comments are my own. My Tlingit name is "Sin-kla-aht," which means "storehouse high on a hill." I am Gunakadeit from Klawock; a Tlingit & Haida citizen; a commercial fisherman in the dive fishery, gillnet, and herring fisheries; a subsistence harvester; a welder; as well as the first ever tribal council youth advisor to the Ketchikan Indian Community. I have also put in an application from 2025 in DC for the non-voting youth seat on the Southeast RAC, and to be clear, Ketchikan is rural and not urban.

I am here to advocate for a diverse tribal consultation, an extension of the comment period, and advocate for the youth who will live with the consequences of decisions that will

potentially be made after the comment period closes. This is not just a federal program that has drifted from its original intent. Rural subsistence is essential. It provides real food security, cultural continuity, and practical life lessons that shape our young people for the rest of their lives.

I am a child of two deaf adults, and my family has relied on subsistence to make ends meet. Many times, the only meat my family would be able to afford is the \$10 it took to buy a buzz bomb and fish from the beach for pink salmon. In Ketchikan, it is becoming harder and harder to find many species due to outside fishing and hunting pressures. People with rural subsistence priority should not have to struggle to harvest food off of the land. Subsistence users deserve a real voice in these decisions, and I support keeping voting public seats that require subsistence knowledge and preserving a flexible, community-based rural designation process.

In reference to other comments, I have personally seen Fish and Game use science to run populations within the dive fisheries into the ground. I have surveyed, or what we call “ka-mer-eeen,” over hundreds of hours searching for sea cucumbers, and that is my lived experience. Fish and Game is underfunded and does not have the resources to conduct proper surveys, even of commercial fisheries, to ensure the continuation of the fisheries, which they are paid to manage through taxes on fish sold. You, as in ADF&G, cannot take a small study of an area and use math to extrapolate it into an abundance of the area when that does not represent the true abundance. Fish and Game has managed the geoduck fishery so well that divers of over 30 years are selling their permits and turning to whale watching instead because they see the writing on the wall.

Listening to some of the comments here have made me tear up today, and I would like to pose the question, what kind of ancestor will you be? In closing, the State does not have the constitutional authority to uphold ANILCA, and I stand with the status quo. Gunalcheesh and thank you for your time.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much. And like Thomas, thank you for your application and interest in the RAC.

00;13;41;11

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room, Tanner Amdur-Clark.

00;14;02;01

Tanner Amdur-Clark:

[Indiscernible] Good evening. Many hours in, we are here. My name is Tanner Amdur-Clark. I am a partner at law firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller & Monkman. We represent Indian tribes, tribal hospitals, tribal organizations, many of the tribes that are here. I also had the distinct honor of representing the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission through the last time that Safari Club tried to overturn the ability of the feds to manage, as well as the State to manage, the fisheries on our rivers, as well as the Organized Village of Kake in the case that's been referenced a few times here today, which I'll get to in a second.

You've heard a number of talking points that SCl put out to all of its members, and we've heard it a couple of times. We'll probably hear them more, and you'll get lots of them online. So, I just wanted to go through some of them really very quickly. Because they don't make any sense in this context. The first one is: protect wildlife first. You've heard this a few times. What is it they think that the folks at the Office of Subsistence Management and Fish and Wildlife Service, what do they think do? Like, that is already what the law does. None of the changes that are proposed would change that because that's already what the regulations and the law are supposed to do.

Science over politics. Again, what do they think happens at the Federal Subsistence Board? The Federal Subsistence Board looks at data, and much of that data is coming from the State. Yeah, but it's the Federal Subsistence Board that's taking the data and then making a decision that comes out of it. It's that decision that is being made is not a political decision. That is being made on the science. And often, some of that science is coming through traditional ecological knowledge, but that doesn't make it any less useful, right? So, none of the changes that have been proposed are going to change that. Right?

Restore the Board structure. What does that mean? That means take away the voices of rural and Alaska Native people who, after the last time this review has happened, the decision was made to add those seats because they were needed. So, all that we would do is take away those voices. That doesn't help anything.

And follow the law, right? So, there's been, both in the petition and spoken about today, there's this idea that the Federal Subsistence Board is doing something that's illegal or it's not consistent with ANILCA, and that is just isn't true. And when the Board has done things that the State or Safari Club think are illegal or are not in keeping with ANILCA, there has been lawsuits, and those lawsuits have gone through the federal courts, gone through the district court, gone up to the Ninth Circuit, gone to the U.S. Supreme Court. And every time,

it what has said is that the Federal Subsistence Board followed the law, right? So, none of these changes are bringing the Federal Subsistence Board within the law. It's already within the law. None of that change, doesn't help anything.

And then this last point about ending regulation duplication also doesn't make any sense. There's duplication of regulations because the State of Alaska can't, through its regulations, can't implement the rural subsistence priority. So, we don't want to, if the State doesn't want to have two sets of regulations, there's a fix. It's change the constitution, so that the State can implement the rural subsistence priority. These proposals don't do that. They will not end the duplication of regulations. They'll still need to be a difference in regulations because the law is different between the State and the Federal Government.

What do these changes actually do? One of the other big things that has been mentioned, thank you very much, has been mentioned, is again, going outside of what ANILCA does, the good example or about special emergency actions, right? That's what they did with Kake, with the Federal Subsistence Board with Kake. They said, look Kake, you've asked for one moose and four deer to feed your elders during the middle of a pandemic. And this is what Safari Club is saying is illegal and out, and no. That has already gone up to the Ninth Circuit. It's wrong. We don't need changes to fix what ain't broke. Thank you very much for your time.

00;18;45;22

Kara Moriarty:

And Tanner, just, thank you for your testimony. You mentioned at the beginning that your firm represents several of the tribes.

Tanner Amdur-Clark:

Oh, I should have mentioned I'm here speaking on my own, on my own behalf today.

Kara Moriarty:

Okay. Okay, thank you for that clarification. I was just curious. Thank you. Yeah, thanks.

Tanner Amdur-Clark:

Thank you.

00;19;05;06

Robbin La Vine:

We are going to do one more in the room before we go back to those who are waiting online. Joe Williams, you are next.

00;19;31;27

Joe Williams, Organized Village of Saxman:

This is scary.

Kara Moriarty:

I'm scary? I'm not scary. My children think I'm scary. My husband thinks I'm scary.

Joe Williams:

Well, my name is Joe Williams, and my real name is “Koh-kish-kap.” Now you know why it's Joe Williams. I am the Tribal President for the Organized Village of Saxman, and I've been—my first run at about 22 years. Now, I've been on my fifth year, my second time running.

You've all heard all that legal jargon that goes on with subsistence. How subsistence is a way of life, and this is what a way of life means to me. Please know at age seven, I dug clams from my grandmother and my grandfather, and I gave them what they needed to eat. Then I went to the creek and caught some salmon. Did the same thing. My grandmother asked for more, so she can smoke it. So I did. My dad used his commercial fishing boat cut, well in excess of 2,000 salmon, and left it at the beach of the community of Saxman, and they picked it up, took it home, processed it by some smoking, others by freezing, and others by jarring.

We had a good, great hunter in Saxman. We called him John Wayne because he was a good shooter. He fed the community of Saxman with deer. He stood probably 5'3". But I still remember seeing him coming up our boardwalk, coming to our house. Initially, I didn't know what it was because I was scared. I was just a little boy. But what he gave us was a deer. All he wanted was a cup of coffee. And so, please know none of these things went to waste, okay?

And my dad would go hooligan fishing during the month of March. It sounds real easy, but I did that for about five years with my dad, and it's not an easy feat. We filled my father's boat with hooligans. We went and fed the community of Ketchikan, went and fed the community of Saxman, and what was left over we made hooligan oil. You don't know what that is? Then, I would make five gallons. I had 218 cans of five gallon cans of hooligan oil. Sold for \$25 a can. Today, that same hooligan oil for one quart, \$75. None of our way of life went to waste.

Please know that the way of life includes all our salmon and hooligans and cockles and clams and sea cucumbers and all alike, and all that was part of us. That was it. And now, now we're being limited. We're being limited to what we can take.

Here is a way of life for those that come into the community of Alaska that do not live here in Alaska. And that is, one day, taking my daughter out to Ketchikan Airport. And the place was just jam packed with outside, we call them outside fishermen, that don't live in Alaska. This one man was boasting. This is the best season, the best trip I've ever had. He had 11 boxes of King salmon, each box weighing 50 pounds, five days fishing. I have a friend of mine that came to Ketchikan, that lived in Ketchikan. He caught two salmon one day, two salmon more than he needed. They took all the salmon that he caught and said, next time we're taking your gear and your boat.

I agree with President Cook. Three minutes is too short. It's an insult. I'm a tribal president. I have the same authority as the president of the United States. And this is how you're being, how I'm being treated as a tribal person, a tribal president. My request to you is to hold a meeting in Saxman. We'll invite the community of Ketchikan. Hold the meeting so that they can hear, so you can hear what is on their mind. With that, I want to say in closing and please know, ladies and gentlemen, don't get too excited over the three minutes. When a Tlingit says in closing does not mean he's ready to quit.

Kara Moriarty:

Duly noted. Thank you, sir.

Joe Williams:

When I say this is a way of life, this is what we do. [Mr. Williams placed jars of salmon on the tables in front of Kara Moriarty, Crystal Leonetti, Robin La Vine, and Katerina Wessels.]

00;25;20;24

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Joe Williams:

So as you're having this, remember: this is the way of life. I've never met you and hope to come to know you. But this is what we do. Gunalcheesh.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, sir, very much.

00;25;56;02

Robbin La Vine:

We're now going online. Next in line is Sarah Dybdahl. Thank you.

00;26;14;05 - 00;26;40;27

Sarah Dybdahl, Sealaska Corporation:

“So-la-kah kay-la-ha.” My name is Sarah Dybdahl. I'm the President of the Sealaska Corporation for Southeast Alaska ANCSA regional corporation representing more than 26,000 shareholders. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the program review for subsistence management on federal public lands in Alaska.

For our people, subsistence is not an activity. It is a living thread to our ancestors. When we hunt, fish, gather, preserve, and teach, we are not only feeding our families, we are practicing our identity. We are carrying forward our laws, our values, our languages, and our responsibilities. This is a complete cultural system, and the word “subsistence” does not fully describe what it means to us. Sealaska strongly supports the Federal Subsistence Management Program and the rural priority in ANILCA. While the rural priority is not a Native preference it is, it remains the only meaningful protection our communities have today on federal lands. Any effort to weaken federal responsibility or defer to State systems, systems that cannot legally implement a rural priority, is deeply concerning.

We support keeping the Office of Subsistence Management under the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. This alignment ensures independence, removes conflicts of interest, and keeps accountability where it belongs.

We also urge that the Regional Advisory Councils remain centered on rural subsistence users. This is a subsistence program. Commercial and recreational interests should not drive decision making. Representation of subsistence users should increase, not decrease.

Relatedly, the Federal Subsistence Board must preserve and strengthen Alaska Native and subsistence users' representation. The three tribally nominated seats are essential, and the Board should move forward toward a clear majority of members who have lived experience and knowledge of subsistence practices.

Sealaska opposes efforts to give additional deference to state regulations, including proposals advanced by advocacy groups seeking alignment that would undermine Title VIII. Federal trust responsibility must remain the foundation of this program.

We further ask the Department to maintain the current special action authorities. These tools are essential for communities. Similar to the stories that have been shared regarding Kake during COVID, it provides the flexibility and responsiveness to save lives.

Finally, the rural determination process must remain intact. A rural priority alone is not enough to protect our way of life, but is the only protection we have today. We ask that you maintain it, strengthen it, and ensure that those who live this way of life continue to guide this program.

And I just want to acknowledge our elders are in the room who have been sitting there for hours. Our esteemed elder, Joe Williams, you know, who has been there front and center. And just want to thank you, staff who are listening to these words. For so many, this isn't a program. This is a way of life. And it's what is keeping our villages intact. Gunalcheesh haw'aa "cha-lit-sen."

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Sarah.

00;29;44;01

Robbin La Vine:

Next online, Catherine Bolton.

00;29;51;20

Catherine Bolton:

Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

Robbin La Vine:

Yes we can.

Kara Moriarty:

Oh, yes. Sorry, Catherine. Yes, we can hear you.

00;30;02;02

Catherine Bolton:

Good evening, I am Wooshkeetaan “yadi” [spoke in Tlingit language]. I am T'akdeintaan “fla-han” Hit. My Tlingit name is “Shoo-woo.” I live in Hoonah. I was born and raised in southeast Alaska. And my way of life means I chose and I saw other ways of life. I lived in Southeast Alaska my whole life, traveled all over the United States and a few other countries. I don't claim to be an expert on any of those other countries or other states. When I traveled from Metlakatla to the Interior, I never took my rifle or my fishing gear with me. I understood that life is much harder in these rural areas. Hoonah is rural. It's on an island, and we can be cut off by the weather, ferries, planes don't fly, budget cuts, so on and so on.

I grew up with the understanding that if we did have extra, we would share. So, my curiosity is these people who want access to public lands and want to intrude on who we are as a people, why do they need more if they can fly all over the state to hunt? Why, what are they sharing with the people, with the communities that would want us to have them there? I'm just curious about that thinking process that they're entitled to more when, clearly, they can afford more than most of the villages can.

I've always been asked this question because I live in a small community, and I'm the subject of many studies and surveys, constantly barraged by all sides. I am a tribal member. I live in Hoonah. I harvest traditional harvest, otherwise known as subsistence. I'm always asked, what is my favorite thing to harvest? And I finally figure out the answer: the biosphere - all of it. All of it's good. They are all intertwined, so when one goes away or is weakened, it affects the entire web. Just one example is the King Salmon. I watched as the King Salmon has decreased constantly, continuously, consistently under the management of State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. It hasn't gotten better. It's gotten tougher.

I consider a way of life from birth, not something I chose as an adult and say I like now. I don't call that a way of life. I call that a life choice. A way of life is: this is where we're from. There's nowhere else to back up to. We can't fly out because we choose to live somewhere else right away. It would be so foreign to live in a desert. I grew up learning, watching in my mother's arms. Even before I was born, she was fishing, and then my grandmothers and aunties taught me, and I had fun teaching my nieces and nephews. And that was a powerful connection. It wasn't all about me and selfishness and greed. It was about sharing and teaching and learning. So, gunalchéesh for your time. Thank you for your time. Gunalcheesh. Thank you to the elders who spoke.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

00;34;28;16

Robbin La Vine:

We have someone who's signed up quite a while ago. We called out someone that is listed as an unknown user. However, this may be a person that is using a landline. If you are using a landline and pressed *5 to raise your hand and you wish to speak, please press *6, unmute yourself, and introduce yourself. Thank you. And that would be somebody calling in on a landline, not through a cell. If you're calling in on a landline and you pressed *5. Oh, I think we have you. Please, um, is this person unmuted? Nope. Please press *6. Try again. Please press *6. Oh, say hello.

00;35;54;14

David Walker:

Yeah, hello.

Robbin La Vine:

We got you.

00;36;01;10

David Walker:

Hi, David Walker here. I live in Holy Cross, Alaska. You could hear me?

Kara Moriarty:

I sure can, David.

David Walker:

Okay, I've been listening all evening actually. And after listening to what is being proposed, and I got a little more educated on what's going on. But, you know, my family, I grew up in a pretty big family. We were raised on subsistence food, and we even had a garden. Everything we had on our plate was either what we call it or we grew. And do me, that's not a subsidy. That's not a subsistence. That's a way of life. That's the way we lived. That's the way my dad and his family lived, and all the way back to our ancestors.

And over the years as it evolved, our way of life had been, it's been, you know, there was a dominant force trying to erode our way of life. And so, I could understand how I could feel and testimony that, you know, people remember that. And I really thank the Federal Subsistence Board following the law. I don't know why we have to have the FBI around, but, you know.

We're in a crisis on the Yukon now. We never fish for six years now, going on six years, and we're on a seven-year moratorium for King salmon. But even Chum salmon crashed, and I don't know where's the science on that? But I really think it's the trawlers contributing to our problem. We couldn't fish one King salmon, and they're allowed in their bycatch to kill thousands yet, so I don't know where's the balance. Billions of dollars worth to support people.

There's what some call management, you know, that I really see in my area with the moose. The State has, you know, we have a federal hunt for the locals here that runs a little longer than the regular state season. And the State honored that. They put that under on our ticket, on our permit. So, I think more education and co-management among the State and Federal and subsistence, or however you want to say, subsistence users, but it's a way of life to people that live off, should have room at the table, too.

So, thank you for putting this together, and I hope positive outcomes come up for, you know, everybody. So, thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, David.

Robbin La Vine:

We're going to go back to folks in the room. The next person in line is Sam Schimmel.

00;40;48;11

Sam Schimmel, Tikahtnu Inter-Tribal Fish Commission:

Thank you. My name is Sam Schimmel, and I'm the co-chair of the Tikahtnu Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. We are an intertribal management agency formed by the Chickaloon, Eklutna, Kenaitze, Knik, Ninilchik, Salmatof, Seldovia Villages and Tribes. We represent over 12,000 Alaskans. Our cultures and our traditions span across three cultural groups. We're Dena'ina, we're Ahtna, and we're Sugpiaq. Our people have been in Tikahtnu for over 15,000 years.

We come with a simple message. Now, we have a much longer comment that we're going to submit, but we come with a simple message. Kara, you said earlier, you know, these are not final actions. These are just ideas. They're bad ideas. They're not ideas that are supported by the people who are going to be most affected by them. People like our 15,000 tribal members.

When it comes to discussions around the makeup of the Board, our message is simple. Full freezers require a full Board. The removal of the public participants on the Federal Board of Subsistence will mean that the much needed and critical input of actual users—who are actually in the places that are harvesting the fish and game that they're managing—are present. By removing them, that voice will be gone and you'll be further reliant upon what has already been discussed as hamstrung federal agencies or, you know, groups that don't have the resources to be able to conduct the science or monitoring that is needed to have accurate or proper management.

So, our tribes come with a simple message on this. We ask for the addition of three tribal seats. If there's going to be public scoping, we want to see three additional tribal seats added as members of the public. And throughout this, you know, this isn't a courtroom. This will probably end in a courtroom, but this isn't a courtroom. You know, people can believe what they like about laws. It's for a judge to decide and for us to have jurors in front of you, I guess.

But when it comes to the substance of this proposal, the proposal itself is dedicated to serving what may be just 1,300 people in Alaska. Our tribal membership and the Alaskans that we represent is easily ten times that. We don't want this. Our tribes don't want to see this.

We want the scoping period extended from 60 to 90 days. We want OSM left where it is. We want the RACs to continue to be appointed in the way that they are. RACs are one of the most important ways that the Board gets its management decisions and gets information from the people who actually know what's going on. You can ask any scientist, any statistician, or any of these people who are tasked with monitoring our resources that we know and have relied on since time immemorial. They don't see trends until they're too late. There's a delay of years before data will support realities.

Moreover, the deferral and consultation with the State and deference to the State is flatly illegal under the McDonnell decision. What's being asked of you is to force the State of Alaska to violate its own constitution.

And I know, I'm in closing here. You know, we heard from the Safari Club, started in 1974. That's 52 years ago. They talk about going back to the way that things were. We would like to see that as well—where we're able to manage the resources that we have stewarded forever. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Sam.

00;45;06;14

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room is Elizabeth Harrington. Elizabeth Harrington. Next in the room is Minnie McCarty. Minnie McCarty. Oh, goodness. I'm so sorry, folks. I know that so many of you have been waiting for so long, and some people couldn't stay. Elizabeth Harrington or Minnie McCarty. Nope? Are you online? Nope. Next in the room, Ken Jones.

00;46;24;21

Kenneth Jones:

Thank you. My name is Kenneth Jones. I'm a third generation, born and raised Alaskan and federally qualified subsistence user, and the owner of a small business that employs more than 15 year-round and seasonal workers. Every one of those jobs support a local family in my rural community of Cordova, Alaska. I'm here today because this Department's review of the Federal Subsistence Board is not theoretical to me. It is not about outside interests. It's personal and it's urgent.

Over the last several years, federal land closures have increasingly been used in ways that go far beyond conservation or genuine subsistence need. These closures are now eminently threatening to shut down my lawful business and put my rural local employees out of work, despite the fact that no biological conservation problem exists with deer in Unit 6. That should concern everyone in this room. When a federal closure can eliminate a longstanding, locally owned, legal business with no demonstrated conservation benefit. That is not subsistence protection. That is process failure coupled with fraud.

What makes this review so important is that these closures are often weaponized, as seen in Wildlife Proposal 26-15 submitted by the Native Village of Eyak. They are presented as biological necessities, but when you look at the actual data, the justification simply just isn't there. Instead of addressing wildlife conservation through proven tools, season timing, bag limits or antlerless restrictions, closures are increasingly used to exclude specific users or operations. That is not what ANILCA intended. Title VIII was meant to protect wildlife first and provide a subsistence priority only when necessary. It was never meant to be used as a blunt instrument to settle local disputes, target individual operators, or shut down much needed economic activity in rural communities in my case.

The consequences are real. If these closures move forward, I don't just lose a business. My captains, deckhands, guides, mechanics, fuel suppliers, grocery stores, and other local businesses all feel the impact. This is how we survive. This is how we feed our kids as born and raised Alaskans. These are not outside interests. These are local rural Alaskans, and in my case, Cordovans.

What makes this especially troubling is that the science does not support these closures. In Prince William Sound, deer populations rise and fall primarily due to winter severity, not harvest levels. Severe winters removed far more animals than hunting ever could. Yet closures are proposed even when an agency analysis confirms that there is no conservation concern. This is exactly why the Safari Club International Alaska Chapter's proposal for reform is so important and why I support it. SCI is not arguing against the subsistence. They are calling for a return to science-based management, accountability and restraint. They are asking that closures only occur when there is a documented biological or subsistence necessity, not when it is politically convenient.

One of the most important reforms SCI proposes is restoring the FSB to its original structure, made up of federal land management agencies with direct scientific and legal responsibility. That structure worked. It provided balance, accountability, and consistency. The current system invites mission creep and erodes public trust.

This review is an opportunity to correct course. We can protect subsistence users, and wildlife, and rural economies, but only if decisions are grounded in science, law, and fairness. Federal authority must be exercised carefully because when it is misused, it doesn't just change regulation, it destroys livelihoods. I respectfully ask the Department of the Interior to take this review seriously, to recognize the real-world impacts of these closures, and to adopt reforms that ensure the FSB operates as it was intended: science driven, accountable, and focused on conservation first. Thank you for listening, and thank you for taking the time to review this process.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Ken.

00;50;22;13

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room, Nicole Schmitt. Nicole Schmitt. And if any of you, who signed up in the room, are online and switched to online, I may call on you anyway. Nicole, are you listening online? Next in the room, Joe Nelson.

00;51;07;02

Joe Nelson, Alaska Federation of Natives:

Miss Moriarty, Miss Leonetti, good to see you. Thank you for staying beyond the published time. Joe Nelson, I arrived in Alaska in 1970 via my mother at the Mount Edgecumbe Hospital. And she arrived for generations and generations forever, through many generations of mothers that are all Teikweidi Brown Bears from Yakutat. And I'm a child of the Kwáashk'ikwáan from Yakutat. I'm here representing myself. I wear many hats. If there's one that I will put on for a moment, it is as co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives. I'm a hunter. I'm a fisher. And we've had many hours tonight of testimony, which I really welcome and appreciate. I did enjoy hearing the Safari Club mention more than once that they support the rural preference. That's all on the record, and it would be great to move forward in a way where we can actually move, at some point, to resolve the real issue at hand.

It's already, I can't get the testimony out any better than a lot of the folks that have. So, I'm going to pivot a little bit and speak to all the tribal members here. It's been a long night, but you've got a room full of Tlingits still because we're used to having long nights. And we've heard from about a half a dozen or a couple dozen presidents and tribal leaders. This is just the beginning. There's 200 more tribes that have not testified tonight. So, to all those tribal leaders, all those tribal presidents, I ask them to issue their own executive orders because we do have an executive order that's driving this from the most powerful man in the world. And we've got secretary orders, basically directing, opening up a bunch of our lands. And there's a fundamental conflict that we know that what they're asking for, the State can never provide because every state employee swears to uphold the State Constitution and that stands in conflict with ANILCA. So, there's a lot of wordsmithing and things happening here.

But the reality is we're only here because, the Federal Subsistence Board only exists because the first people are still here, and we're not on the left, we're not on the right. We're all going to be right here for another 10,000 years. And we're happy to be on this microphone for 3 minutes at a time if it means protecting our way of life because that's what the land claim was all about. What good is the land if you're not able to use it the way we have. So, we do respect and appreciate the civil dialogue with the sportsmen. But we also ask and request that we do acknowledge the most powerful science in our local villages, and that's the science that's generated of thousands and thousands and thousands of years of our own people. Nobody knows our lands and waters better than the

people that have been there for thousands and thousands of years. That's the magical science that these tribes and the tribal leaders hold.

So, we're looking forward to more discussion on how we can improve this process to get to a unified management system within our lifetimes. Gunalcheesh for going into overtime, or fine going into double overtime, triple overtime. I know this Safari Club is comfortable in the court system. We're comfortable there, too. So, we really are looking forward to a unified Alaska Native way of life because we're all in it together. And our Native people aren't going anywhere. So, gunalchéesh for putting in the overtime tonight.

00;54;59;03

Kara Moriarty:

Well, I may not be Tlingit, but I can stick around for a long time, so thank you, Joe. I appreciate your comments. And I'm not sure if you were here when I mentioned earlier that the Secretary did enjoy the meeting that he had here in June and comments on it frequently. So, I just wanted to let you know.

00;55;21;29

Robbin La Vine:

The next person in the room is Heather Bauscher. And while she is coming up, I just want everyone in the room, those of you listening online, if the evening's dragging on, there are so many other ways for you to provide comments. We do want to hear from you. If you have to leave now and you can pop on a little bit later and we're still here, you should have another opportunity to speak. Heather, go ahead.

Heather Bauscher:

Thank you. Thank you, Miss Moriarty. Miss Leonetti. That shade of lipstick is fabulous. I just had to tell you, you look great.

Kara Moriarty:

On the record even, that's nice.

Heather Bauscher:

[Laugh] Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Heather Bauscher. I will be speaking on behalf of myself. I am a non-indigenous rural resident who also relies on the Federal Subsistence Board program, and I live in Petersburg, Alaska. I'm a former resident of Sitka, and I'm a person who has navigated these regulatory spaces as a member of the

public for the past ten years or so, working across the fisheries and wildlife management policy spaces and trying to train others in being effective in participating as well.

I've served in the advisory committees on the state process, participated in Regional Advisory Council meetings, and participated in the Federal Fisheries North Pacific Council process, as well as the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I think we are super lucky in Alaska, to have all these different processes that we are able to work through to influence how our fish and wildlife resources are managed. And I would say that is true about the state process, too. We have multiple processes of representative government in the State, which are all rooted in the democratic process.

And I think going to Subsistence Board meetings really made me appreciate the interagency cooperation that happens there. And I think that, you know, there is dual management. The State has a role. Everybody's trying to cooperate together, and that could work better, but... I'm sorry, getting nervous. The reason we ended up with the Federal Subsistence Board though is because the State lost the ability to manage subsistence priority because of the McDowell decision. And then the Board was created because of that, because the State Constitution says that it can't uphold the rural priority. The State cannot uphold the rural priority for subsistence users as it's counter to the State Constitution.

The Federal Subsistence Board was originally created as a temporary solution because we still had that piece of federal legislation called ANILCA. That still includes a promise of rural priority use of resources, which is especially important during times of scarcity. And when ANILCA was passed, there was acknowledgment that life in Alaska is like nowhere else in the country. And access to resources is critical for survival as well as continuation of culture, and that indigenous and non-indigenous rural people together both took up aspects of this way of life and rely on this access to resources. Look at the conversations we're having in all of these spaces right now. It's brought up at the North Pacific Council meeting is also meeting presently. And you think about the conversations in that space and the Board of Fish to even the conversations we're having right now. Maybe we are no longer operating at a time of the abundance that we once had. Access to resources for subsistence uses are more critical than ever before, and this priority of use for rural residents is more critical than ever before.

There's been plenty of testimony already today that illustrate the realities of what it is to live life in rural Alaska and feed a family and make ends meet. As I listen to some of the conversations regarding the petition, I feel as though perhaps there's a fundamental

misunderstanding of what subsistence even means. Many folks have trouble with that word because it does not actually capture what it means to live this way of life. It's such a deep relationship to land and water. The dictionary definition describes the meaning as something akin to barely the amount needed for existence, which has connotations of welfare and does not describe the richness and abundance of living life this way. What I hear in this room is a fundamental misunderstanding that this category of use is just another user group, without realizing what continuation of these practices actually mean for families, communities, continuation of culture, and rural ways of life for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

I'll just get close, wrapping up. My point was between the different processes that I feel as though sometimes the subsistence conversation should not be pulled into and reduced to the level of the other allocative arguments and battles that occur in the other spaces that are more focused on economic interests. And there was a reason that there isn't a seat for economic interest on the Federal Subsistence Board because that's not what the Federal Subsistence Board is about.

So, I just mostly wanted to say that I'm really concerned with the potential loss of the six public seats. And I don't see how that makes things less political to just leave it in the hands of the agency representatives. We need people that are not in DC, that are on the ground, that have lived experience beyond just the book knowledge to serve in these roles. And thank you for letting me go over. I apologize. And thank you for this opportunity to speak for you, before you, sorry. Please keep the system intact. Maintain roles of the public voices, and thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah. Thank you, Heather, and thanks for the work you're doing with our youth and the curriculum you're putting together at UAS and all of that. So, just want to say thank you.

Heather Bauscher:

Thank you so much for saying all that. And thank you so much for staying here and listening to everybody tonight. I really appreciate it.

Kara Moriarty:

Well, I'm just very appreciative of all the staff especially, so thank you, Robin.

Robbin La Vine:

Thank you, Heather. And I know we're losing people bit by bit, as they speak and provide their comments, and if you do have to go before we end. Thank you so much. Thank you so much for all of you who are staying with us to hear everybody. So, before I go back online, the last person, well not the last person, but the next person in the room is Diloola Erickson.

01;01;43;23

Diloola Erickson:

Good afternoon, I'm Diloola Erickson. "Suh-ooza Gath doh hoot-son-sed-an-sled Fairbanks les-to." My name's Diloola or Diloola Ann. I come from Gath doh or Kaltag, out on the Yukon River, and I live up in Fairbanks, so I'm not a federally qualified subsistence user, but a lot of my family is, and I'm thankful that I get to go out and I get to subsist with them when I can. I'm testifying on behalf of myself today. And I just want to say thank you for the opportunity, and thank you for sticking it out and going overtime with us. I was raised in Southeast, so I know how to stick out a long meeting, too.

So, I'm not going to say a whole lot. I'll submit written comments, but I just want to emphasize the importance of keeping the Federal Subsistence Board the way it is. And, emphasize also what other folks have said. Like I said, I'm from the Yukon Gath doh. It means the place of the King salmon. The Yukon is in crisis right now, and that is entirely because of the State's management of our resource. We had a meeting in November. The AYK Board of Fish meeting and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, their Subsistence Division, gave a report in which they stated that the subsistence needs of the people on the Yukon are not being met, and there is nothing to fill the gap.

And so, it's urgent now more than ever, especially when we're depending on other resources that are already becoming more scarce. If you also look at the harvest statistics for moose out in our region. The success rate for local hunters, people who live in our village, is 30%. Some of our villages that have road contact, their success rate for local hunters is as low as 3%. And so, when we have no fish and it's hard for us to get moose, it's a hard time. So, I just want to emphasize the importance of the Federal Subsistence Board and the ability for them to make the actions necessary for our subsistence users. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much.

01;03;45;08

Robbin La Vine:

Next on line is Shane Brown. Shane Brown, if you're still online, you're still listening? Oh, there you go.

Shane Brown:

Yes, hello? Okay, are we visibly available here? Hello.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, I can hear and see you. Thank you very much and are you wearing a Seahawks hat? Is that what you're wearing? Thata boy. Alright, go Hawks!

Shane Brown:

Oh, well, you know. Go Hawks! Check these out. [holds up shoes] Alright, these are my son. He's first born to me. These moccasins are made of seal, and it's something that has kept his feet warm since the beginning of birth. And now he's in size 6 Xtratuf. The emphasis of this is what I'd like to share with you all pertaining to the delicate, sensitive matter which brings us all here right now. So, I appreciate you and everyone for your time and mine. For most that can't right now, and for those that are able to help ease the tension of the pressure we all feel for having to speak up without having to "grrrr." And if there's any "grrrr" going on, it's for the Seahawks. So, I'm just going to synthesize that a little bit. But thanks for your consideration and the opportunity to provide comments during the review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Generationally born, raised in Yakutat, Alaska 99689, Yaakwdaat, Tlingit Aaní, my ancestors' Kwáashk'l Kwáan Nu Hit homelands since time immemorial. We've been, hereditarily, stewards protecting these lands the whole time. Yaakwdaat, meaning where the canoes rest. Subsistence is important to me. The seal [connection breaking up] since harvesting of seal [connection breaking up] Yakutat Tlingit with a unique and specific bow and stern to pass and glide over icebergs to harvest seal with superb accuracy to ensure retrieval of harvested seal to place in a hull of canoes. [connection breaking up] not only to be recognized as coastal people... You know, this takes a lot of energy, so bear with me. ...As people on glaciers historically for tens of thousands of years. The new year of 2026, New Year's Day, a man of Yakutat, Alaska 99689, also born and raised, local Native [connection breaking up] commercial fishermen harvested many seal, not only for its fur, though to share and distribute literally everything. Those of knowledge will make cooked, baked, boiled, fried, smoked, jarred, meat, seal oil, technically completely utilizing its whole being for the best of what defines good to those in the community, my three-year-old son, sharing his boots and his moccasins. So, my father was blessed to be shared what I

was able to put in three gallon Ziplock bags. That fed us a hot plate for meals that we cherished each and every bite for weeks through the extreme winter.

But you know, barge service was late also with Alaska Airlines cargo into Yakutat, Alaska. That truly made it challenging to provide food for the community, let alone the holiday season [connection breaking up] with no excitement for the New Years dinner for many local families that live within the community year-round, all four seasons. The limited moose, deer, and other wild game has laws and seasonal restrictions all must comply to, let alone the seasonal herring that span eggs, tern, seagull eggs, hooligan, prawns, crabs, seaweed, kelp forest, sea otters, shellfish, and oysters, clams, gumboots, cockles and the flow of salmon to the rivers and extreme conditions to the open fresh glacier water that meet the Pacific ocean salt. Fishing for halibut, the limited... Yes?

Robbin La Vine:

Shane? You've exceeded your time limit. If you could just provide some final words. Thank you.

Shane Brown:

Gunalcheesh, "eagle eye kwaan." The best to each and every one of us. Our food is everything to us since time memorial and for many, many more years and generations to come. Again, thank you for your time.

Kara Moriarty:

And thank you, Shane, for your very personal testimony and for sharing your children's boots as well. I appreciate that. Thanks.

Shane Brown:

One step at a time.

01;09;03;12

Robbin La Vine:

Next online, Kayleen Ward-Peter.

01;09;13;13

Kayleen Ward-Peter:

Hello, everyone. Can you hear me?

Kara Moriarty:

We sure can, Kayleen.

Kayleen Ward-Peter:

Hi, everyone. I hope all of you are having a good night, and I will be as quick as possible. My name is Kayleen Ward-Peter. I'm a tribal member of the Native Village Venetie Tribal Government. I am a young leader in my community. I have been listening in on this for the last few hours.

I just want to emphasize that all the work before these meetings and before the decisions that are being introduced, all the work before that is important. All the Native work to include seats, public seats, tribal seats on the Board are important. You change those ideas and take away those seats is not a good idea.

I feel like this is rushed. Tribal nations across Alaska haven't been notified correctly as there is not that many people on this. And I know that the comment section is open longer for written comments, but I believe that people should have been notified better for something as serious as this, even though it's just considerations right now.

Rural subsistence priority is important to all of our way of lives across Alaska, in every single region. These tribal seats should not be removed. I want to say I am against the proposed claims to change those things.

Our communities depend on the meat we get from subsistence hunting. Our neighbors, our family members in the villages and the cities depend on each other to subsistence hunt and to, sorry, and to provide for our nations. Food insecurity would happen all across rural Alaska and it would be devastating. Our nations are sovereign tribal governments and sovereign entities, and our voices matter. Our animals matter, from the biggest to the smallest, and we are their voices. I want to emphasize that that across Alaska, we are the voices for the animals that we help manage and steward on these lands for, and we are doing this and speaking out because this is for our future generations of peoples and animals.

I personally have been on five conferences today. There is talk of attacking public lands, attacking sacred places in our tribal communities, as the Gwich'in Nation is currently advocating on behalf of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our voices matter in these decision-making public comments. And I just want to say again that I am against the proposed changes to these, to the Board and for taking away the seats.

I also want to emphasize that our future generations depend on the ability to understand and realize that our subsistence rights are and should be at the front lines instead of pushed back and easily changed through a few meetings and to acknowledge all the work done before us. Thank you.

01;13;05;21

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Kayleen.

01;13;10;14

Robbin La Vine:

Next online before we go back to folks in the room, Jim Simon. Jim, if you can press *6 to unmute yourself.

01;13;44;06

Jim Simon:

Hello, can you hear me?

Robbin La Vine:

Yes.

Jim Simon:

Oh, great. Sorry about that. For some reason, my camera is not working now. But thank you very much for this opportunity. And forgive my informality, but while we are a large geographic state, we're a small human population. And so, Kara, it's good to see you again. It was a pleasure to spend time with you at Karen Linnell's family's fish camp this past summer. Crystal, Robin, Liz Williams, you know, Hannah, Amy Craver, all the other federal staff, Brent, Tom, Brian, etc. You have such a great team here at the Office of Subsistence Management. You should both be so proud, and thank you for your dedication, all of you, and your federal service.

My name is Jim Simon. I'm speaking just on my own behalf. My relationship from my place near the Tonsina River in the traditional homelands of the Ahtna-Kohtaene, the Ahtna people. I grew up in the Nelchina Basin. My relationship with the resources, that the Ahtna people have sustainably stewarded it for more than to 12,000 years, began over 55 years ago.

Because of the State's subsistence management systems, you know, problems, I never was able to get a Tier II hunt as a young man. And so, I became an anthropologist and subsistence advocate for, and so began working with and have been working with, Alaska Native intertribal organizations, either with them or for them, for the past 35 years. And 15 or 14 of those years was at the Department of Fish and Game, running the northern two-thirds of the State's Subsistence Division where I've sat at the seat at the Federal Subsistence Board for the State Liaison, in my capacities at the Department of Fish and Game.

There have been times when the State and the Federal program worked well together. And there were also issues, you know, too much deference to the State in the past, such that the Office of Subsistence Management and the Federal land managers were not fulfilling their obligations to uphold Title VIII of ANILCA. And I think that I've been around long enough that I've seen the difference in the Federal Subsistence Board. First, the two public members were added way back when. Then, you know, before that you had five agency staff who rotated in and out from other parts of the nation with no knowledge of ANILCA whatsoever, knew nothing about what it was to live in rural Alaska. When we got those first two public members through a programmatic review, we started to get actual real world information. And now with additional public members being added through tribal nominations and appointments by the Secretary, just as everyone else on the Board is placed, we actually have knowledge, real world experience helping to make these decisions.

I'm very disturbed at some of the information that has been shared about the lack of science and not listening to the State. I know that that is not true, that I've worked in this system. And much of the budget for the Subsistence Division, when I ran the Northern Regional Office, was actually money from the Office of Subsistence Management to conduct these studies, etc. So, this whole misrepresentation of reality, even in the State's filings to the U.S. Supreme Court, are incorrect with—and you can use the Department's own data to demonstrate how incorrect they were, you know, that the tribal co-stewardship with the Federal Government of the Kuskokwim River salmon run, you know, is resulting in hardships upriver. Those per capita harvest rates are no different under that co-demonstration project than under full state management. I know; my staff collected those data.

So, you know, I think it's important that we understand that this Safari Club International petition is ill informed by people who do not participate in the process. I really appreciate the virtual opportunity because it seems entirely inappropriate to be holding the only open

house in a city filled with hundreds of thousands of non-federally qualified users and requiring all of these tribal representatives to expend money that could go better elsewhere. And if the State would stop wasting so much money on losing lawsuits and put that into actually enumerating wildlife and fisheries populations, we may not have the crisis and the needs for section 804 to be applied to provide a meaningful federal priority. The... Yes?

01;19;23;28

Robbin La Vine:

Jim? We have a time limit, and you've exceeded yours. If you want to have a, just take a few seconds to wrap up. Thank you.

Jim Simon:

Yes, thank you very much for your endurance, Kara. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Well, thank you. Thank you very much, Jim. It was a pleasure meeting you at Karen's camp. It was, it was an honor.

01;19;54;25

Robbin La Vine:

Thank you, everyone. Online, we've got I think about four folks left online. I think we have four remaining in the room. We're getting close. Thank you all for being so patient. The next person in the room is Kelsi Ivanoff. Kelsi Ivanoff. And, Kelsi, if you are online and listening, press *6 to unmute yourself.

01;20;30;28

Kelsi Ivanoff, Native People's Action:

I'm online now. Can you, you guys can hear me? Cool.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, we can. We can hear you. I'm sure you had to maybe get home if you have that cute little daughter with you in town. So yeah, I appreciate it. It was a pleasure meeting you in Nome and thanks for sticking it out. And I understand mom duty. So, thanks for, thanks for biting, for participating tonight, Kelsey.

Kelsi Ivanoff:

Yeah, thank you. And thank you for the opportunity to speak and just want to give you guys all a shout out at how, I mean, sitting through this has to be—if it's hard for us, I can't imagine what it's like for you. And ever since my involvement with the Seward Peninsula RAC, the whole, all your guys' staff has just been awesome to work with. And just want to commend you guys on that. For the record, my name is Kelsi Ivanoff. My Inupiaq name is Kasarṅnaaluk and Yupik name is Abuzunaq. I'm Inupiaq, Yupik, and Koyukon Athabascan. I have roots in Unalakleet, Kotzebue, Saint Michael, and Nulato. And I was raised in Unalakleet where I currently live and I'm raising my daughter, and it's a community on the Norton Sound and on the Unalakleet River.

I'm here speaking on behalf of Native People's Action. I am their Communications and Indigenous Engagement Manager. NPA is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to uplifting and strengthening Alaska Native peoples and protecting our ways of life. We are committed to addressing and restoring our people's inherent rights, which includes managing and stewarding our homelands for abundance.

NPA is in support of retaining the status quo. Keep OSM where it currently is. This move received wide support, and the streamlined operations warrant no change. Preserve the Board's public seats. Three tribally nominated seats were just established, and those seats need to be kept. We are the people who have cared for and respected our lands, waters, and everything that inhabits them for thousands of years.

Given the history between the governing bodies, the Board should not defer to the State. We do not believe they should be given a seat on the Board. Federal regulations protect subsistence. And as an example, in Unalakleet, we have a state registration hunt for moose, but you have to be federally qualified to hunt on federal lands. And when I was in high school, our moose population crashed due to poor management. Unalakleet placed ourselves on a five-year moratorium where we didn't hunt moose at all, and now the population is thriving. With a healthy population comes the threat of the State opening our hunt to non-residents. And with our salmon crashing, we rely heavily on moose. And that added layer of regulations just protects our main means of getting meat for the winter.

We like to preserve the existing RAC process. When soliciting applications, they do outreach, including to commercial and sport use organizations, and they carefully consider the qualifications. It took me a year to get appointed to our RAC. And through this, and though this process is lengthy, we go through a very thorough screening process, and it does ensure adequate representation. The system has worked well and supported the purpose of the RACs.

The Board should retain the ability to implement special actions. A great example being brought forth to you guys tonight, in Kake, when COVID weakened transportation across Alaska. Store shelves were empty, and people were running out of food. And this is more common than people realize. Even when we don't have a global pandemic affecting us, our store shelves are bare. And if they aren't, costs are high and they're only rising. We rely heavily on our subsistence foods.

The Board process for making rural determinations should remain. The policy was updated in 2017, and it's working and provides clarity and transparency. Lastly, we're requesting the comment period be extended from 60 to 90 days, and we request that the Federal Government hosts an all-RAC meeting before any changes are proposed.

Many of us serve on many boards and attend many meetings. Today, I had just testified at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Advisory Panel, and I rushed straight over to that meeting. And then had to leave, unfortunately, for my daughter. But each space is different. And at our last RAC meeting, it was shared that RACs are one of the more proactive spaces where we feel that our voices are actually heard and action comes out of it. And we do not want to change what is working. But again, thank you for taking time to listen to us all. I don't envy the position you're in, and yeah, thank you guys so much.

Kara Moriarty:

Well, thanks again, Kelsey, and never apologize to be on mom duty. Family first.

Kelsi Ivanoff:

Thank you. Yeah, thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, and I would just also say to those that have brought up the North Pacific meeting that was held, we were trying to, we were trying to schedule this kind of around the federal subsistence workshops that are this week, trying to be cognizant of that. So, we did not intentionally try to conflict with the North Pacific Management Council meetings. We were trying to synergize, I guess, with the other meetings. So just wanted to put that on the record. Thanks, Kelsey.

Kelsi Ivanoff:

Yeah, it definitely made it easier to attend because I was already here for North Pacific, so thank you for thinking of that.

01;27;01;28

Robbin La Vine:

Next in the room is Karen Linnell.

01;27;25;18

Karen Linnell, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission:

Good evening and thank you. It's a pleasure to see you again. And I just want to thank you for your time here and staying so late.

The RAC system is a good system where local knowledge can be used and brought to the table. The qualifications to serve on the RACs are very simple. Resident of the region; knowledge of the region's fish and wildlife resources; knowledge of the region's subsistence uses, customs, and traditions; and knowledge of other uses in the region, such as sport, commercial, etc. You know, and so, some of the RAC meetings that I've attended, I've seen sport fishermen, commercial fishermen serving on the RACs. And so, I've seen sport guides serving on the RAC. So, it's open. If they're interested in serving, they can put in an application. That's all. And it seems that they're upset that we started to do that. For a lot of times, we sat at the table, on this side of the table complaining about the process rather than getting involved in the process. Well, we started to get involved in the process, and we're seeing changes.

I'd like to see, keep the OSM under the Secretary's office. That was a request from the 2010 report, and it took 15 years to get it moved. It wasn't an easy process. It took a long time for that move to happen.

In the years, over the years of providing public comments to the RACs and the Federal Subsistence Boards, I've seen the influence of the State of Alaska at the Interagency Staff Committee and other things when proposals that are put forward are taken off the consent agenda and put up for deliberation based on input from the Department. The Deputy Commissioner talked about other States having full control of their fish and wildlife resources. I've personally sat in on a co-management meeting with the Salish Kootenai, the Federal agencies, and their State talking about regulations. They're cross deputized; they sell each other's permits. It's true co-management. And we have co-management in Alaska with the Alaska Migratory Birds Co-management Council, the Whaling Commission, and others. So, it does work. And as Mr. Simon said, it's working on the Kuskokwim where they've met their escapement goals for the last ten years.

And contrary to what Mr. Arno said in regards to the State recognizing rural priority, he mentioned the Nelchina Basin community hunt. The Ahtna villages put in a proposal before the Board of Game to form a community hunt to get out of the Tier II system, which was a liar's game that folks were shopping senior centers and things to get to be able to get the longevity needed to be able to participate in a Tier II process. It left a lot of our young people out from being eligible to hunt because they weren't old enough or hadn't used the resource long enough to participate. And so, the community hunt was a compromise that Chairman Spraker and others on the Board of Game put forward, and it worked great the first year in 2011.

And then there was a lawsuit, or was it 2009? 2009. And there was a lawsuit. Mr. Manning said that it wasn't fair, equal access, etc. And in that lawsuit, they were granted, it was decided that other communities may be eligible. Well, those other communities didn't have to put in proposals to be recognized. Anybody could get together; any group of 25 people can form a community. We have groups that are called Mat-Su Slayers. We have the fat bike group. We've got some folks from Kenai, we've got, you know, so that it's not equal access. And those guys didn't have to go under public scrutiny.

Anyway, in regards to OSM and keeping it in the same place, I think that's the most important thing. There was undue pressure from agency staff at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over OSM, and, you know, I got to see that. And I've submitted comments under, or I'm submitting comments under Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, but I'll also be submitting comments on my own, talking to the management and mismanagement of resources here in Alaska by the State of Alaska. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Karen. And again, thank you for allowing me to be a guest at your family's camp and property this summer. It truly was an honor. I appreciated that.

Karen Linnell:

Thank you.

01;34;00;28

Robbin La Vine:

Next person in the room, Emily Eden Shaw.

01;34;20;16

Emily Eden Shaw:

Hello and good evening. Thank you for being here. To everyone online, hello. So, thank you to the Dena'ina people for allowing us to gather on your homelands. Haw'aa to all my aunties and uncles who have spoken before me today, and I love you all. My name is Emily Eden Shaw. I am Yupik and Inupiaq. I'm also a Raven Thunderbird woman of the "Sa-lanas" clan out of Old Masset, Haida Gwaii. I'm a tribal citizen, a shareholder, and a proud Alaska Native woman. I was born in Fairbanks, and I now live in a rural community, Ketchikan. But my roots start in Emmonak and Saint Mary's, and on the on the Eden-Shaw side in Hydaburg. I have the honor of serving as the CEO and Tribal Administrator of Ketchikan Indian Community, the second largest tribe in Alaska, but I'm representing myself tonight. I'm also nearing the completion of my PhD. I'm a PhD ABD. For context, that's the final step before graduating this spring. I'm a proud daughter, mother, auntie, sister, and cousin.

And today I stand before you not only as a leader, as a Native, but as a Native scholar. But also as a woman who loves her people with all of her heart and who believes fiercely in the possibility of a better future. When I began my doctoral work, I often asked myself, how will this research look beyond the pages of a dissertation? How will it matter to people? How will it matter to the people I come from? And after listening today, I know exactly what I must do. I am choosing to speak up, and I am bringing that scholarship into this room. But even more than that, I'm speaking from my heart because data can document injustice, history can explain it, but lived experiences give it a human face, and I'm carrying all three. I am carrying generations of memory, stories, teachings, and traditions. And my communities are still healing. I am here because of my people, and I have a responsibility to them.

Yes, we all here, we are all here to submit comments, but more, I believe that we are all here to bear witness because there is something both moving and heartbreaking about this moment. The majority of the people here, in person and online, are standing before the Federal Government today asking for protections—when it is history that tells us it was the Federal Government, along alongside the State of Alaska and churches, who once inflicted deep, deep harm on our communities, our cultures, and our ways of life, including subsistence. That harm meant separation from families, from communities, from Indigenous knowledge, from languages, and from the foods that have and have continued to sustain us for thousands of years. That is not an accusation. That is truth. Boarding schools, boarding home schools, day schools, asylums, orphanages, internment camps, forced removals, forced adoptions, children punished for speaking their languages; physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse. Storefronts with signs that read "no Natives, no dogs." These were not, these were not accidents. They were federal and state policies. They

were decisions implemented by institutions that, as of today, have never been held accountable.

And the fact that I'm speaking to you today in English, a language not born of my community, is a testimony, is a testimony to that history. I am a Native woman speaking in a language shaped by a colonial power, advocating for life reshaped by love. And still, here we are, still standing, still believing, and still hoping. That is not weakness. That is the sacred strength of a people who have refused to stop fighting. I want to speak to this moment with grace and with truth.

To those who oppose these protections, they're saying they're being discriminated against. I hear your concerns, [blip] must be placed inside our shared history. And yes, Alaska Native history is Alaska history. The truth is those leading this attack did not walk the road my people walked. Their ancestors were not taken by Indian agents. Their children were not locked inside boarding schools while longing to be on the land, rivers, and forests. Sorry. Their bodies were not made sick by forced diets of powdered milk and canned foods. Their languages were not beat out of them. Their grandparents did not pass storefronts with signs saying "no Natives, no dogs allowed," declaring them unworthy of entry. Our people did.

This is not about revenge or about retaliation. This is about truth, and it is about responsibility. It is about refusing to allow, it is about refusing to allow the past to masquerade as fairness in the present. Subsistence protections, federal safeguards, and Native representation are not privileges. They are promises. They are lifelines, and they are the scaffolding of survival. They are the soil on which healing is finally beginning to grow. And make no mistake, healing is happening. Languages are being reclaimed, food systems restored, children learning from the elders again, communities rising, and the long winter of history is giving away to a fragile but radiant spring. And when healing has begun, the greatest danger is interruption. When justice is unfolding, the greatest risk is retreat.

I will end by saying, I dream of a day when Alaska Native peoples no longer have to stand or sit in these rooms, like today, pleading for their right to live in relationship with our own homelands. I dream of a day when the State and Federal Government are known not only for the harms once done, but for the healing fiercely defended. Ms. Kara, this is the power you and this administration hold today. The power to say we have learned, the power to say we will not repeat, and the power to say we choose protection over continued harm. So let us not stumble backwards into old shadows. Let us walk forward into brighter truth. Protect our rights, keep safeguards strong, honor your promises, and most of all, stand with us while we here heal from what federal and state systems once inflicted.

And I urge everyone online and here to do something essential. Know your own history. Study it, and sit with it because that history is, because if that history had truly guided policy, perhaps we would not be standing here today asking for protections that should already be beyond debate. There are scholars in this room and across the country who, thank you, who have dedicated our lives documenting what happened. We have searched archives, listened to elders, recorded testimony, preserved memories nearly lost, not to reopen moments, but to stop them from being reopened again. That scholarship is not abstract. It is instruction. It is warning. It is guidance, and it should shape decisions like the one before you today. Because when policy is divorced from history, harm repeats itself. I want to close by saying that, you know, now this history is not distant. It lives inside our families. It lives inside memory and inside every indigenous person who has testified today. These are not stories from centuries ago. They are from our grandparents, our parents, and our own lives. And that is why truth must guide policy. Because when policy forgets, harm returns. But when policy remembers, healing becomes possible. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Emily, I appreciate that.

01;42;04;01

Robbin La Vine:

Next person in the room is Louis Green. And I call out his name just in case. He may have jumped online and is driving somewhere and listening, and he can say, "oh, it's my turn.:" And, Louis, if you're online, you could press *6 to unmute yourself. But if you are not online anymore, we're sorry we missed you. The last person I have signed up for in-person testimony is Melanie Bahnke.

01;42;48;04

Melanie Bahnke:

Thank you. I know it's been a long, very long night, and we're all eager to go home. I'm Melanie Bahnke. I happen to be the President of Kawarek in the Bering Strait region of Alaska, but I am testifying on behalf of myself. I'm not sure if this is, oh, okay. Testifying as a human being, as a person, as a mother, as a subsistence user. Kawerak has submitted our own, I think, four pages of written comments and will be requesting tribal consultation and assisting our tribes' request tribal consultation as well.

I was raised in Savoonga on the island of St. Lawrence Island where you really can see Russia from your house. The real name of the island is actually Sivuqaq; it means wrung

out. If you look at the shape of it, it looks like it was wrung out. Two villages on the island, population almost 2,000 between the two villages. I noted earlier that Safari Club of Alaska mentioned that their membership is like 1,300 people, which isn't even the total population on my island.

I come from a long line of people who have thrived in rural Alaska, relying on a subsistence way of life for our physical, spiritual, cultural survival. We're currently facing many challenges, including some chum declines due to mismanaged fisheries, a high cost of living, severe weather events, continued, inadequate investments in basic infrastructure like water and sewer, etc.

We just got done celebrating Katie John being upheld just like a few weeks ago, and now here I am testifying. It's like we can never catch a break. Although we were the first stewards of Alaska's resources, it seems like at every turn we are having to fight for our survival as a people, our own State Government constantly suing us. And now neighbors such as the Alaska Chapter of the Safari Club International attempting to diminish our rights to subsist on our own homelands in times of scarcity. If anyone in Greenland is watching, you are right to be wary of being annexed by the United States government who eagerly kowtows to special interest groups that are well funded or connected, depending on which way the political winds are blowing.

Safari Club International Alaska Chapter members number 1,300, compared to the approximately 200,000 rural Alaskans. 1,300, as I mentioned, is less than the population of the two villages on my island. I remind Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture that you have a political government-to-government relationship with tribes, a trust relationship that does not extend to private clubs, fraternities, sororities, and the like. On safari means going on an adventure, journey, or expedition...to hunt. This is the Federal Subsistence Management Program, not the Federal Safari Management Program—and for a reason. The people most reliant for survival on subsistence in Alaska, if you want to talk about science, as evidenced by the percent of our diet, are those of us who live in rural Alaska.

The government must quit wasting resources—we talk about DOGE—on this process that seeks to undermine the Federal Subsistence Management Program. If it will not stop this process, at least extend the scoping period, conduct face-to-face consultation with all 229 federal tribes. I oppose changes to any changes to the membership of the Federal Subsistence Board, changes to the RAC membership criteria, any increased deference to the state regulations that undermine Title VIII.

And as for the Safari Club International, I notice that they have four focus areas: advocacy, conservation, education, and humanitarian services. Nowhere in there does it say: diminish the voices of hunters over bureaucrats. I respectfully request Safari Club International to withdraw its petition and refocus its efforts on something more useful than seeking to minimize the voices of actual hunters over federal and state bureaucrats, and also weakening special action authority, thereby turning a blind eye to hungry people during times of scarcity. Rural Alaskans are hunters, just as you are. The only difference is we are primarily focused on subsistence, not on safari. Thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Melanie. And I know you're not here in your work capacity, but I just want to let you know I have read your letter. It's on my desk, and I did receive it. So, I appreciate that.

01;48;28;11

Robbin La Vine:

So, I know I told everyone we would finish up online. We will in just a moment, but the last person to provide in-room testimony has just returned. Louie Green, you are up.

Louis Green:

...trial for NASCAR. I just drove all the way across town to get myself back. [laugh]

Kara Moriarty:

That's called dad-duty. We had mom duty earlier. Now it's dad duty. All good. Thank you for coming back.

Louis Green:

There's doctor dad, and there's driver dad.

Kara Moriarty:

All of the above. Thank you very much.

Louis Green:

Well, let's see if I can capture. I turned it off. I should know better. So, my name is Louie Green. I'm from Nome. Spent a lifetime there as born a year before statehood. And watching how management has taken place under the State. It's underserved people out in rural Alaska. So, I come from a community that had Tier II salmon on us from about 15

years. And we started this endeavor back in the late '90s, '99? We still had fish in the water. Now we don't hardly have any. So, I'm not a fond person for the state management.

I've served as a Northern Norton Sound Committee member in the past from '93 on; been with the Federal RAC for the Seward Peninsula. I'm here talking on my own behalf. And the thing that I would say about our federal management side is that we are able to make decisions at the table in our regional meetings, and then we go and send it on to the Federal Subsistence Board, and a lot of times they defer to us. When, I recall, when I was on the Norton Sound Advisory Committee. We came up and had discussions and made decisions, and it was all about what the State wanted. And to me, when it comes to the state management, it's all about making money off of the resources that we need to eat and take care of our families with.

So, when they talk about a duplication of management, it's necessary. At one time I thought maybe we could co-manage and everything would be wonderful, you know? I've been involved with this for a long time, but witnessing the difference between the two systems, I think it's necessary. Again, I think it's necessary to make sure that we have that federal jurisdiction and apply the law, which somebody was referring to, that we may not be. ANILCA is the law that allows for rural subsistence to take place, which is important. There's nothing to say against it. We make decisions at the table. We make decisions for subsistence, not for commercial or any other things. It's about food and food security.

So, restructuring of the Subsistence Board, I find that kind of appalling that anybody could bring that to the table and think they've got justification to do so. We have six hunters and fishers there now and five government entities there. I think, I think that's a very good thing for rural subsistence. The science over politics? This is political, and that's why I'm sitting here at the table, and the rest of us have to come here because it's about politics. Their politics against our politics. Hopefully our politics have more power to it, and we get to continue doing what we're doing here, advocating for our people, whether they're, doesn't matter if they're Native or, hey, I'm white and I'm Native. So, I'm advocating for people, not race. And it's important in rural Alaska that the people that are closest to the resource, in times of low abundance and there's harvestable surplus, those are the people that need the resource. I thank you. I know I went over three minutes, but I always count my minutes by one. And I said one twice, and I forgot to say it for the third time. [laugh]

01;53;57;24

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much. And again, like several others, I just want to thank you for your service to the RAC. We didn't get to meet each other in person in Nome, so it's nice to see you face-to-face. Thank you.

Louis Green:

You tell all those guys over there in Washington, DC, I'm just here, and I'm nice today, but... [laugh]

Kara Moriarty:

I'm being nice right now, too. [laugh]

01;54;18;27

Louis Green:

Yeah okay, I knew you were going to say something, so I pulled that out of you. Let's go for it. Alright, well thank you much, Kara.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, thank you. Have a nice night.

Robbin La Vine:

Thank you, everyone. Online and those of you remaining in the room, we have four people online who are waiting to testify, and they have been waiting a very long time. We have Liz, Nathan, Deanna, and finally, Celeste. Liz Cravalho. Cravalho? You are up next.

Liz Cravalho, NANA Regional Corporation:

Good job. It's Cravalho.

Robbin La Vine:

Cravalho, thank you.

Liz Cravalho, NANA Regional Corporation:

Yeah. Yep, I like to joke that it's "yo," not "ho." [Spoke in Inupiaq language]. "I'm Liz Cravalho. I have the privilege of serving as a Vice President of Lands for NANA Regional Corporation. I am a tribal member of the Native Village of Kotzebue, and a shareholder of NANA, and have been able to be home for the past 16 years. It's a privilege. I'll try to be quick. It's been a long evening, and I, just like others, want to express my gratitude to the staff and others in the room for hanging in there. It's been a treat in many ways to hear all of the testimony this

evening, even though I join others in that same feeling of—it's sometimes one thing after another.

But I'll highlight today that NANA, at NANA in the Lands Department, we manage 2.2 million acres of land, and we are one of the regional corporations that have merged with our village corporation, so we're involved in both subsurface and surface estate management in our communities. This land area is less than 10% of our region, and over 60% of our region is in conservation units. We have about 15,500 shareholders who are the descendants of the Inupiaq people of Northwest Alaska.

And NANA has supported, continues to support the leadership of our Regional Advisory Council members. We appreciate their service and their leadership in bringing in important issues that need to be raised to the Federal Subsistence Board, especially in this time of decline for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. NANA has also supported the addition of the additional tribal seats to the Federal Subsistence Board and the relocation of the Office of Subsistence Management into the Secretary's Office.

I just want to share a couple of things. Over 69% of our shareholders living in the NANA region rely on subsistence foods for 50% or more of their household diets. This is higher in our non-hub communities outside of Kotzebue who also experienced some of the highest costs of living as many of our very rural communities experience. Our Ilitqusiat values talk about the importance of respect for nature and our responsibility to tribe. And I really want to emphasize, as you've heard many others who testified more eloquently than I have, that subsistence really is the thread or the sinew that connects us to each other, our history, and maintaining our culture, our language, and our way of life. Again, I want to thank you all for being there this evening in triple overtime. I will follow up with written comments, and I want to say Quyanaq to you all and especially to the elders and leaders who spoke before. And I hope you all have a good evening.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Liz.

Robbin La Vine:

Next online is Nathan Newcomer.

Nathan Newcomer, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council:

Good evening. Gunalcheesh haw'aa. My name is Nathan Newcomer. I represent the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council based in Juneau, Alaska, on Aak'w Kwáan lands.

Our organization is a regional conservation nonprofit that represents more than 8,000 members across Southeast Alaska. Our organization is dedicated to working to ensure that public land and water management decisions affecting the region protect ecological integrity and subsistence resources and support the cultural, economic, and food security needs of southeast Alaska communities. I will not be giving a detailed comment this evening. As everybody has already outlined, it's been a long night, so we will be submitting those online as a part of the public record.

But I want to publicly state that our organization vehemently opposes the petition put forward by the Safari Club International group. In our opinion, this group and their petition does not represent southeast Alaskan voices or interests. And as you have heard from the vast majority of people that have taken valuable time and resources to travel on such short notice, they agree. It is our opinion that the proposal put forth by the Safari Club is tone deaf. We hope the Federal Government will not be so shortsighted in this process as well.

And they should listen to both the rural and Native voices that are saying the same things in unison. Please leave the Federal Subsistence Board, its structure, the RACs, and the laws under ANILCA in place. Please respect the elders and their voices. Listen to their stories and learn. Be respectful to those that have knowledge that have been passed down for generations for thousands of years. Thank you very much. Gunalcheesh haw'aa.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you very much, Nathan.

01;59;50;07

Robbin La Vine:

Next online, Deanna Kosbruk.

01;59;56;20

Deanna Kosbruk:

Hi, can you hear me?

Kara Moriarty:

We sure can.

Deanna Kosbruk:

All right, good evening. My name is Deanna Kosbruk. Thank you for this opportunity for us to provide public comment, personal testimony. I also work for Ahtna Intertribal Resource

Commission, and thank goodness tonight I am not speaking in that capacity because no one can say it best other than Karen Linnell, Executive Director. So, I'm just speaking on my behalf.

As we heard tonight, we've heard many comments. We've heard race-based, political, and that's what it comes down to. We need to keep that in mind that the Safari Club International, they are just members of the public, and their petition had triggered this scoping review. And they're just one voice tonight. You've heard from many of us, and I'm sure that you'll be receiving a lot of comments from tribal citizens all over the state, tribes.

So, I hope you guys do take the time and consider our voices because as an Ahtna-Kohtaene, an Ahtna individual on the road system, we are heavily populated during our hunting seasons from urban hunters. It is hard for us to even harvest for the winter, to put away for the winter for our families. But with our federal management program, that puts rural priority for us.

So, I just want, I just want that to be understood that this political move had triggered a scoping review on what is already working with the three additional seats on the FSB. It's only been a year. That's not even long enough to see improvements, to hear the voices from tribes. That's not a significant time to see improvements for our federal subsistence users and our voices to be heard. I just want to say thank you. And I know it's a long night, and I'll keep it short, so thank you.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Deanna. Nice to hear your voice, and look forward to seeing you again soon. I do want to, I do want to say, I know we've got one more. Is that right, Robin? Let's hear from them, and I'll make that part of my closing comments. Thanks.

02;02;59;27

Robbin La Vine:

Last person online is Celeste Walker.

Celeste Weller:

Hello, can you hear me?

Kara Moriarty:

Yes, Celeste.

Celeste Weller:

Hi, my last name is Weller, W-E-L-L-E-R. Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment. I am from Pelican, Alaska. I'm a very grateful, non-native, federally qualified rural subsistence user. I've been out here for nine years. I serve on the Pelican City Council and Pelican ADF&G Advisory Committee. But tonight I am speaking for myself, and I'll try to keep this short.

To the point of RAC membership, the best way the Board can serve the people it's designed for is by representing themselves. A tribal leader spoke earlier, beat me to this point, but I support adding more Native voices to the Board. They're the first, these are first and foremost their resources that the Subsistence Board manages, and they should be allotted a louder voice in the management. Creating a new board with appointed members simply opens a door for more special interest groups with the thickest wallet to sway decisions.

Regarding ADF&G, my time as a subsistence user and my career and commercial fishing have highlighted season after season, how difficult the fisheries management is as well as deer populations and everything else. Frankly, ADF&G is completely overwhelmed and frequently makes drastic mistakes in management that deeply affect the people of Alaska, whether that's their freezers, their pocketbook, or just the fun they have that season. So no, I don't agree that more responsibility of the subsistence program should be managed by Fish and Game. I support leaving the program as is with the addition of more tribal members on the Board.

I do ask if petitions put forth by Alaskans are taken as seriously as this Texas and Washington based group. Please keep Alaskans first. Thank you for hearing everybody tonight. Thank you for sticking it out and thank you for your time.

Kara Moriarty:

Thank you, Celeste. And Robin, that's it? Any more? Okay.

02;05;21;05

Robbin La Vine:

Anyone online who would like to be heard and have not provided comments yet, you can do so by pressing *5 to raise your hand. Anyone new, I know I hate to do this because it's so late, but we do want to hear everyone. And so, if you're sitting there thinking, "oh, it's so late. They don't want to hear from me," it is late, but we do want to hear from you. So, anyone with remaining comments, you can press *5 to raise your hand. Patricia Phillips, go ahead.

Patricia Phillips:

Hello, this is Patricia Phillips calling in from Pelican, Alaska. I just heard my neighbor there give her testimony. I appreciate her doing that. Thank you, ladies, for being there and everyone in the audience.

I want to just comment on one thing. I've been on the RAC, you know, since 1993. I did have a two year where I was not reappointed, but I put my name in and went through the process of being interviewed, and my references being interviewed, and was re-selected and reappointed by the Secretary back on to the Southeast RAC. And I really appreciate that. There's a lot of longevity and institutional knowledge, and also, just the way of living knowledge that long-time RAC members bring to the RAC process.

That being said is, you know, some of the comments about, oh, way back in the beginning when it was just a five-board-member, a five-member board, you know, Federal Subsistence Board; that's what it should get back to you. Well, what it used to be, and I'm not saying this with any disrespect, is that the directors of the five agencies would, a lot of times, they were circulating in to get in their three-years-high-salary increase, coming to a remote location like Alaska. You're weighed your salary increase. So, they were coming in to pad their retirement and then, you know, cycle out. So, we had a lot of turnover back then. I'm not saying that they didn't contribute because there were some really smart people in those positions and very helpful, I would say. In fact, they wanted to know what the rural voice was saying and to help form their decision making.

But there were also times when they came with their biases from, you know, wherever they came from, you know, stateside. And, you know, it's like, okay deer, you know, they had their opinions on the movement of deer, you know, and wildlife corridors and stuff like that. But it didn't match up with actually what went on, what was going on in the real, where deer really live in Southeast Alaska. And that's where our rural voice would, you know, "hey, that's not quite right."

But anyways, I heard a lot of emotions tonight, and it really brought back memories when I was, you know, 30 years ago or so I would be pretty emotional myself. But, you know, learning about the language of subsistence has really been my honor through my life. So, thank you for taking my comments and have a good evening.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah, thank you, Patricia. We didn't get a chance to meet in in Wrangell. I think you were participating online quite a bit, but it was clear you do have a vast degree of knowledge. And even if you weren't speaking up, the rest of the Board members wanted to know your opinion, too. And that just says a lot about your knowledge and commitment. So, thank you for... Yeah.

Patricia Phillips:

Oh, can I add one more comment is that, you know, during that time that I was supposed to go to Wrangell, my community went 35 days without a mail plane, and even longer without the Alaska Marine Highway. So, we really are isolated and disconnected and really rely on our subsistence resources. So, thank you and thank you for that kind comment.

Kara Moriarty:

Yeah. Yeah, sure. Thank you, Patricia.

Well, hearing none, we've been at this for 6.5 hours, and I would just say thank you to all that have stuck it out, especially to the tribal leaders and elders that have been part of it. I will just reiterate that a lot of comments have suggested that the review is solely because of the petition that the Department of the Interior received from Safari Club, and that is not true. You know, as I started in my opening comments, the Executive Order was developed in January of 2025, and it has a very specific directive on subsistence, as does the Secretarial Order that followed that and before the SCI petition. So, I just wanted to put that on the record. And so, I do want to just reiterate that we are in the process of learning, and this is an informational gathering. And at the end of the day, as not necessarily an employee of the Department of the interior but as an Alaskan, you know, I think it's important; I really appreciated the civil discourse tonight because at the end of the day, we are all Alaska. And so, with that, we're going to conclude. And again, one final thank you to the amazing staff that have hung out and been here. Really appreciate it and everyone have a safe evening.