



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
4230 University Drive, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99508

November 20, 2024

Chairman Anthony Christianson
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, M/S 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chair Christianson:

Thank you for your letter dated July 29, 2024, regarding the revocation of withdrawal status for public lands under section 17(d)(1) of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The Secretary asked that I respond to your inquiries on her behalf. Your letter relayed strong concerns from the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) regarding the impacts of the revocation on subsistence resources. You included correspondence from five Councils describing the detrimental effects the revocation would have on the fish and wildlife crucial to the cultural, social, and economic well-being of rural residents and their communities.

On August 27, 2024, the Secretary finalized her decision to retain withdrawal status for these lands. This will maintain protections for 28 million acres of land vital to protecting important natural, cultural, and subsistence resources. The Department of the Interior initiated review of the status of these lands after legal defects were identified in the previous Administration's orders revoking the withdrawals. This review thoroughly analyzed the potential impacts on subsistence and other important resources, and the decision was made following extensive public outreach, community engagement, and consultation with federally recognized Tribes in Alaska and Alaska Native Corporations.

This decision does not impact acres already available for selection by eligible individuals under the Dingell Act. Approximately 1,900 Alaska Native Vietnam-era Veterans (or their heirs) are eligible to select a 160-acre land entitlement through the Alaska Native Vietnam-era Veterans Land Allotment Program.

We are very pleased to help ensure the continued health of the subsistence resources upon which rural residents so strongly depend. Thank you for the work you do, as the Board Chair, along with the members of the Board and the Councils, to ensure subsistence users have a strong voice in matters involving subsistence interests.

Please reach out to my office at 907-271-5485 or raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov with any questions as we work diligently and collaboratively with you to ensure these actions result in positive benefits for subsistence users and the ecosystems and resources they steward and depend on. I sincerely appreciate your time and expertise in bringing these important matters to our attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raina Thiele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raina Thiele
Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska Affairs
and Strategic Priorities

Cc: Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Interagency Staff Committee
Office of Subsistence Management