



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



In Reply Refer to:
FWS/R7/AFES/MMM

May 24, 2024

Mr. Don Hernandez, Chairman
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chairman Hernandez:

Thank you for your letter of February 2, 2024, providing the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (RAC) support for a Northern Sea Otter Co-Management Agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit and Haida). The FWS also appreciates the concerns your letter raises regarding increased northern sea otter abundance and the impact on other important subsistence marine resources, and the growing disparity current FWS regulations have on the ability of Alaska Native Tribal members to qualify for subsistence use of marine mammals such as sea otters.

I am committed to working with the Tlingit and Haida on their request for a co-management relationship with the FWS to cooperatively manage northern sea otters. On November 7, 2023, the FWS had our first government-to-government discussion with the Tlingit and Haida on their request. This initial meeting provided a strong foundation to better understand the concerns of the Tlingit and Haida and their ideas on solutions. Since then, we have had additional discussions with other Alaska Native Organizations concerning sea otter co-management and are considering the recommendations put forward during these meetings. We will be holding additional government-to-government consultations with the Tlingit and Haida in the future on this subject.

Thank you again for communicating with the FWS and providing the RAC's thoughts on this co-management effort. Should you have additional questions please contact Marine Mammals Management Project Leader, Alice Garrett, via email at alice_garrett@fws.gov or telephone at 503-413-9589.

Sincerely,

Regional Director